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## Elderly Chinese in Pacific Rim Countries

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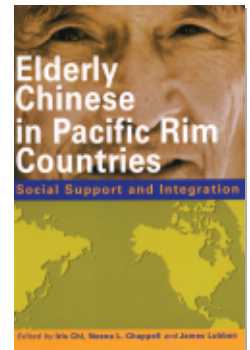
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## **Living Arrangements and Adult Children's Support for the Elderly in the New Urban Areas of Mainland China**

*Shengming Yan and Iris Chi*

In the past two decades, China has experienced rapid urbanization. Statistics show that in 1978, the urbanization rate in China was only 17.92%, whereas in 1995, the level of urbanization reached 29.04% (State Statistical Bureau 1996).

In the process of this rapid urbanization, many cities have encroached on outlying farmland, transforming these previously rural areas into new urban districts. As a result, quite a large proportion of the rural population, including the elderly, has been integrated into urban life. What effects does this have on rural people who find themselves living in a new and unfamiliar environment? For gerontologists and relevant policy-analysts, one of the most interesting questions about this process is how these newly urbanized elderly are able to receive their old-age support, either from their families or public agencies, and maintain their well-being.

Although the impact of urbanization on the life of the elderly in China has been felt and paid attention to (Zeng and Vaupel 1989), past research on support for the elderly has almost exclusively focussed on those who live in either typical rural or established urban areas, as Chi (1998) noted. The elderly living in newly urbanized areas have long been neglected by researchers. So far as today, we still know little about the factors that influence the support for them and their well-being. This research orientation would put them at a disadvantage in promoting their welfare, since the urbanization process has

impact on the support for the elderly, either from their families or public agencies (Hugo 1991)

This chapter tries to reach a preliminary understanding of the conditions faced by older people in the new urban areas of mainland China, with a hope to stimulate more intensive research into this neglected field of study, as the number of elderly persons living in newly urbanized districts is expected to increase further with the acceleration of urbanization in China in the coming decades. In view of the fact that the family has been playing a crucial role in providing support for the elderly in China until today, both in cities and in the countryside, and that it has been suggested there is a close association between living arrangements and family support for the elderly (Kendig, Hashimoto and Coppard 1992), this chapter therefore intends to explore the living arrangements of the elderly in some newly developed urban areas in mainland China in the 1990s, and their effects on adult children's support for their elderly parents. On the other hand, it has been suggested that urbanization and industrialization will cause a decline in the preference for, and the actual instance of, parents residing with their married children (see Levy 1949, Logan and Bian 1999), and further, there are still different estimations about the impact of changing family patterns from multigenerational to nuclear on family support for the elderly in China (Yan, Chen and Yang, forthcoming). With these in mind, special attention has been given in this chapter to the following questions

- 1 What are the preferred and actual living arrangements of the elderly in the new urban areas (traditionally being co-residence with their married children, especially with married sons), and what are their determinants?
- 2 What are the effects of co-residence with married children on the sons' and daughters' support for their elderly parents in terms of emotion, care and finance?

## ▮ Literature Review and Hypotheses

As noted previously, there is little knowledge of the living conditions of the elderly in the new urban areas of mainland China, including the patterns and determinants of the preferred and actual living arrangements. Nevertheless, there are some relevant studies. Yuan and Yan (1998), by analysing the patterns of living arrangements and the determinants of co-residence of elderly people with any of their adult children, found that the elderly in the new urban areas generally had a preference for co-residence with a son, especially with a married son, and that younger age (60 to 69 years old), better self-rated health and having a preference for living with

their married children increased the likelihood of co-residence. Since this analysis pooled both married and unmarried children together, whether the same pattern would apply to living with married children was not clear. In addition, this research did not explore the determinants of the preference of the elderly to reside with their married children. Another relevant study, by Logan and Bian (1999), analysed the determinants of both the preference of the elderly for co-residence with their married children and with married sons and their actual living situations. The results indicated that the factors that influenced the preferred and the actual living arrangements with a married child and with a married son were different. The factors relevant to the present study include the status of widowhood, more advanced age, better education, bigger houses, and bad family relations. The status of widowhood was positively associated with both the preferred and actual living arrangements with a married child, while only the status of a widowed mother was negatively linked to the actual co-residence with a married son. More advanced age was more likely to be associated with a preference for living with married children, but was less likely to result in the actual co-residence with either married children or married sons. Better-educated elderly people were less likely to prefer living with either their married children or married sons, but did not show significant differences from other elderly people in either actual situations of living with married children or married sons. Elderly people with bigger houses were more likely to prefer co-residence with their married children, and in fact, they were more likely to live with both married children and married sons. In addition, Logan and Bian also found that the preference was not always consistent with the actual living arrangements. Many factors prevented the preference from being fulfilled. Although this analysis took into account many variables and factors, the data came from a sample of nine cities, rather than a sample of new urban areas, so to what extent these determinants apply to newly urbanized areas is still a question.

