The Perceptions of Intergenerational Conflict Among Chinese Immigrant Families in British Columbia

by

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ABSTRACT

This study critically examines parental perceptions of intergenerational conflict and explores coping strategies using a mixed methods approach. It specifically focuses on Chinese immigrant families with young adult children aged 18 to 35 years old. Intergenerational conflict is defined as the frequency, the degree, and the severity of problems or arguments experienced within parent-child relationships. Studies have found that problematic intergenerational conflicts are associated with negative consequences and that immigrant families are especially vulnerable (Uba, 1994; Wu & Chao, 2005). Since British Columbia is now home to 30% of Canada's total immigrants from China, Taiwan and Hong Kong (Statistics Canada, 2006), it is essential to explore the social factors contributing to, and buffering against, intergenerational conflict within these families. Results will be valuable in identifying the most vulnerable families, and in recommending resources (e.g., educational and community programs) that can both prevent and reduce intergenerational conflict.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my dearest family and friends. To my father, my mother, and my brother– thank you for all your endless support, your encouragement and your guidance throughout this journey. To my dearest friends – this thesis would not be possible without you.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Statement of Research

Intergenerational conflict is often defined as the frequency, the degree, and the severity of problems or arguments experienced within parent-child relationships (Lim et al., 2009; Costigan and Dokis, 2006; Lau et al., 2005; Fuligni, 1998). Numerous studies have found that excessive amounts of problematic intergenerational conflict are associated with negative consequences including children's delinquent behaviours and developmental outcomes (Lim et al., 2009; Phinney & Ong, 2002; Chao, 2005; Uba, 1994; Wu & Bourne, 1975). Immigrant families are especially vulnerable to experiencing high levels of intergenerational conflict and its negative consequences. According to Uba (1994), immigration is especially stressful for children, as they often acculturate faster to the host culture than their parents, resulting in a dissonance of values. This bicultural conflict leads to an increase in confrontations about appropriate behaviours and expectations between immigrant children and their parents (Uba, 1994; Bourne, 1975).

With the Chinese immigrant population doubling in British Columbia since 1991, British Columbia is now home to over 30% of Canada's total immigrants from China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong (Statistics Canada, 2006).   The negative impacts of conflict have been argued to be particularly harmful for Chinese families since this can "violate cultural norms of respect, obedience to authority and family harmony" (Costigan & Dokis, 2006, p.1253), in addition to other family problems. In light of this vulnerability

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to negative effects, it is critical to explore the social factors contributing to, and buffering against, intergenerational conflict within these families.

The purpose of this mixed methods study is to critically evaluate Chinese immigrant parental perceptions of sources of intergenerational conflict. The first phase of the research consists of secondary quantitative analysis of original data collected for "The Parenting Project" (Mitchell, 2006-2009). Primary data collection in the form of qualitative interviews with eleven Chinese immigrants is conducted in the second phase of the research. Quantitative research questions focus on identifying how parental perceptions of intergenerational conflict are structured by social, cultural, and economic factors. In the second phase, the one-on-one qualitative interviews supplement the findings from the quantitative analysis. These interviews facilitate a more in-depth understanding of parental experiences of intergenerational conflict and the contexts in which intergenerational conflict occur. They also enable a further investigation of issues that were not sufficiently addressed in the "Parenting Project".

This thesis focuses on Chinese immigrant families with young adult children aged 18 to 35. It is anticipated to make contribution to the current literature since research on families with young adult children has been rare in the past. The bulk of the family literature focuses on families with young children or adolescents. Yet many theorists (i.e., Arnett, 2000) argue that young adults in their twenties are empirically and theoretically distinct from other age groups. For example, as "emerging adults", they can face a different set of family, school, and work related issues than teenagers. It is therefore reasonable to assume that the types of conflicts and their effects on parent-young adult relationships are also developmentally distinct.

It is hoped that findings from this study can identify those who are most vulnerable to intergenerational conflict. Consequently, these results can be used to advocate new family policies and programs to assist these families in coping with intergenerational conflict. Consequently, recommendations for professionals and practitioners in this field can be made to improve the effectiveness of policies and programs and to better target them towards the specific needs of Chinese immigrant families.

CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL ORIENTATION AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Research studies on intergenerational relationships are typically based on one of two perspectives, the "solidarity" and the "family conflict" models (Connidis & McMullin, 2002). The solidarity model is based on measuring six dimensions of solidarity, and one of its shortcomings includes reducing problematic features of familial relationships to the absence of solidarity (Roberts, Richards, & Bengston, 1991). Connidis & McMullin (2002) argue that this model cannot provide explanations for studies that find the coexistence of both solidarity and conflict in family relationships (Putney & Bengston, 1999). The family conflict model focuses on problems that families encounter and emphasizes the stresses placed on family members. Connidis & McMullin (2002) also argue that the family conflict model is inadequate, since it does not provide an understanding of how relationships are negotiated or how problems encountered are created by broader social forces. Connidis & McMullin (2002) further suggest that to understand familial relationships, it is essential to venture beyond an interpersonal analysis into the social structures influencing these relationships.

However, most literature on intergenerational conflict is still based on versions of the solidarity or the family conflict model, and focuses on individual consequences (Lim et al, 2009; Constigan and Dokis, 2006; Lau et al., 2005; Fuligni, 1998). Conversely, this research study adapts a life course perspective, which aims to provide a more

comprehensive sociological understanding of social factors contributing to, or buffering against, intergenerational conflict.

A Life Course Perspective

Life course theory is a multidisciplinary paradigm that transcends "across disciplinary boundaries and specialty areas" (Elder, 1994, p.4). While primarily sociological in its underpinnings, its theorizing can be "traced back to the beginning decades of the twentieth century" when the effects of migration, urbanization and industrialization were beginning to dramatically affect social relations in the population (Mitchell, 2006, p.15). It also has its roots in age stratification theory (Riley, 1987) and the work of prominent American sociologist C. Wright Mills (1959). Overall, this growing body of work focused on developing linkages between the micro-level (e.g., individual characteristics) and the macro level (e.g., the social structural level) of social behaviour and society. It is generally considered an emergent perspective in sociology of families and it is most commonly applied to studies of aging families and intergenerational family relations (Mitchell, 2009; Bengston & Allen, 1993).

Specifically, the life course framework emphasizes the understanding of people's lives and behaviours within their distinctive historical, socio-economic and geographical contexts. It assumes that individuals are strongly influenced by dynamic external forces, such as cultural ideologies, economic and socio-political conditions as well as historical events (e.g., immigration patterns). These ever changing external circumstances create distinctive opportunities and challenges for families that shape their perceptions and experiences (Mitchell 2006, 2009). This theoretical framework therefore allows

researchers to understand behaviours and experiences within diverse family settings and amidst social change.

Indeed, Bengston & Allen (1993) suggest that families should be conceptualized as "a collection of individuals with shared history who interact within ever changing social contexts" (p. 470). Families are therefore micro social groups within larger macro social contexts. Mitchell (2006) suggests that this conceptualization of families overcomes limitations associated with a static definition of the family. Fahey (1995) also argues that traditional conceptualizations of the family based on a public/private dichotomous divide, whereby the family is perceived as a private entity separated from the public world, is problematic. Instead, families should be re-conceptualized to incorporate a more flexible, context-specific definition with fluid boundaries.

Life course theory is concerned with life course timing and transitions, which is distinctive from the life span or life cycle. Life span often refers to the chronological duration of life and the age-related characteristics associated with certain periods (e.g., old age), whereas the life cycle is generally referred to as normative stages constituting ideal sequencing of certain events (Mitchell, 2006). The life course is distinctive because it assumes that while there may be "a sequence of socially defined events and roles that the individual enacts over time" (Giele & Elder, 1998:22), there can also be a great deal of variability within these trajectories. It is also does not assume that events and roles necessarily proceed in particular sequences since they may become "reversed," and it is also concerned with a person's cumulative experiences over time. For example, the timing and nature of a family transition (e.g., moving to a new country for a new job) may vary by cultural group, and this can profoundly affect later life situations (e.g.,

income and family relationships). Thus, the life course can be conceptualized as "the intersection of social and historical factors with personal biography and family development" (Mitchell, 2006: 17).

Six major tenets of the life course theory include the emphasis of historical, socio-economic geographical contexts, diversity of social structures and heterogeneity of outcomes, the conceptualization of time and trajectories, the concept of linked lives, individuals as active agents shaping their lives and social environments, and the ability of past events and decisions to affect present and future outcomes. Each of these tenets will be summarized in relation to how they are applied to this study.

Historical, Socio-Economic and Geographical Context

Life course theory assumes that distinctive combinations of ever changing historical, socio-economic and geographical contexts influence individual behaviours. Historical and geographical country-of-origin contexts may influence levels of intergenerational conflict in Chinese immigrant families. The children of Chinese immigrant parents are part of a different generational experience since they are raised in a more Westernized culture that strongly emphasizes individualism and less so collectivism (Chao, 2005). The gap in these contexts could be a source of conflict, especially if immigrant parents grew up in a traditional Asian society that is less individualistic in its value structure.

This study is situated in Metro Vancouver because of its distinctive historical and social contexts. British Columbia has one of the largest Chinese immigrant populations and is also renowned for its generous embrace of Canada's Multiculturalism Act (Government of Canada, Department of Justice Canada, 2009). This Act formalizes the

principle that immigrants can fully exercise their heritage values and practices without hindering their acceptance and recognition as Canadian citizens. British Columbia, especially Metro Vancouver, has a distinctive socio-cultural context, supporting ethnic cultural retention amongst Chinese immigrants. In addition to having a large, vibrant Chinese community in Metro Vancouver (Tsang, Irving, Alaggia, Chau, & Benjamin, 2003), Chinese (all dialects) is the third most commonly spoken language followed by English and French (Statistics Canada, 2006).

Diversity of Social Structures and Heterogeneity of Outcomes

Life course theory appreciates the diversity of social structures and processes, and embraces the heterogeneity of experiences rather than solely focusing only "average" or modal outcomes. Individuals and groups are not homogenous since they are structured by sociological variables including gender, age, social classes, family structures and ethnicity. Outcomes of particular events, therefore, may vary according to individuals' distinctive mix of social contexts.

In this study, it is assumed that parents are influenced by various sociological variables and this may result in heterogeneous experiences of intergenerational conflict. Mothers, for instance, may experience different perceptions of intergenerational conflict compared to fathers due to gender variations in parenting behaviours. Similarly, parents with higher socio-economic status may also experience different levels of intergenerational conflict than parents with lower socio-economic status. In addition, Chinese immigrant parents may vary in their accessibility to resources (i.e., economic and social capital) that can reduce the levels of intergenerational conflict. For this research study, the relationships between Chinese parental perceptions of

intergenerational conflict and diverse characteristics including cultural orientation, parent-child acculturation gap, length of residency, gender, socio-economic status, living arrangements, spousal support and parental perceptions of children's peer interactions will be explored.

Timing and Trajectories of Life

Life course theory also emphasizes the timing and trajectories of individual lives. Elder (1985) conceptualized "time" as a sequence of transitions, which are specific events that occur within a trajectory such as getting married, and trajectories are sequences of linked transitions within an aspect of one's life course, such as an educational or occupational career. Life course theory recognizes the dynamics between various trajectories in individuals' lives and assumes that the changes and timing in one trajectory influences the timing and outcomes of other trajectories.

Intergenerational conflict in this study can be influenced by the timing and sequences of transitions. For example, parents with a "full nest", where all of their children are living in the same household, may have different experiences of intergenerational conflict than parents in an "emptying" nest or "empty nest", where one or all of their children are living independently (Mitchell, 2006). Similarly, the timing of parental immigration may influence parental perceptions of intergenerational conflict. Recent immigrants may experience higher levels of intergenerational conflict compared to immigrants who have resided in British Columbia for a period of time as they have more time to acculturate into the new culture.

"Linked Lives"

Life course theory focuses on "linked lives" or the social ties between individuals and individuals and society. Individual lives are assumed to be interdependent, and societal or individual experiences influence people within a linked network of shared relationships (Mitchell, 2006). The dynamics of relational ties with other people may influence individuals' experiences of intergenerational conflict. Szapocznick and Truss (1978) argue that children of Chinese immigrant families often acculturate faster to Western culture than their parents, resulting in parent-child acculturation discrepancies. This value discrepancy leads to increased intergenerational conflict and stress (Farver et al., 2002). Similarly, relational ties with other people outside the family, such as peers or co-workers may also influence the experiences of intergenerational conflict.

Social relations are predictors of social support and may influence intergenerational conflict experiences in this study. Parents with stronger networks of social relations may better cope with intergenerational conflict and experience higher levels of parental satisfaction than parents with weaker networks of social relations. As well, young adults often develop close relationships with their peers, which may also influence the experience of intergenerational conflict (Fuligni, 1998). To explore the influence of social relations in this study, the relationships between spousal support and parental perceptions of their children's peer interactions with intergenerational conflict will be explored.

Past Events and Decisions Affecting the Future

Life course theory assumes that past events and decisions can affect present and future resources, constraints and outcomes either at a generational level or at an

individual level (Mitchell, 2003). In this study, the past experiences of the relationship

between Chinese immigrant parents and their children may influence the current levels of

intergenerational conflict.   Parents and children who have shared more hostile

relationships in the past may experience higher levels of intergenerational conflict than

parents and children who previously had more positive relationships. This is because

certain conflicts in the past may build up over time, producing more problems within the

parent-child relationships.

Human Agency and Personal Control

Notions of human agency and personal control are also emphasized in that it is

assumed that individuals have some capacity to act as active agents to adapt to changes of

macro-level social structures and processes, as well as to make individual decisions and

to set goals that influence these macro-level social structures (Mitchell, 2003). When

social contexts shift and people's needs change, individuals and families are purported to

have the ability to shape their behaviours and expectations to meet the needs of these

changing contexts (Mitchell, 2006). As illustrated by Mitchell (2006), during times of

economic hardship, families can regain control by adjusting their expectations and

behaviours to match the needs and available resources of their current social situations.

However, there are variations in the degrees of agency and personal control that each

family has access to. Families with fewer resources (financial or social) are more likely

to have less agency or control over their needs and behaviours compared to families with

more resources (Connidis & McMullan, 2002).

Intergenerational conflict can be influenced by the manner in which parents act as

active agents in exploring and utilizing available resources. Immigrant parents who

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actively seek support and seek to learn new coping strategies may acculturate into the Canadian culture with more ease and may cope better with their intergenerational conflict than parents who do not seek these resources. Yet, accessing these resources may also be influenced by parents' ability to speak English as well as their social network ties. Qualitative interviews will be used in this study to explore this issue in more detail.

Literature Review

As previously mentioned, this study explores the influence of sociological factors including parents' and children's socio-demographic factors, cultural orientation, parent-child acculturation gap, length of residency, spousal support, and parental perceptions of their children's peer interactions on intergenerational conflict. Prior to reviewing the specific literature in these areas, research on intergenerational conflict will be discussed.

Intergenerational Conflict

Intergenerational conflict is often defined and operationalized as the frequency, the degree, and the severity of problems or arguments experienced within parent-child relationships (Lim et al., 2009; Costigan and Dokis, 2006; Lau et al., 2005; Fuligni, 1998). In previous studies, intergenerational conflict is assessed using numerous scales, including the Issues Checklist (Robin & Foster, 1989), the Columbia Impairment Scale (CIS; Bird & al., 1996), the Child's Attitude to Mother Scale (CAM) (Hudson, 1992), and the Children's Report on Parent Behaviour Inventory (CRPBI; Schludermann & Schludermann, 1988).

Research studies by Tardif and Geva (2006), Lau et al. (2005), and Lim et al. (2009) examined the influence of acculturation gap and intergenerational conflict. Intergenerational conflict was measured differently in all three studies. Tardif and Geva

used the Issues Checklist, a 44-item checklist of potential disagreement issues, and asked mothers and adolescents to score how frequently they experienced these disagreement issues, as well as score the intensity of anger in these episodes using a 5-point Likert scale. Lau et al. (2005) assessed intergenerational conflict using the Columbia Impairment Scale (CIS) and the Childhood Trauma Questionnaire – short form (CTQ; Bernstein & Fink, 1998). The CIS was used to assess the extent to which adolescents felt they were experiencing difficulties in having a harmonious relationship with their parents, while the CTQ was used to assess the extent to which adolescents felt insulted, hurt or hated by their parents. Lim et al. (2009) measured intergenerational conflict by using the Child's Attitude to Mother scale (CAM; Hudson, 1992). The CAM consists of a 25-item scale measuring the extent, the degree and intensity of the conflicts between mothers and their children.

Tardif and Geva (2006) found that an acculturation gap is associated with a greater number of interpersonal related conflicts between parents and children, while Lau et al. (2005) and Lim et al. (2009) found that acculturation discrepancies are associated with intergenerational conflict and negative adjustments in adolescents such as depression and other negative internalization symptoms. In another study, Wu & Chao (2005) used a subscale of the Children's Report on Parent Behaviour Inventory (CCRPBI; Schludermann & Schludermann, 1988) to assess intergenerational conflict and its influence on adolescent adjustments. The subscale consisted of a 10-item list measuring the degrees to which adolescents perceive their parents as responsive and warm. Similarly, Wu and Chao (2005) found that intergenerational conflict leads to greater adjustments problems in adolescents.

