Department of Land Economy
Environment, Law & Economics

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE
Real Estate Research Centre

Working Paper Series

No. 2026-03

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The Gender Dimension of Homeownership: Evidence from China

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Abstract:

This paper presents findings on the relationship between gender and three key housing asset indicators in China: homeownership, second homeownership, and housing asset value. The analysis also considers whether having a son modifies the relationship between gender of the household head and the housing asset indicators. The empirical analysis found that male household heads are more likely to have homeownership, female household heads are more likely to own a second home, and female homeowners tend to own more expensive homes than male homeowners. These findings are robust across alternative functional forms and variable definitions. The results highlight the importance of exploring the differential likelihood of homeownership and second homeownership as well as disparities in housing asset values from a gender perspective.

JEL Classifications: J16, J19, R20, R30
Keywords: gender gap, housing asset, homeownership, education

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1. Introduction

The privatization of the Chinese housing market following housing reform in the late 1980s led to unprecedented levels of homeownership. According to Clark, Huang, and Yi (2021), 87% of urban households and 96% of rural households in China own a home. The proportion of households with multiple homeownerships has also been increasing steadily. In 2005, the proportion of urban households owning multiple homes in China was 5.49%. By 2015, over 15% of urban households had multiple homeownership (Yi, Ren, Huang, & Wu, 2022).

Various factors contributing to differential rates of homeownership have been explored in literature. Level of education is positively correlated with homeownership (Cui, Yu, & Huang, 2023). Urban *hukou* status is associated with higher homeownership rates in cities (Liao & Zhang, 2021). Political affiliation (CCP membership) and occupation type (public or private sector jobs) also impact homeownership (Cui, et al., 2023). Existing literature also explores the social and institutional determinants of multiple homeownership in China. Residents holding local *hukou* are more likely than non-local *hukou* residents to own multiple homes in urban areas (Yi, et al., 2022). Individuals working for the government or state-owned institutions have a higher likelihood of multiple homeownership. Families with school-age children are also more likely to purchase a second home to access education opportunities in superior school districts (ibid).

Evidently, homeownership is influenced by many factors, including legal frameworks, socio-economic disparities, and cultural norms. These factors all intersect with gender in complex ways. Despite higher overall homeownership rates, empirical evidence suggests a gender gap in homeownership in China. According to the 3rd Survey on the Status of Chinese Women, "only 37.9% of women-owned housing property as opposed to 67.1% of men" (Cui, et al., 2023). Existing literature finds a widening gender gap in housing wealth (Chen & Yu, 2020; Yu & Cheng, 2022) in China. However, research exploring housing inequality in China from a gender perspective remains limited. Considering China's patriarchal culture, which reinforces norms and social values that are often biased toward men, it is crucial to examine housing inequality through a gender lens.

This study aims to contribute to existing literature by investigating the relationship between gender and three housing asset indicators: the likelihood of homeownership, the likelihood of second homeownership, and the value of the housing asset owned. Additionally, this paper will explore whether the gender of a family's child modifies the relationship between gender and the housing asset indicators. The analysis in the subsequent sections reveals a statistically significant relationship between gender and homeownership as well as gender and housing asset value. The findings on the relationship between gender and second homeownership are statistically insignificant but contribute to a better understanding of gender differences in multiple homeownership, nevertheless.

2. Literature Review

Housing privatisation and marketisation have exacerbated housing inequality in China, yet this issue has received limited attention from a gender perspective (Chen & Yu, 2020; Cui, et al., 2023). Understanding gender disparities in homeownership has important policy implications given that housing assets play a central role in wealth accumulation. In this section, we survey existing findings on homeownership outcomes in China through a gender lens. The review is based on a framework that explores how gender and child gender interact to influence housing asset accumulation. The literature review is structured around two primary research questions: whether gender affects housing outcomes directly, and whether having a son moderates these gender effects.

2.1. Gender Differences in Housing Asset Accumulation

Gender disparities in housing outcomes emerge through multiple interconnected mechanisms. Economic factors create direct constraints on housing access, whilst intra-household dynamics and institutional contexts shape how these constraints operate within families. Understanding these mechanisms provides the theoretical foundation for expecting systematic gender differences in homeownership probability, second homeownership, and housing asset values.

2.1.1. Economic Determinants

Economic theory suggests that homeownership decisions depend on both income and credit factors (Winger, 1968), making gender disparities in wages and credit access central to understanding differential homeownership patterns. In China, the gender wage gap has widened substantially

over recent decades. From 1998-2013, the average ratio of female to male earnings declined from 82.2% to 79.9% (Guo, Wen, Hu, & De Domenici, 2024). Iwasaki and Ma (2020) found that the gender wage gap increased dramatically over the last two decades, with approximately 1.5 times greater disparity from the 2000s to the 2010s. Women earn around 75% of men's wages due to both direct wage discrimination and differential access to characteristics associated with higher pay, such as labour market experience, education, and Communist Party membership Xiu and Gunderson (2013).

These income disparities have direct implications for homeownership because lower income and income uncertainty negatively affect housing acquisition (DeSalvo & Eeckhoudt, 1982; Diaz-Serrano, 2005). Women face greater constraints in accessing mortgage credit due to lower average incomes, which limits their ability to qualify for housing loans. Additionally, gender differences in risk preferences and debt tolerance create differential approaches to housing finance. Research consistently demonstrates that men exhibit greater risk tolerance than women (Brooks, Sangiorgi, Hillenbrand, & Money, 2019; Deo & Sundar, 2015; Olsen & Cox, 2001). Women feel less comfortable incurring debt to finance consumption-driven purchases (Almenberg, Lusardi, Säve-Söderbergh, & Vestman, 2021; Meyll & Pauls, 2019). Experian found that men carry 9.7% more mortgage debt than women on average (Beck, 2023), suggesting that increased risk and debt tolerance may be positively associated with homeownership in contexts where housing affordability is declining.

Gender differences in investment priorities also influence housing decisions. Wang, Zhang, and Zhao (2023) found that female-headed households have higher homeownership rates because housing provides more psychological and financial security for women than men. This suggests that whilst men may have economic advantages in accessing homeownership, women may have stronger motivations for housing acquisition as a security mechanism.

