LUND UNIVERSITY
Faculty of Social Sciences

SIMT19, Master's Thesis (Two Years)

in Gender Studies, Major Social Work

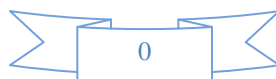*Spring Term 2011*

Supervisor: Åsa Lundqvist

What is behind that closed door?

----------Intimate Partner Violence during Pregnancy in China

Xiaojie Yang

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to acknowledge and sincerely thank the following people for their assistance during the research and writing this thesis.

Firstly, to my supervisor Åsa Lundqvist, who provided much support and encouragement. As a supervisor, Lundqvist has helped me to develop key skills with regarding to writing, thinking, editing and researching. Additionally, her positive and amiable attitude towards me gave me confidence to finish this valuable research.

I would like to thank Xiaozhuan Zhang and other three professionals who participated in my study and made invaluable contribution to my research process. Thanks for all your help when I did my fieldwork in Beijing, China.

The following people are my sisters (survivors) who forwardly participated in this study. Thanks for your courage and doughtiness. Thank you for telling out your stories. Without you, this study would not have been a reality. Sincerely, I wish all of you a much better life.

Finally, I would like to lovingly thank all the professors and lecturers who taught me before, and I would like to thank my family and my lovely friends. It was your whole-hearted love that enabled me to complete this thesis. Thank you all so much for standing by me.

Abstract

The aim of this thesis is to examine intimate partner violence (IPV) towards pregnant women, with the ambition of fulfilling the gap of available knowledge about this complex subject area, in the Chinese context.

The specific objects are: 1) to assess the risk factors and forms associated with intimate partner violence during pregnancy 2) to explore the social dynamics and gender power relations that underline intimate partner violence during pregnancy by exploring the perceptions, attitudes and experiences of survivors and professionals about violence during pregnancy, connection of domestic violence and coping strategies of domestic violence survivors. It was a qualitative study involving 8 semi-structured interviews and 2011. Data was analyzed by narrative analysis.

The results indicated the complexity of the issue of IPV during pregnancy from the viewpoints of both professionals and women. **The women** who had been subjected to violence described their complicated lives as "living in hell where their partners turned into perpetrators". None of the four women left the violent relationships during pregnancy because of multiple reasons. Struggling to find a way to go, these women floundered between hope and despair. **Professionals** viewed pregnancy as a potential trigger for conflicts and violence. What is more, professional analysed IPV during pregnancy from multifarious perspectives under Chinese specific social and cultural context.

The findings of research support feminist theory that intimate partner violence during pregnancy is a result from unequal gender power within patriarchal society. Additionally, the findings can be explained by the ecological model of gender-based violence by illustrating how the meaning of violence is constructed through the interaction of events and circumstances operating at different levels. The traumatic bonding theory and Landenburger's coping theory are suitable to apply to intimate partner violence during pregnancy in a degree. The findings also show positive perspectives of women's reactions which is contrary to the argument by Landenburger's coping theory, and therefore not suitable to be used to study IPV during pregnancy. More importantly, it also contributes to break the stereotype that survivors are passive victims. Finally, the

experience in this paper might be transcended single cultural context to be common to women in other countries in the world.

Key Words: IPV, pregnancy, feminist perspective, ecological theory, traumatic bonding theory, Landenburger's coping strategies

Words: 24777

List of Acronyms

DV	Domestic Violence
IPV	Intimate partner violence
CSL	China Law Society
CDC	National Centre for Injury Prevention and Control
WHO	World Health Organization
ADVN	Anti-Domestic Violence Network
CIOMC	Council for national Organization of Medical Sciences
IRNVAW	International Research Network on Violence against Women

Table of Contents

1. Introduction

1.1. Background and rational of study

Violence against women is a universal phenomenon, and the perpetrators are often male partners who are well known to their victims (World Health Organization, 2005).Domestic violence continues to be common and to be accepted as normal within a lot of countries (Ellsberg, 2000). In particular, domestic violence towards pregnant women is getting more attention nowadays (Jasinski, 2004). Pregnancy is supposed to be a time of peace and safety. According to medical point of view, pregnant women are more likely to experience physical and emotional changes than other periods of lifetime including sensitivity in terms of feelings, high need of caring and weakness, and they have difficulties overcoming the negative emotions faster (Medical textbook on high risk of pregnancy, 2000; cited in Sysavanh, 2007). Pregnancy is a period of time when the family turns their thoughts towards raising the next generation. Unfortunately for many women, they also experience a period of violence when they are pregnant. A survey conducted by World Health Organization on domestic violence involving interviews with 24000 women from urban and rural areas in 10 countries (Tanzania; Serbia and Montenegro; Namibia; Bangladesh; Ethiopia; Brazil; Thailand; Peru; Japan; Samoa) shows that between 1% and 28% of ever-pregnant women reported that they had been physically abused while expecting a baby. More than 90% of them said that they had been abused by the father of the unborn child, and between a quarter and half of them had been kicked or punched in the abdomen (World Health Organization, 2005). In this report, it is also found that violence towards pregnant women happens both in developing and industrialized countries regardless of culture (ibid). Many academics argue that the prevalence rates of domestic violence may be underestimated for a number of reasons, including a lack of supportive victim services, a culture of silence, and the feelings of fear and shame to tell (McCue, 2000; World Health Organization, 2005; Ellsberg & Heise, 2005; Tang & Lai, 2008). These are particularly accurate in countries like China which is the only country where more females commit suicide than males and is one of the few countries where rural suicides outnumber urban, this being considered to be the most serious consequence of domestic violence (Xie, 2007).

Although pregnant women seek medical attention at hospitals for physical suffering and injuries, for instance miscarriage, high uterus contractions or vaginal bleeding, they seldom tell that they suffer from domestic violence (Sysavanh, 2007). A number of studies have shown that battered pregnant women run a higher risk for a range of negative health outcomes like injuries and death, depression, post-traumatic stress, and sexually transmitted diseases than women in non-abusive relationships. (Campbell, 2002; Jasinki, 2004; Sysavanh, 2007). These kinds of injuries can last for long periods of time and have a lasting effect. Many women who are battered during pregnancy can continue to show unhealthy habits resulting from mixed kinds of stresses, such as smoking, drug abuse and improper nutritional habits. These kinds of behaviors also affect the pregnancy (Weiss, 1997; World Health Organization, 2005). Consequently, there is a strong recommendation from the World Health Organization to perform research on domestic violence towards pregnant women.

As a pregnant woman who has a new life in her body experience double burden physically and psychologically, they have to be treated more carefully and better. From my perspective, I am curious about why survivors of intimate partner violence (IPV) suffer from abuse during such a vulnerable period of time and how it happens. Additionally, The People's Republic of China (China) composes of one quarter of the whole population in the world, with a current population of about 1.4 billion people. Yet, little is known about the magnitude and nature of IPV in contemporary China, where it is experiencing rapid economic, social and political changes in recent decades. It is especially clear that there is no academic research conducted to study pregnant women's specific experience with domestic violence in China. Referring to the qualitative research of IPV towards pregnant women, I have not found any academic work on this topic of mainland China. I have the ambition to be the first person to explore the experience of the domestic violence towards pregnant women in mainland China. The main focus of this thesis is not to investigate the prevalence of intimate partner violence towards pregnant women but the qualitative research of this issue to improve understanding of issues such as the cultural and social context of IPV during pregnancy in China and factors that may influence survivors' response. To achieve this goal, two groups of people are to be chosen to participate. These are, the survivors of intimate partner violence during

pregnancy and the professionals who work in the field of anti-domestic violence (anti-DV). By collecting data with the use of in-depth interviews, I would like to find the answer for my research questions. I believe the outcome of this thesis will help to work out the way to deal with IPV during pregnancy and help to figure out what can be done to reduce the damage to the survivors and improve methods of helping the survivors. What is more, findings of this study could be useful for guiding future researches on this topic in China and in other countries. Again, I want to state that IPV during pregnancy should be treated as a serious issue in China and survivors should receive more social attention and multiple professional help. The following are the objects of this study followed by the research questions.

1.2. Objects of Study

1. To access the risk factors and forms associated with intimate partner violence during pregnancy.

2. To explore the social dynamics and gender power relations that underline intimate partner violence in pregnancy through exploring the perceptions, attitudes and experiences of survivors and professionals about violence in pregnancy, connection of domestic violence and coping strategies of domestic violence survivors.

1.3. Research Question

1. What are women's experiences of intimate partner violence during pregnancy?
2. What factors increase women's risk to intimate partner violence during pregnancy?
3. What are women's perceptions about intimate partner violence during pregnancy?
4. What the women's coping strategies?

2. Literature Review& Framework

The main focus of this study is IPV towards pregnant women under Chinese social and cultural context. I will start this chapter by introducing key concepts of this thesis, followed by the detailed explanations of scope of intimate partner violence during pregnancy. I will present the theoretical framework of this thesis including feminist theory, ecological theory, traumatic bonding theory and Landenburger's coping theory. The last sub-chapter of this chapter will be the relevant literature review in China which aims to give a broad background from both historical and academic perspectives.

2.1. Key concepts

2.1.1. Violence against Women

There is still no universally agreed upon terminology referring to the abuse of women. The most common terms being used have different meanings in different countries and different regions. In addition, the terms are derived from diverse disciplines and theoretical perspectives. There are diverse terms relating to violence against women including gender-based violence, sexualized violence, domestic violence, battered women, violence by male partner and sexual harassment. The term "sexualized violence" which is primarily used in Scandinavia refers to all acts of violence towards women within a framework of unequal power relations between females and males (Hammarström, 1999; Risberg & Lundgren, 1999; cited in Kaye, 2006). According to the Declaration on the Elimination on Violence against Women of the United Nations (1993), the term "violence against women" means "*any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life*". In this declaration, gender-based violence is used synonymously with violence against women and as a broad concept for emotional, physical and sexual abuse against women. Accordingly, to be more specific, violence against women encompasses but is not limited to the following:

a) Physical, sexual and psycho logical violence occurring in the family, including battering, sexual abuse of female children in the household, dowry-related violence, marital rape,

female genital mutilation and other traditional practices harmful to women, non-spousal violence and violence related to exploitation.

b) Physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring within the general community, including rape, sexual abuse, sexual harassment and intimidation at work, in educational institutions and elsewhere, trafficking in women and forced prostitution.

c) Physical, sexual and psychological violence perpetrated or condoned by the State, wherever it occurs. Acts of violence against women also include forced sterilization and forced abortion, coercive/forced use of contraceptives, female infanticide and prenatal sex selection.

(From United Nations General Assembly, 1993)

However, there is still a variety of terms that are not used consistently. The term "domestic violence" refers to the abuse of women by current or formal male intimate partners in many parts of the world (Johnson & Sacco, 1995; Fischbach & Herbert, 1997; cited in Ellsberg 2000). According to Dekeseredy and Schwartz, domestic violence against women is defined as an abuse of power. It always occurs when the male partner wants to control the female by means of violence, threat of violence or by controlling the finances and social life (Dekeseredy & Schwartz, 2001; cited in Sysavanh, 2007).

In China, although domestic violence is clearly prohibited by the Constitution, the Marriage Law, the law on the protection of the Rights and Interests of Women, and some other Chinese local laws, neither the term "violence against women" nor "domestic violence" is clearly defined by the above-mentioned laws which lead to difficulties when defining domestic violence in Chinese context (Anti-Domestic Violence Network of China Law Society, 2010a). What is more, currently in China, psychological and sexual violence are excluded by the law. Looking at reality, several forms of domestic violence have not been exposed fully as domestic violence, for example economic control imposed on wife, marital rape, sex selection of unborn babies, infanticide, discrimination or abuse of wife because of sterility, and so on (Huang & Rong, 2004). Since the existing laws and regulations cannot effectively deal with the problem of domestic violence due of the lack of unified anti-domestic violence legislation at the level of basic law, the Anti-Domestic Violence Network has drafted a proposal (ADVN) giving definitions referring to any of the following acts occurring in family:

1. Resulting in physical injury and restriction of personal liberty of a victim, including threats of such acts;

2. Resulting in sexual harm and other victim's will, including threats of such acts;

3. Resulting in psychological harm by means of intimidation, insult, libel or publicizing privacy;

4. Resulting in property damages and other acts of economic control;

5. Resulting in victim's abortion by illegal means

6. Resulting in abandonment of the victim;

7. Other acts resulting in physical, mental and sexual harms or property damages to the victim.

(ADVN of China Law Society (CLS), 2010a: 56)

This proposal contains most of the contents of the definitions of the Declaration on the Elimination on Violence against Women of the United Nations in 1993. Additionally, it defines domestic violence under Chinese social and cultural context. In this study, I am aware that in addressing intimate partner violence, we should not only have a global vision, but also keep the specific conditions of China in mind, that is, having a contextual vision. As a result, I would like to adopt the definition given above and introduce a specific definition which is more suitable for China to lead my study in Chinese society.

2.1.2. Intimate Partner Violence

Regarding the term "intimate partner violence" (IPV), the US "National Centre for Injury Prevention and Control (CDC) gives a strict definition: "an *intimate partner* might be a current or former sex or dating partner whether or not the couple have lived together and *violence* includes physical violence, sexual violence, threats of physical or sexual violence and psychological/emotional violence but only when it occurs in the context of the already listed acts of violence" (in addition, each of various forms are defined according to CDC). (Edin, 2006: 10). To be more specific, intimate relationship is defined as between opposite-sex or same-sex partners and these relationships vary in duration and legal formality (ibid). In this study, the relationship between women and the persecutors include current and former dating male relationships, current and former common-law relationships, current and former married relationships, persons who are the parents of one or more children, regardless of their marital status or whether they have lived together at any time (Alberta Justice Communications, 2008). What should be stressed here is that this study only focuses on opposite-sex relationship.

2.1.3. Survivors

According to Walby(1990), many feminists prefer to use the term "survivors" to take the place of the term "victims" to present women who experience male violence. They argue that the term "survivor" can avoid the misleading impression of women as passive recipients of male violence and stress womenś resistance and efforts to survival from domestic violence (Kelly, 1988a; cited in Walby, 1990). In this study, the term "survivors" are women who are suffering from abuse at present or have suffered from violence previously during their pregnancy. The research focuses on the specific time of pregnancy regardless of whether they finish the delivery. They are the main objects of my research. I decided to choose women who are self-identified as victims of domestic violence and currently experiencing or formerly experienced abuse by an intimate partner.

2.2. Scope of IPV towards pregnant women

According to this study, domestic violence towards pregnant women means any act of, threat to act in violence or abuse, coercion or deprivation of liberty perpetrated upon a partner in a marriage, marriage-like or intimate relationship. The abuse may include any acts which serve to hurt or inflict any suffering upon a pregnant woman, be it physical, mental, emotional or sexual (Runge, 2004). Additionally, intimate partner violence against pregnant women will be recognized as occurring on an unequal basis of gender power (which will be concretely illustrated in theoretical part), meaning the use of domestic violence by male to gain and maintain power and control over pregnant women and this may continue regardless whether they separated or divorced. What is more, abuse may be used as a form of controlling access to health care, finances and social activities. According to the working definitions of violence used by WHO multi-country study on women's health and domestic violence against women, I list concrete definitions as follow which will lead my research process.