With respect to the effects of living arrangements on adult children's support for the elderly in China, except for the study by Yan, Chen and Yang (forthcoming) and some relevant propositions or speculations (Zhang 1991; Wang 1995; Institute of Population Studies, China Academy of Social Sciences 1990; China National Committee on Aging 1994), special exploration of this topic has not been seen until very recently. According to the results of Yan, Chen and Yang (forthcoming), co-residence with any adult children significantly facilitated the support of the adult children for their parents in daily activities (such as doing household chores, shopping, taking buses, making phone calls, managing money, etc.) and in terms of giving them money, and contributed to their maintenance or increase of financial and emotional support for the parents after they had got married, given that other factors, including the characteristics of both parents and adult children, their

family life cycle and their social and economic status, were the same. The living arrangements did not have any effects on the physical care provided by adult children for their parents. However, the data on which this study was based came from a medium-sized city, and the analysis focussed on the likelihood of support, without including the amount of support. Therefore, although the analysis had a good start, it needs to be refined. In addition, given the different nature of the sample, to what extent the results are applicable to the new urban areas remains uncertain. As for the other relevant propositions or speculations, one of them is quite misleading. This proposition claims that the changing family patterns in China from big households to nuclear families do not necessarily signify that children no longer provide any support for their elderly parents. On the contrary, it argues, children living apart still maintain very close contacts with and provide much support for their elderly parents. Some have even suggested that since many of these children live near their parents, it is convenient for them to provide all kinds of support for their elderly parents. It is argued that under these special circumstances, a new intergenerational relationship, i.e. living independently but not separately, is now emerging in the urban areas of China. However, this proposition fails to clarify to what extent this new pattern of intergenerational relationship is different from the traditional pattern which is based on co-residence, and to what extent the new pattern is a substitute for the traditional one. In this case, it could quite easily lead to a false impression that the living arrangement *per se* does not have any effects on family support, especially adult children's support, for the elderly. Although the study by Yan, Chen and Yang has tested the validity of this proposition in a city sample, it needs to be further tested in the new urban areas due to their distinctive features.

Based on the above review, we postulate the following hypotheses:

1. Elderly people of a more advanced age and with worse health are more likely to prefer, but are actually less likely, to live with their married children or sons.
2. The education level of the elderly is negatively related to the preference for and actual instance of co-residence with married children or sons.
3. Since co-residence is generally the norm for both the elderly and the children, there is generally no housing shortage in the formerly rural areas which are now new urban areas, and there is evidence that most of the elderly in these areas have relatively spacious houses (Gui 1998b), thus, housing constraints will not affect the co-residence between parents and their married children or married sons.
4. Co-residence with married children will be especially beneficial to the elderly in terms of emotional and financial support from adult children, but not in terms of care.

## □ Methodology

### Data

The data analysed in this chapter came from a research project jointly undertaken by the University of Hong Kong, Peking University, East China Normal University and other institutions. The project involved a multi-stage probability questionnaire survey in 1995 and 1996, conducted on residents aged 60 or above in the new urban areas of four large cities (Beijing, Shanghai, Suzhou and Guangzhou) in mainland China. A total of 2002 questionnaires were successfully completed.<sup>1</sup>

### Dependent variables

There are two sets of dependent variables in the analysis. The first set includes four dependent variables: the preference for co-residence with a married child and with a married son, and whether or not the respondent actually lived under the corresponding preferred living arrangement. In the survey, the respondents were asked what they thought would be the best living arrangement. If the respondent expressed the desire to live with his or her married children, either sons or daughters or both, then the item for preference to co-reside with married children was coded 1; otherwise it was coded 0. If the respondent wanted to live with his or her married son, then the item for preference for co-residence with a married son was coded 1; otherwise it was coded 0. For the actual living arrangement, if the respondent was living with his or her married child, the item for actual co-residence with married children was then coded 1; otherwise it was coded 0. If the respondent was living with his or her married son, married sons or both a married son and a married daughter, then that item was coded 1; otherwise it was coded 0.