2.1.2. Intra-household Bargaining and Asset Distribution

Within households, asset distribution often follows patterns that favour male partners despite women's economic contributions. The relative socioeconomic status of spouses affects ownership patterns through intra-household bargaining dynamics. When women have higher educational

attainment than their husbands, the probability that they own their dwelling increases by 1.2 times compared to couples with equal education. Similarly, when women hold urban hukou status whilst their husbands do not, their likelihood of exclusively owning and jointly owning the household dwelling increases by 2.2 times and 1.3 times, respectively (Cui, et al., 2023).

However, traditional patterns persist despite these bargaining effects. The China Household Survey reveals that 55.37% of households list the husband as sole owner, whilst only 20.32% list the wife as sole owner (Cui, et al., 2023). This pattern reflects the operation of the "whoever contributes, owns" principle, where individuals who contribute greater amounts to household income have higher likelihood of property ownership (Chen & Yu, 2020). Yet this principle operates within cultural contexts that may undervalue women's financial contributions or assume male financial responsibility for housing.

Housing affordability conditions also affect intra-household bargaining power. In first-tier cities where housing requires dual income contributions, husband-only ownership represents 44.58% of cases and joint ownership 32.52%. In more affordable second-tier cities, husband-only ownership increases to 59.56% whilst joint ownership decreases to 20.32% (Cui, et al., 2023). This suggests that women's bargaining power increases when their financial contributions become essential for homeownership.

2.1.3. Legal and Institutional Context

Legal frameworks shape how gender differences in economic resources translate into property ownership patterns. The 2011 judicial interpretation of the Marriage Law explicitly states that housing property belongs to the person listed on the property deed unless legally contested (Zeldin, 2011). This legal clarification provided institutional support for challenging traditional practices of listing husbands as homeowners despite wives' financial contributions.

The policy impact has been substantial. For dwellings acquired after the 2011 judicial change, wives are 70% more likely to be listed as sole owners and 150% more likely to be co-owners (Cui, et al., 2023). Yu and Cheng (2022) report that 16.91% of couples married after 2011 had wives listed as sole owners, compared to only 5.85% of couples married before 1970. This institutional

change demonstrates how legal frameworks can either reinforce or challenge traditional gender patterns in asset ownership.

2.2. Child Gender as a Moderating Factor in Housing Decisions

The presence of sons fundamentally alters family housing investment calculations through cultural, economic, and institutional mechanisms. Chinese patriarchal traditions create asymmetric investment incentives based on child gender, with families investing more heavily in housing when they have sons. These patterns operate through intergenerational wealth transfer expectations, marriage market dynamics, and anticipatory investment behaviour.

2.2.1. Patrilineal Inheritance and Intergenerational Wealth Transfer

Traditional Chinese inheritance practices favour sons in asset allocation, creating systematic differences in housing investment patterns based on child gender. Empirical evidence demonstrates that parental financial support for sons' marital housing was 3.8 times greater than support for daughters during 2004-2008 (Cui, et al., 2023). This disparity reflects deeply embedded cultural expectations about intergenerational wealth transfer along patrilineal lines.

The operation of inheritance patterns varies by gender in complex ways. Cheng (2023) found that resource dilution theory applies differently to men and women. Whilst women become less likely to achieve homeownership as their number of siblings increases, men benefit from having more siblings because patriarchal traditions cause family members to prioritise supporting brothers over sisters in housing acquisition. This asymmetric family support system means that having sons creates different investment incentives than having daughters.

The one-child policy increased daughters' likelihood of inheriting family assets (Deng, Hoekstra, & Elsinga, 2019), yet patriarchal inheritance norms persist. Sons remain more likely to receive greater proportions of household assets, including housing (Cui, et al., 2023). These inheritance expectations create anticipatory effects where families with sons increase current housing investments to ensure adequate intergenerational wealth transfer.

2.2.2. Marriage Market Competition and Housing as Status Goods

Homeownership serves as a prerequisite for male marriage in Chinese culture, creating intense pressure for families with sons to invest in housing. The gender ratio imbalance resulting from the one-child policy and son preference has intensified marriage market competition for men. In a 2010 Shanghai Daily survey, 80% of mothers stated they would object to daughters marrying non-homeowner men (Wei, Zhang, & Liu, 2017). This cultural expectation manifests in the "mother-in-law economy" phenomenon, where prospective mothers-in-law drive housing demand by requiring future sons-in-law to own homes (Cui, et al., 2023; Z. Gao, Pang, & Zhou, 2022).

Marriage market preferences demonstrate clear gender asymmetries. The 2010 Marriage Market Survey found that 71% of unmarried women prefer homeowner husbands, whilst only 48% of unmarried men express similar preferences for wives (Wei, et al., 2017). This asymmetry creates differential pressure on families based on child gender. Empirical evidence supports the marriage market mechanism: a 10% increase in real estate wealth increases male marriage probability by 3.92% (Chu, Lin, & Tsay, 2020). The relationship between homeownership and marriage prospects is weaker for women, suggesting that housing investment provides greater returns for families with sons.

Housing functions as both shelter and status good in the marriage market context. Housing wealth accounts for over 70% of total household wealth for the average Chinese family (Xie & Jin, 2015) and provides easily observable signals of family wealth. Parental housing wealth acts as a marriage market signal, with men whose parents own expensive homes being more likely to marry (Y. Gao, Alessie, & Angelini, 2023). This signalling function creates incentives for families with sons to invest in higher-value properties to enhance their sons' marriage market competitiveness.

2.2.3. Intergenerational Housing Investment Strategies

Families with sons engage in anticipatory housing investment behaviour that differs systematically from families with daughters. This behaviour reflects both immediate needs and long-term planning for intergenerational wealth transfer. Families anticipate that sons will require housing to establish independent households and attract marriage partners, creating current investment incentives.

Gender-specific housing priorities also influence investment patterns. Families with sons may prioritise housing characteristics that enhance marriage market appeal, such as location prestige or property size. Conversely, families with daughters may focus more on educational access through housing location, though both considerations may operate simultaneously.

Educational access represents another dimension of child gender effects on housing. Families with children purchase homes in superior school districts to access educational opportunities (Clark, Huang, & Yi, 2020). However, given traditional son preference in educational investment, families with sons may be more willing to make significant housing investments for educational access than families with daughters.

2.3. Multiple Homeownership and Gender-Specific Investment Patterns

Multiple homeownership represents a distinct housing phenomenon with particular relevance for understanding gender differences in wealth accumulation strategies. Unlike in Western countries where multiple homeownership primarily serves leisure purposes, Chinese multiple homeownership functions as investment and institutional legacy due to lack of property taxes and rapid housing market growth (Clark, et al., 2020). Despite government attempts to discourage multiple homeownership through increased down payment requirements and purchase restrictions, urban multiple homeownership rates continued growing from 5.49% in 2005 to 15.38% in 2015 (Yi, et al., 2022).