Physical violence

Physical violence indicates the intentional use of physical force with the potential for causing death, injury, or harm. Physical violence includes, but is not limited to, scratching, pushing, shoving, throwing, grabbing, biting, choking, shaking, poking, hair

pulling, slapping, punching, hitting, burning, the use of restraints or one's body size or strength against another person, and the use, or threat to use, a weapon (gun, knife, or object).

Severe physical violence

This means physical violence that is likely to lead to external or internal injuries.

Abusive sexual contact

Any act in which one person in a power relationship uses force, coercion, or psychological intimidation to force another to carry out a sexual act against her or his will or participate in unwanted sexual relations from which the offender obtains gratification. Abusive sexual contact occurs in a variety of situations, including within marriage, on dates, at work and school, and in families (i.e., incest). Other manifestations include undesired touching; oral, anal or vaginal penetration with the penis or objects; and obligatory exposure to pornographic material.

Forced sex

Where one person has used force, coercion, or psychological intimidation to force another to engage in a sex act against her or his will whether or not the act is completed.

Sex act

Contact between the penis and vulva, or the penis and the anus, involving penetration, however slight; contact between the mouth and the penis, vulva, or anus; or penetration of the anal or genital opening of another person by a hand, finger, or other object.

Psychological abuse

Psychological abuse includes any act or omission that damages the self-esteem, identity, or development of the individual. It includes, but is not limited to, humiliation, threatening loss of custody of children, forced isolation from family or friends, threatening to harm the individual or someone they care about, repeated yelling or degradation, inducing fear through intimidating words or gestures, controlling behavior, and the destruction of possessions.

(WHO, 2004; cited in Ellsberg & Heise, 2005: 93).

In this thesis, these reasoned definitions illustrated above were used as the basis of the research design. Additionally, interview questions were designed following this basis.

2.3. Theoretical Concepts

The study aims to explore the social dynamics and gender power relations that underlie violence in pregnancy through exploring the perceptions, attitudes and experiences of women and professionals about violence in pregnancy, linkage of domestic violence and coping strategies of domestic violence survivors. For this purpose, it is important to provide a framework for defining the causes of domestic violence, since theoretical framework are wide ranging. Te Rito: New Zealand family violence prevention strategy (Ministry of Social Development, 2002; cited in Batistich, 2004) suggests that the focus is not necessarily on one particular cause of domestic violence. Therefore, I adopt an integration of feminist theories and ecological theory in this thesis. To be more specific, feminist theory is a critically important perspective with crucial arguments about the gendered nature of domestic violence and its relation to power in the society, while on the other hand, ecological theory acts as a useful complement to the complexity of domestic violence on a multi-levelled basis. Furthermore, the traumatic bonding theory focuses on explaining the victim's adherent behaviour will be discussed. Finally, I will illustrate Landenburger's coping theory. There has been plenty of research studying domestic violence in China today, but relatively less empirical studies on IPV towards pregnant women. At the same time, there is no indigenous theoretical research on domestic violence in China, and there are no indigenous theories that can be applied to my study; therefore it is quite difficult for me to use any Chinese indigenous theories to discuss the topic of my thesis. All the four theories will be used as tools to discuss the findings of this study and will be discussed whether or not it suitable to apply on the topic under Chinese cultural and social context.

2.3.1. Feminist Analysis of IPV

Okun asserts that feminism is "the most important theoretical approach to conjugal violence/woman abuse (Okun, 1986: 100). As Kersti Yllo puts it "domestic violence cannot be adequately understood unless gender and power is taken into account (Yllo, 1993: 47). To be more specific, Mary Maynard asserts that feminist perspective analyses domestic violence in terms of relationship between cultural ideology of male dominance and structure forces that can limit opportunity for women to access the resources and

power in the society. (Maynard,1993; cited in Sysavanh, 2007). Violence towards women occurs as a result of a male-dominated social structure and the socialization practices of gender roles (Jasinski, 2001). In this part, the theory of socialization of gender roles and radical feminist theory which focuses on patriarchy will be discussed.

2.3.1.1. Gender Roles and Violence

According to Ulin and his colleagues, an important premise of feminist theory is that social life and behaviour are constructed in various ways by what is regarded as acceptable behaviour based on gender (Ulin, Robinson, Tolley, & McNeill, 2002). From this perspective, a woman's mission is to bring happiness and harmony to the family but not necessarily become a successful career woman, so her opportunity to participate in public activities is relatively limited. Consequently, this stereotyped gender role results in portraying men's position as superior, dominant and having the ability to reason things out (Walby, 1990). According to Jasinski(2001), gender roles and stereotypes set up gender inequality and vulnerability which are a risk of violence. These socially structured inequalities take place in private intimate relationships, whereby socialized men expect more privilege, have greater control over resources and physical strength, and view women as subordinate groups. Men who are socialized into believing and expecting such gender privilege may use power and control strategies to secure and maintain their dominant positions, with limited social and legal sanctions against such strategies (Schechter, 1982; Pence & Paymar, 1993). Additionally, gender roles are inconsistent and changing, leading to overcompensation of men, by being violent when they violate or fail to fulfil gender role expectation (Pleck, 1995; cited in Renzetti, Edleson, & Bergen, 2010).

2.3.1.2. Radical Feminist Perspective

Radical feminists assert that biological differences between males and females are the predominant reasons for gender-based oppression. Regarding IPV towards pregnant women, the radical feminist perspective with its emphasis on the patriarchal roots of women's oppression based on gender inequality between women and men (Walby, 1990) is specifically appropriate. Radical Feminists believe that patriarchy isolates rights, privileges and power primarily by gender and as a result, patriarchy privileges male and

oppresses female (Jasinski, 2001). In *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* (1978), Engels illustrates the situation of women as property of the father and husband resulting from the patriarchal family form. From the economical perspective, when explaining the subordinate position of women, there exists a conflict of interest between men and women, which means men and masculinity is regarded to have greater value in the most common society. Men are supposed to work outside to support their families and women tend to depend on their male family members and do reproductive labour in private sphere. From this aspect, Ursua (2002; cited in Sysavanh, 2007) argues that the patriarchal system is the basic root of the oppressing position of women and results in the domestic violence toward women without thought that it is unacceptable or inhumane.

The dynamics of power in a context of gender inequality in public and private affairs are believed to locate women at greater risk than men. Applied to violence against women, radical feminist theory argues that men behave in violent ways because they need to control women (Daly & Chesney-Lind, 1998; cited in Jasinski, 2001). Jill Radford exemplifies this statement as follows: "It is clear that men's violence is used to control women, not just in their own individual interests, but also in the interests of men as a sex class in the reproduction of heterosexuality and male supremacy" (Radford, 1987: 43; cited in Jasinski, 2001).

This crucial point of view of radical feminism claims that heterosexuality is the universal foundation of the patriarchal institution of getting married under the function of reproducing children (Renzetti, Edleson, & Bergen, 2010). Brownmiller(1975) asserts that rape is a "normal" and "typical" act to express men's perception that women are men's property and belong to men, sexual practice is one of the social constructions around men's notions of desire, not females'. Pregnancy, from this perspective, is related to sexual violence due to the exposure of vaginal orgasm as a physical myth that is socially constructed sexuality as the norm and superior in patriarchy (Jones, 2003). As what Griffin (1979) says that sex is a major way to control women by men.

Similarly, Jones (2003) argues that the universal phenomenon at the root of patriarchy is not just biological motherhood, but also the social institution of the family base on traditional marriage. To be more specific, Jones explains his view that "politics occur in

the families and between individuals when one person attempts to control or dominate others, it is in the personal and private sphere that women are particularly vulnerable to the power of men" (Jones, 2003: 94). Dobash and Dobash assert that marriage has been a core patriarchal institution to support male privilege (Dobash & Dobash, 1979; cited in Enander, 2008). Violence, from this perspective, can be understood as a means for men to ensure this outcome, although patriarchy changes its form over time, marriage is one of the institutions that preserve many of its features (Enander, 2008). Brownmiller(1975) calls the marriage contract as a license to rape since rape within marriage was considered to be non-existent before, and as a result, women who got marriage were considered as agreeing with sex action at any time.

However, radical feminists were criticized that patriarchy theory over-simplifies and generalises the analysis of causes of domestic violence (Loue, 2001; Batistich, 2004). Additionally, Gelles criticizes that feminist theories including radical feminist theory has limitations in terms of not explaining other issues that mainstream theories address, such as social problems including unemployment and alcoholism (Gelles, 1993; cited in Batistich, 2004). Consequently, arguing that wider social issues cause domestic violence as ecological theory to understanding gender-based violence is needed to construct a comprehensive and logical theoretical framework of this study.

2.3.2. Ecological Theory

There is a growing consensus that violence is caused by interplay among personal, situational, social and cultural factors. The ecological model express this interplay (Bersani & Chen, 1988; Swahnberg, 2003; Belsky, 1980; Batistich, 2004). The promise of ecological theory is illustrated by Carl Bersani and Huey-Tsyh Chen as follow:

> A person's environment can be understood as a series of settings, each nested within the
> next broader level, from the microenvironment of the family to the microenvironment of
> the society. (Bersani & Chen, 1988: 76).

This is similar to Bronfenbrener's argument, He believes that the ecology of human development involved "scientific studies of the progressive, mutual, accommodation between an active, growing human being and the changing properties of the immediate settings in which the developing person lives, and this process is affected by relations between these settings and by the larger contexts in which the settings are embedded"

(Bronfenbrener, 1979: 21; cited in Baristich, 2004).

In the 1980s, Jay Belsky conceived a four-leveled ecosystem model which can explain why IPV occurs in society (Loue, 2001). As a key framework within ecological theory, this study will adopt Heise's ecological model shows in figure 1.
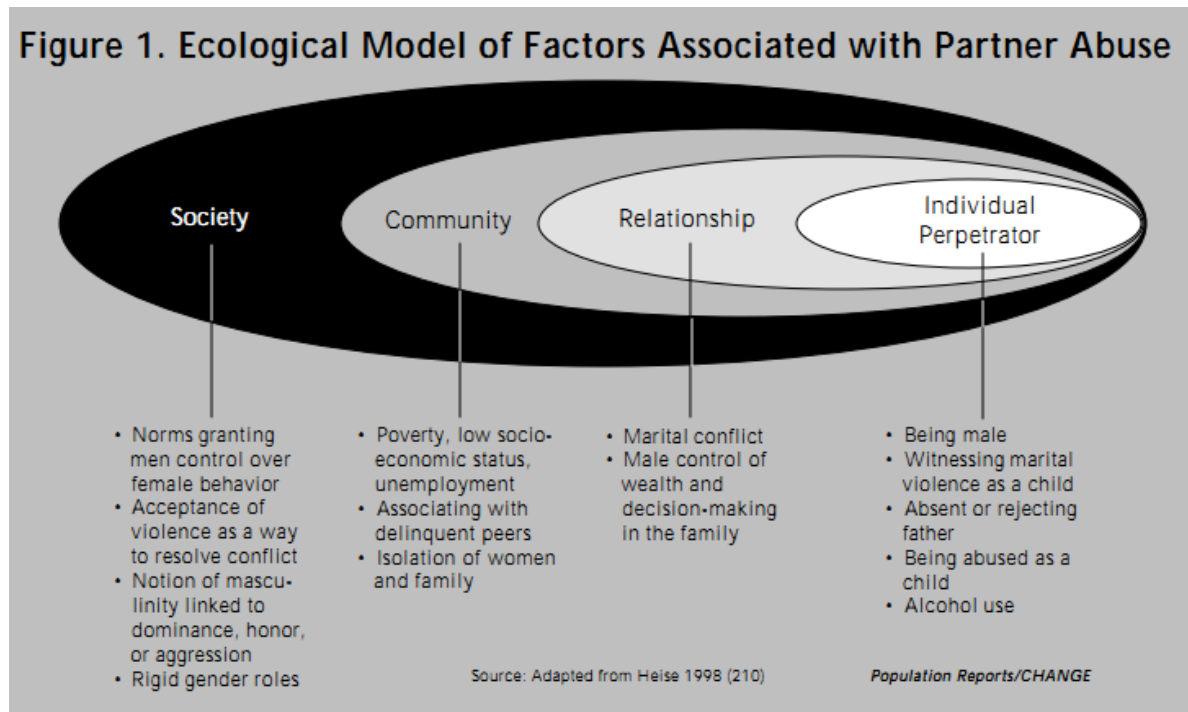
Figure 1 : Heise's Ecological Model (Source: Population Reports, 1999)

A wide range of factors at each of these levels increase the likelihood that a man will abuse his partner:

➢ At the individual level risk factors include man abused as a child or witnessing marital violence in the home, having an absent or rejecting father, and long time use of alcohol.

➢ At the level of the family and relationship, cross- cultural studies assert that male control of wealth and decision-making within the family and marital conflict are strong predictors of abuse.

➢ At the community level, women's isolation and lack of social support, together with male peer groups that excuse and legitimize men's violence are predict higher rates of violence.

➢ At the societal level studies found that violence against women is common where gender roles are rigidly defined and enforced and where the concept of masculinity is

linked to male honor, toughness and dominance. Other cultural norms connected with violence include tolerance of physical punishment of women and children, and the perception that men have "ownership" of women, acceptance of violence as a means to settle interpersonal disputes.

(Population Reports, 1999)

Additionally, the more the risk factors from this model the higher the likelihood of domestic violence (Heise, 1999). In this study, following Dutton's suggestion, the ecological mode will be used as a heuristic tool for understanding the meaning which women themselves ascribe to violent relationships (Dutton, 1996; cited in Ellsberg, 2000). Additionally, these factors together contribute to understanding why some individuals are more violent than others in the society and, on the other hand, why some women choose to stay in violent relationships. (Kaye, 2006; Population Reports, 1999).

2.3.3. Traumatic Bonding Theory

By combining individual-level risk factors with wider environment, the ecological model helps to understand violent reactions of individuals and why women cannot escape from violence at once. Additionally, improving understanding of how women themselves experience violence and choose to stay in an abusive relationship from a theoretical perspective is vital to understand the meaning which they themselves attach to their experiences in my study. From this perspective, "battered women syndrome" was introduced to understand the cognitive behaviour of women who are victims of domestic violence (Walker, 1996). There are two main theories that describe this syndrome which are the cycle of violence and the theory of learned of helplessness (Baristich, 2004).

Feminists assert that throughout time, abused women have been subjugated by the patriarchal society that has placed limits on their opportunities and left them vulnerable to a number of abuses (Jasinski, 2001). As a result, the "cycle of the violence" theory, which emerged from Lenore Walkers's research on battered wives, describes the dynamics of an abusive relationship (Walker, 1979). The promise of this theory is that women are not constantly being abused, and the willingness to stay in abusive relationship is through cyclical fluctuations between periods of abuse and relatively peaceful times (Baristich, 2004).The cycle of violence includes three phases. These are, tension building phase, explosion phase and honeymoon phase. In the first step, the

abusing spouse tends to be continually critical of his spouse. This situation will make the other spouse feel extremely unsecure, and attempts to avoid any further escalation of the tension. The second phase is a relatively short-lived in which the tensions of the previous stage arrive at a proportion to be exploded. After the man releases his tension, the couple enters the third period, during which the husband feels apologetic, remorseful and promises never to repeat the violent episode (ibid). According to Walker (1979), the interchange between caring and abuse keeps the abused wives from leaving the abusive relationship. Additionally, walker points out that it is difficult to predict the period of each phase and the repetition of the cycle due to the influence of situational factors.