Cultural Values Orientation

A *value* is defined as "the ideas held by people about ethical behaviour or appropriate behaviour, what is right or wrong, desirable or despicable" (Oxford Dictionary of Sociology, 2009). Chinese immigrant families with traditional Chinese values may experience more tension living in a Canadian context with Western values. In describing the differences between Chinese and Western cultural values, Sung (1985) attested that the "language, ways of thinking, behaviour, responses, customs, and fundamental beliefs of the two cultures are poles apart" (p.255). Traditional Chinese values are rooted in to Confucian philosophy, which emphasize the importance of social relations, hierarchical structure of relationships and the importance of fulfilling role responsibility and maintaining social order and harmony (Chao 1994). In contrast, Western culture emphasizes values of autonomy, independence and individualistic goals (Lim et al., 2009).

Disparity between Chinese and Western values can be illuminated through practices of parental authority, parental affection and parental expectations (Chao, 1994). Across numerous studies (Lim et al., 2009; Gorman, 1998; Chao, 1994; Sung 1985), it is clear that cultural values and practices of Chinese traditions and Western traditions are undeniably different. Although traditional Chinese and Western values are distinctively different, it is expected that variability amongst both cultural groups also exists. Not all Chinese immigrant parents in this study are expected to adopt stereotypical cultural styles to similar degrees. Some Chinese immigrant parents may have stronger traditional Chinese values and parenting styles, while others may be less influenced by these collective values and adopt a mix of Chinese and Westernized parenting styles. This

study explores the relationship between cultural value orientations and intergenerational conflict. It is expected that Chinese immigrant families with strong traditional Chinese values, living in a Canadian context to experience more tension in daily interactions leading to higher levels of intergenerational conflict than families with less traditional Chinese values.

Parent-Child Acculturation Gap

As previously mentioned, collectivistic Chinese culture holds different values and norms compared to those of individualistic westernized culture present in Canada. It is common for children of Chinese immigrant families in Western societies to acculturate faster to the host culture than their parents, resulting in parent-child acculturation discrepancies (Szapocznick & Truss, 1978). Currently, the majority of the literature on the parent-child acculturation gap focuses on child developmental outcomes and family processes (Lim et al., 2009; Ying, 1999; Farver et al., 2002; Tardif & Geva, 2006; Lau et al., 2005). This study differs by exploring the relationship between parent-child acculturation gap and intergenerational conflict amongst Chinese immigrant families, which has rarely been studied in the past. Among the few studies that have explored this relationship, Tardif & Geva (2006), Dinh & Nguyen (2006), and Farver et al. (2002) found that acculturation gaps were associated with intergenerational conflict. This study differs from these previous studies since it is situated in Metro Vancouver and will involve the participation of both mothers and fathers.

Length of Residency

Immigration involves individuals moving into a new society, leaving old friends, families and a familiar way of life behind. It can cause a great amount of stress to settle

into a new society, and it often requires adaptation to new norms, behaviours and practices, as well as acquiring new languages, customs and expectations of the host culture. Immigration can be especially stressful for recent Chinese immigrants, because values of the Chinese collectivistic culture can vastly contrast values of the Western individualistic culture (Sung, 1985; Lim et al., 2009). While Farver et al. (2002) and Tardif and Geva (2006) found evidence that parent-child acculturation is associated with intergenerational conflict, Lau et al. (2005) and Lim et al. (2009) only found partial evidence for this relationship. A possible explanation for these mixed results may have been due to the length of residency. Immigrants that were included in the study by Tardif and Geva (2006) were recent immigrants, whereas those in the study by Lim et al. (2009) and Lau et al. (2005) were long-term immigrants.

From these findings, it is reasonable to anticipate that recent immigrant families will experience higher levels of intergenerational conflict than long-term immigrant families.

Gender

Gender may also play a role in influencing intergenerational relations since it is a key organizing feature of social relations. Throughout adolescence, regardless of cultural backgrounds, adolescents are more likely to experience greater levels of conflict with their mothers and a decline in cohesion with their fathers (Fuligni,1998; Collins & Russel, 1991; Steinburg, 1990). Interestingly, although both male and female adolescents experience increases in intergenerational conflict with mothers during adolescence, girls have lower levels of conflict with their fathers and greater cohesion with their mothers compared to boys (Fuligni, 1998; Yau & Smetana,1996). Girls also have later

expectations of autonomy and are less likely to engage in open confrontations in negotiating the level of permitted autonomy (Fuligni, 1998). Similarly, immigrant mothers have more emotionally intense conflicts with their sons than their daughters (Tardif & Geva, 2006). In this study, the relationship between gender (parents and children) and the levels of intergenerational conflict will be explored. It is expected that young, male adult children in Chinese immigrant families will experience higher levels of intergenerational conflict than young, female adult children.

Socio-Economic Status

While literature exploring socio-economic status and intergenerational conflict is rare, studies exploring socio-economic status and child developmental outcomes are in abundance (Davis-Kean, 2005; Mandara & Murray, 2000; Blau 1999; McLoyd, 1998; Fuligni 1998; Dodge et al., 1994). However, in the absence of a general consensus on how best to measure socio-economic status (Krieger et al., 1997), studies have adopted their own versions of assessment. The majority of studies use total household income to assess socio-economic status (MyLoyd, 1998; Blau, 1999; Madara & Murray, 2000), while others use a combination of parental educational attainment and occupational status (Dodge et al., 1994; Fuligni 1998), or total household income and parental educational achievement (Davis-Kean, 2005). Studies using all three indictors (income, education and occupational status) are rare (White, 1982).

This research study explores whether socio-economic status influences intergenerational conflict, using indicators of parental educational attainment and total household income. It is expected that families with low socio-economic status will experience higher levels of intergenerational conflict compared to those of high socio-

economic status. Lower socio-economic status families may be under more financial pressure and face more daily challenges from financial strains, and this could result in elevated stress levels (McLoly, 1998; Madara & Murray, 2000). This elevated stress may translate to higher levels of conflict within the family. Although employment status (employed or unemployed) is different than occupational status (occupational prestige) and may not be an indicator of socio-economic status, the relationship between employment status and intergenerational conflict will also be examined.

Spousal Support

Similar to socio-economic status, the relationship between spousal support and intergenerational conflict has scarcely been researched. This is because most empirical studies on spousal support focus on individual outcomes rather than relational consequences between family members. Most studies find that single parent and step-parent family household configurations are associated with more negative child outcomes than families with two biological parents (DeBell, 2007; Pong et al., 2003; Mandara & Murray, 2000; Fuligni, 1998, Hoffmann & Johnson, 1998; Dawson, 1991). This study will explore the relationship between spousal support and intergenerational conflict. Parents with less or no support may have fewer resources (financial, social, etc) in coping with family conflicts than parents with higher levels of spousal support. Therefore, it is expected that parents with less or no spousal support will experience higher levels of intergenerational conflict than parents with higher levels of spousal support.

Peer Interactions

During adolescence, intergenerational conflict and emotional distancing often occurs as adolescents begin to desire more independence and autonomy (Fuligni, 1998).

In addition, parent-adolescent relationships often experience a decrease in closeness, cohesion and engagement (Collin & Russel, 1991; Paikoff & Brooks-Gunn, 1991). During this period, time spent with parents often decreases as adolescents spend more time with their peers. Adolescents begin to place more emphasis and concern on being accepted by their peers and increasingly turn to them for advice and comfort (Gould & Mazzeo, 1982).

Parent-child relationships are often characterized as being hierarchical whereas peer relationships are usually characterized as being more egalitarian in the distribution of power. As children reach early adolescents, they become more aware and unsettled with this power differential in parent-child relationships, leading them to invest less time in their relationships with their parents and more time in their peer-relationships (Buhrmester & Furman, 1986). Adolescents who perceive their parents as restrictive and controlling, and perceive fewer opportunities in influencing decisions, tend to seek more advice and comfort from their peers than from their parents (Fuligni & Eccles, 1993). Similarly, adolescents who perceive extreme unequal power distribution in parent-child relationships are more susceptible to peer pressure and are more willing to forego their parents' rules and teachings. Adolescents who are most dissatisfied with their parent's authority are most willing to openly disagree and engage in conflicts with their parents (Fuligni, 1998). This research study will examine whether parental perceptions of their young adult children's peer interactions influence parental perceptions of intergenerational conflict. It is anticipated that young adult children who are more strongly affected by their peer's negative influences will also experience higher levels of intergenerational conflict than children who are less strongly affected.

In summary, intergenerational conflict in Chinese immigrant families is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon deserving further research. The life course theory will guide this research and allow for the exploration of various sociological factors and their influences on parental perceptions of intergenerational conflict. Based upon current literature, it is anticipated that intergenerational conflict will be greater in immigrant families with strong traditional Chinese values. It will also be more likely when there are large parent-child acculturation gaps, high parental perceptions of negative peer interactions, shorter lengths of residency, with sons compared to daughters, and among families with lower socio-economic status and weaker spousal support.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODS AND DESIGN

Research Design: Mixed Methods Approach

This study employs a mixed methods strategy that combines both quantitative and qualitative analysis (Creswell, 2003; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). This methodological approach has become increasingly popular in the social sciences and has been applied to a wide variety of topic areas ranging from health studies to family studies. And while some are critical of combining two distinctly different types of methodologies in a single study, others argue that using multiple methods in one study can neutralize biases and the limitations of a single method (Creswell, 2003).

There are three different types of mixed methods designs: sequential, concurrent and transformative (Creswell, 2003). This research study employs a sequential mixed methods approach, incorporating the use of quantitative and qualitative data in two distinct phases – one succeeding the other. As previously mentioned, the first phase of this research study entails secondary analysis of quantitative results using data from "The Parenting Project". The research questions from this study focus on how parental perceptions of intergenerational conflict are structured by social, cultural, and economic factors. Through this analysis, significant trends and key predictors of those who were most vulnerable to intergenerational conflict are identified.

The second phase of this research study involves obtaining qualitative data from face to face interviews with eleven Chinese immigrant parents. The purpose of conducting these qualitative interviews is to supplement the key quantitative findings

from the first phase, which facilitates a deeper understanding of parental experiences and the specific contexts in which it occurs. Additionally, the qualitative study facilitates further investigation of issues that were not sufficiently addressed in the original "The Parenting Project" survey (e.g., parent-child acculturation gap).

Data Sources

Data From Telephone Surveys Used in Secondary Quantitative Analysis

The "Parenting Project" telephone interviews ranged from 35-55 minutes in duration and were conducted in the preferred language of the participants. Three versions of the telephone survey were utilized depending on the living arrangement of the family: (1) families with all their children still living at home (full nest), (2) families with at least one child who has left home for 4 months or longer but still have at least one child still living at home (emptying nest), and (3) families whose children have all left home for 4 months or longer (empty nest). Since the purpose of this research study is to examine the perceptions of intergenerational conflict amongst Chinese immigrant families, only data from parents who self-identify as Chinese Canadians (n=105) in the parenting project is used in the secondary quantitative analysis.

This project surveyed 490 Metro Vancouver parents from between 2006-2008. Ninety-two percent of the surveyed participants were recruited via random digit dialling from local telephone directories and 8% of the surveyed participants were recruited via referrals from those already being interviewed. The interview questions examined various parenting issues facing mid –life and later-life parents, such as living arrangements, child launching and the purported 'empty nest syndrome'. Background information was also collected, such as respondent's gender, age, marital status,

partnership history, work background, education and income as well as health-related information (e.g., health status, depression, life satisfaction and well-being). To be eligible to participate in the telephone survey interview, respondents had to be at least 35 years old with at least one child between the ages of 18-35, and whose primary cultural identification was either British, Southern European, South Asian, or Chinese. When parents had more than one eligible child, a 'study child' was randomly selected and the parents were asked to answer the interview questions pertaining to their relationship with that 'study child'.

Data From Qualitative One-on-One Interviews

In the second phase of the study, eleven Chinese immigrant parents participated in open-ended interviews that were audio-recorded. Eligibility requirements for these one-on-one interviews were similar to those of the telephone interviews from The Parenting Project. To participate, parents had to self-identify as being Chinese immigrants, and be 35 years or older with at least one child between the ages of 18-35. When parents had more than one eligible child, a 'study child' was randomly selected and parents were asked to answer the one-on-one interview questions pertaining to their relationship with that 'study child'.

Recruiting eligible participants was accomplished via two methods. Seven of the eleven participants were recruited via the posting of recruitment flyers, which had a summary of the research topic and the researcher's contact information on it. These recruitment flyers were posted on the communication boards of S.U.C.C.E.S.S., a Chinese settlements agency in Vancouver, as well as in two local community churches and a public library. The remaining four participants were recruited from a weekly

parent-support group at S.U.C.C.E.S.S. At the end of every interview, parents were given referral cards with a summary of this research project and the researchers' contact information. Parents were asked to give these cards to any other eligible referrals. However, the response rate from these referrals was minimal. Only three parents responded to these cards, none of whom met the eligibility requirements of this project. To ensure a sufficient level of diversity, the group of eleven participants were selected from a pool of eighteen eligible candidates to reflect a diverse mix of socio-demographic circumstances.

The interviews were 45-60 minutes long in duration and were conducted in either English or Cantonese. Parents were interviewed in a location of their preference. The majority of the interviews took place in participants' homes, coffee shops, local libraries and schools. The interview comprised of asking a series of (semi-structured) questions focused on five topic areas, including parent-child relationships/intergenerational conflict, parent-child acculturation gaps, study child's social circle, spousal support and coping strategies. These five topics were chosen based on current literature as well as findings from the quantitative analysis. As well, they were chosen to supplement and elaborate areas that were not fully explored in the quantitative data. Table 1 below provides a summary of the demographic characteristics of interview participants. Pseudonym names were used to protect the identity of these participants.

Table 1: Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Interview Participants

	Fiona	Sarah	Brenda	Veronica	Wanda	Kyle
Gender	Female	Female	Female	Female	Female	Male
Marital Status	Partnered	Not partnered	Partnered	Partnered	Partnered	Partnered
Age Group	50-59	50-59	40-49	50-59	40-49	50-59
Educational Level	Some College/ Uni	Some College/ Uni	College/ Uni Degree	High school or less	Some College/ Uni	College/ Uni Degree
Employment Status	Part Time Work	Home maker	Part Time work	Home maker	Part Time Work	Full Time Work
Total Household Income	>$75K	$20K-$50K	$20K-$50K	<$20K	>$75K	>$75K
Country of Birth	China	Hong Kong	Taiwan	Hong Kong	Hong Kong	Hong Kong
Length of Residency	40 years	17 years	11 years	12 years	15 years	41 years
Gender of Study Child	Female	Male	Male	Male	Female	Male
Age of Study Child	28	24	22	21	27	27
Study Child born in Canada	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes
Study Child's Marital Status	Partnered	Not Partnered	Not Partnered	Not Partnered	Not partnered	Not Partnered
Study Child's Main Activity	Full Time work	Student	Student	Student	Student	Full Time Work
Study Child's Living Arrangement	Moved out, lives in separate household	Not moved out, lives in the same household	Not moved out, lives in the same household	Not moved out, lives in the same household	Not moved out, lives in the same household	Not moved out, lives in the same household
Interview Language	Cantonese	Cantonese	Cantonese	Cantonese	Cantonese	English

Table 1: Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Interview Participants (cont.)

	Kris	**Mark**	**Candice**	**Jenny**	**Nina**
Gender	Male	Male	Female	Female	Female
Marital Status	Partnered	Partnered	Partnered	Partnered	Partnered
Age Group	50-59	50-59	50-59	50-59	40-49
Educational Level	College/ Uni degree	Some College/ Uni	High School or less	College/ Uni degree	High School or less
Employment Status	Full time work	Full time work	Full Time Work	Home Maker	Home Maker
Total Household Income	$50K-$75K	>$70K	$50-$75K	>$70K	$20K-$50K
Country of Birth	Hong Kong	Hong Kong	Hong Kong	Hong Kong	Hong Kong
Length of Residency	41 years	43 years	26 years	42 years	13 years
Gender of Study Child	Female	Female	Female	Female	Male
Age of Study Child	28	29	21	24	19
Study Child born in Canada	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Study Child's Marital Status	Not partnered	Partnered	Not Partnered	Not Partnered	Not Partnered
Study Child's Main Activity	Full Time Work	Full Time Work	Student	Full Time Work	Student
Study Child's Living Arrangements	Not moved out, lives in the same household	Moved out, lives in a separate household	Not moved out, lives in same household	Not moved out, lives in the same household	Not moved out, lives in the same household
Interview Language	Cantonese	English	English	English	English

Quantitative Analysis

A selection of relevant indicators were selected and used for the secondary quantitative analysis. With the exception of five variables (parent's gender, study child's gender, parent acculturation gap, presence of spouse, and disagreement with spouse over study child's life variables), all of the variables were operationalized by recoding selected parenting project data (See Tables 2 and 3 below). The variables that did not require recoding were used in their original form in the secondary quantitative analysis. In cases where missing values in the original data were present (coded as either "don't know", "no response" or "not applicable") those coded as "don't know" or "no response" were recoded to the central tendency (median category) of that indicator. Although missing values were rare, recoding them ensured that the sample size remained relatively constant across all the variables that were used in the secondary quantitative analysis.