2.3.1. Investment versus Consumption Motivations

Gender differences in multiple homeownership motivations reflect broader patterns in risk preferences and investment priorities. Women tend to prioritise housing's residential function, leading to increased homeownership for accessing educational opportunities through superior school districts (Wang, et al., 2023). Multiple homeownership may serve as risk management strategy, particularly appealing to women who display more risk-averse investment behaviour.

Institutional factors also influence multiple homeownership patterns. Individuals working for government or state institutions have higher likelihood of multiple homeownership due to historical access to subsidised housing and ongoing benefits through work unit housing

programmes (Clark, et al., 2020; Logan, Fang, & Zhang, 2010). These institutional advantages may interact with gender through occupational segregation patterns.

2.3.2. Child Gender Effects on Multiple Homeownership

Child gender substantially affects multiple homeownership probability. Households with sons are more likely than households with daughters or no children to own multiple homes (Hardin III, Hu, & Lin, 2023). The probability of urban Chinese families with sons owning multiple homes is 3.3% higher than families without sons, increasing to 6.2% for families with marriageable-age sons (Chai & Feng, 2021). This pattern reflects anticipatory investment behaviour where families purchase second homes to provide for sons' future housing needs.

Multiple homeownership for families with sons serves several functions. Second homes may be purchased as future wedding gifts or inheritance assets. Alternatively, families may purchase properties in different locations to provide sons with housing options or investment portfolios. The timing of these purchases often coincides with sons approaching marriageable age, suggesting direct connection to marriage market preparation.

Educational considerations also motivate multiple homeownership. Families with school-age children are more likely to own second homes to access competitive schools (Clark, et al., 2020). However, given traditional son preference in educational investment, families with sons may be more willing to purchase second homes for educational access than families with daughters.

3. Analytical Framework

The critical analysis of the literature presented above suggests that gender affects housing outcomes through direct economic mechanisms and indirect cultural pathways, whilst child gender moderates these relationships through intergenerational investment incentives and marriage market dynamics. We developed research questions and testable hypotheses accordingly, as follows.

3.1. Direct Gender Effects

Economic theory predicts systematic gender differences in housing outcomes due to wage gaps, credit access constraints, and risk preference variations. These economic mechanisms are reinforced by cultural patterns of intra-household asset distribution that favour male ownership despite women's financial contributions. Legal institutional changes have begun to challenge traditional patterns, but substantial gender disparities persist. For homeownership probability, economic disadvantages suggest that women should have lower homeownership rates, though their stronger security motivations may partially offset these disadvantages. For second homeownership, women's risk-averse investment preferences may reduce multiple property acquisition, whilst their focus on housing's residential function may increase investment for specific purposes like educational access. For housing asset values, men's higher incomes and greater debt tolerance suggest they should own more valuable properties.

Our first research question examines whether household head gender impacts homeownership outcomes, including first-home ownership, second-home ownership, and housing asset value. This question operationalises the theoretical predictions from Section 2.1 regarding direct gender effects. The general model takes the form:

$$Y_i = f(Gender_i, \boldsymbol{X}_i), \quad (1)$$

where Y_i represents the homeownership outcome of interest (probability of homeownership, probability of second homeownership, or housing asset value) for individual i, $Gender_i$ is the gender of the household head, and $\boldsymbol{X}_i$ is a vector of control variables. More specifically, for binary outcomes (homeownership and second homeownership), we can model:

$$P(Y_i = 1) = G\left(\alpha_0 + \alpha_1 Gender_i + \sum_{k=1}^{K} \gamma_k X_{k,i} + \varepsilon_i\right), \quad (2)$$

where G is a link function (logit or probit), $X_{k,i}$ is the kth independent variable ($k = 1, 2, \ldots K$).

For continuous outcomes (housing asset value), we can model:

$$Homevalue_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 Gender_i + \sum_{k=1}^{K} \delta_k X_{k,i} + \epsilon_i, \quad (3)$$

Based on the literature review in Section 2, we formulate three hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: There is a gender gap in the probability of homeownership in China.
Drawing from economic determinants (Section 2.1.1), we expect male household heads to have higher homeownership probability due to higher average incomes, better credit access, and greater risk tolerance. Sociocultural factors (Section 2.1.2) including patrilineal inheritance practices and intra-household bargaining patterns further support this expectation, though legal changes (Section 2.1.3) may have begun to reduce these disparities.

Hypothesis 2: There is a gender gap in the probability of second home ownership in China.
Based on investment motivation differences (Section 2.3.1), we expect gender differences in multiple homeownership, though the direction requires empirical determination. Male economic advantages and traditional wealth accumulation patterns suggest higher male second homeownership rates. However, women's risk-averse preferences and residential function priorities might motivate investment in additional properties for specific purposes.

Hypothesis 3: There is a gender gap in housing asset values among Chinese homeowners.
Drawing from economic determinants (Section 2.1.1) and intra-household bargaining dynamics (Section 2.1.2), we expect male homeowners to have higher housing asset values due to higher incomes and better credit access. However, bargaining power variations may moderate this relationship, particularly for married couples where women's economic contributions affect ownership patterns

3.2. Child Gender Moderation Effects

Child gender fundamentally alters housing investment calculations through patrilineal inheritance expectations and marriage market dynamics. Having sons creates stronger incentives for housing investment due to cultural expectations about intergenerational wealth transfer and sons' marriage market needs. These effects may be particularly pronounced for male household heads who face the strongest cultural expectations and possess greater economic resources. For female household heads, having sons may trigger compensatory investment behaviour where traditional gender

constraints are overcome to ensure adequate provision for sons. This suggests that child gender effects may be stronger for female than male household heads, creating interaction patterns where gender differences diminish or reverse when families have sons.