The second set of dependent variables consists of six variables: emotional support, financial support and care for the respondents provided by their sons and daughters. In the survey, the respondents were asked to evaluate the degree to which their sons, daughters, other family members, friends and neighbours were willing to listen to them when they had personal problems. The measure used a five-point scale from 0 to 4 (very unwilling to very willing). The greater the score, the more willing the relatives and friends were to listen to the elderly respondents, thus indicating more emotional support. We measured in the same way the amount of support provided by their sons and daughters in terms of care and financial help. The above support scales have a good reliability in measuring the sons' and daughters' levels of support (the Cronbach's  $\alpha$  are 0.88, 0.76 and 0.88 respectively).

## Independent variables

There are also two sets of independent variables in the analysis. The first set of independent variables was used to predict the preferred and actual living arrangements of the elderly respondents, including their socio-demographic characteristics and housing constraints. Since there was no accurate information available about the income of the respondents, we used their major income sources as a proxy. If the respondents' major income source was independent of the financial assistance received from their children, then they were regarded as having more economic resources; if they relied on their children for the major part of their income, then they were taken as having fewer economic resources. The respondents' housing constraints were measured by whether or not they had their own bedrooms at the time of the survey. If they did, then it meant that there were no housing constraints; otherwise, there were. In the analysis of the actual living arrangements, the preference of the elderly respondents for the living arrangements also constituted an independent variable.

The second set of independent variables consists of the respondents' socio-demographic characteristics, family network and actual living arrangements, and the help they had provided to their children (including grandchildren). Since information on the number and gender of the respondents' living children was not solicited in the survey, we used the three items about 'family network' of the Lubben Social Network Scale (LSNS) (Lubben 1988) to create a composite measure of the family networks of the respondents. The measure was used as a proxy to control for the possible effects of the numbers of children, especially those who were not living with the respondents, and of the relationship between the respondents and their co-resident and non-co-resident children. The emotional support and the support in daily activities provided for their children by the respondents was measured by two composite measures as a proxy. As regards daily activities, the measure was whether the respondents often helped their families, friends or neighbours with shopping, cooking, repairing, cleaning and minding children, etc. Since in China elderly people mainly provide this kind of support to their family members, it is a reasonable representation of the help they had provided to their children in this respect. In terms of emotional support, the measure was about the help the respondents had provided to their spouses, children, children-in-law and grandchildren. The measure of help with daily activities used a six-point scale from 0 to 5 (never to always), while the measure of emotional support used a five-point scale from 0 to 4 (never to always). The financial support the respondents provided to their children and grandchildren was measured on a five-point scale from 0 to 4 (never to always). The reliability of the scale is acceptable (the Cronbach  $\alpha$  is 0.70). Since the salient features of

intergenerational relationships in the Chinese society are characterized by reciprocity in a lifelong process rather than in an instant, the 'mutual aid model' (Lee, Parish and Willis 1994) could be well applied not only to the family members in co-residence, but also those living apart. Therefore, the more help the elderly had provided to their children, the more old-age support they would receive from them. The actual living arrangement was divided into four categories — co-residence with married sons, co-residence with married daughters, co-residence with unmarried children, and living independently or with others. Finally, cities were included in the analysis, with Guangzhou as the reference category, since there are great differences in some aspects of the new urban areas of different cities (Gui 1998a and b).

In the analysis, such variables in the second set of independent variables as socio-demographic characteristics, family network measures, the help the respondents had provided, and the cities were all used as control variables. This was to examine the effects of different living arrangements after the effects of these variables had been controlled for.

