

Literature Review on Changing Fatherhood in China

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Introduction

Masculinity and fatherhood studies have become a field of research in the West after the research boom on femininity and women studies as early as 19th century, fueled by a wealth of data and generous research funding. However, the story of non-Western fatherhood did not experience rapid development in such extent, especially Chinese case. As one of the East Asian giant, China is distinct from other societies with respect to fatherhood.

In addition, China has a long history of more than 5000 years and has witnessed the remarkable social changes, especially after the establishment of People's Republic of China. The social expectations to the role of fathers and fathering behaviors have been considerably transforming from a feudal society to a communist nation and then to a Chinese character communist state or Chinese "capitalism" system. Most scholars agree that Chinese fatherhood need to be understood in the historical contexts and they are usually separated it into two main categories: historical fatherhood and modern fatherhood. Traditional Chinese fatherhood characters and its philosophical structures become a common sense. However, the modern fatherhood in post-1949 China and its underlying factors are still unclear. This paper therefore proposes to give a chronological overview of changes in fatherhood in post-1949 China by reviewing what existing literature tells us about this. Besides, without analyzing the influences from the traditional Chinese Confucian culture and socio-cultural changes in post-1949, we cannot fully understand modern Chinese Paternal attitudes and practices towards childrearing and housework. Therefore, this paper further aims to overview a full landscape of trajectories of fatherhood in China by addressing: 1) Changing attitudes towards Chinese fatherhood; 2) changing Chinese fatherhood practices; 3) the factors underlying changing Chinese fatherhood.

History of Chinese Fatherhood Research

Chinese fathers account one fifths of the world's fathers and there are more than 60 million overseas Chinese live in 198 foreign countries and communities in 2017. Furthermore, China has witnessed the economic miracle over the past 60 years, especially after 1978 and has achieved the Number 2 power

economically. Westerns and other Easterners regard China as a rising superpower or a threat to geo-stability and economics in the world. They are observing and wondering how the rise of new manhood will globally affect the Post-Mao China and the world (Louie, 2014). In view of Chinese fatherhood study is significant, historical overview Chinese fatherhood research is indispensable.

Fatherhood in Chinese culture has been little addressed by Chinese scholars, but has largely been told by those writing outside of mainland China before the end of 1980s (Ho, 1987). These famous prominent scholars in the Chinese fatherhood research field include: Michael E. Lamb and Margaret O'Brien (in UK); Ralph LaRossa (in USA); Masako Ishii-Kuntz, Yoko Ito and Futoshi Taga (in Japan); David Y. Ho, Daniel TL Shek and Kam Louie (in Hong Kong), and Wei-Jun Jean Yeung (in Singapore).

On top of the various perspectives on Chinese men and fathers from “outside” of China, the growing number of Chinese also positively display and explore Chinese masculinity and fatherhood to the West from the 1990s. The images of Chinese father - a strong determined man with tender feelings (*Tie han rou qing*) are successfully well-known in the West through the director Ang Lee’s “Father Knows Best” trilogy: *Pushing Hand* (1992), *Wedding Banquet* (1993), and *Eat Drink Man Woman* (1994). The traditional Chinese masculine *Wen-Wu* (literary-martial) paradigm and Confucian filial piety notion/character applied to a Chinese father figure-Mr.Chu (in Ang Lee’s “Father Knows Best” trilogy) who help Euro-American better understanding traditional Chinese fatherhood (Louie,2014; Zhang, 2017).

With the increasing numbers of Chinese fathers in abroad and addressing children’s excellent academic achievement under Chinese parenting styles, the cross-cultural comparative perspective studies (Wang, 2009; Louie, 2014) focus on Chinese families in the West and other developed East societies are increasing after 2000. Meanwhile, with the process of defamilialization after the second half of 20 Century, Chinese scholars (e.g.,徐安琪, 张亮) are also starting indigenous family studies and exploring the changing of family value, childcare within the de-gender contexts and so on.