Our second research question investigates whether family child gender modifies the relationship between household head gender and housing asset indicators. This question operationalises the theoretical mechanisms developed in Section 2.2 regarding child gender as a moderating factor. The model takes the form:

$$Y_i = f(Gender_i, Son_i, Gender_i \times Son_i, \boldsymbol{X}_i), \quad (4)$$

where Son_i indicates the gender of the family's child (with a focus on having a son), and $Gender_i \times Son_i$ represents the interaction between the gender of the household head and having a son. More specifically, for binary outcomes:

$$P(Y_i = 1) = G\left(\alpha_0 + \alpha_1 Gender_i + \alpha_2 Son_i + \alpha_3 Gender_i \times Son_i + \sum_{k=1}^{K} \gamma_k X_{k,i} + \varepsilon_i\right), \quad (5)$$

For continuous outcomes:

$$Homevalue_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 Gender_i + \beta_2 Son_i + \beta_3 Gender_i \times Son_i + \sum_{k=1}^{K} \delta_k X_{k,i} + \epsilon_i, \quad (6)$$

Three more hypotheses are formulated to answer this research question as follows.

Hypothesis 4: The relationship between household head gender and homeownership probability is moderated by having a son.

Based on patrilineal inheritance patterns (Section 2.2.1) and marriage market dynamics (Section 2.2.2), we expect that having a son will strengthen the positive relationship between male household heads and homeownership probability. Cultural expectations that sons will provide housing for future families, marriage market competitiveness requirements, and inheritance practices create stronger housing investment incentives for families with sons, particularly those with male household heads.

Hypothesis 5: The relationship between household head gender and second homeownership probability is moderated by having a son.

Drawing from intergenerational investment strategies (Section 2.2.3), we expect that having a son will increase second homeownership probability, with interaction effects varying by household head gender. Evidence that families with marriageable-age sons are more likely to purchase additional homes suggests that child gender effects may be particularly pronounced for multiple homeownership decisions.

Hypothesis 6: The relationship between household head gender and housing asset values is moderated by having a son.

Building on marriage market signalling mechanisms (Section 2.2.2) and anticipatory investment behaviour (Section 2.2.3), we expect that having a son will increase housing asset values through interaction with household head gender. The theoretical mechanisms suggest amplification effects for male household heads and potential substitution effects for female household heads, though the relative magnitude requires empirical determination.

4. Empirical Implementation

4.1. Data Source and Variables

The empirical analysis uses panel data from the China Health and Nutrition Survey (CHNS), a collaborative project between the Carolina Population Center at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and the National Institute for Nutrition and Health at the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention. Samples in the CHNS were selected using a multistage, random cluster process and includes around 7,200 households and over 30,000 individuals across 15 provinces and municipalities. This paper utilises data from nine surveys conducted between 1991 and 2015.

This paper explores gender differences in homeownership, second homeownership, and housing asset value. The analysis considers how the gender gap in homeownership is affected by other explanatory variables like age, marital status, education, wage, whether the family has children, and residential status. Details on the variables used in the empirical analysis are provided below.

Dependent variables in the empirical analysis are homeownership (*Homeowner*), second homeownership (*Homeowner2*), and housing asset value (*Homevalue*). Data for second homeownership is only available in the 2015 survey. Homeownership and second homeownership are coded as binary variables. Housing asset value is a continuous variable and measures the nominal value in Chinese yuan. Key explanatory variables include the gender of the household head (*Gender*) and whether the household head has a son (*Son*). An interaction term between *Gender* and *Son*, i.e. *Genderson*, is created to capture the moderating effect of child gender. Details on the key explanatory variables can be found in Table 1 below.

Several control variables are included as additional explanatory variables. The control variables are individual-level demographic characteristics that existing literature suggests could impact homeownership, second homeownership, and housing asset value. The vector of control variables $\boldsymbol{X}_i$ includes demographic characteristics (*Age*, *Education*, and *Married*), economic factors (*Hincome, Wage, Job_private, Job_SOE, Job_rural, Hukou*), household composition (*Child* and *Brothers*), and regional indicators to control for local housing market conditions (*Urbanresi* and *Province*). These controls address potential confounding factors that might bias the estimated gender effects. Definitions and descriptive statistics of these control variables can be found in Table 1.

Table 1. Variable definitions and descriptive statistics

Variable	Definition	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Dependent Variables						
Homeowner	= 1 if household head owns home	158256	0.928	0.258	0	1
Homeowner2	= 1 if own a second home	22082	0.097	0.296	0	1
Homevalue	Value of home in 100,000RMB	88010	1.804	6.451	0	100
Key Independent Variables						
Gender	= 1 if male	133512	0.485	0.500	0	1
Son	= 1 if has a son	132871	0.405	0.491	0	1
Genderson	= 1 if male household head and has a son	132871	0.202	0.402	0	1
Control Variables						
Age	Age in years	99685	45.611	16.44	18	101
Education	Highest level of education obtained	115404	1.63	1.395	0	9
Married	=1 if married	132871	0.364	0.481	0	1
Hincome	Household income in RMB	9964	45565.494	147221.16	0	3000000
Wage	Average monthly wage in RMB	28713	1296.092	3945.693	0	400000
Job_private	= 1 if works in private sector	109506	0.104	0.305	0	1
Job_SOE	= 1 if works in public sector	109506	0.177	0.382	0	1
Job_rural	= 1 if works rural job	109506	0.374	0.484	0	1
Hukou	= 1 if has urban hukou	101945	0.396	0.489	0	1
Child	= 1 if has a child	147291	0.647	0.478	0	1
Brothers	= 1 if has a brother	132871	0.210	0.493	0	5
Urbanresi	= 1 if lives in urban site	99685	0.332	0.471	0	1
Province	= province individual lives	99685	38.134	10.021	11	55

4.2. Estimation Strategies

Our empirical strategy employs multiple model specifications to test the theoretical predictions whilst addressing potential confounding factors. For binary outcomes (*Homeowner* and *Homeowner2*), we utilise logistic regression models to estimate the probability of homeownership and second homeownership. For continuous outcomes (*Homevalue*), we employ linear regression models to analyse housing asset values, with appropriate transformations to address potential skewness in the dependent variable. The models incorporate gender variables, control variables, and interaction terms to assess how the gender of a family's child moderates the relationship

between household head gender and homeownership outcomes. We include year and province fixed effects to account for temporal and regional variations, and conduct robustness checks using alternative model specifications and variable definitions to ensure the reliability of our findings.