## ■ Results

### Preferred and actual living arrangements

Table 1 lists the preferred and actual living arrangements of the elderly respondents. Results show that 45.0% of the respondents preferred to live with their married children, 40.4% preferred to live independently, and 14.6% had no definite preference. The proportion of respondents in the present study who indicated a preference for living independently is very close to the results (40.4% vs. 44.0%) of a similar research on the urban elderly in China (Logan and Bian 1999). Given the prevalence among the rural elderly to live with their married children, these results seemed to reflect the impact of urbanization on traditional Chinese family values. It appeared that the preference of the elderly for this living arrangement had been undermined in the new urban areas. On the other hand, however, among those who said they preferred to live with their married children, about 68.8% preferred to live with their married sons, 25.5% had no particular gender preference, and only 6.2% preferred to live with their married daughters. A cross-variable check indicated that among these elderly, about two-thirds had no sons (not reported here). This indicates that although the preference for living with married children was not so prevalent in the new urban areas, for those who preferred living with their married children, living with their married sons was still the most preferable arrangement. Only very few of the elderly



respondents who had sons preferred to live with their married daughters. These results seemed to suggest that the influence of traditional family values was still profound among the elderly in the newly urbanized areas, even if within the limits of preference.

Table 1 Distribution of preferred and actual living arrangements of the elderly

Actual living arrangements	Preferred living arrangements					Total
	Married sons	Any married children	Married daughters	Independently	Depends on situation	
With married sons	67.7 (415)	51.3 (115)	29.1 (16)	25.9 (208)	36.1 (105)	43.2 (859)
With married daughters	4.4 (27)	15.2 (34)	34.5 (19)	1.9 (15)	4.1 (12)	5.4 (107)
With unmarried children	9.8 (60)	8.9 (20)	16.4 (9)	8.7 (70)	18.6 (54)	10.7 (213)
Living independently	18.2 (112)	24.6 (55)	20.0 (11)	63.5 (510)	41.2 (120)	40.7 (808)
Total	30.9 (614)	11.3 (224)	2.8 (55)	40.4 (803)	14.6 (291)	100.0 (1987)

However, to some extent, the actual living arrangements were quite different from the preferred ones. Some 48.6% of the respondents were living with their married children, 36.4% were living independently, either with their spouse or alone, and the remaining 15.2% were living with unmarried children or others (not reported in Table 1). Still, living with married sons was the predominant arrangement. Among all the respondents, 43.2% were living with their married sons (far exceeding the proportion of those who expressed a preference for living with their married sons), and only 5.3% were living with their married daughters. In other words, 89% of those living with their married children were living with their married sons. These results seemed to suggest that the elderly in the new urban areas were actually more traditional in their behaviour than in their expressed preference.

The discrepancies we found between the preferred and actual living arrangements were not unusual. Merely having a preference for a specific living arrangement does not mean that its realization is guaranteed. This result is consistent with that of the study conducted by Logan and Bian (1999), which suggested that many factors will make the elderly people in cities unable to achieve their preferred living arrangements, while on the other hand, living under a specific living arrangement can possibly change an individual's preference.

The results of logistic regression analysis indicate that the predictors of whether the elderly preferred to live with married children or with at least a

married son were by and large the same. Widowed mothers were more likely than others to prefer both living arrangements, while elderly people with independent resources were less likely to have the same preference. The respondents in Beijing were less likely to prefer either of the living arrangements, possibly suggesting the influence of Beijing as a modern, international metropolis and a national, political and cultural centre. Beyond these similarities, there were also slight differences between the determinants of preference for living with married children and the determinants of preference for living with at least a married son. First of all, education did have negative effects on the preference for living with at least a married son, but not on the preference for living with married children. The respondents who had reached the level of senior primary school or above were significantly less likely to prefer living with a married son. But since the proportion of the respondents who had attained this level of education was much higher in Shanghai than in other cities, when the 'cities' variable was introduced into the model, the effects of education on the preference were eliminated by the effects of Shanghai. This result probably suggests that the education level of the elderly, which is often used as an indicator of cultural modernization (Logan and Bian 1999), has a greater effect on the more traditional values about living arrangements than on the less traditional values. Secondly, the relatively younger respondents were less likely than others to prefer living with married children, but were as likely as others to prefer living with married sons. The pattern was that the younger the respondents, the less likely they were to prefer living with married children. If we take ten years as the cut-off point for different generations, then this pattern may reflect the overall impact of different decades on different generations. The fact that poor self-rated health had no influence on both preferences was somewhat surprising and needs further exploration.