Table 2: Dependent Variable: Intergenerational Conflict

Variable Name	*Original Survey Question*	Recoded	*Original Survey Answers (Parenting Project)*	Recoded Groups
Intergenerational Conflict	How much conflict, tension or disagreement do you feel there is between you and your study child at this point in your life?	Yes	*1 = no conflict at all* *2 = not much conflict,* *3 = a little conflict* *4 = very much conflict* *5 = a great deal* *6 = don't know.*	= No Conflict Present = Conflict Present

Table 3: Socio-Demographic Variable

Variable Name	*Original Survey Question*	Recoded	*Original Survey Answers (Parenting Project)*	Recoded Groups
Parents' Gender	What is your gender?	No	*1 = Male* *2 = Female* *3 = Other*	N/A
Study Child's Gender	What is your study child's sex?	No	*1 = Male* *2 = Female* *3 = Other*	N/A
Parent's Marital Status	What is your current marital status or living arrangement?	Yes	*1 = Never married* *4 = Divorced/ Separate* *5 = Widowed* *2 = Married* *3 = Living with a partner*	= Not partnered = Partnered
Study Child's Marital Status	What is your study child's current marital status or living arrangement?	Yes	*1 = Never married* *4 = Divorced/ Separate* *5 = Widowed* *2 = Married* *3 = Living with a partner*	= Not partnered = Partnered
Parent's Age	When were your born? (year)	Yes	**Participants answered with the year they were born in** *1933 - 1946* *1947-1956* *1957-1966*	 = 60 years & older = 50 -59 years = 40-49 years

Table 3: Socio-Demographic Variable (cont.)

Study Child's Age	With respect to your study child, when was she (he) born? (year)	Yes	**Participants answered with the year their study child was born in**	
			1971-1973	= 33-35 years old
			1974-1978	= 28-32 years old
			1979-1983	= 23-26 years old
			1984-1989	= 18-22 years old
			One missing value from original data, recoded into median category "18-22 years old" *	
Parents' Employment Status	What is your main activity?	Yes	*Are you:*	
			1 = Working at a paid job full time *2 = Working at a paid job part-time* *8 = Self-employed/Own business*	= Working paid jobs
			5 = Retired *9= Unemployed*	= Retired/Unemployed
			3 = A homemaker *4 = A student* *6 = Disabled* *7 = Other*	= A Homemaker = A student = Disabled = Other

Table 3: Socio-Demographic Variable (cont.)

Study Child's Main Activity	What is your study child's main activity	Yes	*1 = Full time student* *2 = Part time student* *3 = Full time paid Work* *4 = Part time paid Work* *5 = Unemployed/ looking for work* *6 = Unemployed/not looking for work* *7 = Homemaker* *8 = Other*	= Full time or part time student, or unemployed = Full time or part time work = Full time or part time student, or unemployed = Other
Parent's Educational Level	What is the highest level of education that you have attained	Yes	*1 = Less than high school* *2 = High school graduate* *3 = Some College or University* *4 = College diploma or other special certificate* *5 = University Degree* *97 = Don't know*	= High school or less = Some College or University = College or University Degree = Don't know
Total Household Income	What is your total household income for the last year?	Yes	*1 = <$20k* *2 = $20k-$50k* *3 = $50,001-$75k* *4 = $75,001 - $100k* *5 = $100,001-$125k* *6 = $125,001-$150k* *7 = >$150k*	= <$20K = $20K-$50K = $50,001-$75K = Over $75K

Independent Variables: Other Variables

In addition to the socio-demographic variables, other independent variables were also examined, including the importance of ethnic identity, parent-child acculturation gap, length of residency, presence of spouse, the frequency of discussions about family life with spouse, disagreements about study child's life with spouse, and living with parents (study child's grandparents). These variables were similarly operationalized by recoding selected parenting project data (See Table 4 below).

Table 4: Other Selected Variables

Variable Name	*Original Survey Question*	Recoded	*Original Survey Answers (Parenting Project)*	Recoded Groups
Importance of Ethnic Identity	How important are the traditions of your cultural or ethnic group in your family life?	Yes	*1 = Not important at all* *2 = Somewhat not important* *4 = Somewhat important* *3 = Important* *5 = Extremely important*	= Not/slightly important = Important/ Extremely Important **One missing value from original data, recoded into median category "Important/ Extremely Important" ***

Table 4: Other Selected Variables (cont.)

Parent-Child Acculturation Gap	In general, how similar are your general opinions and values to those of your daughter/son?	No	*1 = Not at all similar* *2 = Somewhat similar* *3 = Very similar*	N/A
Length of Residency	What year did you immigrate to Canada	Yes	**Participants answered with the year they immigrated to Canada ** *1996-2005* *1964-1995*	 = Less than 10 years = 10 years or longer
Presence of Spouse	Currently, do you have a spouse or partner?	No	*1 = Yes* *2 = No*	N/A
Frequency of Discussion About Family Life with Spouse	You discuss your family life with your spouse…	Yes	*1 = Daily* *2 = At least once per week* *3 = Monthly* *4 = Several times per year* *5 = One per year or rarely* *6 = Not at all*	= At least weekly = Monthly = Several times per year or less **One missing value from original data, recoded into median category "At Least Weekly*****

Table 4: Other Selected Variables (cont.)

Disagreements Over Study Child's Life	Do you and your partner (spouse) ever have disagreements over any aspect of your study child's life	No	*1 = Yes* *2 = No*	N/A
Living With Parents (Study Child's Grandparents)	Are you living with either of your parents?	Yes	*0 = No* *1 = Only with the* 　*mother* *2 = Only with the* 　*father* *3 = With both*	= No = At Least One Parent

Qualitative Analysis

Prior to conducting the qualitative interviews, all participants were given a standard definition of intergenerational conflict: *the frequency, the degree and the severity of problems or arguments experienced between parents and their children.* This ensured that all participants referred to the same definition during the interview. Several questions were posed, including: *"In general, how would you describe your relationship with your study child?", "How often do your and your study child have fights or disagreements?"* and *"What do you and your study child typically fight about?".* Participants were also asked to complete a socio-demographic questionnaire prior to the interviews (see Appendix G*).* Additional questions were also asked, that focused on five different categories relating intergenerational conflict. These categories include: the relationship parents had with their study child, parent-child acculturation gap, peer

influences, spousal support and coping strategies (See Appendix D for a complete list of interview questions).

Data Analysis

For the secondary quantitative analysis, the statistical program, SPSS 17.0 was used. Univariate, bivariate, and bivariate analysis with a control variable were conducted in this project. The univariate analysis was accomplished by examining frequency distributions and central tendencies for each variable (Appendix A, Table 5, 6, 7). Two types of bivariate analyses were carried out – one with a control variable and one without. The bivariate analyses without a control variable were carried out using cross-tabulations and tests of statistical significance between the dependent variable (intergenerational conflict) and each of the independent variables (Appendix A, Table 8, 9). Bivariate analyses with a control variable were also carried out using cross-tabulations and tests of statistical significance between the intergenerational conflict and parent-child acculturation gap. Three control variables were selected: the study child's marital status, living arrangement, and main activity (Appendix A, Table 10, 11, 12) [1]. Results from this analysis were used to identify emergent patterns and to generate questions for the qualitative interviews.

The qualitative interviews were audio-recorded and were conducted in English or Cantonese. Those conducted in Cantonese were first translated into English. All of the interviews were transcribed, and subsequently reviewed in two different stages. In the first review, transcripts were analyzed by focusing on recurrent themes and patterns that surfaced across the eleven interviews. Once these major recurrent themes and patterns

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[1] Due to the small sample size, this analysis is limited to testing bivariate associations with one control variable

were identified, transcripts were reviewed a second time. During this second review process, interviews were coded by the emergent themes and patterns previously identified, and specific verbatim quotes were selected and to provide examples in the analysis. These qualitative interviews and the process of reviewing these interviews allowed for a deeper understanding of the complexity of parental perceptions of intergenerational conflict (See Appendix C, D, E, F, G for qualitative research instruments). Due to the limitations of this study, we were unable to conduct more advanced qualitative analysis or 'credibility checks' with our participants to ensure that these interviews were interpreted accurately (See Appendix H for researcher's personal reflections as an insider).

Ethical Issues

This project was conducted with the approval of the Simon Fraser University Research Ethics Board. Permission to access and conduct analysis on The Parenting Project data was granted by Dr. Barbara Mitchell (Appendix B). Prior to conducting the qualitative interviews, all participants were given a detail explanation of their voluntary roles and rights in this study. As well, they were told about the goals of the study, its benefits and potential risks and the confidentiality protocols. Participants were then asked to read and sign a consent form, and were given an opportunity to discuss, and ask for clarifications on any uncertainties. In cases where participants preferred to conduct the interview in Cantonese, a translated Chinese version of the informed consent form was offered (Appendix F).

A number of measures were taken to ensure participant confidentiality, including the use of secure data storage systems (password protected computer log-ins and locked

filing cabinets), the restricted access of data to Yvonne Lai (primary investigator), Dr. Barbara Mitchell (senior project supervisor) and Dr. Jane Pulkingham (secondary project supervisor) and the use of pseudonym names in this research. Data for this project will be safely kept for two years after completing this study and will be appropriately discarded thereafter, abiding by the rules set out by with Simon Fraser University's Records Retention Schedule and Disposable Authority (RRSDA). Caution was also taken to ensure that the tone, attitude, and guiding questions asked to participants are consistent across all interviews to avoid biases in participants' responses. All the information provided by participants was held in confidence within the bounds of the law.

Another ethical consideration relates to the issue of potential risks to the participants. There were no anticipated risks to the safety of the participants prior to conducting this research. However, there were moments where several participants experienced slight temporary discomfort from recalling past conflictual or tension-ridden episodes. These episodes were not long lasting nor did it cause any permanent physical or emotional harm to the participants. Thus, the risks that the participants faced by participating in this study were no greater than risks they may face in daily life and conversations. In addition, during these uncomfortable moments, participants were reminded that their involvement in this study was voluntary and they could end their participation at any time. None of the participants prematurely ended their participation, and all participants completed the entire interview.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

This chapter provides the results of both the quantitative and qualitative findings. Quantitative results will first be presented followed by qualitative analysis findings, entailing analysis of key emergent themes arising from the face-to-face interviews with eleven immigrant Chinese parents.

Quantitative Results

Univariate analyses were accomplished by generating frequencies and central tendencies for each variable.

Socio-Demographic and Background Characteristics of Sub-sample

As shown in *Appendix A – Table 5*, the sample of this study (n=105) has more female than male respondents, with 66 mothers (62.9%) and 39 fathers (37.1%). The majority of respondents were partnered (87.6%) and the median age category at the time of the telephone survey was the "50-59". About one-quarter of the participants were between 40-49 years old, and one-quarter were 60 years or older. Just about one-half of respondents had an educational level of high school or less (56.2%), while one-third (32.4%) had a college/university degree. Forty percent of respondents worked in paid occupations (part time or full time) while 28.6% were homemakers and 31.4% were retired or unemployed. The majority of the respondents (50.5%) had a total household income between $20,000-$50,000. Approximately one-third of the respondents (29.5%) had a total household income between $50,001-$75,000, while a small minority had a

total household income of less than $20,000 (8.6%) or total household income over

$75,000 (11.4%).

With respect to the study child, there were 54 (51.4%) males and 51 (48.6%)

females. The majority of study children were not partnered (not married or living with

partner, 29.5%) and the median age category at the time of the telephone survey was 23-

27 years old. More than one-half of the study children lived at home (58.1%), while

41.9% lived independently from their parents. Fifty-nine percent of the study children

worked in paid occupations (full-time or part-time), while 39% were students (full time

or part time) and 1.9% were unemployed.

Univariate Results of Intergenerational Conflict

As shown in *Appendix A – Table 6,* the majority of parents experienced

intergenerational conflict (59.0%). When questioned about the topics of these conflicts,

issues of responsibility (11.4%) and *issues of money/finances* (12.4%) were two of the

most common responses. Other responses included *issues surrounding child's*

employment/work (5.7%), *issues related to driving* (3.8%), *issues regarding siblings*

(1.0%), *time spent/communicating with family* (1.0%), *child's relationships* (1.9%) and

issues over lifestyle/health (2.9%).

Univariate Results of Selected Social Factors

As shown in *Appendix A – Table 7,* when asked about the importance of their

ethnic identity, the majority of respondents considered it to be important to extremely

important (74.3%). Only a about a quarter of the respondents considered it to be not

important or only slightly important (25.7%). In assessing parent-child acculturation gap,

respondents were asked how similar their general opinions and values were to those of

their child at the present time, and the majority of respondents thought they were somewhat similar (68.6%) to very similar (21.9%). Only a small percentage (9.5%) considered them not similar at all. Within this sample, approximately one-third (34.3%) of respondents are recent immigrants who have resided in Canada for less than 10 years, while 65.7% of respondents have resided in Canada for longer. Most of the respondents have spouses (89.5%, n=95), and about half of those who do, have discussions about their family life with their spouses weekly (52.1%), while 27.7% do so monthly, and 20.2% do so several times per year or less. Although the majority of parents expressed not having any disagreements regarding their children's life with their spouses, a significant proportion of parents did (37.2%). Amongst those participants whose parent(s) are still living (study child's grandparents, n=55), the vast majority (85.5%) did not live with their parents, while 14.5% did live with one or both parents.

Bivariate Results

Bivariate analyses were used to examine various social factors and their influences on parental perceptions of intergenerational conflict. When considering these results, it is important to be mindful of the relatively small sample size (n=105). Using a small sample compromises the power of bivariate statistical tests and ultimately affects the results. The power of a study is the "probability of correctly identifying a difference between the two groups in the study sample when one genuinely exists in the populations from which the samples were drawn" (Whitely & Bell, 2002, p. 335) and is dependent upon the effect size and the sample size of the study (Whitley & Bell, 2002). High-powered tests are often achieved by using a large sample sizes. With a small sample, it is

more difficult to detect statistically significant associations between groups even if they truly exist within the population.

Bivariate Analysis: Intergenerational Conflict by Demographic Variables

As shown in *Appendix A – Table 8*, the relationships between intergenerational conflict and parental age, and between intergenerational conflict and employment status were statistically significant. Older parents were found to experience less conflict with their children in comparison to younger parents (tau-c = -0.27, $p<0.05$). For example, 72.0% of those aged 40-49 experienced intergenerational conflict compared to 34.6% of those who were 60 years old and older. Similarly, parents who were working in paid jobs experienced the most conflict with their children with 71.4% reporting that conflict is present in their relationships, compared to 42.2% of parents who were retired/unemployed (x = 0.04, df = 2, $p<0.05$).

Even though only the bivariate analyses examining parental age and employment status were statistically significant, all of the bivariate analyses between intergenerational conflict and the study child's demographic variables were statistically significant, with the exception of the study child' gender variable. Results found that study children who were not partnered experienced more intergenerational conflict than those who were partnered (Pearson's R = -0.31, $p<0.01$). Amongst those who were not partnered, 68.9% experienced intergenerational conflict compared to 35.5% of those who were, suggesting that children from Chinese immigrant families who do not have partners experience more conflict with their parents. The bivariate results also showed that as study children get older, they experience less intergenerational conflict with their parents (tau c = 0.39, $p<0.01$). Amongst the group of study children who were between 18-22 years old, 83.8%

experienced intergenerational conflict compared to 38.5% of those between 33-35 years old. Additionally the relationship between the study children's living arrangements and intergenerational conflict were statistically significant ($x^2 = 10.31$, df = 2, p<0.01). Study children who were living at home experienced the most intergenerational conflict with their parents (72.1%), followed by those who have lived independently from their parents (40.9%) suggesting that children of Chinese immigrant families experience less intergenerational conflict when they live independently. [2]

The relationship between the study children's main activity and intergenerational conflict was also statistically significant ($x^2 = 7.11$, df = 1, p<0.01). Study children who were students or unemployed experienced the most intergenerational conflict with their parents (74.4%) compared those who worked at paid occupations (48.4%), suggesting that children from Chinese immigrant families who are employed in the work force have less conflict with their parents than those who are not.

Other trends that are note-worthy include the relationships between intergenerational conflict and parental gender, educational level and total household income. Although not statistically significant, certain patterns emerge as informative. Results show that mothers generally experienced higher levels of conflict with their children compared to fathers (63.6% and 51.3% respectively). The relationship between education level and total household income with intergenerational conflict also showed interesting trends. Unlike linear associations, educational level and total household income were curvilinear. Notably, 59.3% of parents with the lowest educational levels

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[2] The Pearson's R correlation test was used to test the study child's gender and marital status. Using the Pearson's R correlation test and treating these two dichotomous variables as binary allows for probabilistic results. The Kendall's tau-C test was used to test the relationship between the study child's age and intergenerational conflict, and the Chi-squared test was used to test the relationship between the study child's living arrangement and main activity with intergenerational conflict.

(high school or less) experienced intergenerational conflict, while only 50% of parents

with middle educational levels (some college/university) experienced intergenerational.

However, this downward trend reverses when considering those with the highest level of

education (college/university degree). Those with college/university degrees experienced

the highest level of intergenerational conflict (61.8%).