4.1. Multivariate Logistic Regression Model

A logistic regression model similar to the approach in Chen and Yu (2020) and Wang, et al. (2023) is used to examine the relationship between gender and the binary dependent variables homeownership and second homeownership. The models are developed by augmenting Equation (5) with year and province fixed effects.

$$P(Y_i = 1) = G\left(\alpha_0 + \alpha_1 Gender_i + \alpha_2 Son_i + \alpha_3 Gender_i \times Son_i + \sum_{k=1}^{K} \gamma_k X_{k,i} + \gamma_w + \gamma_p + \varepsilon_i\right) , \quad (7)$$

where γ_w and γ_p represent year and province fixed effects, respectively. As the data used is panel data collected in waves from 1991-2015, controlling for the wave or survey year effects helps ensure that the empirical analysis more accurately captures the relationship between gender and homeownership by mitigating the confounding impacts of time-varying factors, such as temporal changes in economic conditions and policy changes unrelated to gender. Secondly, it is important to control province fixed effects because economic conditions affecting relative socioeconomic status, cultural norms determining family dynamics and inheritance regimes, institutional factors impacting local policies on homeownership, and population size influencing housing market competition can vary across provinces (Wang, et al., 2023).

The key coefficients in Equation (7) are α_1, and α_3. α_1 measures the impact of the gender of the household head on homeownership and second homeownership, respectively. If α_1 is significantly positive, Hypotheses 1 and 2 are true. α_3 measures the moderating effect of the gender of the family's child. If $\alpha_3 > 0$, Hypotheses 4 and 5 are supported by the empirical evidence.

An Ordinary Least Squares model is used to explore the relationship between gender and value of the housing asset owned. The models are developed by augmenting Equation (6) with year and province fixed effects.

$$Homevalue_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 Gender_i + \beta_2 Son_i + \beta_3 Gender_i \times Son_i + \sum_{k=1}^{K} \delta_k X_{k,i} + \gamma_w + \gamma_p + \epsilon_i \ , \quad (8)$$

Like the logistic regression model outlined in Equation (7), X_i represents a series of time variant, individual-level control variables. γ_w and γ_p represent survey year fixed effects and province fixed effects, respectively. In Equation (8), $homevalue_i$ represents the natural logarithm of the estimated housing asset value. The key coefficients in Equation (8) are β_1, and β_3. β_1 represents the effect of the gender of the household head on housing asset value. This coefficient is used to test Hypothesis 3. β_3 expresses the combined effect of the gender of the household head and the gender of the family's child on housing asset value. If β_3 >0, Hypothesis 6 is true.

A Hausman test was performed to determine whether a fixed effects model or random effects model is more appropriate (Woolridge, 2012). The p-value for the Hausman test is 0.1674, which is greater than the 0.05 threshold. As such, there is insufficient statistical evidence to prefer the fixed effects model over the random effects model, so the random effects model is used. Both logistic and linear regression models are run using robust standard errors to ensure more reliable hypothesis testing by taking into account the potential presence of heteroskedasticity that can bias the estimates.

5. Empirical Findings and Discussion

This section presents the empirical findings and tests the six hypotheses developed in Section 3. The analysis addresses two primary research questions: whether gender directly affects housing outcomes, and whether having a son moderates these gender effects. Table 2 presents the regression results for homeownership probability (Model 1), second homeownership probability (Model 2), and housing asset values (Model 3).

Table 2. Logistic and OLS regression results

	Model 1 *(Homeowner)*	Model 2 *(Homeowner2)*	Model 3 *(Homevalue)*
Gender	0.1675***	-0.1104	-0.1385***
Son	0.1218*	-0.0831	0.0478
Genderson	0.2271***	0.0983	-0.0282
Age	-0.0777***	-0.0007	0.0072
Age²	0.0007***	-0.0000	-0.0000
Wage	0.2931***	0.1758*	0.1376***
Education	-0.3096***	0.1657***	0.1072***

Urbanresi	-1.4295***	0.2072	0.4501***
Job_SOE	0.1491	-0.0187	0.0670
Job_private	0.3999*	0.0058	-0.0707
Job_rural	0.6795***	-0.0264	-0.1592**
Year	YES	NO	YES
Province	YES	YES	YES
N	16,948	2,533	13,793
R Square			0.8841
R Square Within	0.2469	0.0532	
χ^2	2612.7073***	95.4318***	
F			3194.2033***

Note: *Homevalue* and *Wage* are log transformed. Age^2 is the square of *Age*. Year fixed effects are not included in Models (2) and (5) because data is available in the 2015 survey year only. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

5.1. Direct Gender Effects on Housing Outcomes

The first research question examines whether household head gender directly impacts housing outcomes. The results provide clear evidence for gender disparities across multiple housing indicators, though the patterns vary by outcome type. First, we found strong support to Hypothesis 1. Male household heads demonstrate significantly higher homeownership probability than female household heads. The gender coefficient of 0.1675 ($p < 0.01$) translates to an odds ratio of 1.18, indicating that male household heads have 18% higher odds of homeownership compared to female household heads. This substantial difference demonstrates a meaningful gender gap in housing access. The finding aligns with the theoretical predictions from Section 2, reflecting the operation of economic determinants including income disparities and credit access constraints, alongside sociocultural factors such as patrilineal inheritance practices and traditional intra-household asset distribution patterns.

We did not find evidence to support Hypothesis 2 regarding the second homeownership. The results show no statistically significant gender difference in second homeownership probability. The gender coefficient of -0.1104 translates to an odds ratio of 0.90, suggesting that male household heads have slightly lower odds of second homeownership than female household heads, but this difference is not statistically significant. This finding diverges from theoretical expectations and suggests that investment motivations for multiple homeownership may operate differently from initial homeownership decisions. The lack of significance may reflect the competing mechanisms identified in Section 2, where men's economic advantages are offset by women's risk management and residential function priorities.

Finally, Model 3 rejects the hypotheses on the relationship between gender and home value (Hypothesis 3). The coefficient for *gender* is negative and statistically significant. This suggests that given the individual is a homeowner, the gender of the household head being male is associated with a decrease in the housing asset value of approximately 138,500yuan. Although Chinese females are less likely to be homeowners, those who own a home tend to own more expensive ones than their male counterparts. This finding is supported by Yu and Cheng (2022), who find that both the purchasing and current price of properties owned exclusively by the wife are higher than those jointly owned or owned exclusively by the husband. This could be because the likelihood of husbands being able to fund a down payment for a property alone decreases as the price of the property and the size of the housing mortgage increases. As the wife's contribution is needed to attain homeownership, her bargaining power increases with house prices, increasing the likelihood her name is listed on the property deed.