The theory of learned helplessness explains why women are psychologically prevented from leaving abusive relationships (Law Commission, 2001; cited in Baristich, 2004). It reflects the existence of a power imbalance within the abusive relationship, the abuser perceive himself as dominating his partner. Over time, with the more frequently and serious violence, the pattern of recurring physical and emotional brutality followed by tenderness may have the effect of changing a women's sense of reality to the degree that she becomes convinced that there is nowhere to go and therefore give up the effort to seek to help (Walker, 1996; cited in Ellsberg, 2000).

2.3.4. Landenburger's Coping Theory

Landenburger came up with four stages of abuse; from binding to recovery from an abusive relationship. The four stages are *the binding stage, the enduring stage, the disengagement stage* and *recovery,* and they are not mutually exclusive but each wave into another (Landenburger, 1989)

In the binding stage, the abused woman emphasizes the positive parts in the relationship. There is rationalization or denial within this stage. The woman does not pay attention to the warning signs which shows that the situation will never turn better, she works harder to heal the relationship and blames herself for the abuse and lets herself bond to her partner. Later, she enters the second stage, where she moves from ignoring the problems to consciously neglecting problems. She tries to find a solution without thinking about the problem. She turns to live in two different realities, blaming herself or changing her behaviour to lessen the situation. In the disengagement stage, there is recognition of the problem and active seeking help. But at this stage, she may feel like

losing the relationship, hence, she chooses to come back to the abuser. The recovery stage is marked as leaving the relationship if the violence still persists. In this stage, if she cannot abandon her guilt complex and cannot focus on herself, she may return to the abuser (Landenburger, 1989; Kaye, 2006)

According to Campbell and Campbell, the four stages often do not apply to pregnant women who experiencing intimate violence since they always stay in the first or two stages (Campbell & Campbell, 2006; cited in Bhandari, 2009). Lutz (2005) illustrates that woman may leave the abusive relationship if the violence escalates after she gives birth to the child.

What should be stressed here is that theories used to do research on domestic violence today have the tendency to put women in the passive and weak position, but many empirical researches show the opposite findings (Ellsberg, 2000; Kaye, 2006; Edin, 2006). In this thesis, I would like to show a positive mind of thinking this issue, trying to find affirmative and positive perspective to make the thesis a heuristic study. I have the wish that survivors will not just be treated as a weak group in a subordinated position but as a group of women who have the inner strength, but need more guidance to help themselves to find the way to go.

2.4. Relevant Literature Review

As mentioned before, there is limited academic research on IPV toward pregnant women; so I encountered difficulties in finding previous studies of IPV towards pregnant women in mainland China. There is especially no academic studies on the qualitative research focus on experiences of pregnant survivors in abusive relationships. But I believe that the Chinese case has its own speciality in terms of culture and history. I shall therefore explicate Chinese traditional culture and values relating to gender issue, going on to explain the changes of gender practices today and finally, illustrate some existing previous researches of IPV during pregnancy under Chinese context. These discussions will offer the macroscopic background to understand the IPV in China today; what is more, this background can be understood as the society circle of ecological theory which interacts with other three circles. Additionally, the gender inequalities and patriarchal system will be discussed as the main concepts in feminist theory.

2.4.1. Social and Cultural Context of China

2.4.1.1. Traditional Culture Beliefs, Values and Practices

Confucian philosophy advocates patriarchal beliefs and values in traditional Chinese culture which emphasize the dominant role of men and the inferior role of women in traditional Chinese societies (Gallin, 1992; cited in Tang & Lai, 2008). These stiff gender roles can be reflected by dogmatic Confucius decorum such as *San Cong Si De* which means three obedience (to father before marriage, to husband after marriage and to son after the death of husband) and four virtues (morality, proper speech, modest manner and diligent work) (Xia; cited in Huang & Rong, 2004). These principles were regarded to be basic dictum for Chinese women to follow in their whole lives. Additionally, *nu zi wu* cai *bian shi de* stipulates that ignorance is a woman's virtue since she will never waste time in receiving education but will keep submitting to her husband and son to be a good wife and mother (Tang & Lai, 2008: 11). To be a *xian qi liang mu* (means excellent wife) and is the aspirations of a woman who demonstrates that she is a virtuous wife and a conscientious mother (Tang &Lai, 2008: 11). The cultural ideology created an image of women as someone that should be gentle, likeable, submissive, thoughtful, caring and self-effacing, so the woman's mission is to show affection for others and use their inborn capability and interest to raise children and take care of other family members (Chen; cited in Huang & Rong, 2004).

The role of family is vital in Chinese traditional culture and marital roles are gender-segregated between "reproductive" roles for women and "productive" roles for men. Men act the role of the leader in the family, which can be reflected by the maxim "*men are the sky*" (Chen, 2004: 3). Men are decision makers in the family especially on major issues, whilst women may manage the family's expenses though this role is considered to be a basic skill to take care of the family (ibid). The dominant status of men can be maintained by means of using violence in the family for the sake of traditionally normal order of the family. This tradition contributes to men's privilege to abuse their wives in the name of putting women in their rightful place in the family to keep men´s dominant status in the family (Tang & Lai, 2008). The abusive action is often condoned as a legitimate treatment of Chinese women and is always explained to be rules of the family. In order to

keep honour, solidarity, and harmony of family, women are discouraged to leave their husbands no matter how abusive they might be (Huang & Rong, 2004).

Chinese interpersonal relations that emphasize loyalty, obligation, and reciprocity stem from five cardinal relations of *wu lun* (Tang & Lai, 2008: 12) and strictly prescribes the power, responsibilities, and roles between the emperor and ministers, father and son, husband and wife, among siblings, and among friends. The Chinese have been socialized to comply with these rules to maintain the harmony, discipline, and self-restraint in interpersonal relationship (Goodwin & Tang, 1996; cited in Tang & Lai, 2008). As the central organizing role for Chinese, family gives individuals sources of identity, security and is supposed to be a private sphere (Huang & Rong, 2004). Family shame should not be made public; therefore, domestic violence should be concealed or covered within the family. If a woman notifies others of her abusive life, it is not just herself losing face since outsiders will see her as "not a good woman" to do what she should do responsibly and the whole family will also lose face since their private life is publicly known (Huang & Rong, 2004). Due to the inferior status of women and the persistent patriarchal attitudes towards women in Chinese traditional culture, Chinese women are in vulnerable positions in both family and society. It is therefore not surprising that the exploitation and violence against women within the family have been happening for many centuries (Gilmartin, 1990).

2.4.1.2. Economic, Social and Political Changes in China

Chinese society developed rapidly in the past decades in terms of economy, social and political perspectives. Traditional cultural beliefs and values have been challenged by modernization and have been segmented to pieces which create tension in the new society (Chan & Lee, 1995; cited in Tang & Lai, 2008). The Chinese people are now at a crossroad of modernism and traditionalism, and this may create new pressure on women as some of the changes may become new factors contributing to intimate partner violence in China (Zhao, 2010). Bellow is the specific illustration.

❖ Economic and social changes

Since the economic liberalization policies from 1980s have transformed China into a market-based socialist economy, women have greater access to education and employment and can bring additional financial income to the family. This new situation

may make men more reluctant to give up their marital power as prescribed by traditional patriarchal privileges which in turn may create high levels of conflict in marital relationships (Tang, 1999a; cited in Tang & Lai, 2008). As a result of the birth control policy in China, smaller families with an average of less than two children per couple became common. More and more couples choose to cohabit without marriage and live separately from their old parents. The nuclear families has increased significantly leaving family members isolated from each other and less able to offer mutual support and assistance (Tang & Lai, 2008).

Another two significant changes are the increasing rate of divorce and extramarital affairs. Brownridge(2006) summarizes that; simplified marriage and divorce laws, more liberal attitudes toward divorce, and greater economic independence among women has resulted in increasing rate of divorce in China today and as a result of the rapid economic development and unification of Hong Kong, increasing population mobility from rural area to urban area and from inland-to-coastal regions in search of better lives. Love and morality have all been under great challenges by increased casual sex and extramarital relationships. The phenomenon of second wives or mistresses has raised public concern in both China and Hong Kong to the extent of passing of reforms of marriage laws in order to restrict and punish such behaviour (Tang, 1999a; cited in Tang & Lai, 2008). Since this kind of men love the new and loathe the old and have the purpose to get divorce from first wife, he may torture his wife physically and psychologically, leaving untold sufferings to the wife (Jiangxi Provincial Women's Federation, 2000).

❖ Political and legal changes

Political changes in China in the past decades has contributed to the protection of women in the society especially after the Cultural Revolution in the 1960s which advocate the slogan "*Women can uphold half of the sky*" to promote the concept of gender equality (Tang & Lai, 2008: 13). The revised 1980 Marriage Law was modified again in 2003 in order to increase the protection of women. This current legal reform stipulates that it is illegal to have extramarital relationship in order to affirm the principle of monogamy. It also regulates that acts of "domestic violence, abuse, bigamy, neglect, and abandonment" constitute criminal offence and perpetrators will be punished (Marriage Law of the People's Republic of China, 2003/11/14). From the early 1980s, since the relatively

looser political climate, women's studies and gender research programs were formally established in 1985. After a long process of promotion, popularization and lobbying, Chinese women began to have the courage to report domestic violence and campaigned for laws to protect their rights (Milwertz, 2003). Intimate partner violence became more visible in public. The successful experience of China's first international conference on domestic violence in 2002 boosted the development of NGOs who aim to protect women's rights (Tang &Lai, 2008).

2.4.2. Contemporary Gender Practice in China

The movement to combat domestic violence had started early in some western countries. In the early 1980s, the first shelter for battered wives was set up by women's groups in Hong Kong to provide anti-domestic violence service (Milwertz, 2003). Although the new Marriage Law in 2001 addresses domestic violence issues, anti-domestic violence work is still in a preliminary stage in China today as a result of multiple reasons. In spite of rapid development in China's societies these decades, androcentrism and some patriarchal attitudes still remain in China. Gender stereotype and traditional culture contributes to the preferable of masculine characteristics than feminine characteristics in societies and within families. Still, men are considered to deserve more power than women (Tang, Wong, & Cheung 2002). Nowadays, women have more freedom to access education, occupation and social activities, while many still consider the most proper place for women are their families where they should take responsibilities to household chores and caring for family members as gender roles advocates that "the man handles external affairs and the woman manages family affairs" (Chen, 2004; cited in Huang & Rong, 2004). Regarding the evaluation of successful career for women, public affirm them to be rational, decisive, capable, dominant, accomplished. On the other hand, given the specific appellation *nv qiang ren* (Strong women), they are being criticized as selfish, aggressive, excessively independent, lack of feminine characteristics and nurturance (Huang & Rong, 2004: 24). It is not uncommon to regard women who have divorced as losers to keep the stability of family and fulfil traditional wives roles. What is more, the public attitude towards single mothers and divorced women tend to be negative in China (Tang, 2004; cited in Tang & Lai, 2008).

Regarding the awareness of intimate partner violence, there is still a lack of understanding of the issue. Under deep influence of traditional ideas such as "*it is a disgrace to divorce and no good person will want a divorce*" and "*it is preferable to pull down ten temples than to break up a marriage*", family invention could be difficult when people believe family issues can just be decided and solved within family members (Huang & Rong, 2004: 15). In China, basic-level public security organs (referring to police substations) do not intervene in cases of IPV that have not yet caused death or serious injuries (ADVN of CLS, 2010b).

More importantly, due to the narrow and unclear definition of IPV in China, various negative consequences have emerged.

> ➢ Neglecting of victim's subjective experience can exacerbate the problem of under-reporting and reluctance in seeking help and assistance from society.
> ➢ It is hard for frontline professionals and researchers to detect, prevent or handle cases of IPV that may be excluded by the narrow definitions.
> ➢ It results in low estimates of incidence and prevalence of the problem of IPV which furthermore offer an excuse for policy makers' delay to allocate resources for prevention and intervention.

(ANDV of CLS, 2010b).

2.4.3. Previous Findings of IPV against Women

Due to the different study methods, study design and presentation of research results, there is a considerable variation in the prevalence of domestic violence from country to country, and even among studies within one country. As a result, it is difficult to compare research results even between studies conducted in the same country (WHO&PATH, 2005). Since the thesis focus on IPV during pregnancy in China, I will present the existing findings which include three sections. The three sections are prevalence and forms of IPV towards pregnant women, risk factors and survivors' perceptions about IPV. What should be mentioned here is there is no academic research of qualitative research on IPV during pregnancy from micro level similar to my research, so I believe although I cannot find previous research on my topic in China; my thesis will contribute to this gap in the knowledge of this field.

2.4.3.1 Prevalence and Forms of IPV towards Pregnant Women

The subject started to get attention due to a research done by Leung and his fellows in a Chinese community in Hang Kong in 1998 where they found that among 631 surveyed women (mean age is 29 years), 17.9% of the pregnant women had a history of abuse, 15.7% of the women had been abused in the past year and 4.3% of the women had been abused during current pregnancy. Meanwhile, 9.4% of the surveyed women reported to be forced to have sexual intercourse by their husbands in the last year. In addition, the main form of violence during pregnancy is threats of violence without real physical injury. (Leung, Leung, Lam, & Ho, 1999). Another research recruited 1200 post-natal women in 2002-2003 (mean age is 28-30 years) and found that 11.2% of surveyed women had experienced at least one type of violence during current pregnancy by their intimate partners. The prevalence of physical, psychological and sexual violence was 4.1%, 8.8% and 5.5% respectively (Lau, 2005).

The first population study conducted by the National Centre for Women and Children Health between 2001-2002 in 32 communities in north and central China shows that the prevalence of domestic abuse (physical, emotional, or sexual) happening in any period (before, during, or after pregnancy) was 12.6%. The prevalence of physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse were 3.5%, 5.6% and 8.0% respectively. In general, women experienced less IPV during pregnancy (4.3%) in comparison to pre-pregnancy (9.1%) and post-natal periods (8.3%). At the same time, the research found out that partner-perpetrated physical violence increased in frequency and severity during the postpartum period compared with the antennal period (Guo, Wu, Qu, & Yan, 2004). This is in accordance with two studies on IPV occurring during the period of pregnancy and after pregnancy conducted by Ye and his colleagues in central and south China (Ye, Wang, Xio, Feng et al., 2005; Ye, Wang, Xio, Xu et al., 2005).

A more recent study was conducted in 2005–2006 which recruited 3245 pregnant women, showing that the prevalence of IPV during current pregnancy was 9.1% for any type, 6.7% for psychological, and 2.4% for physical and/or sexual violence (Tiwari et al., 2008; cited in Tang &Lai, 2008). In mainland China, according to a cross-sectional study conducted in Tianjin, Liaoning, Henan and Shanxi provinces between 2001-2002 shows that the prevalence of IPV among participants was 22.6%. The violence included 18.1%

sexual abuse, 7.8% physical abuse and 3.0% emotional abuse. 16.8% of the abused women experienced violence frequently while 4.4% experienced all the three types of violence (Wu, Guo, & Qu, 2005).