Similarly, when considering total household income, 55.6% of parents with the

lowest total household income (<$20,000) experienced intergenerational conflict. Parents

with a total household income between $20,000-$50,000 a year experienced slightly

more intergenerational conflict (64.2%) and parents with total household incomes

between $50,001-$75,000 experienced the least intergenerational conflict amongst all the

groups (45.2%). Those with the highest total household incomes (over $75,000) had the

highest level of intergenerational conflict (75%).

Bivariate Analysis: Intergenerational Conflict by Selected Variables

Analyses between intergenerational conflict and other selected variables

(*importance of ethnic identity, parent-child acculturation gap, length of residency,*

frequency of discussion about family life with spouse, disagreement over study child's life

with spouse and living with parents (study child's grandparents), see Appendix A - Table

9) were also conducted. Only the relationships between intergenerational conflict and

parent-child acculturation gap (tau = -0.22, p<0.05) and intergenerational conflict and

disagreements over study child's life with spouses (Pearson's R = -0.28, p<0.01) revealed

statistically significant results. It was found that the more similar parents' opinions and

values were to their children's, the less intergenerational conflict was experienced.

Eighty percent of parents who considered their values and opinions as not being similar at

all to their child's experienced intergenerational conflict compared to only 39.1% of parents who considered their values and opinions as being very similar to their children's.

It was also found that a significantly higher proportion of parents who had disagreements with their spouses about their study child's life experienced intergenerational conflict (77.1%). Only 49.2% of those who do not have disagreements with their spouses experience intergenerational conflict.

Although not statistically significant, bivariate analyses between the importance of ethnic identity and intergenerational conflict, and length of residency and intergenerational conflict also generated interesting results. Parents who placed less emphasis on their ethnic cultural traditions experienced less intergenerational conflict than parents who placed a stronger emphasis on such traditions. Only 55.6% of Chinese immigrant parents who did not consider their ethnic identity as important or only slightly important experienced intergenerational conflict, compared to 60.3% of parents who considered their ethnic identity to be important or extremely important. It was also found that long-term immigrants compared to recent immigrants experienced less intergenerational conflict. Fifty five percent of long-term immigrants experienced intergenerational conflict compared to 66.7% of recent immigrants.

Bivariate Analysis with a Control Variable

Bivariate analyses between parent-child acculturation gap and intergenerational conflict were conducted using three control variables: the study child's marital status, living arrangement and employment status. Parent child acculturation gap and the three control variables were chosen because prior analyses revealed that they are strongly associated with intergenerational conflict. Examining these relationships allowed further

exploration on whether intergenerational conflict continues to be influenced by cultural factors (parent-child acculturation gap) even after controlling for the effects of the study child's life course transition factors (marital status, living arrangement and employment status).

As shown in *Appendix A, Table 10,* when bivariate analysis between the parent-child acculturation gap and intergenerational conflict was conducted with the study child's marital status as the control variable, results were only statistically significant for the group that were "not partnered" ($x^2 = 8.61$, df = 2, p<0.05). Amongst the group of parents whose children without partners, 88.9% of those who had the largest parent-child acculturation gaps experienced intergenerational conflict compared to 41.2% of those who had the smallest parent-child acculturation gaps. Although results for the group that were "partnered" were not statistically significant, it still generated similar trends.

Bivariate analysis between the parent-child acculturation gap and intergenerational conflict was conducted with the child's living arrangement as a control variable, as shown in *Appendix A, Table 11.* Results were only statistically significant for the group that was still living at home ($x^2 = 10.26$, df = 2, p<0.01), but not for the group that was living independently from their parents. Amongst the group of parents whose children were living at home, 85.7% of those with the largest parent-child acculturation experienced intergenerational conflict compared to only 40.0% of those who had the smallest parent-child acculturation gaps. Similar trends were present for those who were living independently from their parents, however, results were not statistically significant.

Similarly, as shown in *Appendix A, Table 12,* when bivariate analysis was conducted between parent child acculturation gap and intergenerational conflict with the

study child's employment status as a control variable, results were only statistically

significant for amongst the group who were full time or part time students, or

unemployed ($x^2 = 6.57$, df = 2, p<0.05). Within that group, 80.0% of parents who had the

largest parent-child acculturation gap experienced intergenerational conflict compared to

45.5% those who had the smallest parent-child acculturation gap. Similar trends

appeared for the group of parents who have children that were employed full time or part

time, however results were not statistically significant.

This suggests that while parent-child acculturation gap may be associated with

intergenerational conflict, this trend only applies to certain groups including immigrant

parents with children who do not have partners, who are living at home, and who are

students or unemployed. Parent-child acculturation gap does not predict

intergenerational conflict amongst parents with children who have partners, who live

independently and who are employed in the work-force.

Qualitative Results

Qualitative results below are presented by the topic areas used in the qualitative

interviews: parent-child relationships/intergenerational conflict, parent-child

acculturation gaps, study child's social circle, spousal support and coping strategies.

Parent-Child Relationships/Intergenerational Conflict

<u>*Definition of Conflict: Differentiating between "Fighting" and "Disagreeing"*</u>

When participants were asked the question "*How often do you and your study*

child fight or disagree?", the majority of parents differentiated between "fighting" and

"disagreeing". They stressed that while fighting occurs occasionally, most of their

conflicts were disagreements over different points of view. For example, Fiona, when

describing the conflict between her and her daughter explained, *"we don't fight in a sense, we disagree…she has her own points of views and I have mine"*. Similarly, Mark, when describing his conflict with his daughter explained, *"we don't actually fight, we have disagreements on things…she has her view point and I have my view point…we don't have big heated arguments and all that. You know we basically agree to disagree"*. Most parents associated fighting with violent heated arguments and yelling, and associated disagreeing with discussions involving different viewpoints. While most parents experienced minimal fighting with their children, several cases experienced more severe fighting. Veronica, a mother with two sons explained, *"usually our arguments start from me being fed up with his habits and he will disagree and start arguing with me…in the earlier years, it was worse, he would sometimes punch holes in the walls and such"*. When asked to compare the intensity of intergenerational conflict with her son in the present time and in the past, Veronica said, *"we would yell more back then, but now I think our relationship just got so much more worse than before that we just don't bother yelling as much anymore"*.

From these interviews, it was found that most conflict experienced between parents and children was the result of disagreements due to different perspectives. These disagreements occurred on a regular basis, while fighting and yelling were often rare. Only a minority of parents (n=3) experienced more severe fighting and yelling with their children on a regular basis.

Types of Intergenerational Conflict: Healthy, Ambiguous, and Unhealthy Conflicts

Various types of intergenerational conflict were also found, which can be categorized into three distinctive types: healthy, ambiguous, and unhealthy conflicts.

Healthy conflicts are conflicts that originate from differing viewpoints of love and care. They were often found in healthy parent-child relationships, characterized by Chinese immigrant parents as a relationship that allow for the expressions of different point of views, while still holding an infallible understanding of the deep-caring bond they have for each other. These conflicts were often low intensity and usually occurred in environments where both parents and children shared an equal power balance. When asked the question "*In general, how would you describe your relationship with your study child? Excellent, good, average, fair or poor?",* all the parents who answered "*excellent"* and the majority of those who answered *"good"* reported experiencing healthy conflicts. Candice, who characterized her relationship with her daughter as *"excellent"* explained, "*well, school is important to me, so if she is not doing well, then usually I would get quite anxious and we would argue a little. But usually it is quite minor and we don't fight about other issues….usually, we just sit down and talk about the issue*". Candice explained that her daughter's school achievement was important to her, because doing well academically would benefit her daughter's future. These healthy conflicts reflect Candice's love and concern for her daughter's future. When asked to describe how these conflicts were usually resolved, she explained that they would discuss these issues by expressing their personal feelings and perspectives until they reach a resolution.

Another example of healthy conflicts can be found in Mark's father-daughter relationship, which he described as being *"excellent"*. When asked what they normally fight or argue about, Mark answered, *"it's usually ideas or maybe certain things we do. For instance…she would say 'dad, why would you buy this item?' or 'dad, you don't*

really need this'....or 'dad, you shouldn't be eating that, it's not good for you – you should be reducing it'....and certain things, she may make a point and say 'hey, you shouldn't be eating that! Why don't you exercise?'....I think it's good we have these healthy conversations".

The second type of conflict that was found was ambiguous conflicts. Ambiguous conflicts are conflicts that stem from contradictory emotions, as well as from power and control issues. They occur when either a parent or a child has more power and control in the relationship, resulting in one person dominating in conflictual episodes while the other takes a more passive role. Ambiguous conflicts were found in relationships where emotions between parent and children were unclear. For example, Jenny, a mother with two daughters explained, *"she would complain about my expectations of her. I have two daughters, and she thinks that I am comparing her with her older sister"*. Jenny explained that her younger daughter often felt insignificant compared to her older sister, resulting in feelings of uncertainty about Jenny's love for her. Another example was with Wanda, who explained that her daughter perceived their conflicts as Wanda's lack of love for her, *"she always tells me that I am forgetful...she thinks that if I don't remember things that are related to her, then I don't care about her"*. For Wanda, her daughter was often the instigator of conflictual episodes and had more power in their relationship, while Wanda played a more passive parenting role. Wanda explained, *"she is quite stubborn and has a strong character...she equates you not agreeing with her with you looking down on her. She is actually upset because she thinks you are looking down on her, not really because you just have a different opinion"*. Ambiguous conflicts were mostly found in relationships that were described as *"good"* by parents.

The third type of conflict that was found can be considered "unhealthy", relative to the other types. Unhealthy conflicts appear to be rooted in negative emotions that parents and children have towards each another. These conflicts occur when personal boundaries are trespassed or when there is a lack of respect in a relationship. They were mostly found in relationships that were described as *"average"* or *"fair"*. For example, Veronica explained, *"he [her son] has a really bad attitude when I talk to him about things and now he doesn't accept anything I say to him anymore…he is quite selfish…usually he will be doing his own thing and when I get to a point where I am really frustrated with his lifestyle I will speak up and tell him….he told me that I am annoying"*. Veronica clearly had some negative emotions towards her son and his behaviours when describing their relationship. Veronica also explained that her son was very selfish and does not partake in any household responsibilities, exemplifying the lack of respect in their relationship.

Another example is Brenda, a mother who described her relationship with her son as *"average"*. Brenda explained that most of the conflict with her eldest son involves the issue of parenting her younger son. Brenda reported that with the absence of a father figure in her family, her eldest son frequently attempts to fulfil this role. She explained, *"I feel that my older son is a little bit – substituting himself to be a father….he told me I should teach my younger son how to use money.. he told me that my discipline style is a joke. That word [joke] is very intense, and also he will use the way I love him to control me….he said he can't stand the way I discipline my youngest son….John is a little over top with his younger brother. He will check his email, search his room, his backpack,*

stuff life that. And he even teaches me how I should do – how I should discipline my

youngest one".

<u>*Past, Present and Future Conflict*</u>

Parents were asked about the frequency and intensity of their past and present

parent-child conflicts, and whether they predict that these conflicts will decrease, increase

or remain the same in the future. Parents were asked, *"Is the frequency and intensity of*

your current parent-child conflicts the same, worst or better since your child was a

teenager between the ages of 13-18 years old?" and *"With time, do you think these*

arguments will decrease, increase or remain the same?". Nine of the eleven respondents

predicted that the level of intergenerational conflict in the future would decrease, while

the remaining two parents predicted that it would remain the same. None of the

respondents predicted that the level of conflict would increase in the future. Many

parents suggested that as their children get older, they would become more mature and

more understanding. Brenda shared that with time she will also learn to better understand

her son. In her interview, Veronica said *"I think they will decrease, because I*

think…right now he is just going through adolescence too…I think one day when he has

to go out and get a job and face the real world, he will understand that what I've told him

was right". Jenny suggested that with more time, she and her daughter would learn *"how*

to respect each other and our boundaries", while Kris explained that in the future, as his

children grow older, he foresees himself to be more lenient with his disciplinary style.

Another trend that was found was that the majority of parents experienced less

conflict in the present time compared to the past. They also gave reasons that were very

similar to those mentioned previously when comparing present levels of conflicts to

future levels of conflict. Only three participants experienced more conflict in the present time than in the past. Even though these three parents currently experience higher levels of conflict, they all explained that this is beneficial to their parent-child relationship since it has allowed them a better understanding of their children's opinions. Jenny shared *"it's worst now…I think now that she is older, she can really express how she feels"*. Similarly, Sarah shared, *"we use to fight less when he was younger. Because when he was younger, he didn't say too much. So when we fight, it's only me that talks. Now when we fight, he talks and argues back….I still think it is better than before,….because when he argues back and I can finally understand how he feels about things. Because it's only when you fight do you understand another person's differing opinions…so it's better"*. Wanda also suggested that the increased conflict in the present time may have originated from the general trend that children are going through adolescence at a later age. Wendy explained, *"When they were teenagers, they never thought that our opinions were wrong or ever fought back. It's only after they turned 20 they started to have different opinions and disagree with our opinions…That is why I think we have more conflict now than before…In my opinion, my children's teenage problems got pushed back into their twenties. They matured quite late, this may not be their problem; many young adults are actually experiencing this problem"*.

Power Balance and Respecting Boundaries

Parents and children who respected each other's personal boundaries and differing values and beliefs experienced less intergenerational conflict and better relationships. Additionally, when power dynamics between children and parents were shared equally, there was less intergenerational conflict.

Kris, when describing his relationship with his daughter, shared, *"they have their own lives too and you can't really…discipline them, you have to treat them as a friend, you know. You have to be sensitive and try to be reasonable and logical"*. Similarly, Fiona said, *"I think me as a parent, I give you a set of values. I tell you to do something and if you don't follow and it really doesn't have a big influence or affect, then I would just stop and let it go"*. Wanda, when describing about her daughter's decision to move out of their home, stated, *"I think traditionally, I don't want her to move out before she gets married, but realistically, I don't really mind if she does if that is her choice"*. All of these parents voiced respect for their children's choices and decisions, and as a result, shared close relationships with them and minimal levels intergenerational conflict. Conversely, parents and children who lacked respect for each other's boundaries experienced higher levels of intergenerational conflict. For example, Brenda's eldest son did not respect her personal boundaries and often tried to interfere with her parental duties. She shared, *"John is a little over the top in looking after his younger brother….and even teaches me how I should discipline my youngest one…. John told me that my discipline style is a joke"*.

Traditional Chinese values, rooted back to Confucian philosophy, strongly emphasize obedience towards parents and elders, and the hierarchical structure of relationships (Chao 1994). Although some parents still found this important, many acknowledged that unlike the past, it was no longer realistic or healthy to expect total submission from their children. Fiona, unlike her own parents who demanded total submission from her as a child, often resorted to negotiating and reasoning with her own daughter. She asserted, *"when we were children ourselves, we never spoke back to our*

parents or argued back to our parents. There were no negotiations. I tell her that when I was child, I did everything my parents asked and if I didn't, they would hit me....so I tell her, now that I reason with you, you have so many disagreements with my reasoning, so I am learning to be a parent and you have to understand me as well". Similarly, Kris expressed, *"yes...sure he is obedient, but we don't want to cross the line to make something that he can't be obedient for.....because we respect him as an individual".* Jenny, as well, reported, *"I have to respect that they are not the same as me... you don't expect them to have total submission to parents, you know? Not like the old Chinese".*

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Parent-Child Acculturation Gaps

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<u>*Westernized Values vs. Chinese Values*</u>

When parents were asked the question, *"people of different ethnicities often have different core values – for example, some people value family life, others value health or financial success. What are your core values?"*, all of the respondents answered either *"family life"* or *"happiness within the family"* as one of their core values. However, when asked whether their children shared the same core values as them, not all of them agreed. When parents were asked to further describe their and their children's core values, several patterns surfaced. Parents' core values often reflected more collective traditional Chinese values emphasizing social relations, hierarchical structure of relationships, the importance of fulfilling role responsibility, and maintaining social order and harmony (Chao, 1994). Parents who responded that their children shared different core values often described them as being more "*westernized*", emphasizing values of autonomy, independence and individualistic goals (Lim et al., 2009). For example, Wanda described, *"for my daughter, it is her own happiness at her work that is most*

important. For us, we work for our responsibilities, for the new generation, they work for themselves". Susanna also revealed, *"I still value family life very much…I think right now, he is valuing his own interests….it is important for him to enjoy his life with his interests. He thinks the most important thing to him right now is to do something he enjoys"*. Similarly, Veronica described her son's core values as *"he only cares for himself. He never cooks or even helps out"*.   Parents and children who shared the same core values experienced better parent-child relationship and less intergenerational conflict compared to parents and children who shared different core values.

It was also found that Chinese immigrant parents consciously considered themselves as being different than non-immigrants. Wanda shared that, *"westerners are more concerned about their own selves and their own rights and their own independence, more so than the Chinese. To the Chinese, the self plays a much smaller role"*. Similarly, Mark said, *"our core values is home and family….of course money is always important, but it's not number one on the list, but I think family unity is. I think in Chinese Asian culture, the core value has always been the family"*. Brenda also stated, *"for us Chinese, relationships with our family members, not only between children and parents, but also between other relatives such as grandma and grandpa or auntie or uncle – this is really important to us. We consider ourselves one big family. But people here don't think that way, they don't think of their relatives as the same family. Everyone has their own families"*.