5.2. Child Gender Moderation Effects

The second research question examines whether having a son moderates the relationship between household head gender and housing outcomes. The interaction term *Genderson* captures how the gender effect differs for families with sons compared to families without sons.

First, Hypothesis 4 is supported. The significant positive interaction coefficient (0.2271, $p < 0.01$) indicates that having a son strengthens the positive relationship between male household head status and homeownership probability. This finding supports the amplification hypothesis developed in Section 2, where cultural expectations about intergenerational wealth transfer and marriage market competition create stronger housing investment incentives for male household heads with sons. To interpret the odds ratios: the direct effect of being male gives an odds ratio of 1.18, whilst having a son provides an odds ratio of 1.13. The interaction effect has an odds ratio of 1.25. For families without sons, male household heads have 18% higher odds of homeownership than female household heads. For families with sons, the combined effect becomes substantially larger: male household heads have odds ratios of $1.18 \times 1.25 = 1.48$ compared to female household heads without sons, representing 48% higher odds. This demonstrates that son presence nearly

triples the gender advantage in homeownership access, highlighting the powerful influence of child gender on housing decisions.

We did not find evidence to support Hypotheses 5 and 6. In Model 2, the interaction coefficient (0.0983) is not statistically significant, though it translates to an odds ratio of 1.10, suggesting a modest amplification effect that lacks statistical significance. Combined with the non-significant direct effects of both gender (-0.1104, odds ratio = 0.90) and having a son (-0.0831, odds ratio = 0.92), these findings suggest that multiple homeownership decisions are less influenced by the cultural mechanisms identified in Section 2 than initial homeownership decisions. The absence of significant gender or child gender effects on second homeownership indicates that different factors may drive multiple property acquisition compared to initial homeownership access.

Similarly, in Model 3, the interaction coefficient (-0.0282) is not statistically significant, indicating that having a son does not significantly moderate the relationship between household head gender and housing asset values. This unexpected finding suggests that whilst child gender amplifies gender differences in homeownership access, it does not significantly affect the value of housing assets acquired. This may reflect supply-side constraints in housing markets or different mechanisms governing housing quality versus housing access decisions.

In summary, Hypotheses 1 and 4 receive strong empirical support, demonstrating direct gender effects on homeownership probability and housing asset values, plus child gender moderation of homeownership probability. Hypotheses 2, 3, 5, and 6 are not supported, suggesting that second homeownership and the moderation of housing asset values operate through different mechanisms than theorised. The pattern of results suggests that gender and child gender effects are most pronounced for homeownership access decisions, with weaker effects for multiple homeownership and housing asset values. This finding has important implications for understanding how gender inequality operates in housing markets and suggests that policy interventions might need to focus particularly on initial homeownership access rather than housing quality or multiple property ownership.

5.3. Control Strategy and Causal Identification

The control variables serve a crucial function in isolating the true effects of gender and child gender on housing outcomes by accounting for potential confounding factors. The significance and expected directions of these control variables provide confidence that the estimated gender effects represent genuine relationships rather than spurious correlations driven by omitted variable bias.

The inclusion of wage controls is particularly important for interpreting gender effects, given the substantial gender wage gap documented in Section 2. The strong positive wage effects across all outcomes (OR = 1.34 for homeownership) confirm that income represents a major pathway through which gender might affect housing outcomes. However, the persistence of significant gender effects even after controlling for wages suggests that the mechanisms identified in our theoretical framework operate beyond simple income differences. The remaining gender coefficient of 0.1675 for homeownership represents the direct effect of gender independent of current income, supporting the operation of additional mechanisms such as credit access constraints, risk preferences, and intra-household bargaining dynamics discussed in Section 2.

The significance of other demographic and institutional controls further validates the robustness of the gender findings. Age controls capture complex life-cycle effects that could otherwise bias gender estimates, whilst education and urban residence controls address selection bias from migration and location choices. Employment type controls prevent gender estimates from reflecting occupational segregation patterns, and comprehensive regional and temporal fixed effects account for unobserved heterogeneity in housing markets and cultural norms across provinces and time periods.

The high explanatory power of the models (R-squared of 0.88 for housing values) provides additional confidence in the control strategy. This level of model fit suggests that the control variables successfully capture the major determinants of housing outcomes, leaving less scope for omitted variable bias to contaminate the gender estimates. The fact that gender and interaction effects remain statistically significant in models with such comprehensive controls strengthens the interpretation that these effects represent causal mechanisms rather than statistical artifacts. This comprehensive control strategy ensures that the hypothesis testing results presented in Sections

5.1 and 5.2 reflect genuine gender and child gender effects rather than confounding from observable characteristics.

6. Robustness Checks

The robustness checks presented in this section examine the extent to which the main results are sensitive to institutional developments, individual characteristics, and modelling choices. As discussed in Section 2, institutional frameworks such as the 1992 Law on the Protection of Women's Rights and Interests have shaped women's legal claims to property ownership in marriage and family contexts. Analysing the period before and after the introduction of this legislation allows for the assessment of whether formal legal protections have altered the gender dynamics of homeownership. The role of education, which has been shown to affect intra-household bargaining and women's relative status in the family, is also explored as a possible moderating factor in the relationship between gender and housing outcomes. In addition, the use of alternative functional forms and variable definitions serves to test the stability of the empirical results and to ensure that findings are not unduly influenced by the choice of model specification. These checks aim to assess the credibility of the empirical findings in light of observed heterogeneity in legal, social, and behavioural factors.

6.1 The Impact of Judicial Changes

This section examines whether the relationship between gender and homeownership changed following the passage of the *Law on the Protection of Women's Rights and Interests of the People's Republic of China* by the Fifth Session of the Seventh National People's Congress on April 3, 1992. The law came into effect on October 1, 1992, and was subsequently amended three times: on August 28, 2005, October 26, 2018, and October 30, 2022. Key provisions of the law explicitly state that "the state shall ensure that women enjoy equal property rights with men" and that "in marriage and family joint property relations, women's lawful rights and interests shall not be infringed." These clauses specifically safeguard women's property rights in marital and familial contexts.

Due to data limitations, the potential moderating effect of judicial changes on second homeownership is not explored. Second homeownership data is only available in the 2015 wave,

which precludes analysis of the judicial changes enacted in 1992. Additionally, we report results only for the 1989–2006 period, as data on homeownership is unavailable for the 2009, 2011, and 2015 waves.