2.4.3.2. Risk Factors of IPV towards Pregnant Women

There is no consensus about whether pregnancy reduces or increases on-going violence even if there are studies showing that pregnancy can be regarded as a trigger especially in relationships with on-going serious violence (Helton & Snoddgrass, 1987; Helton et al., 1987; Campell et al., 1992; Parker et al., 1993, 1994; cited in Edin, 2006). In the Chinese context, poor economic situations, low income family, low education of male or both partner, unplanned pregnancy, unemployment of male partner and smoking are the common risk makers of IPV during pregnancy of many studies (Ye, Wang, Xio, Feng et al., 2005; Ye, Wang, Xio, Xu et al., 2005; Leung, Leung, Lam, & Ho, 1999; Wu, Guo, &Qu, 2005; Lau, 2005). What is more, marital disputes, poor marital relationships, early marriages, single, divorce and cohabitation are found to increase IPV towards pregnant women (Leung, Leung, Chan, & Ho, 2002; Guo et al., 2004; Wu et al., 2005). In the research of Lau (2005), small residences and low social support can also be risk makers. This finding is in line with Tiwari's study. What is more, Tiwari also points out that unwanted pregnancy can be a trigger of IPV during pregnancy (Tiwari, 2008; cited in Tang & Lai, 2008). Ye and his colleagues assert that the persecutor may abuse pregnant woman because she does not do household chores, or because she stays out late (Ye, Wang, Xio, Feng et al., 2005). Besides, fear of partner, partner's economic control, receiving the cold shoulder from partner and multiple abortions could be triggering factors (Wu et al., 2005). Higher male-on-female IPV prevalence during pregnancy was also found among women who reported actual or suspected extramarital affairs of their husbands (Li, Ching, & Hwang, 2003; Xu et al., 2005).

2.4.3.3. Survivors' Perceptions about IPV

Generally speaking, Chinese women have a poor understanding of IPV, especially women from rural areas. One study shows that about 75% of the interviewed women from rural areas did not understand the exact meaning of the term "domestic violence" (Zhao, Guo, Wu, & Wang, 2006). Some studies also show that women would increase

risk of IPV when they cannot recognize psychological violence and marital rape as domestic violence (Li et al., 2003, 2004; Ye, Wang, Xio, Fenget al., 2005; Ye, Wang, Xio, Xu et al., 2005) and/or agree with such statements as "Conflicts and violence in the family, where family secrets should be kept secret" (Li et al., 2003, 2004; Xu et al., 2005; Ye, Wang, Xio, Xu et al., 2005; Ye,Wang, Xio, Feng et al.,2005).

3. Research Methodology

In this chapter, I elaborate the qualitative method I used in this research. I will start with the research design, i.e. meanings of qualitative research, sites and target samples. Then, I will present methods of data collection of this research including semi-structured interview and non participant observation. The last part will be the discussion of ethical considerations and analytic framework of this thesis.

3.1. Feminist Qualitative Research

3.1.1. Feminist Research Design

The aim of this research is to improve the understanding of IPV towards pregnant women because little is known about this issue in China today. A qualitative approach that "seeks to produce rounded and contextual understandings on the basis of rich, nuanced and detailed data" is appropriate (Mason, 2002: 3). According to Morgan and Krueger, qualitative methods are useful to gaining depth of knowledge and illuminating the context of a problem (Morgan & Krueger, 1998). Furthermore, qualitative methods are more suitable and helpful in collecting more actual answers when talking about personal and private topics which might be difficult for a person to answer (Flick, 2006).

As an important strand of qualitative research, feminist research centralizes the voice of marginalized groups (their standpoints) and foreground issues of power (Somekh & Lewin, 2005). Griffiths explains that into specific way: that knowledge generated is grounded in experiences and subjectivities and inflected by acknowledged power relations and subject to theorizing which, she says, is indispensable (Griffiths, 1995; cited in Somekh & Lewin, 2005). According to Weiner, feminist research is political, critical and praxis-oriented (Weiner, 1994). Similarly, DeVault says that feminist methodology reveals the location and perspectives of women, supports research of value to women, leading to social change and

shares the value of minimizing harm and control in the research process (DeVault, 1996; cited in Somekh & Lewin, 2005).

In order to understand a sensitive issue, this research adopts a research design since it is impossible to enter a field with a blank mind. In this study, semi-structured interviews and non participant observations were used in the data collection method to get deeper and rich information of each informant. Field diary and notes were taken, also a tape recorder was used to avoid missing important information.

3.1.2. Location and Site

According to the practical guide of WHO, creating partnership between the researcher and those persons who are in a position to use the research effectively such as service providers, government agencies or non government organizations (NGOs) is important (Ellsberg & Heise, 2005). I chose two of the biggest and most influential NGOs focusing on the issue of domestic violence in Beijing, QianQian law firm in Beijing and one NGO in Tangshan, Hebei province.

Anti-Domestic Violence Network of China Law Society (ADVN of CLS) - an NGO aiming to eliminate gender-based violence in China and raising awareness of domestic violence into the public spotlight was the first NGO I visited in Beijing. The women's psychological counselling centre in Beijing has an anti-domestic violence hotline and conducts studies on various topics including domestic violence, was the second NGO I visited in Beijing. I chose them because they have normal institutions in the city and can receive victims in their institutions which can be regarded as consulting centres for victims. What is more, as the capital of China, Beijing is a cosmopolitan with a diversity of NGOs helping victims of domestic violence. Choosing these two NGOs helped me to expand my choice of the next institute to visit. My first contact was with the manager of ADVN who helped me find the law firm. I chose the last NGO in Tangshan because the organizer was involved in an on-going research on domestic violence toward pregnant women in rural area for ten years and has abundant experience on this topic.

I am aware that the two cities cannot represent the situation in both rural area and urban area of China and this might be the biggest limitation to deploy the research, my purpose of this research is to explore the characters and situation of intimate partner violence towards pregnant women from the experts' perspective and explore the experiences of the survivors

but not to discuss this question from a macro perspective. Furthermore, there were time and resource limitations that made impossible for the study to cover the whole country. As a whole, I try my best to explore IPV toward pregnant women as much as I can.

3.1.3. Target Samples

In my research, two groups of people were chosen to be interviewees. The groups include survivors and professionals including three service managers working in three NGOs and a lead councillor from one of the law firms. As implications for research design, Goldbart and Hustler stress the important role of documenting when the researcher is sampling and developing the plan to explicit sampling (Goldbart & Hustler; cited in Somekh & Lewin, 2005). Following their suggestion to do research on this sensitive topic, I shall elaborate the process of finding samples in the following chapter.

3.1.3.1. Professionals

At the beginning, what should be stressed here is the usage of terms. The terms "experts" and "professionals" will be used as the same meaning which represents the four expert interviewees.

I chose to interview managers and lead councillors because they represent a group that can offer plenty of information (Flick, 2006). They have valuable information about the prevalence of IPV towards pregnant women and have encountered different kinds of cases brought to them in hand, so they can summarize the characteristics of this kind of IPV and give some analysis as to why this violence occurs from different and perspectives. What is more, these experts have personal relationships with other experts working on the same topic, so I can use the snow ball technique to find my next interviewee.

The process of finding the professionals to conduct interviews was not difficult since the professionals received elaborate information about my study and understood it quite well. All of the four professionals took initiative to participate in the study and forwardly gave me much help. Finally, three service managers of NGOs including Mrs Zhang, Miss Liu and Mrs Zhou and a lead council (Mrs X) who took charge of the famous case of Dong Shanshan who suffered from IPV to death all participated in my study.

In addition to asking for the potential experts to be interviewed, I also got some contact information on the survivors of IPV. This is a vital point in the whole process of research.

Firstly, it is crucial that I can receive some contact information about the survivors to continue my research further. Secondly, I need the help of the experts to communicate with the survivors for the part of narrative interviews from the beginning in order to guarantee the survivors agree to participate in personal interviews with me.

3.1.3.2. Survivors

In order to study the women's stories about violence, the main target samples are either in the pregnant stage or postpartum women who suffered from IPV when they are pregnant or were pregnant. Since this study focuses on the period of time of pregnancy, the samples include women who were pregnant over one year before the interview if they can recall their experience of IPV when they were pregnant. The women were chosen according to their specific experience on IPV during pregnancy and their ability to describe and interpret their own actions and feelings about the experience.

After I met with the managers of NGOs and finished interviews, I asked them whether they could offer me some contact information of survivors (mainly email address). Due to the character of the NGOs and the law firm, women always take the initiative of getting in contact with professionals there to ask for help. This was therefore the best place to get into contact with the women who were to take part in my study. I got contact details for thirteen women this way, but seven of them refused to take part in the interviews from the beginning when I wrote to them and ask for the possibility of taking part in the interviews, and with the rest of the women we started contact via email for a time (some is longer while some is short). In the process of communication, I also used the snow ball technique. I asked them whether they knew someone who could take part in my study. Finally, with this strategy I successfully found two more survivors (A and B).

Another method which I used synchronously was joining in online chat rooms which focus on marital issues. I chatted with groups of people, looking for potential women for my study. This method is unusual but useful. I put much energy into building trust between me and the survivor. At the same time, I excluded some survivors who were not suitable to participate in my study. Although this method is quite time and energy consuming, I had to stay in front of the computer for the whole day to wait for my potential interviewees, and sometimes I had to wake up at midnight by the phone. But this method helped me get a lot of detailed and unexpected information. After a long time, I found a currently pregnant woman (C) who is

suffering from IPV brave enough to participate in my study.

Additionally, I visited six neighbourhood communities in my city and two police stations where I have acquaintances as policemen. This method was really tough to conduct since I put much energy and time to communicate with the leaders. I talked with the leaders about family life and the domestic violence situation in the local area and asked them whether they know some women who have come to report any cases of IPV. I spent around two weeks asking questions to about 15 persons just in order to get valid information, and to ensure I could find the survivors fit for my study. This method helped me find the last participator (D), who reported case of being abused by her intimate partner to a neighbourhood committee and ask for help.

3.2. Data Collection

The data collection started from March to July 2011. In this study, semi-structured interviews with four experts and four survivors and non participant observation were used to collect data. Depending on the different purpose of inquiry, kinds of knowledge sought and the different interview subjects, semi-structured interview part can be divided into expert interview, narrative interview and computer-assisted interviews. Each method will discuss in detail in the sections below.

3.2.1. Semi-structured Interview

According to Kvale and Brinkmann, the research interview is a professional conversation where knowledge is constructed in the inter-action between two persons (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). As a main form of interview, a semi-structured life world interview can be regarded as an interview with the purpose of "obtaining descriptions of the life world of the interviewee in order to interpret the meaning of the described phenomena" (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009: 3). In this study, I will treat the interviewees' views as the basis of research.

Flick (2006) illustrates that semi-structured interview is based on "subjective theory", the believe that interviewees have a complex stock of knowledge about the topic under study. What is more, semi-structured interviews allow the researcher to prepare a framework of questions which can be adjusted to apply to the respondents according to their context and backgrounds. In this way, each participator of my research was

interviewed separately, loosely following a set of flexible questions which can be developed during the interview according to what the interviewee answered. Furthermore, interviewees in semi-structured interviews are considered as informants rather than respondents since they have the freedom to give relative answers which they regard as important for the question.

3.2.1.1. Expert Interview

I used this method of interview because I realized that the data I collected from professionals could be different from those of survivors. Professionals were supposed to represent plenty of professional knowledge of IPV during pregnancy. The expert interview focuses on the abundant information of interviewees' (Flick, 2006). According to Kvale and Brinkmann, it can be named as elite interviews and this method is used with persons in powerful positions such as leaders and experts. They suggest that interviewer should be knowledgeable about the topic of concern and master the technical language, as well as should be familiar with the social status and experience of the interviewee (Kvale & Brinkman, 2009). At the same time, they stress the considerable skill from the interviewer to lead the interview and avoid the situation that experts go beyond the topic to be discussed and mislead the track (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009: 147). From my perspective, the process of guiding the professionals to offer relevant information was a big challenge to me since the range of potentially relevant information provided by the experts is restricted much more than with other interviews.

Additionally, all of the professionals are female in this research. Three of the expert interviews were conducted in three organizations in Beijing and one over telephone. An interview guide (Figure 2) which included five broad subject areas was used together with a form of detailed questions of expert interview, but the exact words and order of questions could be different, and questions were changeable depending on different interviewee and context (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

| 1.Personal and professional experience and knowledge in general |
| 2.Concepts, perceptions, understandings and definition of IPV |
| 3.Personal and professional knowledge of pregnancy and IPV during pregnancy |
| 4.Opinions and attitude concerning victims, persecutors, triggering factors of violence towards pregnant women and thoughts of intervention |

5. potential personal arguments about current situation of IPV in China

Figure 2. Subject areas in interviews with experts

3.2.1.2. Narrative Interview

In order to collect data from survivors of IPV, narrative interviews were used. Narrative interviews centre on the stories which the subjects tell, on the structures and the plots of their accounts (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Mishler points out that narrative is "one of the natural cognitive and linguistic forms through which individuals attempt to organize and express meaning and knowledge" (Mishler, 1986; cited in Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009: 153). During the narrative interview, the main role of the interviewer is to remain a listener, abstaining from interruption, occasionally posing some questions for clarification and assisting the interviewee in continuing to speak out his or her story (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Since the aim of this part is to explore the survivors' specific experience of IPV during pregnancy, narrative interview is suitable to apply to this study.

In order to offer a relaxed environment of interview and make survivors feel comfortable, we started with casual conversation. After that, I introduced myself, explained what my topic was, the duration, why it is important to study this topic and thanked for their participation. Moreover, I stressed that they will keep anonymous in the research. Additionally, I told them that this conversation might last about one and half hours or longer and asked for their permission to use recorder. What should be noted is that I kept good relationship with the survivors, so some of the data I used in this study came from informal communication as a replenishment of formal interview.

3.2.1.3. Computer Assisted Interviews

In this research, email interviews and chat interviews were used with interviewees who cannot participate in face to face interview. According to Kvale and Brinkmann (2009), chat interview are more synchronous in time than e-mail interviews and the interaction of it is similar to that of face to face interview. So, the technique I used in this interview was almost the same as face to face interview. For email interview, the advantage is that the writing text is self-transcribing and save my time to record. But the drawbacks are obvious due to the high requirements of the skills of written communication, difficulty to generate rich and detailed descriptions (see Elmholdt, 2006; cited in Kvale&Brinkmann,

2009: 149), I frequently and carefully checked the direction of the conversation and gave the leading questions step by step.

3.2.2. Non Participant Observation

Non Participant Observation is useful as it helps to get information about how the survivors are feeling and their reactions to sensitive issues while they are talking. It can help the researcher to understand and feel interviewee's environment of living and experiences (Flick, 2006). Jones and Somekh suggest to record utterances verbatim and key points of information in order to record specific information which interviewees offer (Jones & Somekh, 2005). However, it is not easy to disclose the sensitive issue when the phenomenon of domestic violence is still hidden (Ellsberg & Heise, 2005). This method is used as a supplementary method to my research and is used to help me get information about how the interviewees were feeling and their reactions when they were talking about this sensitive issue.