Gender studies in China were largely focus on studying Chinese women. In contrast, masculinity study in China was not a rich academic field and gradually became significant after the dawn of the 21C (Louie, 2014). Quite a number of literatures that specifically focus on Chinese manhood have appeared in the following relatively short period. The rise of fatherhood studies in the Chinese masculinities research has especially explored by educationalists, psychologists and sociologists and has experienced two research booms: family and absent father studies booms by the turn of 21st Century, and paternal involvement studies booms after 2013. In light of the CNKI (the largest and continuously updated Chinese journals database in the world), there are totally 1114 published Chinese-language fatherhood papers from 1960 to 2016. To more detailed, the total annual published paper was less than 10 before 2003 but after 2013 the number is increased sharply to 110. The top six scholars who contributed to Chinese-language published papers of fatherhood are Liang Zhang, Xinchun Wu, Zhongwei Hou, YuLan Chen, Anqi Xu, and Yan Xu. The top six keywords of previous fatherhood studies are followed by paternal involvement, factors, father, family education, children, and undergraduate students.

Generally, English-language Chinese fatherhood studies is stimulated by the experiences of fatherhood studies in Western developed countries. However, Chinese-language fatherhood studies in China have thoroughly sprouted after imitating a South Korean popular reality show, ‘Dad! Where Are We Going?’ (*Appa! Eodiga?*). The Chinese popular reality show, “Where is the daddy going”, started in 2013, and is the first media of its kind to challenge traditional images of strict and authoritarian fathers, and offers new concepts on emotionally supportive fathers in contemporary China. Furthermore, this reality show also created government support to fund research on Chinese fatherhood and promoted a dozen leading Chinese scholars of fatherhood issues to examine the roles of Chinese fathers from a variety of disciplines, such as: Zhonghe Wu, Pinmei Huang, Qiong Xu, Mario Liong, Xuan Li and so on. Wu (2013) brings an educational, historical and cultural perspective to discuss and distinguish between the father’s role and the mother’s role in Children’s education and to investigate its factors (importantly labor market and political policies) in Beijing. Huang (2014) explores how older and younger fathers identify their role as fathers and their experiences of fathering and fatherhood in Guangzhou by conducting a qualitative research. Xu (2017) is a sociologist who examines how fathers identify their masculinity and the role of fatherhood through a mixed-methods study on the father-daughter relationship in dual-earner families in Shanghai. Liong (2017) brings a gender perspective to observe the practice of fatherhood within the changing social-cultural conditions in Hong Kong. Li (upcoming 2018) brings a psychological and historical perspective to examine traditional and contemporary ideals of fatherhood, the father-child interactions, and fathers’ influence on children and families by further referencing contemporary media and historical records across the country.

Overview of Research into Changing Attitudes Towards Chinese Fatherhood

Both empirical and theoretical literatures on fatherhood consistently support and further supplement father’s roles: moral teacher, protector, playmate, disciplinarian, remote role, provider, secondary parent role, shared caregiver, primary caregiver, involved father and so on (Habit, 2012). What is not clear in the literature is the specifically changing paths in different communities. Therefore, a global wider research networks on the roles of fatherhood in various cultural contexts are increasing. Chinese scholars, especially psychologists (e.g., 伍新春, 陈玲玲) and educationists (e.g., 孙云晓, 许岩) are interested in looking deep into it. It is worth noting that, Habit (2012) provides a new perspective that comparing with the expectations from others, how fathers identify their own roles and apply such meaning into their actual paternal involvement are more significant and useful.

The nature of large-scale agricultural culture has gradually derived Chinese cultural codes, namely “holistic whole” (*Zheng ti guan*) and “the view of under heaven” (*Tian xia guan*). The dominant Confucianism applies these cultural codes into five moral standards (i.e., *ren, yi, li, zhi, xin*) and the philosophical structures for traditional Chinese paternal attitudes and practices in patriarchal system (Hangsleben, 1980; Xu, Zhang & Hee, 2014). Traditional Chinese father’s roles include: 1) a stern disciplinarian as concisely depicted both in *The Three-Character Classic* (e.g., *Yang bu jiao fu zhi gu*) and *Wisdom In Chinese* (e.g., *Yan fu chu xiao zi*); 2) an authoritarian with strict hierarchy and emotional remote

as the basic structure of Confucian ethics culture-the three cardinal guides (e.g., *Fu wei zi gang* and *Fu wei qi gang*); 3) as well as a provider (Ho, 1987; Wang, 2009; Li & Lamb, 2013).