<u>*Cultural Traditions and Practices*</u>

While the majority of parents were knowledgeable of their cultural traditions and practices, they did not consider them as being crucially important nor did they feel the

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need to have their children engage in these practices. Many parents explained that it was more important to educate their children on the history and stories rooted behind these traditions rather than practicing them. Engagement in these cultural traditions and practices had little effect on parent-child relationships and intergenerational conflict.

When parents were asked to describe the importance of their cultural traditions and practices to them and their children, Kris answered, *"because she was born in Canada, she just doesn't have the background. She won't really know. Say, for the Mid-Autumn festival, we have moon cakes and all that, she would know about that, but she wouldn't know the background behind it or the history behind it"*. Similarly, Fiona revealed, *"I want her to preserve these traditions. I mean, I don't need her to follow these practices because she is Chinese, but I want her to be reminded that this is our culture and this is what we do. I tell her she doesn't have to follow it or practice in it, but I want her to know what they mean and why we do these traditions"*.

Several parents revealed that they were Christians and explained that Chinese traditions were not important to them since many are rooted in superstition and engaging in these practices would be against their beliefs. Jenny explained, *"those are not important. As I say, anything to do with superstition is not important at all"*. Similarly, Candice shared, *"I don't think it is too important. And we are Christians too, so many of the superstitious traditions we don't practice. It is not too important to us"*.

Many parents also acknowledged that they would engage in more cultural traditions and Chinese celebrations if their extended family members lived in closer proximity. For example, Brenda said, *"I don't have any family here. If I had a family here, then there would be more family celebrations for the Chinese festivals. If their*

grandma and grandpa were here, we would definitely need to celebrate and my sons would probably feel more need to celebrate and acknowledge these festivals". Similarly, Sarah expressed, *"I think New Years day and Christmas are more important than Chinese New Year and other Chinese festivals. I don't feel like they are as exciting….it use to be exciting when all my family and relatives were living in Hong Kong. We would celebrate together."*

Study Child's Social Circle

Parents were asked to describe their child's social peers and the effect they have on their relationship. Parents who showed more respect for their children's peers and created an equal power environment have better relationships with their children and experienced less intergenerational conflict. When parents expected to dominate their children and their peers, they experienced more intergenerational conflict. For example, Mark, who has an excellent relationship with his daughter shared, *"basically again, we treat all her friends no different…we want to treat them with the same respect she has for them.".* Similarly, Kyle reported, *"his friends have always come over to our house, because we are always open. They just come and they chit chat or play games or watch TV or whatever….most of his friends, I know pretty well already".* In contrast, Veronica described her husband's estranged relationship with her son and said, *"his dad told him he was no longer allowed to play video games and that John had to get his approval every time he played and that included his friends. His dad wants John to get his approval before bringing friends over and play video games…that argument really hurt their father-son relationship".* Veronica explained her perspectives on her son's social circle, *"I think it is really important to respect his friends, I don't think like his father. I*

think if I respected his friends, my relationship with him will improve….I actually encounter him to bring his friends home". Parents who respected their children's peers and created non-threatening environments experienced less intergenerational conflict than those who did not.

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Spousal Support

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The presence of a spouse was seen by most participants (seven of eleven) as benefitting their parent-child relationships and decreasing the amount of intergenerational conflict they experienced. Candice argued that if she were a single parent, *"there would be more conflict…because there will not be anyone to share your ideas with, you will always think what you did is right"*. Similarly, Jenny responded, *"my spouse would give me a different point of view…there are things maybe I wouldn't see, and he would see it in a different way that would help me understand"*. Kyle suggested, *"you need that kind of support from your other half you know, to release your anxiety and anger"* and Kris expressed that having a spouse decreases intergenerational conflict *"because we talk about things and we do things together and it is helpful, because we do things in consolidation"*. Brenda, a mother who received minimal spousal support responded, *"if he was here [her spouse] then I wouldn't have to pick on everything and point out everything myself. Of course the more you point out everything, the more conflict you will have"*. Parents who expressed that having a spouse present benefited their parent-child relationships also shared that they rarely have disagreements with their spouses on issues involving their children. Two respondents said that having a spouse present probably has no effect on the amount of intergenerational conflict in their parent-child relationship. Wanda shared *"I don't think there will be a difference. Having him around*

or not has no affect on my relationship with her". Unlike parents who found that having a spouse is beneficial, these two parents experienced moderate to high levels of disagreements with their spouses on issues regarding their children. However, rather than openly disagreeing on these issues in front of their children, these parents would discuss their differences in private until they reach a compromise. In the presence of their children, they would still present themselves as a consolidated parental team.

Two respondents claimed that having a spouse present is detrimental to their parent-child relationship. Fiona explained, *"if I was a single parent, I think Mary will do everything I say, she will do whatever I teach her"*. Similarly, Veronica explained, *"I think having my spouse present creates more conflict between me and my son. I think it will be easier being a single parent….sometimes, I think my relationship with him would be better if I was divorced."*. Both these respondents revealed that they experience high levels of disagreements with their spouses on issues regarding their children. However, unlike parents who discussed their differences in private, these two respondents stated that they would often openly disagree on these issues in the presence of their children. Veronica explained, *"I think my son just gets confused sometimes too because we both try to each him different things"*. Therefore, having a spouse present was beneficial only when parents had minimal disagreements on issues regarding their children, and when these issues were discussed privately.

When discussing spousal support, many participants also shared that they adopted very traditional gendered roles in parenting. Kyle said, *"well, because as a woman, you are always more sensitive toward the kids. And sometimes as a man, as a father figure, I am quite blunt like most fathers"*. Similarly, Mark said, *"I find that between a man and a*

woman, I think the woman is more caring… if I was a single parent, I don't think I would know what to say to my daughter sometimes". Jenny, a mother of two daughters expressed, *"I guess being a husband, a man, maybe they are not as sensitive to daughters...my husband has to be a little more sensitive to girls. But usually, I think the girls would talk to me first...it depends on what it is…they know who to go to. If they want hockey tickets, they would go to their dad, but if it is a more personal thing, they would come to me. But I think they know that both of us are just involved".* This may be one possible reason why the majority of mothers experienced more intergenerational conflict than fathers.

<center>*Coping Strategies*</center>

Parents and children who revisited their disagreements by openly communicating and resolving these conflictual issues experienced better parent-child relationships. For example, Wanda asserted that because she and her daughter would always discuss their conflictual issues until they reached a resolution after an argument, she was very close to her daughter despite their high levels of intergenerational conflict. Wanda explained, *"yes, it does get pretty heated and loud…but both she and I have learned to be more calm in these situations…we usually try to talk things out until we come to a resolution…we can't just ignore each other or the problem…..even though our conflicts can be quite intense….we are very close, but we do fight quite a bit too".* In Wanda's case, although she experienced high levels of conflict with her daughter, they maintain a close bond by having open communication. In contrast, Veronica shared that she and her son rarely communicated and often ignored their conflictual issues. Veronica explained, *"the problems usually don't get resolved, we just carry on our normal life….he will have his*

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opinion and I will have mine. Whenever I bring it back up again, he will get really angry

again. I think we have really big problems in this area of communication…I don't even

know how to resolve conflicts with him, I only know how to ignore them and just forget

about them". Veronica experienced high levels of conflict in her parent-child

relationship, and they shared poor communication resulting in a more estranged parent-

child relationship.

To further illustrate the importance of open communication between parents and

children, when Mark, who shares a healthy relationship with his daughter was asked,

"how do these issues resolve themselves? Do they get ignored or do you actually talk

about them?", he answered, *"well, you don't continue the conversation for sure. You*

don't bring it up the next day and say 'by the way, yesterday we were talking about this',

no I think you just let it go and I think then, no, it doesn't go any further than that. You

don't discuss it anymore. I think that is the sad thing about that, I think it should maybe

be brought up and rehashed and say ' ok, the conversation we had was maybe a heated

moment', but we don't do that and I think its something we let it go and forget about it

and not bring it up anymore". This comment illustrates that even though parents and

children do not always have to revisit their conflictual issues to have healthy parent-child

relationships, there is value in sharing open communication in any relationship.

Quality time spent together was an important factor in relationship closeness,

regardless of the frequency and intensity of parent-child conflicts. Kris, who shares a

healthy bond with his daughter, explained that on average, him and his daughter would

have heated discussions about twice a month, and described his relationship with his

daughter as *"between good and excellent".* Kris also shared that they spend quality time

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with each other every week despite their busy schedules to help maintain their father-daughter bond. When asked the question *"how much time does Mary typically spend with you and/or your wife in a typical week?"* he explained, *"Mary will go out with her mum to go shopping if she is off, or on an off day, she would sometimes go out with lunch for me…..usually, a couple of times a week"*. Another example is Wanda, a mother who explained that despite the many arguments she has with her daughter (once a week on average), they were still very close and they spend a great deal of time together. She shared, *"although there is quite a lot of conflict between us, she still spends quite a bit of time with me….we spend quite a bit of time talking at home. We usually talk everyday, sometimes for hours….we are very close"* . Although intergenerational conflict had negative effects on parent-child relationships, open communication and quality time spent together were key buffers against these negative effects.

Strategies and Resources for Coping with Intergenerational Conflict

When questioned about the strategies and resources used to cope with intergenerational conflict, all parents expressed that during a heated discussion with their children, they would normally stop and walk away before the discussion becomes too heated. However, only some of the parents revisit their arguments with their children afterwards.

When parents were questioned about the resources they use to cope with intergenerational conflict, many parents answered that they would consult with close friends or other family members. For example, Mark shared, *"I would try to discuss with my friends….in terms of comparing notes with their children. You know, 'hey what does your child do' and you try to compare and say 'oh yeah, my child does this and that' and*

I think again it is basically trying to find out if my child is different than his child or is my child so bad". Sarah also explained, *"if I am really upset still, I usually call my younger son and I will talk to him for a while…he doesn't really talk about it afterwards with John. He's more just a listening ear…since my younger son is usually willing to listen, I will just talk to him and I usually feel better after talking to him".*

Several parents explained that seeking advice from friends and family members alone was not sufficient and felt the need to seek help from additional coping resources. Brenda, who meets with her family counsellor every week shared, *"because I can't really open up everything and say everything to my friends…there are many things I don't feel comfortable sharing …but with my counsellor, she will talk about what alternatives I have and how I should proceed in solving these issues. Or sometimes I will just read about it in books or listen to any audio tapes that are useful".*

Parents who sought outside assistance for coping with intergenerational conflict maintained that parent-support groups such as those held by S.U.C.C.E.S.S., as well as one-on-one family counselling sessions were especially helpful. Parents explained that by attending support groups, they were able to observe and learn from other families. As well, these groups gave them a sense of community. Wanda expressed, *"it is helpful to learn about other parents' conflicts and struggles and also listen to how other people may tackle these problems. These group sessions give me an opportunity to think in different perspectives".* Similarly, Veronica said, *"this parent meeting group is really great…it's good to put your problems into perspective – you realize that there are other families with worse problems than you".* On the other hand, some parents found one-on-one counselling more helpful in coping with intergenerational conflict. Brenda stated

"actually, the parent-support group I attend now is not as helpful, because most of the problems other parents are experiencing are way too simple compared to mine. My issues with my sons are much more complicated….they can't really help me….but the counsellor – it is one on one. She sees my situation from all angles and tries to give me alternatives on what to do. She assesses my options and we work on alternatives together".

Many parents stressed that the counselling styles and accreditation (i.e., training) of the facilitators in these groups and counselling sessions were just as important as the workshops themselves. It was important to have a facilitator that shared the same cultural roots, values, tradition and language as the participants, as it was more difficult for parents to express their feelings and explain themselves to facilitators of different backgrounds. For example, Brenda described, *"she was a huge help for me and my family…she is also from Taiwan and she is also a single mother with a son and a daughter. The second family counsellor that I saw was from Hong Kong. I'm not saying that people from Hong Kong are not good, but because I am from Taiwan, she was less helpful because we had different roots".* Similarly, Veronica shared, *"it is harder to talk to Westerners. At the end of the day, we have different values and many of them don't understand our Chinese traditions and values".* When asked if she knew of any other organizations other than S.U.C.C.E.S.S. that she could seek assistance from, Wanda explained, *"there is ISSBC (Immigrant Settlement Services of British Columbia), but they don't speak Mandarin or Cantonese...I feel that S.U.C.C.E.S.S. is more helpful because we are dealing with the same people from the same background and the same language.*

I can listen and understand English, but it is harder for me to express my feelings in
English".

The majority of the parents stressed that while resources available for Chinese immigrant families are helpful, they are in high demand and often families have to wait for months before receiving any assistance. Veronica had to wait for three months before receiving assistance from a professional counsellor through S.U.C.C.E.S.S. She explained, *"I think in the aspects of family relations and emotional support, I don't think there are enough workshops or resources out there. I have many friends that are also going through the same thing and they are also finding it hard to get help".* When asked what other programs or workshop she would like to see more of in the future, Veronica suggested, *"ones that are more family related, ones that help family relationships and those that offer emotional support. It would be great to see more funding in these areas".* Brenda also shared, *"there are lots of workshops that will be helpful like a marital-support group…I also think that there needs to be more preventive workshops which teaches people how to have a good healthy family rather than having workshops to just help people's problem…it's like a flu shot, you don't take it when you have a flu, you take it beforehand".*

Several parents reported that they have never sought out assistance from outside resources. The majority of these parents explained that they have been able to resolve their intergenerational conflicts within the family, and their problems have not been severe enough to require outside assistance. Additionally, many parents raised the issue of shame in seeking help with family issues. Wanda explained her husband's reluctance in seeking help and shared, *"he is very against going because he feels ashamed to seek*

for help in regards to family matters". Similarly, Mark shared, *"I think in the Chinese culture and all that, people would be ashamed, depending on where you come from. …I think a lot of times, I find a lot of Chinese families don't do it, because they are afraid of loosing face or afraid to tell anyone their problems and all that."*

In summary, the results from these qualitative interviews yield many interesting trends and contextualize patterns found in the Parenting Project. Notably, these findings facilitate a clearer understanding of the experience and meaning of parental perceptions of intergenerational conflict as well as some of the sources contributing to, and buffering against, these conflicts. In this way, these results help to identify the how public services may be improved so that families can better cope with, and prevent more serious forms of intergenerational conflict.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

Intergenerational Conflict

As previously noted, excessive amounts of problematic intergenerational conflict are linked with negative consequences and family outcomes. These negative impacts have been argued to be particularly harmful for Chinese immigrant families, as they "violate cultural norms of respect, obedience to authority and family harmony" (Costigan & Dokis, 2006, p.1253), in addition to causing other family problems. Quantitative analyses revealed that 59% of the Chinese immigrant sample experienced some degree of intergenerational conflict. However, qualitative results revealed distinctive styles of conflict with some being more detrimental to the parent-child relationship than others. Indeed, a major finding from this research is that not all conflict is necessarily destructive or problematic, and that some families are better able than others to successfully deal with conflict.

This key finding suggests that the presence of intergenerational conflict in families requires critical evaluation in its life course context. Indeed, in some families, conflict may not necessarily be detrimental since it can be considered "healthy" and relatively normal. These "healthy" conflicts, in moderation, for example, were shown to benefit parent-child relationships by opening communication and allowing for expressions of opinions. Ambiguous conflicts were found in more troublesome parent-child relationships and generally had negative impacts on the parent-child relationships. And not surprisingly, unhealthy conflicts had the most detrimental effect on parent-child

relationships. Those parents who reported unhealthy conflicts also reported estranged relationships with their children. Even so, only two of the eleven parents who were interviewed reported mostly experiencing conflicts that were unhealthy in nature compared to three parents who mostly experienced ambiguous conflict, and six parents who mostly experienced healthy conflict.

Intergenerational conflicts among the Chinese immigrant families interviewed were diverse, supporting the life course theoretical idea that emphasizes diversity in parental/family experiences. Indeed distinctive combinations of dynamic historical, socio-economic and geographical contexts were found to influence individual experiences and perceptions of intergenerational conflict. To fully appreciate family dynamics, it is therefore necessary to consider the varying social contexts and external forces shaping individual experiences.

Cultural Orientation

It was anticipated that Chinese immigrant parents with strong traditional Chinese values in a Canadian context would experience higher levels of intergenerational conflict. Despite the lack of statistical significance, quantitative results found that a larger percentage of parents who placed higher importance on their ethnic identity experienced intergenerational conflict than parents who placed none or slight importance. The qualitative analysis also found that many parents acknowledged differences between Chinese and Western values. These parents described traditional Chinese values as being strongly collective, and Westernized values and traditions as being strongly autonomous. Many consciously perceived themselves as being different than Westerners and were expressively proud of retaining their Chinese identities, support existing literature (Chao,

1994; Sung 1985; Lim et al., 2009; Gorman, 1998). In addition, despite cultural differences, it was found that parents actually placed higher importance on educating their children on the history of Chinese traditions than on the actual practices of these traditions. These findings suggest that although cultural orientation may be a source of intergenerational conflict for Chinese immigrant families, most parents are primarily concerned with endowing their children with the histories of Chinese cultural traditions.