3.3. Ethical Considerations

In 1999, based on the work of International Research Network on Violence against Women (IRNVAW), the guidelines for addressing ethical and safety issues in gender-based violence research was published by WHO. It is crucial since it is not only protecting the safety of respondents and researchers, but also ensuring data quality (Ellsberg & Heise, 2005). As follows, I will discuss some of the main ethical issues in my research process.

3.3.1. Informed Consent for Respondents

According to the practical guidelines of WHO, the principle of respect for persons consists of two basic ethical principles: respect for autonomy and protection of vulnerable persons (Ellsberg & Heise, 2005). In my case, to make sure that the interviewees understand the purpose of the research and their participation is not forced, I informed them of the research proposal and the information about myself at the beginning of interviews. Although there is still no consensus on whether the informed consent process for violence towards women studies should specifically acknowledge that the study will consist of questions on violence or whether it is already sufficient to warn participates the sensitive topics will be raised, I followed the discipline of WHO and used the individual

consent form (World Health Organization, 2005). I told my interviewees that they can stop the interview anytime they want and they have a right to refuse to answer any questions they find inappropriate. What is more, I told them that they have the rights to withdraw from the interview if they want.

3.3.2. Minimizing Harm to Respondents and Researcher

According to the International Guidelines for ethical Review of Epidemiological Studies issued by the Council for International Organization of Medical Sciences (CIOMC) (1991), respect for persons, their beneficiaries and minimizing harm to respondents and research by means of maleficence are the basic ethical principles when conducting research. To ensure the safety of interviewees, I chose a private room of a tea house in the centre of Beijing when I conducted narrative interviews with survivors. Additionally, I stressed and promised that their names will never appear in the thesis.

Due to the sensitive topic of research, the interview provoked powerful emotional responses in some participants, interviewers need to be aware of the effects that questions may have on participants and how best to respond, based on a woman's level of distress (Ellsberg, & Heise, 2005). To solve this potential problem and be more practical, I went to ADVN of CLS to gain professional training before I devoted to narrative interview. Additionally, I followed some of the advices of WHO and PATH (see Ellsberg & Heise, 2005) and advices from training course and guidebooks under Chinese social and cultural context from ADVN of CLS.

3.3.3. Treating the Interview as an Intervention

During the process of the interview, I showed my consideration and care all the time for interviewees, when they felt sad, I felt the same way, and helped them to feel better, coming close to them and touching them. When they were crying, I gave them tissue and waited for them to continue.

Jansen and his fellows point out that women who disclose their experiences of violence in research have never told anyone else about their situation (Jansen, Watts, Ellsberg, Heise, & Garcia-Moreno, 2004). A qualitative study of survivors of abuse conducted by Wessel and Campbell in Nicaragua show that a central part of women's process of recovery and personality as well as collective empowerment comes not only

from the increased knowledge of their own rights, but also, more importantly, from the chance that they share their abused experience with others and this helps women in similar situation (Wessel & Campbell, 1997; cited in Ellsberg & Heise, 2005). So, I treated the interviews as an intervention to heal the women who suffer from domestic violence and tried my best to help them in telling their painful experience.

3.4. Presenting and Analyzing Women's Voices

In seeking a methodology that explores the locations and perspectives of all women, I analysed a range of data including research diaries, collected documents and interviews with 8 people involved in this study. At the beginning of the analysis process of the study, I encountered the key issue of how to analyse the data I collected. I found out that the data I collected from expert interviews and narrative interviews had many different concerns when constructing the accounts. I found it impossible for me to use the same analytical method to analyse both interviews. While, my aim is for analysis to pay due attention to all the "voice" from the women, their experiences and perspectives and not to presenting any one "voice" as if it is more important or valid than the others. Also, I do not want to gloss over or conceal the different views. The way I approached and addressed this dilemma was to develop a discursive analytical framework that blended aspects and practices of different ways to do narrative analysis. By using narrative analysis, the survivor's experience of IPV and professional data collected from expert interviews will be presented. The following is a short description about the analytical method.

According to Carlisle (1994), the term "narrative" can be so vague and difficult to define, so there is diversity of understanding of narrative. Applied to this thesis, Chatman's definition that narrative comprises both a story and a discourse is adopted. To be more specific, he distinguishes two of parts as follows:

➢ a story (*histoire*), which in its turn is comprised of: a) the content or chain of events (eg actions or things that have happened) plus b) the existents (eg. characters or things that have to do with the setting). An *histoire*, in other words, is the 'what', and

➢ a discourse (*discours*) or the expression. This has to do with the means by which the content is communicated, or the *how*.

(Chatman, 1978: 19)

The distinction is helpful when it comes to practical applications. The shared assumption underpinning narrative studies is that we, human beings organize our experience mainly in the form of narratives (Czarniawska 1999, 2000, 2004; Larsen 2002; Somers 1994; cited in Robertson, n.d.). To study narratives can help us to learn more about the power which regulate understandings in society; and to learn about the identity and about how people make sense of the world (Riessman, 1993). Furthermore, Bruner (1991) asserts that narrative studies can give us insights into the distribution of power in the society. More importantly, narrative analysis fits feminist and cultural studies since it enables studies of voices of the marginalized groups in society (Carlisle, 1994).

Riessman emphasises there is no, and must not be, "one best method" of narrative analysis (Riessman, 1993: 5). Similarly, Kiser illustrates when narrative analysis comes to practice, scholars can combine narrative approach with theoretical framework and can combine different aspects of narrative analysis to gain rational and comprehensive understandings of the narratives (Kiser, 1996).

Above all, narrative analysis will be used to analyse the data collected from narrative interviews with survivors and expert interviews with professionals. Emphasizing the personal experiences and meanings in stories told by women who had been subjected to violence during pregnancy, the first part of narrative research seeks to interpret the interpersonal and social context and to answer the questions mainly about "what was told" (Chatman, 1978). In the second part of narrative analysis (professional part), the main emphasis will put on "how" narrative was told; with a focus on the way a story is communicated, and not just its structure (Riessman, 1993). Consequently, the two parts of findings of narrative analysis will be illustrated in two ways as follows.

I spent considerable time scrutinizing the rough draft of transcriptions before going to the next level. Additionally, gaining inspiration from Edin's work, I first coded data into minor and major categories to interpret the probable implication and then find embedded structures, forms of meanings and essentials which constitute analytic framework of findings (Kvale, 1996; Dahigren, Emmelin, & Winkvist, 2004; cited in Edin, 2006). To avoid missing original information, the variations including contradictions and particularity are pointed out. In the presentation, the narratives are presented either as

individual stories or as a variety of voices embedded in coherent narratives of interviewees' (Kvale, 1996; cited in Edin, 2006). The recorded interview was transcribed verbatim with small modifications and complements in brackets to improve readability and ensure anonymity. What is more, the quotations in italics are the original expression of survivors and professionals.

4. Research Findings

4.1. Survivors' Experiences

The findings are based on the narratives of four women regarding IPV during pregnancy in 4 relationships. All four women had experienced severe physical, sexual violence or psychological abuse frequently even threats of death. All of the women and their partners are Chinese-born. The women were aged from 23 to 42 years and the pregnancy in question had occurred around 0.5-3 years ago. Apart from one woman divorced when her child was 1 year old, three women were still suffering from domestic violence at the time when interview process finished in July 2011, including the one who was in process of divorce. Three of the women were married with their violent partners and one was cohabiting with her partner. One of the four was pregnant before she got married.

After detailed work, the following presentation is in three sections; "The beginning of nightmare", "Being a gravida in hell" and "searching for a way to go". Additionally, the specific personal information of survivors can be found in appendix 1.

4.1.1. The Beginning of Nightmare

In the four abusive relationships, three of the women suffered from the first time violence before their pregnancies. One was beaten by her husband when she was two months pregnant.

It is my wish to have a baby

Some of the pregnancies were described as planned. They described the reason that they wanted a baby as the husband wished, the wishes of extended families and their own wishes. Even though the joint or individual desire to has a baby, women showed a reluctance to become parents in violent relationship. For two of the women, having a baby was their own decision made by themselves, something they really wanted. One woman decided she wanted a baby since her partner promised to get married with her if she could pregnant.

He promised to me: dear, I am almost 40 years old and my family just has me as the only child, I have a puzzle. If you are sterile, my family cannot accept you, let us just cohabit first and when you have a baby, I promise I will marry you. Ok, this is what he said to me, you know, I'm really stupid to trust, but I did trust‥‥‥(interviewee C).

It is the only hope of mine

One of the women had the strong desire to have a baby even though she was suffering from on-going violence. The woman did not actually believe that a baby can heal all the cracks of her marriage. Instead, she had the hope to recall positive sides of marriage, passion, love, strong feelings to be an entire and warm family; she had the wishes that her husband would come back home to enjoy the feelings to become father.

I cannot have babies anymore

Even though the planned pregnancy happened, after the women find that they are already trapped in violent relationships, most of the women described the problems attached with avoiding being pregnant again after they have lost the babies in a miscarriage. One women living in a violent relationship with continuous sexual violence reported that she had already been pregnant three times and lost all the three unborn babies because of severe physical abuse and improper care, which has resulted in her becoming infertile. Following is the thoughts she had at that time:

The first time when I carried a baby, he kicked my abdomen so viciously and at that moment I was bleeding and just miscarried soon. He just forced me to have sex with him and made me pregnant, and then forced me to do induced abortion, it is one of his way to abuse me, he knows if I'm dead on the obstetric table, he does not have to take responsibility of my death, yeah, he knows, he totally knows, so he forced me to have sex even just three days or ten days after I did abortions. He just wants me to get pregnant and destroy me time after time, I tried to take acyeterion secretly, but when he found that, he just beat me like a beast and screamed at me, cursed me‥‥‥and now I cannot have any baby, he just discarded me and call me waste, rubbish, every bad words he can‥‥‥(interviewee A)

4.1.2. Being a Gravida in Hell

I have just like gone through all the suffering in hell

For one woman, pregnancy was regarded as starting point of IPV. In the other cases, the pregnancy was one period of on-going violence and it remained similar or became worse. The same point that was brought forward in all the women's narratives is that IPV had infiltrated

the women's pregnant process and made their life terrible. The violent events were described as being recurrent and diverse in form.

The description of physical violence included the men pushing and beating them, pulling their hair, throwing them down and away, binding their hands and legs, pegging their arm by using stapler, pricking their body by using needle, kicking their stomach, abdomen and waist, slapping and spitting at their face, hitting by using wine bottles and sticks, throwing things at hand such as ashtray, book or plate, strangling their throats, sitting on them, pinning knees on their abdomen, dropping globules of wax candles into their body. Certain verbal intimations were severe, such as threats to kill the woman and then use personal relationship to commit the woman as suicide, to kill the woman's parents, to kidnap and kill the baby or threatening that he would kill himself. One persecutor uses the back of a sharp knife blade skim over his partner's throat and face to threaten her.

For all the women, they perceived that psychological and sexual violence are worse than physical abuse. As one woman put it, the experiences of being psychologically abused and sexually abused are more difficult to tell but can influence the whole life, "*wounds in the heart is more painful than the ones on the body*". Psychological violence consisted of different forms such as humiliation in front of others, isolation from family and/or friends, harassments, denigration, degradation, controlling behaviour, destruction of possessions, threatening loss of custody of children and neglect. Two women described their partners flirted with women in front of them on purpose.

The sexual part of IPV is the "*most horrible part*" that makes women feel like they "*live in a life in hell*". Some women were physically forced to have sex with persecutor after abuse regardless of whether they are willing or not. Some gave examples that the persecutor just can have sex every time he wants without thinking about their physical conditions such as bleeding after abortion or having gynaecological complications or diseases. One woman described how her partner tormented her by using sex after she got pregnant and wished her partner could come back to her from the other woman outside their marriage.

He thought that "you want to restrict me, and you are the one who wants me to come back home, I'll just torment you every night, do you have the face to tell others, who can you say that to?!" So, that is what he did, he was drunk every day when he came back home, and when he was drunk, he just had strong demand on that kind of thing (sex), that is not like normal man just need 5 or 10 minutes (to

finish sex), he had to make you suffer from speechless disgrace by using different kinds of dirty means ……you know, allowing you no sleep, just the whole night to do the thing(sex)……(interviewee D)

One has been destroyed; you are just rubbish, you are nothing

What runs through all the women's stories is how IPV changed them step by step and made them lose themselves and comply with their partners in weird ways. They described the difficulties for them to be aware of the truth that they changed according to their violent partners and went far away from their original life paths. Some women wondered when they just started to change and were trapped into an extremely strange situation following their partners. Some women told small and banal matters that resulted in IPV during their pregnancies. One woman described the fast changes of her husband after they got married and gave the example of her first suffering of IPV.

It is the first time he beat me, he disliked my father since my father did not allow me to get married with him, and that day, he called my father "idiot" ……we quarreled and then he just curse me and my parents, I am so angry and pushed him once, he turned to be mad, hit me so hard and kicked my stomach and abdomen on purpose, at that time I was already pregnant for two months, if the baby was not lucky enough, he would have already died at that time……(interviewee C)

The continual torments influence women's self-confidence extremely negative and made their judgement to be unbalanced. They change to become more and more behaved to avoid domestic violence. But their partners always become more and more strict, critical and heartless. All the women described the negative feelings and judge themselves extremely low. A woman described in detail how her attitude towards herself changed and she called the process that her partner made her change as "wash the brain".

I sometimes sat there and just thought: we are a family, I am not a good woman nor a good wife, otherwise I can cope with him more better than now, I am not lenient enough and so provocative, yeah, I sometimes really thought it was my fault, I did not do what a good woman should do, yeah, maybe I just like to make him has reason to beat me……if I had just listened to him, stayed at home, he might care about me and my baby and afraid we might have problems to go out…… (interviewee B)

Some described the hurt when they heard the words of curse and insults that made them feel they are worth nothing. A woman described how her partner left her in shopping mall alone and humiliated her in front of a crowd. One man repeatedly told the woman how disgusting she looked and called her "*ugly porcine evil spirit*", he felt ashamed of her and she was forced to look at the mirror when she was naked. Even, this man pushed her outdoors and

left her in the corridor when she just wore underwear to make her feel ashamed and fearsome. The woman had to beg him to let her in.

According to the narratives, persecutors use certain attitudes and methods to make the women feel especially denigrated and low self-confidence when they are pregnant. A woman who had a high position in her workplace had been slandered as a dissolute woman by her partner. And her partner refused to admit that the unborn child was his and vilified her to sleep with different men and had a "*son of bitch*". Another woman told the similar experience how her husband questioned the paternity of the child and harassed the men he suspected. This situation forced this woman to quit her job. One partner belittled the woman in her daily life and controlled her for a long time to make her feel insecure all the time. As the woman puts it:

I am nothing, I feel like nobody needs me in the world, he told me all the time that it is just he may demand me, no other people need me, I am just totally nothing, if I leave home, what can I do, nothing, I do not know what I can do, you know that, life is not easy, you cannot say you want to go, and then you just can go, you do not understand…… (interviewee C)

I just live in a prison

One point visible through all the women's narratives is that they feel like their lives are restricted from different ways and isolated from friends, family members and/or the whole society. Restrictions could be control women's emotion and physical body which makes the women just stay at home. One partner gave the woman seven rules to obey and wrote down on a paper in order to isolate the woman from her original interpersonal circles. One woman's partner did not allow her to speak to others no matter men or women, she described the concrete process how her partner restricted her life.