Fathers' role in modern China comes to be defined largely as breadwinner with the childcare supports from the units and communities. With the social transformation, especially after implementing the opening-up policy, modern China is experiencing remarkably urbanization and globalization. The family formula is also gradually shifted from extended family to nuclear family and rural-urban inequality is increasing. Meanwhile, in the process of large scale of migration, westernization and gender-equality movements, the value of democratic, feminism and child-centered are introduced and emphasized. Breadwinner-provider and Career-oriented father are challenged, and nurturer-caregiver role and familistically oriented father are debated. The expectation of fatherhood is shifting from a provider to a nurturer. Traditional roles of fathers may no longer be adaptive. Chinese fathers are consciously or unconsciously adjusting their new roles of fatherhood. They are warned against spoiling children (*Ni ai*) after one-child policy. They are tending to play a supporter role, namely neither full control nor fully indulge. Father-son centered value is also being altered. Chinese fathers are seeking for role model of "good father".

In the last decades, facing up the sound of China threatening to the West and the status of inequality and the increasing rural-urban sharp gap, China has firmly stepped into a new Chinese characteristics modern road with new four modernizations (i.e., Industrialization, informatization, urbanization, agricultural modernization) and the fifth modernization (i.e., To promote national governance system and governance capacity modernization). To promote "Chinese value" and to become "a socialist cultural superpower", Chinese governments is reviving traditional culture and harnessing moral decay by the 'next cultural revolution' (The Economist, 2017). Louie (2014) also argues that Easternization rather than Westernization is more significantly affecting Chinese fathers' 'tough guys' image. The popular images of pretty boy (*Hua yang nan zi*) is originally borrowed from Japanese manga *Hana-yori Dango* (1992-2004) and the well-accepted term of cooking man (*Zhu fu*) is powerfully affected by Korean pop culture. However, Chinese fathers' perception of breadwinner role is significantly lower than Japanese fathers (Ito, Izumi-Taylor & Zhou, 2017). Meanwhile, the majority of first generation of singleton has become parents and they are facing the issue of raising one or two children after two-child policy (2015). Although dominant nuclear family structure remains, three-generation family structure is increasing and grandparents are largely involved in childcare and housework. Young fathers have to take a new look at from inside what it means to be a good father. Friendly-companion fathers are replacing authoritarian fathers. Fathers are shifting toward more loving, warm, compassionate and friendly-companion. They want to build up a loving relationship with their children and have more closely involved with the child care. Many young fathers want to be their children's friend rather than to be a superman. A study of 241 families in Shanghai and Jinan suggests that modern Chinese fathers own progressive paternal attitudes rather than authoritarian attitudes and they have low parental role differentiation, non-traditional, non-hierarchical and egalitarian paternal attitudes (Chang, Chen & Ji, 2011). Recent studies of Chinese fatherhood also provide some evidence that emotional fathers are defined as new good fathers although the role as breadwinner and moral

teacher remain important. Besides, post-modern China is particularly concerning about the issue of absent father and is emphasizing father's unique role in the children's well-being. Zhang (2014) critically points out that father absent and "left behind children" are still widespread phenomenon in China, especially in rural areas. The deep-seated traditional patriarchy and gender norms remain prevalent in majority of rural areas.

In brief, the dominant image of father in China has shifted from a stern educator, then to a supporter and finally to a friend. Attitudes towards fatherhood refer to not only the value of father's role, but also the role allocation in the family. The stereotypic view of "Man are breadwinners, women are homemakers" (*nan zhu wai, nv zhu nei*) has been strongly entrenched in Chinese culture and has persisted to today. However, recent studies suggest that family members start to realize that sharing roles, such as child rearing, housework is very important for maintaining the healthy family functioning and children's well-being. They, especially educated women rethink their traditional roles and to fulfill their certain new roles after discussion with respect to childrearing and housework, rather than blindly following the traditional gender role allocation. Many Chinese mothers have encouraged their husbands to watch the popular TV show "Where is the daddy going?", hoping their husbands will be inspired from involved fathers. A comparative study of 117 Chinese and 108 Japanese fathers also indicates that Chinese fathers agree that fathers should share more childcare and housework chores with their partners than Japanese fathers think (Ito, Izumi-Taylor & Zhou, 2017).