Parent-Child Acculturation Gap

It has been argued that for Chinese immigrant families in Western societies, children often acculturate faster to the host culture than their parents, resulting in parent-child acculturation discrepancies (Szapocznick & Truss, 1978). Since several studies (Tardif & Geva, 2006; Farver et al, 2002) have found that acculturation gaps are positively associated with intergenerational conflict, it was anticipated that larger parent-child acculturation gaps would result in higher levels of intergenerational conflict.

Both quantitative and qualitative results supported this expected relationship. Bivariate analysis examining the relationship between intergenerational conflict and parent-child acculturation gap yield statistically significant results. It was found that parents who considered their values to be different from their children's experienced the highest levels of intergenerational conflict. Additional analysis exploring this relationship was examined while controlling for the study child's marital status, living arrangement and employment status. Results indicated that parent-child acculturation gap is a source of intergenerational conflict especially among parents with children are not partnered, living at home and are students or unemployed. Similar trends emerged for parents with children who are partnered, living independently and are employed in the

workforce despite the lack of statistical significance. Qualitative interviews revealed that parents who reported sharing the same core values with their children had better parent-child relationships and experienced less intergenerational conflict, while parents and children who shared different core values experienced higher levels of intergenerational conflict. Supporting current literature, results from this study suggest that parent-child acculturation gap is an important source of intergenerational conflict amongst Chinese immigrant families.

Length of Residency

Current literature suggests that the length of residency may influence intergenerational conflict. While Tardif and Geva (2006) and Farver et al. (2002) found evidence of parent-child acculturation gap being associated with intergenerational conflict amongst immigrant families, Lim et al. (2009) and Lau et al. (2005) only found partial evidence. Immigrants in the Tardif and Geva (2006) study were recent immigrants (immigrated less than 10 years ago), whereas those in the study by Lim et al. (2009) and Lau et al. (2005) were long-term immigrants (immigrated 10 years or longer), suggesting that recent immigrants may be more susceptible to higher levels of intergenerational conflict.

Similarly, it was expected that recent immigrants would experience higher levels of intergenerational conflict than long-term immigrants. Quantitative results found partial evidence of this relationship. Although bivariate results were not statistically significant, quantitative trends still showed that long-term immigrants (immigrated 10 years or longer) experienced less intergenerational conflict than recent immigrants (immigrated less than 10 years ago).

Qualitative results found that the majority of parents experienced higher levels of intergenerational conflict in the past compared to the present. In addition, all of the parents predicted that they would experience lower or similar levels of intergenerational conflict in the future compared to the present.

These findings are consistent with the life course theoretical notion that emphasizes the influence of timing and trajectory on individuals' perceptions and experiences. Elder (1985) suggests that time should be conceptualized as a sequence of transitions and transitions are events that occur within a trajectory. In other words, changes and timing in one trajectory can influence the timing and changes of other trajectories. In this study, transition sequences or timing of events may have affected the experiences of parent-child relationship dynamics for immigrant Chinese families. Results found that as more time elapse from the time of immigration, the less intergenerational conflict was experienced in Chinese immigrant families.

Several plausible explanations may be responsible for this trend. As parents and children become more acculturated to the Canadian context over time, stress from adapting to a new culture may be gradually alleviated, and the relief of such tension may have a positive effect on parent-child relationships and decrease intergenerational conflict. Alternatively, many immigrants move to Canada in hopes of attaining greater social and financial opportunities and providing more positive environments for their families. Attaining better living conditions (financially and socially) after moving to Canada may also have positive effects on parent-child relationships as a result. Another plausible explanation could be that as children mature, both parents and children may

gain better understanding of each other, resulting in a decrease of intergenerational conflict.

Spousal Support

Quantitative analyses examined the relationship between the presence of a spouse and intergenerational conflict, and the relationship between disagreements over the study child and intergenerational conflict. Despite the lack of statistical significance, quantitative trends revealed that more parents with spouses experience intergenerational conflict compared to parents who did not have spouses. Additionally, it was found that amongst parents who had spouses, a larger proportion of those who had disagreements with their spouses on issues relating to their study child experienced intergenerational conflict compared to parents who did not. Similarly, qualitative results found that parents who had more disagreements on issues regarding their study child experienced higher levels of intergenerational conflict compared to parents who had less disagreements. Contrary to the quantitative results, qualitative interviews revealed that most parents agreed that having a spouse decreases the level of intergenerational conflict. However, it was also found that parents who agreed that having a spouse was beneficial to their parent-child relationship also rarely had disagreements with their spouses about their study child. The few parents who expressed that having a spouse increases the level of intergenerational conflict also had high levels of disagreements with their spouses on issues related to their study child. This suggests that the presence of a spouse and spousal support can a buffer against intergenerational conflict only when spouses share similar values and views, and have minimal disagreements on issues relating to their children.

Otherwise, the presence of a spouse may actually prompt or exacerbate intergenerational conflict.

These results are consistent with the life course principle that emphasizes the influence of linked lives on individuals' perceptions and experiences. As such, lives are interdependent and societal or individual experiences influence people within a linked network of shared relationships. In this study, parent's linked social support networks may influence their experiences of intergenerational conflict.

Perceptions of Children's Peer Interactions

Adolescence is often associated with increased levels of intergenerational conflict and emotional distancing as young adults begin to desire for more independence and autonomy (Fuligni, 1998). During this period, adolescents begin to spend more time with their peers and increasingly turn to them for advice and comfort (Gould & Mazzeo, 1982). Current research on young adults and intergenerational conflict is rare as most research focus on adolescents. It was expected that the more time young adult children spent with their social networks and the more strongly orientated they were towards their peers, the higher the level of intergenerational conflict they would experience.

Although quantitative data were not available to explore this area, the qualitative interviews probed this theme, but no evidence was found to support the view that peer networks affected levels of intergenerational conflict. Specifically, it was found that intergenerational conflict was not associated with the amount of time study children spent with their friends or the strength of their orientation towards them, but was associated with the amount of time they spent with their parents. In addition, regardless of how strongly bonded the study children were to their social network, parents who respected

their children's peers and created environments that encouraged equally shared power and control experienced better relationships with their children and less intergenerational conflict. Parents who expected to dominate in power and control over their children and their peers experienced more estranged parent-child relationships and higher levels of intergenerational conflict. Although results suggest that parental perceptions of children's peer interactions may not be a source of intergenerational conflict, they suggest that power dynamics between parents, their children, and their children's peers may be an associated factor of intergenerational conflict.

Socio-Demographic Variables

While quantitative results were only statistically significant when examining two parental socio-demographic variables (age and employment status) and intergenerational conflict, all of the quantitative analyses between the study child's demographic variables and intergenerational conflict were statistically significant with the exception of gender. Parents who were younger and employed, and children who were younger, not partnered, living at home, and who were students or unemployed were the most prone to intergenerational conflict. Conversely, parents who were older and unemployed, and children who were older, partnered, lived independently, and employed were least subjected to intergenerational conflict.

These results suggest that intergenerational conflict is more related to the socio-demographic characteristics of the children from Chinese immigrant families than those of their immigrant parents. A possible explanation may be that the transition from adolescent to young adulthood, and the increase in desire for independence is a source of disagreement. As adolescents mature and become more independent, they may develop

different perspectives and values from those of their parents, causing more tension in the parent-child relationship. Young adults may negotiate new personal boundaries with their parents, which they may not have felt a need for as a child, and these negotiations may trigger more intergenerational conflicts. As well, a larger proportion of the study children who were younger (teenagers to mid twenties) lived at home with their parents compared to the proportion of study children who were older (mid twenties to early thirties), exposing them to more opportunities to engage in intergenerational conflict. As young adults mature into late adulthood, parents may be more accepting of their children differing perspectives and values, and may feel less parental obligations to have their children confirm with their own beliefs, and therefore resulting in less intergenerational conflict.

Since the study child's socio-demographic variables, and parent-child acculturation gap were good predictors of intergenerational conflict, additional bivariate analyses were carried out. Analyses from exploring the relationship between intergenerational conflict and parent-child acculturation gap, while controlling for the study child's marital status, living conditions and employment status yield interesting results. It was found that parent-child acculturation gap is only a source of intergenerational conflict for parents with children who were not partnered, living at home and who were students or were unemployed. Among the group of parents with children who were partnered, living independently and who were employed in the work force, parent-child acculturation gap was no longer associated with intergenerational conflict.

Gender of Parents and Study Child

It was anticipated that young adult boys would experience higher levels of intergenerational conflict with their Chinese immigrant mothers compared to their fathers. Both quantitative and qualitative results from this study found partial evidence supporting this expected relationship. Despite the lack of statistical significance, quantitative trends showed that mothers experienced more intergenerational conflict compared to fathers. However, no gender differences were found when considering the study children's gender. Qualitative results showed similar patterns. Mothers experienced higher levels of intergenerational conflict compared to fathers, but there were no differences when considering the study child's gender. It was also revealed that Chinese immigrant parents held very traditional gender roles in their families. Mothers played a larger role in providing emotional support, while fathers were less sensitive to emotional issues but played larger roles in financially providing for the family. Consequently, mothers may experience more conflict with their children since they typically share more emotionally charged relationships with their children than fathers. As well, qualitative interviews revealed that mothers spend more time with their children and therefore, are exposed to more opportunities of experiencing intergenerational conflict.

Socio-Economic and Labour Forces Status

It was anticipated that lower socioeconomic status families would experience higher levels of intergenerational conflict compared to families of higher socioeconomic

status. Quantitative results only found statistically significant results for the relationship between employment status and intergenerational status. Parental educational level and total household income did not emerge as statistically significant predictors of intergenerational conflict. Employed parents were found to have the highest level of intergenerational conflict followed by homemakers and retirees. The relationships between educational level and total household income with intergenerational conflict were curvilinear. Parents who have completed college or university (highest socio-economic status) had the highest level of intergenerational conflict followed by parents with a high school or less education (lowest socio-economic status). Parents with some university or college education experienced the least intergenerational conflict. Similarly, families who have a total household income of over $75,000/year (highest socio-economic status) had the highest level of intergenerational conflict, followed by those who had a total household income between $20,001-$50,000/year and those who had less than $20,000. Parents with a total household income of $50,001-$75,000 experienced the least intergenerational conflict.

Qualitative results found that parents with lower total household incomes and less education experienced higher levels of intergenerational conflict, especially over finances, than parents who had higher incomes and more education. For example, lower income parents, such as Brenda and Veronica, experienced more conflict and placed more emphasis on their children's allowances, spending etiquettes, and financial contributions from their part time jobs. These money-related conflicts were less common in families with higher total household incomes, which is consistent with what was expected. However, there were no differences in intergenerational conflict when

examining parents' educational level and employment status, findings which are inconsistent with what was anticipated. This suggests that there could either be no connection between intergenerational conflict and socio-economic status, or that this relationship is influenced by other contributing factors not explored in this study.

Taken together, these findings support the concept of heterogeneity in the life course theory, which assumes that families are diverse and experiences are influenced by a constellation of sociological variables including socio-economic status. In other words, the association between socio-economic status and intergenerational conflict may be mediated by other sociological factors such as age, gender, living arrangements, etc. These mixed findings suggest the need for further research to better understand the relationship between socio-economic status and intergenerational conflict.

Coping Strategies

Parental coping strategies were also examined in the qualitative study. It was revealed that the most commonly used strategy by parents when confronted with conflict was "stepping back" and removing themselves away from heated situations. However, results from this study found that open communication and quality time spent together provided a buffer against these negative effects regardless of the levels of intergenerational conflict. Similarly, regardless of the level of intergenerational conflict, parents and children who spend more quality time together also had closer relationships than those who spend less time together.

Qualitative interviews also found that many parents (n=8) turned to close family members and friends for support when experiencing intergenerational conflict. This is consistent with the linked lives concept of the life course theory, which assumes that lives

are interdependent and societal or individual experiences influence people within a linked network of shared relationships. Intergenerational conflict not only affected the dynamics between parents and children, but because parents turned to their close friends and family for support, it also affected the relationships between parents and their larger social networks. It was found that parents with strong support networks had more positive experiences with intergenerational conflict than parents who have a limited support network.

In addition, parents reported that seeking outside assistance from support groups or one-on-one counselling sessions were helpful in their coping process. Several parents (n=6) asserted that parent support groups were helpful because they created a sense of community and allowed them to learn from other families. Yet other parents (n=3) said that counselling sessions were more helpful for them since they were more tailored to their individual needs. Seeking assistance in coping with intergenerational conflict supports the life course tenet emphasizing human agency and personal control. As suggested by Mitchell (2006), individuals and families are purported to have various degrees of capacity to shape their behaviours and expectations to meet the needs of changing contexts. In this study, immigrant parents had the ability in shaping their experiences of intergenerational conflict by seeking outside assistance and those who sought out assistance had more positive experiences than parents who received no assistance. However, the degree of agency in seeking help from the community was also influenced by other factors other than their own motivation, such as language barriers, transportation issues, and the strength of social networks. For example, qualitative

results revealed that parents who were not fluent in English had more barriers in being aware of, and accessing community resources.

Another theme that was consistently raised is the importance of the facilitator's cultural background. Parents unanimously agreed that it was important for the facilitators of these parent support groups and counselling sessions to share the same cultural roots, values, language and traditions as them. These parents expressed the concern that it was difficult to share their situations and get assistance from facilitators that originated from different cultural backgrounds.

In the interviews, parents were asked to discuss their views on the availability and accessibility of community resources available to immigrant families coping with family issues, as well as what future changes or growth they hope to see in this area. Parents unanimously agreed that currently, there is shortage of family resources catered to Chinese immigrant families due to the rapid growth of this population in the last several decades. Several parents (n=5) who were participants in parent-support groups or one-on-one counselling complained that they were on a waiting list for between 3 to 6 months before having access to these resources. Additionally, many parents also suggested the need for creating family programs specifically targeted at preventing intergenerational conflict from occurring in the first place.

Conclusion

Results from this study found that most Chinese immigrant families experience some level of intergenerational conflict. While disagreements over different perspectives occur on a regular basis, fighting and yelling were rare. Three distinctive styles of intergenerational conflict were found including: healthy conflicts, ambiguous conflicts

and unhealthy conflicts. A major finding is that indeed, healthy conflicts can actually be beneficial since they can encourage open communication. However, ambiguous and unhealthy conflicts have more detrimental effects on parent-child relationships and cause more serious family problems such as estrangement between parents and children.

Children's socio-demographic factors (i.e., marital status, age, living arrangement, and main activity) were found to be significantly better predictors of intergenerational conflict than their parents' demographic factors. In particular, study children who were without spouses, aged between 18-22, living at home, and who were full time or part time students were the most likely to experience more problematic levels of intergenerational conflict. Mothers also experienced higher levels of intergenerational conflict with their children compared to fathers.

Results found that parent-child acculturation gap was associated with intergenerational conflict among the group of parents with children who were not partnered, living at home and who were students or unemployed. However, among the group of parents with children who were partnered, living independently and who were employed in the work force, parent-child acculturation gap was no longer associated with intergenerational conflict. Spousal support appeared to have a buffering effect against intergenerational conflict, but only when spouses had minimal arguments and shared similar views on issues regarding their child's life.

Despite the lack of statistical significance, results suggested that recent immigrants, and parents who placed more emphasis on ethnic identity and cultural traditions experienced more intergenerational conflict. This is in comparison to those who have resided in Canada for 10 years or longer and those who place less emphasis on

ethnic identity and cultural traditions. Contrary to what was expected, intergenerational conflict was not associated with the study children's peer group interactions, but it was associated with the amount of time they spent with their parents. This finding is probably due to developmental stage and maturity. However, it was found that parents who respected their children's peers and encouraged equal power and control in their relationships experienced better relationships with their children and less intergenerational conflict.

In coping with intergenerational conflict, parents often turned to friends and other family members for support. A significant number of parents also sought assistance from parent-support groups or counselling sessions. These parents argued that it was important for the facilitators of these groups and sessions to share the same cultural roots, values, language and traditions as them. Parents unanimously agreed that although resources available for Chinese immigrant families coping with intergenerational conflict in British Columbia are available, there is still a need to increase the number of these resources.

CHAPTER 6: LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Limitations of Study

In this study, the use of secondary quantitative analysis facilitated the identification of general trends and patterns in parental perceptions of intergenerational conflict of 105 Metro Vancouver Chinese immigrant parents. The largest advantage of this research method is its efficiency in terms of time and cost. Using data that has already been collected from the larger "Parenting Project" is less costly and more time-effective than collecting primary data.

One limitation of this study concerns the issue of generalizability across other cultural groups. Although the original parenting project included data from other cultural groups, this study only analyzed data from the Chinese immigrant sub-sample in Greater Vancouver and results can therefore not be generalized to other immigrant groups. In addition, the sample size of the secondary quantitative analysis was 105 participants. Using data from a small sample often compromises the power of statistical analyses, which ultimately affects the final results.

Another limitation of this study is that the "Parenting Project" data was originally created for a project of a different, but related topic. This restricts the operationalization of concepts by using only available indicators (interview questions) from this data set and having limited knowledge of data accuracy and reliability. For example, parent-child acculturation gap in this study was operationalized by using the indicator, "*In general, how similar are your general opinions and values to those of your daughter/son?*".

Although this question may be related to parent-child acculturation gap, it may not be a direct reflection of this concept. Therefore, in-depth, one on one qualitative interviews were conducted to supplement the results from the secondary quantitative analysis.