At first he did not allow me to go out with friends like before, and then he had more and more requirements, I felt like I just had him, myself, and the unborn child, nothing left, even what kind of food I ate, what kind of clothes I wore, when I took bath, he has to rule me and tell me: hey, you, dirty pig, go to take bath……(interview B)

Other women described the feelings that they lost their own lives and became like something belonging to their partners. They talked of the strange feelings that they are not a person. One of the women feels like she is a bird in the cage without any possibility to return to the sky since she had already lost the ability to fly. One woman told her experience of how she was restricted by her partner like a real prisoner when she was pregnant and refused to do abortion.

He locked me in the bedroom, there was nothing but a bed, I even had to pee and shit in the same room I slept and ate······ when he returned home, he would bring me something to eat, sometimes he did not return home for the whole day, so I had to wait for the next day when he returned home to eat…… (interviewee A)

Some women said how their partners controlled the money and gave them a sense of no security if they were to leave their partners; they will have no money to afford themselves. A partner transferred all the money before he married with the woman and even did not give the key of their apartment to the woman. Some women described that they could not eat properly during pregnancy nor ensure the enough nutrition for their unborn child. One partner had his own business but he never told his partner how much deposit he had and just offered the woman little amount of money as basic living fees.

I am a marionette

All the women described the feelings that they were controlled by their partner and not like a real person, as one woman said: "*It is just like marionette's life*". They feel like they do not belong to themselves but are controlled by their partner not only their body, their mind but also their pregnancy. One partner told the woman all things at home belonged to him including the woman, so he has the rights to decide whether he needs the woman or not. Some women described how their partners ignored their physical conditions and forced them to do housework or go out to work. One partner forced the woman to wash clothes by using icy water in winter time after she did abortion. Another woman could not say she felt uncomfortable during pregnancy, because if she did, her partner criticized her as a trashy weak woman who was not worth to live like others "*strong and good*" women. Some women's narratives showed they feel like the pregnancy belonged to the man but not to them. A woman gave an example:

I had abortions twice, every time was because he forced me to do abortion, he never think about the condition of my body and how much I want to keep my own baby, he just think from his own perspective, if he does not want the baby, he cannot allow me to decide, he told me: you, all of you belongs to me! I say no is no! Just do the things I tell you, anyway you cannot keep it (the baby) to the day to give birth to! …… (interviewee D)

4.1.3. Searching for a Way to Go

All the four women who were in violent relationship did not choose to leave their partner at the first beginning when the violence started. Instead, they all hoped to solve the problem or at

least improve it at the beginning. It seemed complicated and difficult for them to understand the situation will never turn better but it just became worse and worse. Pregnancy, opposite to someone's wish to improve violent relationship turned to be a weight to weaken the women's position and push them into a more unbalanced situation. Being pregnant adds to the difficulties to leave the persecutor. One woman who had already decided to leave her partner and returned to her own family, her parents had opposite attitude to her marriage. She finally returned to her partner because her mother persuaded her:

You are pregnant now, and now you want to leave, of course you can, but have you considered for the child, you want him to be a child without farther, and grow up in a family just has mother? How will people look at you and your child, have you thought of that? You have to think about how to solve the problem but not use divorce as the only way, you have to know, every family has problems, and the thing is: you have to make it work…… (interviewee C)

Who is abnormal?

In the violent relationship, it is not easy for women to aware of that they are in a violent relationship far away from normal life style. One woman did not know she had suffered from IPV for a long time. She believed in what her partner told her "*Before I beat you to until you are disabled that cannot be called domestic violence*". For women, they are afraid to be judged by other people for being weak and blind sometimes. The women told their own emotions during pregnancy such as how they felt lonely, fear, isolated, unhappy, powerless, worried, anxious, stressed and tired. Two women talked about their experience of how they lost their support from others and how it made them feel desperate. One woman described her feeling when her friend left her:

I know, I cannot just talk talk talk, I do not like to complain all the time also, but what can I do? When a friend just told me: can you just leave that guy and live in a normal life. Look at yourself, do you know how negative you are and even cannot be called normal even. You see, my friend, she said that to me, maybe I am abnormal, who knows, but you know, it is so painful to hear that also, now I'm just so lonely, I do not know who can help me…… (interviewee A)

Some special moments can be catalyser of hopelessness. All the women have either considered suicide or killing the persecutor to finish all the things. One woman described her imagination of her partner's death made her feel a bit comfortable, at the same time; she has the dread that she may kill her partner in real life. It made her feel like she is abnormal and push herself into a more hopeless situation. Another woman felt pity for their relationship and

excused her partner's violent behaviour. She said *"If I can be an excellent woman, may be, things would not happened like that way"* (interviewee B).

Long-time torment can make women have some different thoughts from normal values. One woman forgave her partner's disloyalty and encouraged him to stay with mistress. Her reason is she can ease the burden from sex and this way can please her partner.

If I just say no, he won't listen to me and will beat me, abuse me. So I gave up all efforts to beg him stay with me, no matter how many women he has, just if he likes, I will not say anything······I can ease myself also, so it is good for me, or both of us······(interviewee D)

A dream never comes true

In the narratives, there are lots of contradictions. It is not easy for them to see other choice except to stay in a violent relationship. The women described a good deal of negative feelings but still trying to find ways to balance themselves between despair and hope to encourage themselves to stay in the painful situation. None of the four women was forced into the relationship, instead everything started well, and some even started with really romantic beginning. All of them spend a sweet period of time with their partner no matter how long it is. One woman stayed with her partner for a long time and viewed their relationship as *"arranged by fate"*.

Three of the women described how their partner treats them after every violent action. One woman gave the example how her partner beg her after beating her to make her heart soft again. One partner cried and kneeled in front of the woman to beg her forgiveness and swear never to do it again. One man bought flower or gifts for his partner, said lots of sweet words and promised rosy further to women, and the woman described her feelings:

He told me if I leave him, he will lose everything, he felt jealous when he saw I talked with men and could not control himself to beat me, all those were because he just could not let me leave him, he told me he loves me so much, he was so afraid that I would leave him or stayed with other man······When he just said that and kneeled to me and hugged me to beg me……I became soft hearted, and I just believed that everything is because he loves me ,even, I asked myself where can I find a man that loves me so much, and no man can hurt me so much like him also…… (interview C)

For the women in violent relationship, it is difficult to distinguish love and control, normal love and abnormal love. The women live in a strange situation which puzzles them. One woman described that she enjoyed at the beginning when her partner called her several times every hour and always suddenly showed up in her company, she was happy because she

thought that was because her partner cared about her until her partner started to control everything and beat her if she did not obey to the requirements.

To avoid violence, some women chose to follow all the requirements of their partner's without any condition. They learned to behave carefully in a certain way and gave up all their own personality and disciplines. They had the hope that the situation would turn better if they do not give excuse to their partner. But this expectation is unrealistic since the truth is their partner always find new reasons to get angry. One woman gave the example how her partner just changed so fatly from a "*fake gentleman*" to a "*devil*" and abuse her just because she forgot to flush the toilet. And another woman said "*no reason can be a reason*".

Where is the way to go?

Some women gave the examples how they told out the violence to others including parents-in-law, friends and/or police station. One woman told her farther-in-law how his son treated her, and this approach had effect at the beginning. But after several times, her farther-in-law started to felt impatient of her and blamed her to give him too many troubles. And her mother-in-law tried to persuade her to endure the situation. Leaving with parents-in-law, this woman felt hopeless to stay with the whole family without any support.

I lived with them, it was like the three persons were monsters, they were a union and I was just so weak to fight against, I really did not know where was the way that I should go at that time (interviewee B)

One partner severely abused the woman, and the policeman came to their home to investigate the situation, the man became really scared at the beginning but unshakably denied his violent action, then the policeman just asked couples of simple questions and left, he became more angry and continued to beat the woman. In other women's narrative, similar misgivings existed. The women were afraid that reporting can push them into a more dangerous situation since the policeman cannot help them effectively. One woman gave the examples that she did not trust the Women's Federation, as what she said: *I do not trust them, they cannot offer me any real help, I just need some place to give me help and act the role of shelter, but they cannot! (interviewee D).*Some women expressed their disappointment of the legislations and laws to protect women's rights. One woman who was in process to divorce said she was disappointed that the country did not have the

specifically national legislations to prohibit domestic violence and penalize the persecutors. But still, she did not give up the effort to find useful resources to help herself to get divorce with her abusive partner.

Even living in violent relationship of daily life and having to cope with the sufferings, the women still gave many examples of resistance. Even if they are scared to be abused more seriously or be threatened to death, three women refused to have sex with their partners. One woman described that she refused to have sex with her violent partner and locked the door to prohibit him from entering bedroom after she miscarried for the first time.

At that moment, I just thought that whatever happened, I did not want him to touch me and hurt me anymore, I just wanted him to know I did not want to be something of his, and I hoped that he knew that I did not want that…… (interviewee A)

Three women expressed their wishes to leave the relationship and already asked for help from NGO and other legal organizations. One asked me whether there are some methods for her to avoid further violence. The woman who divorced told her experience about how she collected the recording of IPV and forensic results after she had been abused physically.

4.2. Professional Narratives

The four professionals were found to have plenty of knowledge in terms of personal and professional perspectives. Each of the interview lasted more than 2 hours, so the information I gained were diversified and detailed. The quotations in italics are the original expression of professionals. The findings in this research are not representing what each professional express individually but tend to show a general sight of the professionals' narratives. Figure 3 reveals three main themes of this research which will be illustrate in details.

4.2.1.Gendered Differences	4.2.2.Impact of Pregnancy	4.2.3.Cultural Perspectives and other findings
1A) Different meanings& Understandings	2A) Pregnancy as a potential trigger of violence	3A) New insights and practical Difficulties
- Wife/girlfriend has the responsibility to satisfy her male partner - Sex is a way to control women - Women need right and good feeling to have sex "Cold violence" is worse than "hot violence"	- Complex relationship between couples - Continually toleration and unrealistic hope - Particularly in a problematic relationship - Young age& unwanted pregnancy - Male partner's intention - Rights to do induced abortion	- Unequal status of couple - Gender discrimination - Extramarital affairs - Different women has different suffers - Lack of gender perspective in the whole society and judicial system
1B) Different gender positions and perspectives	2B) Changes, fears, disturbances and pressures	3B) Keep it in Silence
- Women are responsible for others' wellbeing - Men are sky, women are earth - Control and love are different but so hard to distinguish - rationalise the violation - Two faces of those men - Those men are just poor and weak - Lack of confidence and sense of security	- Transfer to new role as parents - Women refuse to have sex - Women suffer from multiple pressures - So difficult to cope with new problems - Not a big problem for couple but might be huge issue for big family	- Sensitive and private Subjects - A taboo to discuss this issue influenced by tradition - sexual abuse is the most difficult issue to tell - Insufficient legislation to support practices - Pressure from the public

Figure 3: Three main theme of the experts' discourse as presented in this research

4.2.1. Gendered Differences

1A). Different meanings and understandings

According to the professionals, there are three types of IPV which are "cold violence", "hot violence" and sexual violence. When asking the perception of "cold violence", they gave the similar scope as psychological abuse in Chapter 2. From their perspective, suffering from "cold violence" often makes women feel fearsome, fall into insecure situation and might leave great psychological shadows for their whole lives; what is more, it will influence the valuation of themselves. As for men, it is hard for them to be aware of their neglect, cold words, vicious blame can be regarded as domestic violence. Men cannot bear women's continuous complaint, chatter and wordy utterance and might think they suffer from domestic violence from their female partner, but it is not seriously up to the degree that can be considered as domestic violence to ask for help. Generally, women are more vulnerable to become victims of domestic violence than men.

The professionals deemed that women cannot separate from love and sex, they need to have sex with the people they love, at least, with the people they like. It is difficult for women to have sex without appropriate or good feelings with men they are afraid of or dislike, it sometimes may have the feeling like being raped. But a woman may accept to have sex with the persecutor as she is afraid to refuse especially after being abused. But for men, especially the persecutors, they believe their female partners have the obligations to have sex with them regardless females' willing. What is more, the persecutors treat sex as a means to control the victims of violence and make them feel like it is their duty to satisfy their intimate partner.

……Who you wish me to have sex with, would you like me to find another women?!……

1B). Different gender positions and perspectives

The professionals generally described women as the one who should take care of children, husband and the whole family from the traditional cultural and social context regardless of their economic and social status. This gender role is formulated from childhood when the girl was told to act as a "girl" and played the role to take care of smaller children and bring others wellbeing. The professionals mentioned those women who have the right of discourse, earn higher salary than their husband and have high status in society also be

considered to be the one who have to shoulder responsibility of traditional female works at home. The society has the common comprehension that if a man is willing to share domestic work with a woman, he is a good man who loves the woman so much so he can help the woman to do work that does not belong to him. Additionally, the professionals thought that there are lots of parlances illustrating and reinforcing the dominant status of males in Chinese society.

……Men are sky and women are earth, sky will always be on top of earth……

In current Chinese society, this stereotype remains and has a lasting influence especially among the families which men have higher economic status. Women are considered as beatific ones without worrying about money and their works are considered to be unnecessary since supporting family is men's mission.

Another point of view illustrated by professionals is that women are so tolerant towards men which can lead to continued abuse if they chose to endure from the first time. Women are so soft hearted and easy to be touched by sugared words and comforting actions from intimate persecutors who hurt them. Victims of domestic violence cannot distinguish love from control; even most of the victims treat control as a means of men to show their love and care. They even sometimes rationalise the violation by using this excuse to comfort and persuade themselves to stay in abusive relationship.

Professionals also mentioned the men who abuse women are aggressive and always have two faces. They are sweet, good at sugared words, normal, some even quite romantic and gentle; on the other hand, they are weak, anxious, oversensitive, suspicious, lack of confidence and sense of security and have low self-esteem. Experts explained that in this changing social environment, women are increasingly independent and have autonomy, and they are influenced by the idea of empowerment and all these changes unbalance traditional gender roles. Men view these changes as a challenge for their dominant role and power. They are the poor men who cannot treat themselves in proper way and transfer their insecurity to their female partners. According to the professionals, the persecutors need professional and systematic training and guidance to rebuilt a healthy mind, but all the professionals believed even that women should consider more further for their families and children and leave the abusive environment when they become aware that they cannot solve the problem themselves. Meanwhile, all

professionals illustrated that it is also quite difficult for women to become aware that the abuse is too much to bear before something serious happens to them.

4.2.2. Impact of Pregnancy

2A). Pregnancy as a potential trigger of violence

All professionals regard pregnancy as a special period of time for both man, woman and the extended family. Mostly, the changes of pregnancy cannot improve relationship between couples if they have already had grievous contradictions and abusive experience. Women who are continually tolerant to abusive actions and have the unrealistic hope to use pregnancy to ameliorate relationships with intimate male partner always end up disappointed themselves. Additionally, the professionals all admitted that both women and men should take certain responsibilities to the problematic or volatile relationships. The both sides lack of responsibility, are aggressive, careless about each other, might be selfish and cannot adjust themselves into a serious relationship and orient the relationship into a well-functional way. When the relationship is not mature and stable, the pregnancy will make the situation worse and trigger more intensive and dangerous imbalance.