To investigate whether the relationship between gender and homeownership has changed over time, we divided the sample by year and conducted separate regressions for each period. From the regression results presented in the table, it can be observed that the influence of gender on homeownership gradually decreases over time. Starting from 1997, the effect of gender on homeownership becomes insignificant.

In the 1989 sample, the probability of the household head owning a home increases by 35.1% when the household head is male. For the 1991 sample, the probability increases by 18.5% when the household head is male, although not significant. For the 1993 sample, the probability increases by 24.6% when the household head is male. From the regression results, it can be observed that due to the lagged effect of policy implementation, gender still had a significant impact on homeownership in 1993. However, by 1997, the effect of gender on homeownership was no longer significant. This suggests that the judicial change contributed to reducing the gender gap in homeownership.

For the interaction coefficient, it is significant in the 1993 sample, the positive interaction coefficient (0.2888, $p < 0.01$) indicates that having a son strengthens the positive relationship between male household head status and homeownership probability. To interpret the odds ratios: the direct effect of being male gives an odds ratio of 1.246, whilst having a son provides an odds ratio of 1.144. The interaction effect has an odds ratio of 1.335. For families without sons, male household heads have 18% higher odds of homeownership than female household heads. For families with sons, the combined effect becomes substantially larger: male household heads have odds ratios of $1.246 \times 1.335 = 1.66$ compared to female household heads without sons, representing 66% higher odds in 1993. Similarly, by 1997, the interaction coefficient was no longer significant. This also suggests that the judicial change contributed to reducing the gap of child gender on housing decisions. The results of the judicial change's effect are presented in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Effect of the 1992 judicial interpretation of the Marriage Law

	(1) 1989	(2) 1991	(3) 1993	(4) 1997	(5) 2000	(6) 2004	(7) 2006
Gender	0.3009***	0.1701	0.2202**	0.0708	0.0386	0.0195	0.0309
Son	0.1902**	0.0574	0.1346	-0.0500	-0.2306*	0.0121	0.0259
Genderson	0.1287	0.2769	0.2888**	0.1522	0.0662	0.1702	0.1268
Age	-0.0271**	-0.0604***	-0.0614***	-0.0067	0.0011	-0.0042	0.0009
Age^2	0.0000	0.0005**	0.0003**	-0.0000	-0.0001	-0.0001	-0.0001
Wage	-0.3724***	-0.3562***	-0.4855***	-0.1802***	-0.0789**	-0.0134	-0.0456
urbanresi	-1.5050***	-1.1335***	-1.5898***	-0.9220***	-1.0000***	-1.1030***	-0.9559***
Job_SOE	-0.9861***	-0.6754***	-0.5601***	-0.1216	-0.1519	-0.5339***	-0.0050
Job_private	0.9004**	1.4321	0.0000	0.9811***	0.3387	-0.1929	0.1843
Job_rural	0.4171***	0.8402***	1.0348***	0.6369***	0.5317***	0.4814***	0.6083***
Year	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Province	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
N	9286	5763	8588	8479	9237	8700	8715
R Square	0.2576	0.2196	0.3032	0.0879	0.0774	0.0696	0.0539
Within χ^2	1671.02	695.60	1587.04	456.24	334.57	280.13	217.86

* $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

6.2. The role of Education

It is important to acknowledge the intersectionality of gender and other variables, like education, to consider how overlapping social identities affect homeownership, second homeownership, and housing asset value. Doing so can provide important insight for policy design that can improve gender equality in housing wealth.

An interaction variable *genderedu* was created to assess whether the level of education modifies the relationship between the gender of the household head and the three dependent variables. The regression output is presented in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Effect of Education

	Model 1 *(Homeowner)*	Model 2 *(Homeowner2)*	Model 3 *(Homevalue)*
Gender	0.4219***	-0.5165	-0.2164***
Education	-0.2726***	0.0836	0.0919***
Genderedu	-0.0597*	0.1347	0.0251**
Son	0.2539***	-0.0184	0.0309
Age	-0.0774***	-0.0055	0.0070
Age^2	0.0007***	0.0000	-0.0000
Wage	0.2919***	0.1846*	0.1389***
Urbanresi	-1.4322***	0.2069	0.4501***
Job_SOE	0.1449	-0.0090	0.0676
Job_private	0.4007*	0.0080	-0.0700
Job_rural	0.6786***	-0.0124	-0.1586**
Year	YES	YES	YES
Province	YES	YES	YES

N	16948	2533	13793
R Square			0.8841
R Square Within	0.2467	0.0543	
χ^2	2613.33	98.88	
F			3195.56

* $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

To summarize, there is a statistically significant negative relationship between *genderedu* and *homeownership*. The sign of the coefficient *genderedu* in the homeownership model is opposite from the core regression model, suggesting a higher level of education potentially modifies the relationship between gender of the household head and homeownership. The negative coefficient implies that male household heads with a higher level of education are less likely to have homeownership. An explanation could be that more educated male household heads are more likely to seek out jobs in urban areas, where the cost of homeownership is higher. Thus, a higher level of education could negatively impact the likelihood of homeownership.

There is no statistically significant relationship between *genderedu* and *secondhomeownership*. This suggests that the level of gender-related educational attainment does not play a decisive role in determining the likelihood of owning a second home. Nevertheless, the sign of the *genderedu* coefficient is opposite from the *gender* coefficient in the core regression. When level of education is considered, the gender gap in the likelihood of second homeownership becomes less significant. An explanation could be the importance of relative education level between husband and wife in intra-household bargaining for homeownership (Cui, et al., 2023). An individual with a higher level of education has more leverage in the intra-household bargaining for homeownership, which is likely to impact outcomes for second homeownership significantly.

There is a statistically significant positive relationship between *genderedu* and *homevalue*. In this model, the coefficient for *gender* is negative and statistically significant. This suggests that given the individual is a homeowner, the gender of the household head being male is associated with a decrease in the housing asset value. This finding is supported by Yu and Cheng (2022), who find that both the purchasing and current price of properties owned exclusively by the wife are higher than those jointly owned or owned exclusively by the husband. However, the coefficient for *genderedu* is positive, which implies that the level of education has a positive impact on narrowing the gender gap in home value.

6.3 Alternative measurements of key variables and functional forms

Additional models are estimated to test whether findings in the core regression models are robust when using alternative functional forms. Probit regressions are used as a robustness check when *Homeowner* and *Homeowner2* are the dependent variables in the core model, Tobit regressions are used for *Homevalue*. The regression outputs are presented in Table 5 below.