Overview of Research into Changing Chinese Fatherhood Practices

Whether considerable changes in paternal attitudes have translated into actual changes in paternal practices? It is more controversial than the researches on changing parental attitudes (Habib, 2012). Researchers applied the term of prominence hierarchy (McCall & Simmons, 1978) and identity theory (LaRossa & Reitzes, 2009) to predict young man's future paternal behavior and to explain paternal attitudes are likely to affect paternal practices. Habib (2012) suggests that the higher prominences hierarchy as a father status, the more likely role-related behavior will be enacted. However, other researchers through empirical studies argue that paternal attitudes don't necessary to translate into actual paternal practices. Zheng (1998) finds out that paternal attitudes are not significant impact on both the quantity and quality of paternal involvement. Until now, there is no consensus over it. Besides, in the last few years a growing number of researchers have been studying the paternal involvement for children's well-being (e.g., 刘秀丽 & 赵娜, 2006), the status of paternal involvement (e.g., 王丽 & 傅金芝, 2005; 杨雄, 2007; 赵连伟, 2010), the evaluation of paternal involvement (e.g., 陈玲玲 & 伍新春, 2012; 叶颖, 2012). A burgeoned body of literature documents positive paternal involvement will promote marital relationship, children's well-being and father's own development. However, the changing paternal practices literature has not consistently differentiated and systematically compared the quality, quantity and mixed studies on fathering behaviors.

Traditionally, Chinese fathers have not been part of the process of delivering babies. In some patriarchal communities, doing these kinds of bloody activities is shameful and unlucky for men. With the

rapid expansion of knowledge of good fathering, fathers are not only sitting outside of delivery room but also glad to be able to participate in the process of delivery. According to the result of a descriptive quantitative study in Fujian Province (He, Vehviläinen-Julkunen, Qian, et al., 2015), 80% of fathers who are present at labor and birth, feel proud of becoming a father, show their love to their partner and are happy with kids. Another mixed-study (questionnaires and semi-interviews) in Shanghai (Xu & O'Brien, 2014) also shows that 75% of girls think their relationships with their fathers are “close” /emotional close or “very close” /specialty intimate.

One of Chinese fathers' main involvement is childhood socialization (*zuo ren he zuo shi*). Parents, especially fathers as moral teachers have duty to teach children to become acceptable members (*he ge*) of Chinese society. Traditionally, encouragement of modesty and filial piety is particularly emphasized by fathers. Fathers are responsible for discipline children. On the one hand, it is Chinese proud characters for the harmonious family and world. On the other hand, it facilitates modern families to remain hierarchy orders like father is the head of the household. Modern Chinese families generally place significant high value on education. Young Chinese fathers are more involved in children's education than their fathers' generation did (Yeung, 2013). A similar finding (Ito, Izumi-Taylor & Zhou, 2017) also shows that comparing with Japanese counterparts, Chinese fathers involved in more children's development and learning related activities (e.g., reading books to children, writing notes on children's school parent notebooks) and made more efforts to obtain scientifically childrearing from various resources. Because of the limited time on paternal involvement, fathers more prefer showing their kindness, emotions to their children. Some mothers also prefer that fathers do not scold or stern discipline children for making up the lost father-child time. Fathers portray good cop and mothers play bad cop. More and more young fathers prefer explaining the reasons to children why they should obey regulations rather than forcing or ordering them to follow it. Besides, young fathers realized that positive engagement with children will have a closer relationship with children and also will widen and enrich father's experiential world. Then the greater self-satisfaction and happiness further intimate their more active paternal involvement.

Apart from paternal involvement in childcare, paternal involvement should also include housework. Abbott, Ming and Meredith (1992) explicitly point out that the popular press has started to refer to gender sharing housework from 1973. The image of cooking man (*Zhu fu*) and the men from Shanghai who share housework and do cook well are very popular. Although mothers are mainly performing childcare and housework, the new role model of good fathers are reshaping fathering, especially the so-called national good father-noobhuang (*Huang xiao chu*) and cool Daddy-Zhang Liang. 25% of Chinese fathers takes changing diapers, feeding babies, making lunches and doing laundry as their job.

Practices towards fatherhood refer to not only the paternal involvement, but also the accountability or assessment of paternal involvement. In the early time-use studies, there is no common standard for evaluating what extend engagements can be called good paternal involvement. The pioneer scholars (e.g., 伍新春, 叶颖) general agree and largely accept the conceptualization of three dimensions proposed by Lamb (1985). They further make a common Chinese standard questionnaire based on three dimensions

include engagement, accessibility, and responsibility. On top of emphasizing the quantity of paternal involvement, researchers now more emphasize the quality of paternal involvement since it depends on the child's subjective feeling state of 'love' (Habib, 2012). It also impetus more complex longitudinal studies on fatherhood in a wider cultural and social context.