The professionals stressed that the worst situation could be when young people cohabit or get married, at the same time have unwanted pregnancy in a problematic relationship. A combination of negative factors, especially when both of the young people are immature and do not have a serious attitude towards marriage, responsibilities and parenthood, intimate partner violence towards pregnant women are highly possible to happen. According to professionals, pregnancy itself may not directly result in domestic violence, but it is the complex environment during pregnancy that may lead to frequent quarrels, fighting and violence. From this point of view, pregnancy can be regarded as a trigger for violence.

……it is impossible for a terrible relationship to get better just because of pregnancy; it just adds the possibility to have worse violence……

Additionally, the professionals viewed completion of induced abortion without informing male partner as a dangerous trigger to result in more serious violence in an already violent relationship. The pregnant woman chooses to do induced abortion secretly if she feels extremely unsecure and fears to give birth to a child who has an abusive father, and her action could evoke the persecutor's negative feelings and make

him feel that the woman does not respect him and totally lose control. The professionals mentioned that a man may intentionally abuse his pregnant partner if they have straightforward purpose. And this is quite obvious if they do not want the unborn child since the main abused part of the woman is abdomen. One of the professionals asserted that a jealous and unbelieving man might abuse his pregnant woman if he suspect the unborn child is not his and he will rationalise his behaviour to protect his dignity and face.

2B). *Changes, Fears, Disturbances and Pressures*

The professionals entirely agreed on the standpoint that pregnancy means the start of the new role as parents for man and woman. This new change brings not just happiness for someone, but also fear, disturbances, anxieties and pressures resulting from the worries about the new parenthood and a string of changes. Women may refuse to have sex with intimate partners out of consideration for unborn child and this may provoke dissatisfaction for the men. What is more, men may feel abandoned since females put most of their energy on the unborn child and ignore the feelings of the males. Additionally, men are confronted with new problems because of the forthcoming member of the family; they have the stress to earn more money to afford the child.

The professionals agreed on the argument that in comparison to the men, women will suffer from more negative feelings and pressures than men when they are pregnant. Both the body and mental go through obvious and huge changes during pregnancy. The woman may lack a of sense of security more than ever before and become afraid of not being satisfactory to her male partner both in terms of sex and other aspects such as fatter somatotype and distracted chatter. On the other hand, not only do pregnant women have to cope with uncomfortable pregnancy reaction, but also have to handle possible changes of work, and extended family relations. All this negative feelings make women fall into the traps of loneliness, grievances and indignation. If their male partners cannot give them enough support and understanding, new circles of domestic violence might arise or exacerbate.

4.2.3. Cultural Perspectives and Other Findings

3A). *New insights and practical difficulties*

The professionals' understanding of IPV towards pregnant women in China has some special characters. They mentioned that gender discrimination towards the unborn child still exists but have different meanings. People used to want a boy in the family but today, especially in some poor rural areas, people believe that breeding a son is more difficult than a girl; so even if a pregnant woman gives birth to a boy, she would suffer from domestic violence from her male partner and/or her parents-in-law. What is more, professionals argue that females are also profoundly influenced by the traditional culture. In urban area, especially in wealthy families in which family members do not have to worry about the money to breed children, women still want to give birth to boys for their husbands. This kind of females carry a heavy burden due to this issue and they have the tendency to rationalise intimate male partner's violence.

The professionals also stressed the importance of the economical situation of both men and women. They believe that economic control is a useful means for men to control women. The speedy development of China boosting polarization of the rich and the poor has led to problems in marital relationships including the increase in divorce rates and complex extramarital affairs. Unequal status of couples is problematic also because of the difficulties for couples to cope with chores of real life and complicated interpersonal relationships among both members of the extended families and others in the society.

...... if a princess gets married with a poor guy, it is called "naked marriage". Yeah, it could be romantic and have a happy ending but that just happens in fairy tales. In today's Chinese society, it always finished in divorce......ugh...... hurtful for both sides, but it is just reality today......

According to the professionals, to intervene in violent relationships and offer the victims help totally depends on the victim's willing. They do not have the rights to force victims to do anything. They mentioned two common types of victims, the first kind of victims are the weak, timid, incapacitated and the second type is the strong minded, brave and decisive. The first type of victims accounts mostly of victims and they always ask for help after serious consequences have already happened. On the other hand, the second type of victims is good at using beneficial resources to help themselves. They always have a stronger mind to leave persecutors and more actually putting mind into actions than the first type of women who always hesitate to leave the violent relationships.

Another viewpoint of professionals is the distempered and inadequate judicial system that fails to offer effective and valid support and protection for female victims of intimate partner violence. Additionally, the shortage of gender perspective of the whole society cannot provide victims healthy and open environment to ask for help without heavily problematic burdens and potential risks.

3B). Keep it in Silence

The professionals entirely agreed with the view that intimate domestic violence is a sensitive and private subjects which is difficult to talk about due to the taboo behind it and discussing of private affairs in public in Chinese traditional culture. Furthermore, talking about abusive experience to outsiders may make the woman feel pressure, shame, uncomfortable and disturbed. Victims always have various worries not only about herself, her family and her parents but also about the evaluation by the public.

……the public can give victims great pressure, she (victim) is afraid to be blamed, such as blame her for doing something wrong by getting herself in that kind of situation, or blame her that she did not flee from abusive relationship immediately which made things worse……

Among the different types of abusive, sexual abuse is the most difficult type for victims to talk about and they always use obscure ways to express rather than directly talk about it from the beginning. The professionals viewed sex abuse to be a way for men to control women by using inexplicable and indelicate means. Insufficient legislation to support practices and to protect victims would be an important reason of keeping intimate domestic violence as a secret. Even though victims report abusive relationships to the police and/or neighbourhood committee, they cannot offer effective interventions and/or assistance to the women. Additionally, professionals illustrated that even if victim gets a divorce with persecutor; there are no further legislations to protect them from potential harm in the future

5. Discussion of Findings

The qualitative approach used in exploring, developing, understanding and explaining theory, as used here, is inductive (Morse & Field, 1996; cited in Kaye, 2006: 26). In this study, the researcher's position as being a woman, a social worker and a master's student of Gender Studies, there is a risk of influence the dialogues that could have added to a

limited receptiveness and the understanding of a sensitive topic, and according to Kvale, it could be an instrument to facilitate trust, understanding as well as to expose potential issues (Kvale, 1996; cited in Edin, 2006).

The other important issue is that even thought I chose the survivors using different means, all of them actively participated in the study and offered rich and useful information towards the study. All of the four survivors I interviewed are different individuals with different personalities, but they all shared a common issue in life, which is the multiple and complicated experience caused by abusive spouses. I have to stress here that I do not have the intentions to generalize IPV during pregnancy in the whole country and the findings of this thesis represent only the experience of the survivors and the discourses of professionals.

IPV during pregnancy is found to be a complex and serious issue in this study. Pregnant women are reported to be suffering from multiple forms of violence including physical, sexual, and psychological violence perpetrated by their intimate partner. Additionally, there are other forms of violence such as economical control, verbal and emotional violence occurring along with physical, sexual and psychological violence. Severe physical violence and forced abortion are also part of the issue of IPV, which is found to be in contradiction with Leung and his colleagues' study which found that the main form of violence during pregnancy is threats of violence without real physical injury (Leung, Leung, Lam, & Ho, 1999). Meanwhile, the findings of the forms of IPV are in line with the previous studies mentioned in the part of relevant research.

In this study, interviewees (both professionals and survivors) illustrated how the masculinity and femininity were created and produced from childhood and how it influences men and women on the way they cope with different situations including sexuality and violence. According to Taylor, the discourse of masculinity and femininity can bear the idea of gender (Taylor, 2001). A rather fixed professional understanding of masculinity and femininity influenced the professionals' knowledge of gender and their attitude toward opposite gender positions. The stereotype of gender was found in the study from both the professionals' and the survivors' perspectives. Rigid gender role stereotypes performed in the private sphere were found to result in IPV during pregnancy. Through socialization into patriarchal values, women internalized powerlessness and

submissiveness. This study found that pregnant women are at greater risks of being abused during with their pregnancy period, especially when they could not perform their expected roles in the family. It shows that men use violence as a way to punish women who are not fulfilling their expected responsibility.

IPV against pregnant women reflects that the patriarchal social structure is still strong in China. Patriarchy is regarded as the root cause of IPV during pregnancy in the social and cultural context of China. Pregnancy before marriage and single mother are not acceptable in the cultural context of China. The value of marriage is high in the Chinese society, especially for women. Marriage is a core value in society and a basic institution that preserves many of the patriarchal features. Divorce is not a proud issue in China and divorced women might be confronted by discrimination and bias from the society. Though the women have suffered from IPV, it is not easy for them to leave the violent environment as they need to maintain the marital status in the patriarchal society. Furthermore, in a patriarchal social structure, power, control and gender stereotypes that actively devaluate women are considered as fundamental causes of IPV against pregnant women.

This study demonstrates relationships of gender power and violence in a patriarchal society from a feminist theoretical perspective. The findings of this research also indicate that in a changing social environment, domestic violence is related to unequal gender power relations. Violent men view women's empowerment as a threat of losing the authority to control women and losing their dominant roles in domestic violence and society. This is in agreement with Kaye (2006) and Edin (2006), even though violence is regarded as an expression of powerlessness and the way for men to rebuilt a sense of security by reasserting power and control (Eliasson, 2001). In fact, violence is an indication of despair, stress, fear and lack of confidence and self-esteem. When men feel like they cannot be the one who live up to expected notion of success, their identity and self-esteem will be affected, violence in the private environment is a way to release frustration and insecurity and redeem their self-esteem (Eliasson, 2001; Kaye, 2006). This study reflects the feminist theories of domestic violence.

Additionally, the relationship between changes, stress, insecurity, disturbances, fears, marital conflicts and violence are well grounded (Ellsberg, & Heise, 2005; Jasinski, 2004;

Ellsberg, 2000). Pregnancy, as a period full of unstable factors cannot escape from violence (Jasinski, 2004; Edin, 2006). The findings indicate that pregnancy is regarded as a trigger to violence and more serious violence is in agreement with Tang and Lai (2008) and Kaye (2006). Distorted relationships of spouses or partners result in the accumulation of tension until something triggers the explosion of violence. The research findings also indicate that domestic violence is a social problem that happens in households but stems from power imbalance arising from the interaction between individuals, family members, community and the society which could be explained by the ecological theory. The transition from a traditional patriarchal society to a modern society is associated with social changes which may affect the power dynamics in gender relations. Professor Tao illustrates the foundation of domestic violence in China as the traditional gender bias combined with gender discriminations. Additionally, this foundation is supported by certain regime and institutions (Tao, 2000; cited in Tang & Lai, 2008). In this study, narratives expressed that mistrust and suspicion linked to family members-in-law add the risk for women to suffer from IPV especially during pregnancy. This is in agreement with Kaye (2005). The findings show that women's tolerant nature can intensify violence which is in accordance with Edin (2006). Additionally, if a violent man does not perceive risk in terms of legal or social consequences as a result of the initial violence, there is a risk that this will increase. The shortage of strong legal and social support institutions drives the victims to stay and endure the violent environment. The findings also indicate that prejudice against women in the social and cultural context asserts and permeates that patriarchy maintains victims to keep domestic violence a secret. The previous discussions can be used to explain how social and cultural norms combined with individual factors, family factors and the factors at the community levels to determine the likelihood of violence according to an ecological model.

In this study, some women mentioned of unwanted sexual actions and these are classified as rape in a marriage. It is described by women as a painful and forced experience but also as a means to calm the partner down and prevent further violence. Pregnancy termination is strongly associated with unwanted pregnancy and violence toward pregnant women which is in line with Wu and her colleagues' study. (Wu, Guo,& Qu, 2005). In this research, some women reported of men who intended to use violence

to terminate pregnancy. While, pregnancy termination as a trigger to more furious violence it is not supported by others' research, but Wu and her colleagues' in their research illustrate that the proportion of women reporting domestic violence was higher among those who had induced abortion (Wu, Guo, &Qu, 2005).

According to the findings, pregnancy was found to make the violent relationship complicated and hard for women to leave the violent relationship. Women also illustrated their hope that pregnancy might awake their partner's wish to be a father and improve their relationship. In this study, women also opposed their partners, seeing violence as wrong and coping with violence by using several strategies. But the coping process is complex and some cases may last a long period of time while some may be trapped in vicious circles. Throughout all the narratives in this research were descriptions of how the women underwent stages to cope with IPV. They described their experience to rationalize or deny IPV, with the intention to focus on the positive aspects of the relationship. In the process of rationalization, the persecutors used both violence and means of comforting to change the women step by step, and pushed them into a cycle of abuse. Additionally, women described the stage of enduring, where they cover up the violence, blame themselves or modify their behaviours carefully to lessen the violence. The coping process contains different stages which do not have clear boundaries is in line with the theory of Landenburger's (1989). More so, the findings that some pregnant women stayed in the binding stage or the enduring stage instead of leaving while pregnant are consistent with Campell and Campell's study and Lutz's study.

The study also indicates positive perspective, even though there is insufficient legislation and support, women showed their positive reactions to fight against IPV, some women had the ability to recognise the problem and then seek help from the NGOs and/or law firm. It is not easy for the women to realize that they are or have been abused, especially for those who do not experience physical abuse and those who are isolated from normal social life, but they still tried to survive and stay in the complicated relationship. Survivors in this study showed their perceptions of IPV, and more or less recognized the complication and seriousness of the problem they were confronted with. What is more, they showed their positive willingness to get rid of abusive relationships to some extent. These points are important to regard survivors as a group of people who

positively react to IPV but not as the group of women who have negatively become helpless and desperate. Critically speaking, although the learned helplessness theory and cycle of violence can be used to apply to the negative reactions of women in this study, it also indicates the positive reaction of women which can be explained by the disengagement stage and recovery of the Landenburger's coping theories. So, to a certain extent, the findings of this study are not in accordance with Campbell and Campbell's illustration that this theory is not suitable to apply to pregnant women experiencing IPV as they often stay in the first or the second stages.

6. Short Conclusion

This study's results present a reliable image of the magnitude and characteristics of intimate partner violence during pregnancy in China, and the qualitative data provide insights into the meanings of violence from perspectives of abused women and professionals. The descriptions of violence presented in narratives are in line with a dynamic of domestic violence from feminist perspective which is illustrated by previous studies. It shows that intimate partner violence towards pregnant women is closely connected with the unequal power and control behaviour. Findings in this thesis support the ecological model of gender-based violence (Heise, 1999) by illustrating how the meaning of violence is constructed through the interaction of events and circumstances operating at different levels. Additionally, the women's experience to feel isolated, oppressed, helpless, hopeless, low self-confidence, low self-esteem and their struggles between staying or leaving the violent relationship supports the traumatic bonding theory which can be explained from two perspectives: learned helplessness theory and cycle of violence. The coping theory of Landenburger's (1989) was also well grounded in this stud.