The main advantage of using qualitative interviews was the ability to ask additional open-ended questions that allowed parents to freely express their subjective interpretation of their intergenerational relationship experiences. Although these interviews were guided by a predetermined list of questions, having direct communication allowed the interviewer to ask for any clarifications or further details on topics that are important to this study, enabling a deeper understanding of the complexities and nuances of intergenerational conflict.

One limitation, however, of conducting in-depth face-to-face interviews includes the issue of family privacy, shame and embarrassment, and potential language barriers. The physical presence of an interviewer may have caused some parents to feel a stronger intrusion to their privacy compared to answering a telephone survey. Although most parents seemed comfortable responding to the questions openly and freely, there were a few parents who seemed fairly reluctant to share their intergenerational conflict experiences, especially at the beginning of the interviews. However, as the interviews progressed, they became more relaxed and responded more openly. Moreover, although the interviews were conducted in either English or in Cantonese (depending on the participants' preference), several eligible participants were only fluent in Mandarin. As a result, these parents were unable to participate in this research study. In addition, the primary researcher for this study is also a Chinese immigrant, and therefore had an insider status amongst this specific population. This insider status may have caused bias

in the accessibility and interpretation of this study's results. (See Appendix H). It would be beneficial to also conduct 'credibility checks' by re-interviewing the eleven participants subsequent to the qualitative analysis process to ensure that interpretations of their interviews were accurate.

Similar to the parenting project, the one-on-one qualitative interviews were also subject to sampling biases. As participation was voluntary, there may be bias based on the type of parents who agreed to be interviewed. For example, those who are more highly educated with better communication skills and less serious levels of family problems may be more willing to share their personal stories than less educated or more isolated parents. Small non-probability samples also limit the generalizability and potential diversity of experiences. However, to ensure a sufficient level of diversity, participants were selected and chosen to reflect a diverse mix of socio-demographic variables.

Future Research

This study focused solely on parental perceptions of intergenerational conflict. Future research incorporating the perceptions of children would be valuable. Currently, most research on intergenerational conflict focuses on either the parents' perceptions or the children's perceptions and studies incorporating the perceptions of both generations are rare. Moreover, some recent research (e.g., Momirov and Kilbride, 2005) suggests that intergenerational conflict among immigrant populations can stem from parental issues, yet most research still focuses on the problem as stemming from the child. For example, children can become the cultural and language interpreters for their immigrant parents, resulting in a certain dependency on the part of parents that creates stress and

conflict on the parent-child relationship, which many lead to intergenerational conflict. As well, in this study, more Chinese immigrant mothers participated in the qualitative interviews than fathers, and this may have influenced what was observed in the qualitative results. Future studies should strive to include an equal number of mothers and fathers.

It would be beneficial to conduct more research in this area using a larger sample size. By using a larger sample size, it would increase the power of the statistical tests as well as potentially provide insight into a broader spectrum of subjective experiences of intergenerational conflict. Also, this study only used univariate and bivariate analysis. Based on the results generated, it will be beneficial to conduct more research in this area using multivariate analysis. Many of the results from this study found partial associations between social factors and intergenerational conflict. This suggests that there may be other contributing factors that influence, or interact with, these relationships. Conducting more advanced multivariate analyses would certainly allow for a better understanding of these influences on intergenerational conflict. It would also be beneficial to expand the breadth of this study to include analysis on the influences of other social, cultural and economic variables and its interactions with the immigration processes, and the impacts they have on parents-child relationships and intergenerational conflict.

This study was a cross sectional study and only incorporated the perceptions and experiences of Chinese immigrant parents at one particular point in time. Another suggestion to extend this research in the future is to conduct longitudinal studies, exploring the experiences and perceptions of intergenerational conflict in immigrant families over an extended period of time. Longitudinal studies will allow better

understanding of the changes within the relationship dynamics of Chinese immigrant families over time.

Recommendations

Public Resources for Intergenerational Conflict: Suggestions of Amendments

A major recommendation is that policy makers and community programmers increase the number of available public resources targeted at Chinese immigrant families in British Columbia. The consensus amongst the interviewed parents is that parent support groups and one-on-one counselling sessions with facilitators who share the same cultural backgrounds and language are tremendously helpful. At the present time, however, there is a shortage of these available resources and parents are regularly placed on waiting lists for these services for as long as 6 months.

Three of the largest, most accessible multicultural settlement agencies in British Columbia are S.U.C.C.E.S.S., MOSAIC and Immigrant Services Society of British Columbia (ISSBC). Although these organizations offer a wide variety of easily accessible family programs, many of these programs are targeted at families with young or adolescent children. There is currently a lack of programs catering to immigrant families with young adult children. Additionally, the majority of family based programs either involve the participation of only immigrant parents or only immigrant children. In other words, programs encouraging the participation of both parents and children are rare. Existing family programs allow immigrant parents and children opportunities to interact and create social networks with other individuals similar to themselves, but do not promote strong familial relationships and arming immigrants families with coping skills when challenged with family conflict. It is also necessary to recognize that certain

families are particularly vulnerable, especially those with children who are not partnered, between the ages of 18-22, living at home, and who are full time or part time students. As such, additional programs targeting Chinese immigrant families with these characteristics should be implemented.

In addition to increasing the number of resources to effectively assist immigrant parents and children to cope with intergenerational conflict, preventive measures should also be taken. As such, more workshops focusing on intergenerational conflict in its early stages should be created and offered at schools and community centers. These programs should be strongly promoted in high schools and universities, as well as in work places and in community bulletin boards, where they are most likely to reach the most vulnerable population identified in this study.

Canada's Immigration Eligibility Requirement: Suggestions of Amendments

There are currently many eligibility requirements for immigrating to Canada and many of these requirements are designed with the goal of stimulating the Canadian economy. It would be beneficial to have requirements concerning family cohesion amongst immigrant families and their success in acculturating into the Canadian society. The current eligibility requirements do not protect immigrant families from possible challenges related to cultural integration and amendments should be made to protect immigrant families and ensure positive transitional experiences.

One amendment that should be considered is to strongly encourage prospective immigrants to attend province or territory specific cultural workshops. These workshops should aim at introducing individuals to the Canadian culture found in specific regions of Canada, supplying them with resources related to housing, employment, health care,

transportation, etc. These workshops can help raise awareness of what new immigrants should expect upon arriving in their host societies. Introducing cultural workshops will be beneficial to both prospective immigrants and Canadian host societies, as immigrants will be more familiarized with the Canadian culture and expectations, and reduce the risks of experiencing "cultural shock". Canadian society and the economy will also benefit through improved quality of family life and reduced expenditures later on (e.g., in health care) since new immigrants will more likely integrate successfully into their new culture.

In addition, prospective immigrant families undergoing stress and tension should also be encouraged to complete additional family counselling. According to Uba (1994), immigration is stressful on families with children, as children often acculturate faster to the host culture than their parents, resulting in a dissonance of values. This value dissonance increases confrontations about appropriate behaviours and expectations between immigrant children and their parents. Family counselling sessions can therefore raise awareness of the challenges that families may face subsequent to immigrating and equip prospective immigrants with effective coping skills shall these challenges arise. Results from this study found that there are different types of conflict including healthy, ambiguous and unhealthy conflicts, and the most common topics of conflict relate to issues of responsibility, money and finances. Families would benefit from counselling sessions, which focus on identifying different types of conflict and resolving these most common issues. In addition, as found in this study, parents and children who share equal powered relationships experience less intergenerational conflict. Therefore, prospective

immigrants would also benefit from counselling sessions that focus on creating these healthy relationships.

To better prepare prospective immigrants, additional family resources including handbooks, magazines, videotapes and family group conferencing sessions should be widely accessible via schools, community centers, and immigration offices, and families should be encouraged to take advantage of these resources. Currently in British Columbia, the Ministry of Children and Family Development offers family group conferences, which help families solve problems together with the help of a coordinator. Ideally, it would be advantageous to create and provide similar conferences for prospective immigrant families focusing on intergenerational issues, successful integration and positive family adjustment. With these amendments and recommendations, it is hoped that families immigrating into Canada can be better equipped to deal with acculturation stress and the problematic intergenerational conflict that can sometimes develop.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Tables from Quantitative Analysis

Table 5: Univariate Analysis - Socio-Demographic and Background Characteristics of Sample

Variable	N	Percent
Parent's Gender	**105**	
Male	39	37.1%
Female	66	62.9%
Parent's Marital Status	**105**	
Not Partnered (Single/Separated/Divorced/Widowed)	13	12.4%
Partnered (Married/Living with partner)	92	87.6%
Parent's Current Age	**105**	
40-49 years old	20	23.8%
50-59 years old	54	51.4%
60 & older	26	24.8%
Parent's Educational Level	**105**	
High school or less	59	56.2%
Some College/University	12	11.4%
College or University Degree	34	32.4%
Parent's Employment Status	**105**	
Working Paid Job(s)	42	40.0%
Homemaker	30	28.6%
Retired/Unemployed	33	31.4%
Total Household Income	**105**	
Less than $20,000	9	8.6%
$20,000-$50,000	53	50.5%
$50,001-$75,000	31	29.5%
Over $75,000	12	11.4%
Study Child's Gender	**105**	
Male	54	51.4%
Female	51	48.6%
Study Child's Marital Status	**105**	
Not Partnered (Single/Separated/Divorced/Widowed)	74	70.5%
Partnered (Married/Living with partner)	31	29.5%

__Table 5: Univariate Analysis - Socio-Demographic & Background Characteristics of Sample (cont).__

Study Child's Current Age	**105**	
18-22 Years Old	36	34.3%
23-27 Years Old	30	28.6%
28-32 Years Old	26	24.8%
33-35 Years Old	13	12.4%
Study Child's Living Arrangement		
Living at Home	61	58.1%
Living independently from parent(s)	44	41.9%
Study Child's Main Activity		
Full time or part time student, or unemployed	43	41.0%
Full time or part time work	62	59.0%

__Table 6: Univariate Analysis - Intergenerational Conflict__

Variable	N	Percent
Frequency of Conflict	**105**	
No conflict present	43	41.0%
Conflict present	62	59.0%
Topic of Conflict		
Issues of responsibility	12	11.4%
Money/Finances	13	12.4%
Issues surrounding child's employment/work	6	5.7%
Issues related to driving	4	3.8%
Child's relationships	2	1.9%
Issues over lifestyle/health	3	2.9%
Issues regarding siblings	1	1.0%
Time spent with family/ Communicating with family	1	1.0%
Other	14	13.3%
Nothing/ Can't Think of Any	49	46.7%

Table 7: Univariate Analysis - Selected Social Factors

Importance of Ethnic Identity		
Not/ Slightly important	27	25.7%
Important/Extremely Important	78	74.3%
Parent-Child Acculturation Gap	**105**	
Not similar at all	10	9.5%
Somewhat similar	72	68.6%
Very similar	23	21.9%
Length of Residency	**105**	
Less than 10 years	36	34.3%
10 years or longer	69	65.7%
Presence of Spouse	**105**	
Yes	94	89.5%
No	11	10.5%
Frequency of discussion about family life with spouse	**94**	
At least weekly	49	52.1%
Monthly	26	27.7%
Several times per year or less	19	20.2%
Disagreements over study child's life with spouse	**94**	
Yes	35	37.2%
No	59	62.8%
Living with parents (Study child's grandparents)	**55**	
No	47	85.5%
At least one parent	8	14.5%

Table 8: Bivariate Analysis - Intergenerational Conflict by Demographic Variables

	No Conflict Present	**Conflict Present**	**Statistic**	**Stat. Sign.**
Parent's Gender			Pearson's R = 0.12	NS
Male	48.7% [19]	51.3% [20]		
Female	36.4% [24]	63.6% [42]		
Parent's Marital Status			Pearson's R = 0.04	NS
Not Partnered (Single/Separated/ Divorced/Widowed)	46.2% [6]	53.8% [7]		
Partnered (Married/Living with partner)	40.2% [37]	59.8% [55]		
Parent's Current Age			Tau c = - 0.27	p<0.05
40-49 years old	28.0% [7]	72.0% [18]		
50-59 years old	35.2%[19]	64.8% [35]		
60 years & older	65.4%[17]	34.6% [9]		
Parent's Educational Level			Tau c = 0.01	NS
High school or less	40.7% [24]	59.3% [35]		
Some College/University	50.0% [6]	50.0% [6]		
College or University Degree	38.2% [13]	61.8% [21]		
Parent's Employment Status			$\chi^2 = 6.44$ df = 2	P<0.05
Working Paid Job(s)	28.6% [12]	71.4% [30]		
Homemaker	40.0% [12]	60.0% [18]		
Retired/Unemployed	57.6% [19]	42.4% [14]		
Total Household Income			Tau c = - 0.04	NS
Less than $20,000	44.4% [4]	55.6% [5]		
$20,000-$50,000	35.8% [19]	64.2% [34]		
$50,001-$75,000	54.8% [17]	45.2% [14]		
Over $75,000	25.0% [3]	75.0% [9]		

Table 8: Bivariate Analysis - Intergenerational Conflict by Demographic Variables (cont)

Study Child's Gender			Pearson's R = -0.04	NS
Male	38.9% [21]	61.1% [33]		
Female	43.1% [22]	56.9 [29]		
Study Child's Marital Status			Pearson's R = -0.31	P<0.01
Not partnered (Single/Seperated/Divorced/ Widowed)	31.1% [23]	68.9% [51]		
Partnered (Married/ Living with Partner)	64.5% [20]	35.5% [11]		
Study Child's Current Age			Tau c = -0.39	P<0.01
18-22 Years Old	16.7% [6]	83.8% [30]		
23-27 Years Old	46.7% [14]	53.3% [16]		
28-32 Years Old	57.7% [15]	42.3% [11]		
33-35 Years Old	61.5% [8]	38.5% [5]		
Study Child's Living Arrangement			χ^2 = 10.31 df = 2	P<0.01
Living at Home	27.9% [17]	72.1% [44]		
Lived independently from parent(s)	59.1% [26]	40.9% [18]		
Study Child's Main Activity			χ^2 = 7.11 df = 1	P<0.01
Full or part time student, or unemployed	25.6% [11]	74.4% [32]		
Full or part time work	51.6% [32]	48.4% [30]		

Table 9: Bivariate Analysis: Intergenerational Conflict by Selected Variables

	No Conflict Present	Conflict Present	Statistic	Stat. Sign.
Importance of Ethnic Identity			Pearson's R = 0.04	NS
Not/ Slightly important	44.4% [12]	55.6% [15]		
Important/Extremely Important	39.7% [31]	60.3% [47]		
Parent-Child Acculturation Gap			Tau c = - 0.22	p< 0.05
Not similar at all	20.0% [2]	80.0% [8]		
Somewhat similar	37.5% [27]	62.5% [45]		
Very similar	60.9% [14]	39.1% [9]		
Length of Residency			Pearson's R = -0.11	NS
Less than 10 years	33.3% [12]	66.7% [24]		
10 years or longer	44.9% [31]	55.1% [38]		
Presence of Spouse			Pearson's R = - 0.03	NS
Yes	40.4% [38]	59.6% [56]		
No	45.5% [5]	54.5% [6]		
Frequency of discussion about family life with spouse			Tau c = - 0.01	NS
At least weekly	38.8% [19]	61.2% [30]		
Monthly	46.2% [12]	53.8% [14]		
Several times per year or less	36.8% [7]	63.2% [12]		
Disagreements over study child's life with spouse			Pearson's R = - 0.28	p<0.01
Yes	22.9% [8]	77.1% [27]		
No	50.8% [30]	49.2% [29]		
Living with parents (Study child's grandparents)			Pearson's R = - 0.03	NS
No	34.0% [16]	66.0% [31]		
At least one parent	37.5% [3]	62.5% [5]		

Table 10: Bivariate Analysis: Intergenerational Conflict by Parent-Child Acculturation Gap, with the Study Child's Marital Status as a Control Variable

STUDY CHILD: NOT PARTNERED

	No Conflict	**Conflict Present**	**Statistic**	**Stat. Sign.**
Parent-Child Acculturation Gap			$\chi^2 = 8.61$ df = 2	P<0.05
Not similar at all	11.1% [1]	88.9% [8]		
Somewhat similar	25.0% [12]	75% [36]		
Very similar	58.8% [10]	41.2% [7]		

STUDY CHILD: PARTENRED

	No Conflict	**Conflict Present**	**Statistic**	**Stat. Sign.**
Parent-Child Acculturation Gap			$\chi^2 = 0.62$ df = 2	NS
Not similar at all	100.0% [1]	0.0% [0]		
Somewhat similar	62.5% [15]	37.5% [9]		
Very similar	66.7% [4]	33.3% [2]		

Table 11: Bivariate Analysis: Intergenerational Conflict by Parent-Child Acculturation Gap, with the Study Child's Living Arrangement as a Control Variable

LIVING AT HOME

	No Conflict	**Conflict Present**	**Statistic**	**Stat. Sign.**
Parent-Child Acculturation Gap			$\chi^2 = 10.26$ df = 2	P<0.01
Not similar at all	14.3% [1]	85.7 [6]		
Somewhat similar	17.9% [7]	82.1% [32]		
Very similar	60.0% [9]	40.0% [6]		

LIVING INDEPENDENTLY FROM PARENTS

	No Conflict	**Conflict Present**	**Statistic**	**Stat. Sign.**
Parent-Child Acculturation Gap			$\chi^2 = 0.89$ df = 2	NS
Not similar at all	33.3% [1]	66.7% [2]		
Somewhat similar	60.6% [20]	39.4% [13]		
Very similar	62.5% [5]	37.5% [3]		

Table 12: Bivariate Analysis: Intergenerational Conflict by Parent-Child Acculturation Gap, with the Study Child's Employment Status as a Control Variable

STUDY CHILD: FULL TIME OR PART TIME SCHOOL, OR UNEMPLOYED

	No Conflict	**Conflict Present**	**Statistic**	**Stat. Sign.**
Parent-Child Acculturation Gap			$\chi^2 = 6.57$ $df = 2$	P<0.05
Not similar at all	20% [1]	80.0% [4]		
Somewhat similar	14.8% [4]	85.2% [23]		
Very similar	54.5% [6]	45.5% [5]		

STUDY CHILD: FULL TIME OR PART TIME WORK

	No Conflict	**Conflict Present**	**Statistic**	**Stat. Sign.**
Parent-Child Acculturation Gap			$\chi^2 = 3.09$ $df = 2$	NS
Not similar at all	20% [1]	80% [4]		
Somewhat similar	51.1 [23]	48.9% [22]		
Very similar	66.7% [8]	33.3% [4]		

Appendix B: Approval Letter – Permission to Access and Use the Parenting Project Data Set, from Dr. Barbara Mitchell

Barbara Mitchell, Associate Professor

Department of Sociology and Anthropology

street address

AQ 5054
8888 University Drive
Burnaby BC Canada
V5A 1S6

778-782-3146 (Tel)
778-782-5799 (Fax)
E-mail: mitchelo@sfu.ca
www.sfu.ca/sociology

January 18, 2010

RE: Ethical Approval, Yvonne Lai, M.A. Candidate, Dept. of Sociology/Anthropology

Dear SFU Research Ethics Board,

I am writing this letter in support of Yvonne Lai's application for ethical approval. As P.I., I am verifying that I have granted her permission to use data collected from my 2006-2009 SSHRC-funded study (#31-639564) entitled "Mid- and Later-Life Parenting and the Launching of Adult Children: Cultural Diversity, Health and Well-Being" for her thesis work. If you require any additional information, please do not hesitate to ask.