Overview of Research into the Factors Underlying Changing Chinese Fatherhood

The evidences appear to jointly support that the determinants of changing fatherhood are considerably complex and multidimensional. Researchers are trying to explain the underlying reasons and factors from historical, cultural, socioeconomic and gender perspectives. This paper summarizes that we have potential to explain it from the following three levels.

The first level comes from micro level - individual level that most existing fatherhood research focus on. It includes the interactions among the domestic triangle of father, mother and children's characters (Hobson, 2002). Universal patterns include: 1) father's education level and socioeconomic status (SES) are two main factors but better educated fathers will more significantly result in positive fathering practices (Yeung, 2013); 2) mother's education level, SES, 'housing keeping role' are three main factors and fathers' positive involvement will appear under mother's high SES and low housing keeping role conditions (Wang, 2009). Modern Chinese mothers have to handle double burdens, namely paid work and unpaid labor. Besides, education can facilitate women's professional careers in public sphere and also can strengthen women's negotiation capability of involving their partner's engagement in family life; 3) Along with the growth of children's age, father's involvement will increase a lot. From life-course perspective (Hansleben, 1980; Xu, 2017), the role of fathers differs with the four major stages (i.e., prepare for fatherhood, post-childbirth period, child rearing, and disengagement-termination stage). For example, father mainly becomes a supporter of prospective mother during the preparation for fatherhood. In terms of the controversial issue of whether children's gender has positive or negative influence on fatherhood, the findings (Abbott, Ming & Meredith, 1992; Zheng, 1998; Ito, Izumi-Taylor & Zhou, 2017; Xu, 2017) become more and more clear: fathering is no significant differences between sons and daughters, and even fathers are preferring more emotionally involved and spending more time with daughters. Besides, Habib (2012) further proposes two modeling and compensating hypotheses which may help us understand the influences from the strong intergenerational ties-grandparents. Hansleben (1980) also finds that male friends' expressive behaviors will influence father's displays.

The second level is from meso level - socio-cultural level that has been achieved more and more attentions by sociologists. It includes the interactions among the welfare regime institutional triangle of state, market and family (Hobson, 2002). Universal conclusions include: 1) high women's labor force participation rates, family-supported institutions and gender-equal and family-centered welfare system are the key main drivers to fathers' positive involvement (Abbott, Ming & Meredith, 1992; Wang, 2009; Ito, Izumi-Taylor & Zhou, 2017). The gender-equal programs (e.g., The Marriage Law of 1950 and the new Marriage Law of 1980) and Maoist slogan "women hold up half the sky" have promoted women's liberation

in the family and public, and have also encouraged women's labor force participation; 2) population planning has great influence on Chinese family and fatherhood. One-child policy has introduced the Western parenting attitudes and practices, child-centered value to China and then has impacted father-child relationship (Yeung, 2013; Xu, Zhang & Hee, 2014). It has also challenged the traditional most central father-son relationship and has altered the traditional fathers' responsibility for daughters (to help find a husband). Parents and grandparents try their best to support their children and grandchildren regardless of gender for ensuring academic success and competing their bring future. Xu and O'Brien (2014) study supports that today's fathers in Shanghai regardless of their socioeconomic status are highly and positively involved in daughters' care from cognitive, emotional and behavioral levels. They put all their resources and hope for daughter to become a phoenix (*Wang nv cheng feng*); 3) fathers have been all but invisible in Chinese government policies and welfare programs, but recently growing momentum among researchers and community-based practitioners aims to address that exclusion. Statutory parental leave and flexible working schemes are widespread implemented in China. However, Hangsleben (1980) argues that the importance of taking parental leave is often not acknowledged by employers. Many fathers question why time off for children's sick leave and children's birth was allowed less inflexible than the death of relatives.

The third level comes from macro level - global level that deserves to pay more attention by historians, anthropologists and ethnographers. It includes the Second demographic transition (SDT). SDT has shaken up the family structures and ideologies after the second half of the 20C. To be more detailed, SDT-theory fully recognizes that less stability of households, decline of marriage, low fertility rate, interracial and transnational marriage, integration of immigrants, single persons of all ages, and lone fathers have altered the gender expectations of fatherhood. However, Yeung (2013) notes that the SDT are not prevalent in Asia since patriarchy still remains a dominant family ideology. The process of urbanization in the West has been rapidly compressed both in space and in time (周维宏, 2016). This East Asian "compressed modernity" results in the increasing non-resident fathers who work in other regions or countries and leave their children with their partner or other relatives in their hometown (Yeung, 2013; Li & Lamb, 2013). In contrast to a common living arrangement-nuclear family in the West, Chinese extended family is more widespread especially in big cities because of the traditional culture attributions and practical help from grandparents (Wang, 2009). The number of skip generation families (grandparents and children live together, but parents work and live in other cities) was increased from 0.5% in 1990 to 2.4% in 2000 (Li & Lamb, 2013) because of the weakness or very low level of state-provided welfare, which forces people to rely on grandparents for economic security. The Chinese grandparents play a greater role in childcare and they have varying effects on the role of father and father-children relationship. However, grandparents as a domestic helper have not received as much systematic attention in the previous research.