Above all, the fact is that two different analytic orientations producing strikingly similar results indicates that not only do they capture the experiences lived by few individual women, but these findings might be true for many other women who live in similar violent relationships. Additionally, the core themes and main findings which emerged in the descriptions of collected data are almost consistent with the theoretical conceptualizations of domestic violence developed in this thesis. What should be noticed

is that, theoretical conceptualization of domestic violence was developed from plenty national and international research, in this way, the experience in this paper might be transcended single cultural context common to women in other countries in the world. This study could be a starting point and continued discussion towards further studies on IPV during pregnancy.

Initially I thought it would be extremely difficult for the women to talk about such a sensitive issue in their live, but on the contrary, during the formal interview, I found out that both the professionals and the survivors were willing to tell as much as they could. While, the process of building trust was quite time-consuming and difficult, I found myself experiencing a complex psychological change within myself along with the continuingly changing interacting models between the survivors and I. The feelings consistent depression, anxiety, powerlessness, disappointment influenced my own emotions and ways of looking at life. I would therefore like to advice researchers who will devote themselves to this field to adjust their own psychological conditions and withdraw from the research sometimes. While, IPV during pregnancy is a really tough and heavy topic to discuss, the study also shows gratifying implications that survivors in China today are trying to fight back the violence and fight for their own rights.

With limited time and energy, I conducted eight interviews with both professionals and survivors in two cities. Despite the deficiency of research on IPV towards pregnant women, I hope my study could fulfil the gap in my country and encourage more scholars to do research on this topic. This study mainly focuses on the urban area in mainland China, there are therefore lots of spaces for scholars to explore the situation in rural areas. Last but not least, the shortage of theoretical and empirical researches on IPV during pregnancy results in the shortage of useful and feasible intervention measures and legislations. I hope this paper can help originations to work out useful intervention measures and can be helpful to policy making to protect women.

References

- Alberta Justice Communication. (2008). Domestic Violence Handbook: for police and crown prosecutors in Alberta. http://justice.alberta.ca/programs_services/families/Documents/Domestic%20Violence%20Handbook/DV_Handbook_2008.pdf . Accessed on February 17, 2011.

- Anti-Domestic Violence Network of China Law Society. (2010)(a). *Law of the People's Republic of China on the Prevention and Punishment of domestic Violence (A Draft Proposal by Anti-Domestic Violence Network Experts).* Published in interior. (Chinese version)

- Anti-Domestic Violence Network of China Law Society. (2010)(b). *Intervention Model of Domestic Violence in Practice in China.* Published in interior. (Chinese version)

- Batistich, C. (2004). Breaking the Silence: A critical analysis of integrating a community level intervention model within a domestic violence public awareness campaign in New Zealand. http://aut.researchgateway.ac.nz/bitstream/10292/202/2/BatistichC.pdf Accessed on March 7, 2011.

- Belsky, J. (1980). Child maltreatment: An ecological integration. *American psychologist*. 35: 320-335.

- Bersani, C. & Chen, H. (1988). Sociological perspectives on family violence. In Van Hasselt, H., Morrison, A., Bellack, H., & Hersen, M. (Eds). Handbook of family violence. (pp. 57-88). New York: Plenum Publishers.

- Bhandari, B. (2009). Coping Among Pregnant, Rural, Low-income Women Facing Intimate Partner Violence (Pregnancy to Three Month Post-natal. https://mospace.umsystem.edu/xmlui/bitstream/handle/10355/9570/Research.pdf?sequence=3. Accessed on June 10, 2011

- Brownmiller, S. (1975). *Against our will: men ,women and rape*. New York: Simon and Schuster.

- Brownridge, D. (2006). Violence against women post-separation. *Aggression and Violent Behaviour*, 11: 514−530.

- Bruner, J. (1991). The Narrative Construction of Reality. *Critical Inquiry.* 18: 1-21.

- Campbell, J. (2002). Health consequences of intimate partner violence. *The Lancet*, 359, 1331-1336.

- Carlisle, J. (1994). Introduction. In Carlisle,L., & Schwarz,D.R., (eds). *Narrative and Culture* .(pp.1-12). London: University of Georgia Press.

- Chatman, S. (1978). *Story and Discourse. Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film.* Ithica and London: Cornell University Press.

- Chen, X. Y.(2004). The Women-oriented Value in Combating Domestic Violence. Shanxi: Marriage and Family Research Center. In Huang, L. & Rong, W.Y. (2004). *Combating Domestic Violence against Women: China in Action*. (pp. 51-61). China: Social Science Press (Chinese Version)

- Council for International Organizations of Medical Sciences. *International Guidelines for Ethical Review of Epidemiological Studies.* Geneva: CIOMS; 1991. http://cedoc.cies.edu.ni/general/2nd_Generation%20(D)/Definitions,%20testing%20&%20ethical/Ethical%20Issues/Ethical%20guidelines.pdf. Accessed on February 22, 2011.

- Declaration on the Elimination on Violence against Women of the United Nations. December 12, 1993.General Assembly. http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/48/a48r104.htm Accessed on February 5, 2011.

- Edin, K. E. (2006). *Perspectives on intimate partner violence, focusing on the period of pregnancy.* Umeå Epidemiology & Public Health Sciences, Department of Public Health and Clinical Medical Obstetrics and Gynecology, Department of Clinical Sciences, The national Graduate School of Gender Studies.

- Ellsberg, M. C. (2000). *Candies in Hell: Domestic violence against women in Nicaragua.* Umeå Department of Epidemiology and Public Health; Department of Preventive Medicine Nicaragua Autonomous National University Leon Nicaragua.

- Ellsberg, M, & Heise L. L. (2005). Researching Violence Against Women: A Practical Guide for Researchers and Activists. Washington DC, United States: World Health Organization, PATH.

- Enander, V. (2008). Women Leaving Violent Men: Crossroads of Emotion, Cognition and Action. Ph.D. University of Gothenburg. http://gupea.ub.gu.se/bitstream/2077/17921/1/gupea_2077_17921_1.pdf. Accessed on March 2, 2011.

- Engels, F. (1978). *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State.* New York: International Publishers.

- Flick, U. (2006). *An Introduction to Qualitative Research*. (3nd) .London: Sage Publications.

- Gilmartin, C. (1990). Violence against women in contemporary China. In Lipman, L., & Harrell, S. (Eds). *Violence in China: Essays in culture and subculture* (pp. 203−226). New York: State University of New York Press.

- Griffin, S. (1979). *Rape: the power of Consciousness*. San Francisco: Harper and Row.

- Guo, S., Wu, J., Qu, C., & Yan, R. (2004). Physical and sexual abuse before, during, and after pregnancy. *International Journal of Gynecology &Obstetrics*. 84 :281−286.

- Heise, L. (1999). Violence against Women: an integrated ecological framework. *Violence against Women*. 4(3) : 262-290.
- Huang, L. & Rong, W.Y. (2004). Combating Domestic Violence against Women: China in Action. China: Social Science Press (Chinese Version)
- Jansen, H, Watts C, Ellsberg M, Heise L, &Garcia-Moreno, C. (2004). Interviewer training in the WHO Multi-country Study on Women's Health and Domestic Violence Against Women. *Violence against Women.* 10(7) :831-849.
- Jasinski, J.L. (2001). Theoretical Explanations for Violence Against Women. In Renzetti, C.M., Edleson, J. F., &Bergen, R. K. (Eds). *Sourcebook on Violence Against Women*. 2nd . (pp. 5-21). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Jasinski, J. L. (2004). Pregnancy and Domestic Violence: a review of the literature. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse.* 5(1), 47-64.
- Jiangxi Provincial Women's Federation. (2000). Reports on Domestic Violence in Jiangxi Province. Published in interior (Chinese version)
- Jones, L., &Somekh, B. (2005). Observation. In Somekh, B. & Lewin, C. (2005). *Research Methods in the Social Sciences*. (pp. 138-145). London: Sage Publications.
- Jones, P. (2003). Feminist theories. *Introducing Social Theories*. CB2: 87-98
- Kaye, D.K. (2006). *Domestic Violence during Pregnancy in Uganda: the social context, biomedical consequences and relationship with induced abortion*. Kampala: Axis Printers.
- Kiser, E. (1996). The revival of narrative in historical sociology: What rational choice theory can contribute. *Politics and Society*. September 1996. 24: 3.
- Kvale, S, &Brinkmann, S. (2009). *Interviews: Learning the Craft of Qualitative Research Interviewing.* (2nd). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- Landenburger, K. (1989). A process of entrapment in and recovery from an abusive relationship. Issues in Mental Health Nursing 1989; 10: 209-227.
- Larsen, Peter (2002) Mediated fiction in Klaus Bruhn Jensen, ed. (2002) *A Handbook of Media and Communication Research*. London: Routledge, pp. 117-137.
- Lau, Y. (2005). Does pregnancy provide immunity from intimate partner abuse among Hong Kong Chinese women? *Social Science & Medicine*, 61: 365-377.
- Leung, W., Leung, T., Lam, & Ho, L. (1999). The prevalence of domestic violence against pregnant women in a Chinese community. *International Journal of Gynecology & Obstetrics*. 66:23−30.
- Leung, T., Leung, W., Chan, P., & Ho, P. (2002). A comparison of the prevalence of domestic violence between patients seeking termination of pregnancy and other general gynecology patients. *International Journal of Gynecology & Obstetrics*. 77: 47−54.
- Li, X., Ching, Y., & Hwang, N. (2003). A survey of domestic violence in rural China. *Chinese Behavioral Medicine Science*. 12: 228−230 (Chinese version).

- Loue, S. (2001). Theories of causation. In *Intimate Partner Violence*. (pp. 21-35). New York: Plenum Publishers.
- Lutz. K. (2005). Abuse experiences, perceptions, and associated decisions during the childbearing cycle. *Western Journal of Nursing Research*. 27: 802-824
- Marriage Law of the People's Republic of China 2003/11/14. http://www.nyconsulate.prchina.org/eng/lsqz/laws/t42222.htm. Accessed on April 2, 2011.
- Mason, J. (2002). *Quanlitative Research*. (2nd). London: Sage.
- McCue, M. L. (2000). *Domestic violence: a reference handbook*. California: ABC-CLIO. Milwertz, C. (2003). Activism against domestic violence in the People's Republic of China. *Violence Against Women*. 9: 630−654.
- Morgan. D.L. & Krueger. R.A. (1998). *The Focus Group Guidebook.* Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- Okun, L. (1986). *Woman abuse: facts replacing myths*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Pence, E., & Paymar. M.,(1993). *Education groups for men who batter: The Duluth model.* NewYork: Springer.
- Population Reports: Ending Violence against Women. *Issues in World Health*. November 11, 1999. http://info.k4health.org/pr/l11/violence.pdf. Accessed on March, 12, 2011.
- Renzetti, C.M., Edleson, J. F., &Bergen, R. K. (Eds). (2010). *Sourcebook on Violence Against Women*. 2nd . Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Riessman, C. K. (1993). *Narrative Ananlysis. Qualitative Research Methods Series*. Newbury Park: Sage Publications. No. 30.
- Robertson. (n.d.). Narrative Analysis (New version 15 September.). www.promusica.se. Accessed on July 10, 2011. (In English).
- Runge, M. (2004). *Psychological pregnant women* in M.et. al (ed), Medical Textbook: Obstetrics on High Risk Pregnant Women. Germany
- Schechter, S. (1982) *Women and male violence: The vision and struggles of the battered women's movement.* London: Pluto Press.
- Somekh, B. & Lewin, C. (2005). *Research Methods in the Social Sciences*. London: Sage Publications.
- Swahnberg, K. (2003). *Prevalence of Gender Violence: studies of four kinds of abuse in five Nordic countries.* Sweden: Akademitryck AB, Edsbruk.
- Tang, C., Wong, D., & Cheung, F. (2002). Social construction of women as legitimate victims of violence in Chinese societies. *Violence Against Wome*n. 8: 968−996.

- Tang, C. S. & Lai, B.P. (2008). A review of empirical literature on the prevalence and risk markers of male-on-female intimate partner violence in contemporary China, 1987–2006. *Aggression and Violent Behavior.* 13: 10-28

- Ulin, P., Robinson, E., Tolley, E., & McNeill, E. (2002). Qualitative methods: A Field Guide for Applied Research in Sexual and Reproduction Health. *Research Triangle Park: Family Health International* ¨

- Walby, S. (1990). *Theorizing Patriarchy*. Oxford: Blackwell

- Walker, L. (1979). *The Battered Women*. New York: Harper and Row.

- Walker, L. (1996). *Abused Women and Survivor Therapy: A Practical Guide for the Psychologist.* Washington, DC: American Psychologist Association.

- Weiner, G. (1994). *Feminisms in Education: An Introduction*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

- Weiss, R. E. (1997). *Domestic Violence in Pregnancy*. http://pregnancy.about.com/cs/domesticviolence/a/domesticviol.htm Accessed on February 2, 2011.

- WHO multi-country study on women's health and domestic violence against women: summary report of initial results on prevalence, health outcomes and women's responses. Geneva, World Health Organization, 2005

- Wu, J., Guo, S., & Qu, C. (2005). Domestic violence against women seeking induced abortion in China. *Contraception.* 72:117−121

- Ye, X., Wang, H., Xio, S., Feng, L., Chou, Y., Leung, C., et al. (2005). A survey on family violence among pregnant and postnatal women. *Chinese Journal of Public Health.* 21: 1012−1013 (Chinese version).

- Ye, X., Wang, H., Xio, S., Xu, C., Zhang, Z., Chou, Y., et al. (2005). A survey of family violence among pregnant and postnatal women Guangzhou and Shenzhen. *Chinese Journal of Preventive Medicine*. 39: 11-28. (Chinese version)

- Yllo, K. (1993). Through a feminist lens: gender, power and violence. In Gelles, R., &Loseke,D. (Eds). *Current controversies on family violence*. (pp. 41-62). CA: Sage.

- Zhao, F., Guo, S., Wang, L., Wu, J., & Wang, L. (2006). Investigation on the patterns and knowledge regarding domestic violence among married women in rural areas of China. *Zhonghua Liu Xing Bing Xue Za Zhi*. 27: 664−668 (Chinese version).

- Zhao, K. (2010). *Women in a changing China: Statement Prepared for the Congressional-Executive Commission on China.* March 8, 2010 http://cecc.gov/pages/roundtables/2010/20100308/kzhaoStatement.pdf . Accessed on February 5, 2011.

- Sysavanh, P. (2007). *Domestic Violence against Women by Male Partner during Pregnancy in Attapea Province, Lao P.D.R.* Faculty of Graduate Studies, Health Social Science.

http://www.sh.mahidol.ac.th/hssip/theses/2005/thesis2005/SYSAVANH.pdf.
Accessed on August 12, 2011.

Appendix 1

Basic Personal Information of Survivors

	Age	Marital Status	Occupation	Time of first violence during pregnancy
A	30	cohabitation	housewife (used to be office worker)	2008,11
B	42	divorced	vice office director	2009,01
C	23	married	librarian	2010, 12
D	32	married (in process of divorce)	teacher	2008,08