Regards,

Barbara A. Mitchell, Ph.D.

Associate Professor

Dept. of Sociology/Anthropology

Appendix C: Recruitment Flyer Used to Recruit Interviewees

<u>SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY</u>
RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS NEEDED

The Sources of Intergenerational Conflict Amongst Chinese Immigrant Families

PURPOSE:
> To explore social factors contributing to and buffering against parent-child conflict amongst Chinese immigrant families in British Columbia.

ELIGIBILITY:
> Individuals who are **<u>at least 35 years old, who self identifies as Chinese, and have immigrated to British Columbia from Hong Kong, Taiwan or Mainland China, with at least one child between the ages of 18-35 years old</u>**.

RESEARCH INVOLVEMENT:
> This research study will involve a 45-60 minute interview with Chinese immigrant parents about their relationship with their children and other various demographic/socioeconomic factors.

BENEFITS:
> Along with our sincere appreciation, your participation will contribute to the quest of knowledge about Chinese immigrant families in British Columbia. In participating in this research study, you exercise an opportunity to freely voice concerns and comments about your intergenerational conflict experiences; data, which can potentially be used in family policy and program creations/modifications, and to advocate for increased public and private funding towards programs targeted at Chinese immigrant families in British Columbia.

COMPENSATION:
> $20 Gift Certificate (T&T Grocery Market or Maxim Cake Shop)

IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN PARTICIPATING IN THIS STUDY, PLEASE CONTACT – <u>*YVONNE LAI*</u> (Primary Investigator) at ywl6@sfu.ca or 604-773-0531.

This study is under the auspices of Simon Fraser University.

Appendix D: Questions Used in the Qualitative Interviews

<u>**Definition:**</u>
Intergenerational Conflict (parent-child conflict) is often defined as the frequency, the degree and the severity of problems or arguments experienced between parents and children.

<u>**Interview Questions**</u>
1) **Relationship with Study Child/ Conflict with Study Child**
   a) In general, how would you describe your relationship with your study child?
      a. Excellent, Good, Average, Fair, Poor
   b) How often do you and your study child have fights or disagreements?
   c) What do you and your study child typically fight about?
   d) Describe a typical argument with your study child? How does it usually begin? How intense do these disagreements/arguments get? What is done to resolve these issues? How long do they last for?
   e) What is the intensity of these conflicts? Are they
      a. Severe, Moderate or Mild?
   f) Is the frequency and intensity your present parent-child conflicts the same/worst/better since your study child was a teenager (13-18 years old)? With time, do you think these arguments will decrease, increase or remain the same?

2) **Parent-Child Acculturation Gap**
   a) What ethnic identity do you most identify with? What ethnic identity does your study child most identify with?
   b) What cultural traditions do you practice? What cultural traditions does your study child practice?
   c) How important are the traditions of your cultural or ethnic group to you? In your opinion, how important are the traditions of your cultural or ethnic group to your study child?
   d) People of different ethnicities often have different core values – for example, some people value family life, others value health or financial success. What are your core values? Are they different from your study child's core values? If so, how are they different?
   e) Would you consider your child to hold more traditional Chinese values than you? Would you consider them to hold more "Westernized" values than you?

3) **Peer Influences**
a) Does your child have many friends?
b) Are the majority of your child's friends the same ethnic background as he/she?
c) In your opinion, how much influence do your child's peers have on your child? How much time does your child typically spend with his/her friends? How much time does your child typically spend with you (and/ or your spouse?) in a typical week?
d) In your opinion, how important is it for your child to be accepted by his/her peers?
e) Does your child's interactions with his/her friends interfere with your relationship with them? If yes, how so?
f) In your opinion, are there any other outside influences that is affecting your relationship with you and your child? For example, boyfriends, media, other family members? If so, how?

4) **Spousal Support**
a) Do you currently have a spouse/partner? Do you live with your spouse/partner?
b) How involved is your spouse/partner in your study child's life?
c) How much support does your spouse/partner provide you in terms of parenting/ caring for your study child?
d) How often do you and your spouse disagree about decisions or issues involving your study child?
e) Who experiences more conflict with your child – you or your spouse? Why?
f) In your opinion, do you think that having a spouse present increases or decreases your intergenerational conflict with your study child?

5) **Coping Strategies**
a) What methods or strategies do you use to cope with parent-child conflict between you and your study child?
b) How often do you seek for help to coping with intergenerational conflict? Where do you seek for help?
c) Can you think of any resources (such as community programs or workshops) that might be helpful to parents experiencing parent-child conflict? Would you participate or attend?

Appendix E: English Informed Consent Form

Date: Jan. 18, 2010

Study Name: The Sources of Intergenerational Conflict amongst Chinese Immigrant Families in British Columbia.

Researchers: Yvonne Lai (Primary Investigator), Dr. Barbara Mitchell (Project Supervisor), Dr. Jane Pulkingham (Committee Member)

Goals of the Study: The goal of this research study is to explore and understand what Chinese immigrant parental perceptions of intergenerational conflict with their children are and how these perceptions are socially structured by social, cultural, and economic factors. Results from this study will allow an indication of which social factors are correlated with intergenerational conflict, and therefore allowing the creation of a social profile for the most vulnerable population. This study will be conducted under the auspices of Simon Fraser University.

What You Will Be Asked to Do in the Research: You are invited to participate in an in-depth open interview about your intergenerational conflict experiences between you and your study child. You will be asked to describe your experiences including, but not exclusive to, the frequency of conflicts, the degrees of conflict and the topics of conflict. In addition, you will also be invited to describe other social factors, including cultural beliefs and practices, length of residency, your relationship quality with your own parents, your income range, highest attained level of education, occupational status, the amount of spousal support your receive and your perception of your child's peer interactions

Voluntary Participation and Withdrawal From the Study: Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You may choose to stop participating in this research study at any time and for any reason during this process. Your decision to stop participating in this research study will not influence your relationship with the researchers, or any other group associated with this project. Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary and is greatly appreciated.

Risks and Discomforts: We do not foresee or anticipate any risks to your safety from participating in this study. There *may* be a minimal chance of slight temporary discomfort from recalling previous conflictual or tension-ridden episodes. However, we do not foresee this slight discomfort being long-lasting or causing any permanent physical or emotional harm to you. Risks that you may face in this study will be no greater than risks you may face in daily life and conversations.

Benefits of the Research and Benefits to you: Your participation in this study is greatly appreciated. Along with our sincere appreciation, your participation will contribute to the quest of knowledge about Chinese immigrant families in British Columbia. In participating in this research study, you exercise an opportunity to freely

voice concerns and comments about your intergenerational conflict experiences; data, which can potentially be used in family policy and program creations/modifications, and to advocate for increased public and private funding towards programs targeted at Chinese immigrant families in British Columbia. Additionally, subsequent to your kind participation, you will receive a small gift as a token of our appreciation.

Confidentiality: All the information you provide during this interview will be held in confidence. Unless you specifically indicate your consent, your name will not appear in any report or publication of this research and the data you provide will be kept in secure data storage systems (password protected computers and locked filing cabinets). Data you provide only be accessible to the primary investigator (Yvonne Lai), the senior supervisor (Dr. Barbara Mitchell) and the committee member (Dr Jane Pulkingham) of this project. This study will also use pseudonyms in place of your identification to prevent disclosure. Confidentiality will be upheld to the fullest extent possible within the bounds of the law.

Questions About the Research/ Where to Obtain Research Results If you have any questions about the research or would like to obtain a copy of the research results of this study, please feel free to contact Yvonne Lai either by telephone at 604-733-0531 or by e-mail ywl6@sfu.ca.

Complaints: Any complaints regarding this research project is to be directed to:
    Hal Weinberg, Director
    Officer of Research Ethics
    Simon Fraser University
    Burnaby, B.C., Canada
    V5A 1S6
    778-782-6593

I _____, consent to participate in *The Sources of Intergenerational Conflict amongst Chinese Immigrant Families in British Columbia* study, conducted by Yvonne Lai. I understand the nature of this project, and my role as a participant. The signature below indicates my consent.

---   ------------------------------------
Participant Signature   Date

---   ------------------------------------
Principal Investigator   Date

Appendix F: Chinese Informed Consent Form

日期 ：2010年1月18日

研究的名稱：代溝與衝突的因由及其潛伏在BC省的中國人移民家庭的各種問題。

研究人員：Yvonne Lai 賴韻安（首席調查員), Dr. Barbara Mitchell （研究導師), Dr. Jane Pulkingham（委員會委員）

研究目標：
本研究的目的是要研究，探索和深入了解中國移民父母與他們子女的代溝衝突的看法，以及這些觀念是否會因不同的社會結構，文化和經濟因素而成。這項研究結果將顯示出那些重要社會因素是與代溝衝突有密切的相關，因此能允許設立一個專業社區項目為有需要的家庭提供協助與解決。(這項研究是由西門菲沙大學贊助及支持)。

你將被要求做的研究：
您被邀請參加在深入訪問時，打開你與孩子的代溝或衝突的經驗。 您將被要求描述你的經歷，包括但不是唯一的，則頻率衝突，衝突的程度和衝突的主題。此外，您還將被邀請來形容其他社會因素，包括文化觀念和做法，居住在BC省多久，你與自己父母的關係，你的收入範圍，最高的達到教育程度，職業地位，支持你家庭及配偶的開支和你對孩子與他們朋友交往的看法。

自願參與或退出這研究：
你參與這項研究是完全自願的。在這個過程中，在任何時間或因任何理由，您可以選擇停止參加這項研究，您決定停止參與本研究，將不會影響你們與研究人員的關係，或任何其他團體參與這項計劃。您參與這項研究完全是自願的，是給與我們極大的支持和感謝。

風險和不安：
參與這項研究，我們預測不會對你日常生活有任何風險。
可能有一個極小的機會有輕微不適當重溫經歷不愉快的衝突或充滿緊張的事件時。然而，這種輕微不適不會構成長期或永久性造成對任何身體或精神的傷害。

參與 研究的好處和優點：
衷心感謝您的參與。**這**研究將有助於尋求多方面的知識交流，增加各社區對 BC省的中國人移民家庭的深入了解。在參加這項研究性學習，讓移民家庭有機會自由地表達你們的顧慮和意見，你的代溝衝突的經驗。這些數據
有可能被用於家庭政策和方案創作/修改，並主張增加公共和私人資金的資助，能增加有關社區機構得以幫助移民家庭提供協助與解決。此外，隨你的善心參與，您將收到一份小禮 物作為一個感謝象徵，我們表示之讚賞。
保密性：

所有您提供的信息在本次採訪將於保密。除非你明確表明您同意，您的名字將不會出現在任何報告或發表這項研究和數據，你的資料將被保存在提供安全的數據存儲系統（密 碼保護的電腦，並鎖定的檔案櫃）。您提供的資料只能使用到: 首席調查員（賴韻安）Yvonne Lai，研究導師（Dr. Barbara Mitchell）和委員會委員（Dr Jane Pulkingham)。這項研究也將使用假名代替您的身份，以防止洩露。保密將堅持以盡可能在有關法律範圍內。

有關研究的問題/或 何處獲取研究結果報告:
如果您有任何問題有關這研究或想獲得一份研究結果報告，請隨時聯繫 **賴韻安 Yvonne Lai**。可以通過電話: **604-733-0531**或通過電子郵件 ywl6@sfu.ca.
投訴：

任何投訴，這一研究項目是直接聯絡：
Hal Weinberg, Director　　哈爾溫伯格，主任
Officer of Research Ethics　研究倫理 主任
Simon Fraser University　　西門菲沙大學
Burnaby, BC, Canada V5A 1S6
778-782-6593

本人_____,同意參與研究項目(代溝與衝突的因由及其潛伏在BC省的中國人移民家庭的各種問題)。由西門菲沙大 學研究生 賴韻安 Yvonne Lai進行採訪。我知道這個項目的性質，和我的角色是一個參與者。下面顯示我的簽字同意。

_____
參與者簽署及日期

_____
 首席調查員簽署及日期

Appendix G: Socio-Demographic Questionnaire

Questions About You:

a) What is your gender?
  a. Male
  b. Female

b) What is your marital status?
  a. Partnered (Married/Common-Law)
  b. Not Partnered (Single/Separated/Divorced/Widowed)

c) What is your age group?
  a. 40-49 years old
  b. 50-59 years old
  c. 60 & older

d) What is your educational level?
  a. High school or less
  b. Some college/University
  c. College/University degree

e) What is your employment status?
  a. Working at a paid job full-time
  b. Working at a paid job part-time
  c. A student
  d. Homemaker
  e. Retired
  f. Unemployed/Looking for work
  g. Other
      i. Specify: _____

f) What is your total household income?
  a. < $20,000
  b. $20,000-$50,000
  c. $50,001-%75,000
  d. >$75,000

g) Which country where you born in?
  _____

h) When did you immigrate to Canada?
  a. _____ (Year)

Questions about your 'study child'

i) How many children do you have between the ages of 18-35?

_____

j) What is your study child's gender?
   a. Male
   b. Female

k) What is your study child's age?

_____

l) Was your study child born in Canada?
   a. Yes
   b. No

m) What is your marital status?
   a. Partnered (Married/Common-Law)
   b. Not partnered (Single/Separated/Divorced/Widowed)

n) What is your study child's main activity?
   a. Work at a paid job full-time
   b. Working at a paid job part-time
   c. A student
   d. Disable
   e. Other

o) What is your study child's living arrangement?
   a. Has not moved out and lives at your (and/or your spouse's) home
   b. Moved out and lives in a separate household as you and/or your spouse
   c. Moved out and lives in the same household as you (you moved in with your study child)
   d. Other:
      i. Specify: _____

Appendix H: Personal Reflections As An Insider

The topic of intergenerational conflict amongst Chinese immigrant families in British Columbia is of great interest to me, as I am also a Chinese immigrant myself from Hong Kong. Due to various circumstances, my family (my mother, father, and brother) and I moved from Hong Kong to Vancouver, British Columbia in August 1997. Being a young adult from a Chinese immigrant family in British Columbia myself had given me an "insider status" as a researcher for this study, which had its advantages and disadvantages.

One main advantage of having this "insider status" is my accessibility to the Chinese community in Vancouver. Being fluent in Cantonese and English has given me easier accessibility to various resources including the parent-support group held by S.U.C.C.E.S.S., which was conducted in Cantonese. As well, I was able to interview immigrant parents who were only fluent in Cantonese. As an insider, I noticed that parents were quite comfortable and relaxed when they were sharing their intergenerational experiences during the qualitative interviews. It is fair to assume that without this insider status, data from the qualitative interviews may not have been as rich or contextual.

A major disadvantage of being a Chinese immigrant researcher in this study is my potential bias when analyzing data and interpreting the results. Notably, my interpretations may have been influenced by my own personal experiences of intergenerational conflict. To overcome this disadvantage in future studies, it would be beneficial to conduct *'credibility checks'* with my interview participants subsequent to

my qualitative data analysis process to ensure that parents' interviews were interpreted accurately from their own frame of experience.

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