Conclusions and discussions

This paper identifies how much we already do or don't understand about the changing patterns of fatherhood in contemporary China, and related social attitudes. To be more detailed, this paper gives a

fuller understanding of changing fatherhood in post-1949, focusing on attitudes, practices as well as factors in the post-1949 history of Chinese fatherhood.

With regard to the questions of 'periodisation' of changing fatherhood, few researchers point out the exact turning point altered the role of fatherhood: Dong (2013) particularly considers the so-called 17 year period (1949-1966) which is the most important period for the establishment of socialist regime and political system, and also consider treating Chinese women as an invisible category through applying the imported gender theory after 1980s; Yeung (2013) gives a quick and loose description of three important changing periods, namely reforming marriage and labor law (1950s-1970s), implicating one-child policy and economic reform (1970s-2000) and undergoing rapid privatization and globalization (2000~now); Xu (2017) further proves Yeung's above time division in her Ph.D dissertation; Huang (2014) summarizes three post-war political periods, namely 'Great Leap Forward' (1950s to the early of 1960s), 'Cultural Revolution' (mid-1960s to mid-1970s) and 'Open Up' (after 1978~now). In light of limited findings, we can present some hypothesis regarding the causes and timing of three key shifts (i.e., 1949-1979; 1979-2000; 2000~now) in the post-1949 history of Chinese fatherhood.

The fatherhood studies in Chinese-language are limited in heterosexual families. The gay fathers, non-resident fathers, stepfathers, and social fathers are seldom become selective samples. It is not accessible to the international stage of showcasing the Chinese fatherhood changes and dynamics. Although the previous scholars take the characters of family (e.g., parents' age, education level and income, and children's gender and age) and regional differences into consideration, the changing role of fatherhood cannot be comprehensively understanding without exploring and comparing the similarities and differences among multi-generations' fatherhood, especially their grandparents and children's generation. The samples also need to extend to more rural areas since urban samples in progressive parts of China cannot represent the major Chinese rural populations' fatherhood. Furthermore, although some pioneer scholars (e.g., 伍新春, 陈玲玲) have been doing a native version of father involvement questionnaire, the questionnaire and interview contents are not consistent in the majority of empirical research on fathering. The existing data based on self-report surveys and semi-structured interviews cannot be generalized the overall status of changing Chinese fatherhood and do not allow us to compare the changing fatherhood in the past 60 years. The findings of the researches that examining the quantity of paternal involvement, especially the direct engagement of dual-income families also would not be expected to find the underlying factors. More and more researchers have been aware this problem, and predict that new longitudinal study on fatherhood considering three generations' changing may be can answer the questions of the determinants of changing fatherhood. Pioneers offering an oral history perspective on changing fatherhood in post-modern China are remarkably necessary, since the continuously historical data on the same variables can help to make statistical comparisons of changing Chinese fatherhood over 60 years.

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Literature Review on Changing Fatherhood in China

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This paper aims to overview a full landscape of trajectories of fatherhood in China by addressing: 1) changing attitudes towards Chinese fatherhood; 2) changing Chinese fatherhood practices; 3) the factors underlying changing Chinese fatherhood. In light of the literature review on Chinese fatherhood, this paper finds that the dominant image of good father in China has shifted from a stern educator, then to a supporter and finally to a friend. Furthermore, young fathers have involved more in childcare and housework than older generations did. In terms of the reasons and factors underlying changing Chinese fatherhood, this paper summarizes that we have potential to explain it from the three levels (i.e., micro - individual level; meso - socio-cultural level; macro - global level). Finally, this paper presents some hypothesis regarding the causes and timing of three key shifts in the post-1949 history of Chinese fatherhood. Moreover, future research will bring to light an oral history of changing Chinese fatherhood.