Table 5. Alternative measurements of key variables and functional forms

	Model 1 *(Homeowner)*	Model 2 *(Homeowner2)*	Model 3 *(Homevalue)*
Gender	0.0946***	-0.0642	-0.1385***
Son	0.0690*	-0.0476	0.0478
Genderson	0.1213**	0.0501	-0.0282
Age	-0.0437***	-0.0015	0.0072
Age^2	0.0004***	-0.0000	-0.0000
Wage	0.1531***	0.0922*	0.1376***
Education	-0.1695***	0.0836***	0.1072***
Urbanresi	-0.7967***	0.1036	0.4501***
Job_SOE	0.0894	0.0060	0.0670
Job_private	0.2118*	0.0193	-0.0707
Job_rural	0.3383***	-0.0106	-0.1592**
Year	YES	YES	YES
Province	YES	YES	YES
N	16948	2533	13793
R Square			
R Square Within	0.2401	0.0522	0.4211
χ^2	2701.82	94.72	
F			3201.40

* $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

The estimations for the *gender* variable in the two Probit models are consistent with results in the core regressions. In Model 1, the Probit models demonstrate a statistically significant relationship between the gender of the household head and the likelihood of homeownership. When the gender of the family's child is considered, the coefficient remains positive. In Model 2, the Probit regression finds no relationship between the gender of the household head and the likelihood of second homeownership. This is the same as in the main logistic regression. In Model 3, the Tobit regression finds a significantly negative relationship between the gender of the household head and the home value. This is also the same as in the main logistic regression. The relationship between gender and homeownership and second homeownership are robust across logistic and

Probit regressions, the relationship between gender and home value is robust across logistic and Tobit regressions, strengthening the findings in this paper.

While offering more insights into our main findings, the results of the robustness do not change our conclusions. The influence of gender on homeownership diminishes over time, which suggests that legislative change may have contributed to a reduction in the gender gap. The inclusion of interaction terms between gender and education reveals that education modifies the relationship between gender and second homeownership as well as housing asset value, while its effect on first-home ownership remains less pronounced. The direction and statistical significance of the key coefficients are also maintained across Probit, logistic, and Tobit models, and the results are stable under alternative measurements of key variables. Together, these findings indicate that the observed relationships between gender and housing outcomes are not driven by sample selection or model assumptions, and can be considered robust across a range of empirical conditions.

7. Conclusion and Policy Implications

This paper examined the relationship between gender and three key indicators of housing wealth in China: homeownership, second homeownership, and the value of housing assets. It also considered whether the gender of a family's child modifies these relationships. Drawing on a unified analytical framework grounded in economic, sociocultural, and institutional dimensions, the analysis contributes new empirical evidence to a body of literature that has thus far given limited attention to gendered patterns in housing accumulation.

The results show that male household heads are more likely to be homeowners than their female counterparts. This finding is consistent with existing literature that highlights the role of traditional norms, patrilineal inheritance practices, and the competitive marriage market, all of which place greater pressure on men to acquire housing assets. The interaction between gender and having a son reinforces this pattern, suggesting that homeownership decisions are shaped not only by the gender of the household head but also by household composition and expectations regarding future intergenerational transfers. In contrast, no statistically significant gender difference is found in the likelihood of second homeownership, but the direction of the coefficients, supported by qualitative evidence, points to the growing economic agency of women and the changing basis of intra-

household negotiations over property rights. In households where women do own homes, the housing assets tend to be of higher value. This result challenges prevailing assumptions about male dominance in asset accumulation and suggests that women, when they do acquire housing, are more likely to secure higher-value properties—possibly due to greater psychological and financial investment in ownership or more active bargaining in higher-cost urban contexts.

Our findings have several important policy implications. First, the results support existing literature that finds male household heads are more likely to be homeowners. Similarly, having a son increases the likelihood of homeownership. This is due to the competitive marriage market for males in China, patrilineal inheritance regimes, and traditional social norms. Housing assets typically account for the largest proportion of total household wealth (Xie & Jin, 2015). Thus, the gender gap in homeownership has significant implications for wealth inequality. Recognizing the gender inequality in homeownership and exploring potential determinants can inform policy that promotes more equal homeownership for men and women.

Moreover, this paper may provide support to claims of gender differences in attitudes toward owning a home. Counterintuitively, the empirical analysis finds that females are more likely than males to own a second home. Moreover, female homeowners tend to own more expensive homes than their male counterparts. These findings can serve as evidence to further support the claim that women attach greater value to owning a home than men due to the psychological and financial security it provides them (Wang, et al., 2023). This novel interpretation can inspire research to better understand the complex interactions between gender and housing assets.

Our findings also illustrate the changing status of women in China. Historically, women had low social status and little economic power compared to men (Attané, 2013). This is manifested in patrilineal inheritance regimes, the gender wage gap, and other areas that contribute to gender inequality in homeownership. However, this study finds evidence that women have increasingly greater bargaining power to gain homeownership, second homeownership, and own more expensive homes. This is due to the empowerment of women in the public sphere—through the narrowing gender wage gap, increasingly competitive housing markets demanding financial contributions by women, and more equal education opportunities— as well as in the private

sphere— the impact of the one-child policy on patrilineal inheritance regimes as more families have singleton daughters and women leveraging the "female privilege" in demanding homeownership status as a pre-requisite to marriage. The increased likelihood of women owning second homes and the correlation between female household heads and more expensive properties underscores the rising economic influence of women in China.

In conclusion, our analysis suggests that the factors contributing to the gender differences in multiple homeownership and housing asset value are likely different than the determinants of gender differences in the likelihood of homeownership, highlighting an important area for future research. Some limitations of the study remain. The definition of household head in the dataset is self-reported and may not always reflect the main economic decision-maker. Homeownership is recorded at the household level, and the analysis assumes it is attributable to the household head, which may obscure within-household allocation of ownership. Furthermore, the gender of a family's child is treated as exogenous, although previous research has found that wealthier households are more likely to use sex-selection technologies. The absence of data on the gender of the first child precludes the use of this variable as an instrument to correct for potential endogeneity. The findings are also based on retrospective data, which limits the identification of causal mechanisms. Future research should incorporate individual-level data on homeownership and apply identification strategies that better isolate the direction of causality. These steps would help to refine the understanding of how gendered housing outcomes are produced and sustained in China's evolving urban landscape.

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