The factors that were associated with the actual living arrangements were somewhat different. Again, the main predictors for both living arrangements were generally the same. Table 2 shows that widowed parents were more likely to live with their married sons. Contrary to the predictors of preference, widowed fathers had an even greater likelihood of living with their married sons. As expected, the preference of the respondent had the strongest effects on the actual arrangement. The elderly respondents in the new urban areas of Shanghai were less likely to live with either any married children or married sons, while those in Suzhou were more likely to live under either arrangement. This pattern may be associated with the education level of the respondents of these two cities — the Shanghai respondents were the most educated and the Suzhou respondents the least. Again, there were also some differences in the predictors of living with any married children and with married sons. Firstly, before the effects of cities were

**Table 2** Logistic regression of the preference for living with married children and married sons and actual living arrangements

Variables	Preferred living arrangements with		Actual living arrangements with	
	married children	married sons	married children	married sons
<b>Gender and marital status</b>				
Widowed father			0.499**	0.531**
Widowed mother (Married couples)	0.734***	0.410***	0.467***	0.491***
<b>Age</b>				
60–69	–0.435*			
70–79	–0.393*			
(80–89)				
<b>Education</b>				
Senior primary school or above			–0.377*	
Junior primary school (No formal education)				
<b>Independent resources</b>				
Have (Do not have)	–0.521***	–0.472**		
<b>Self-rated health</b>				
Bad So-so (Good or very well)				–0.390**
<b>Own bedroom</b>				
Have (Do not have)				
<b>Cities</b>				
Beijing	–0.590***	–0.776***	–0.776***	
Shanghai		–0.586***	–0.438**	–0.439**
Suzhou (Guangzhou)			0.971***	0.609***
<b>Preference for living arrangement</b>				
With married sons	—	—	1.192***	1.195***
With married children	—	—	1.207***	0.707***
With married daughters	—	—	0.677*	
To live independently (Depends on situation)	—	—	–0.835***	–0.520***
<b>Constant</b>	0.587**	–0.330*	–0.652***	–0.719***
<b>Model <math>\chi^2</math></b>	117.857	102.927	445.047	345.309
<b>df</b>	6	5	10	10
<b>Number of cases</b>	1958	1958	1958	1958

\* $p < .05$  \*\* $p < .01$  \*\*\* $p < .001$ 

Notes: 1. Categories in parentheses are reference-omitted categories.

2. The symbol '—' indicates that the variable is not included in the model.

controlled for, the respondents who had attained senior primary education were significantly less likely to reside with any married children and a married son, but after their effects had been controlled for, the effects of education were still significant on the co-residence with married children, but not significant on co-residence with married sons. This seemed to suggest that as one of the components of modernization, education had a greater influence on the preferences of the elderly in the new urban areas for the more traditional living arrangement (co-residence with married sons), while for the actual situations, it seemed to have a comparatively weaker influence. Secondly, the elderly with poor self-rated health were less likely than others to live with a married son, but were as likely as others to live with any married children. This is surprising because according to Chinese traditions, it is usually the son's responsibility to live with and care for the frail elderly members of the family. Since the data was cross-sectional, it was difficult to distinguish whether the poor health led to the non-co-residence of the respondents with their married sons, or the poor health was the result of this living arrangement. A plausible explanation for this result is that among those who did not live with their married sons, many lived independently or even alone but did not receive adequate support, thus leading to poor health. This could be partly supported by the evidence presented in the next section of the chapter that the elderly who lived with their married sons generally received much more care from both sons and daughters. An alternative explanation is that the elderly respondents wanted to maintain their independence as long as possible and did not want to trouble their sons despite their poor health. Or perhaps there was a fear that the intensive care required could cause problems in the relationship between the mother and daughter-in-law. Since we do not have relevant information to support these speculations, further research is needed. Thirdly, the preferences for different living arrangements had different effects on co-residence with married children or married sons. It is worth noting that the preference for living with married sons had robust effects in predicting the actual arrangement of both living with any married children and living with married sons. This suggests that more traditional values had greater effects on the actual living arrangement, and that living with sons was generally the dominant norm for the elderly in the new urban areas.

### **Effects of living arrangements on the support from sons and daughters**

Table 3 lists the results of bivariate analysis on the living arrangements and the support from sons and daughters for the elderly in different categories.

In terms of emotional support, the respondents received significantly more support from their sons if they lived with them and significantly less support from them if they lived with their married daughters. Regarding the emotional support from married daughters, there were no significant differences among different living arrangements. In caring for the elderly respondents when they were ill, the support from sons and from daughters were significantly different under different living arrangements. Generally, if the elderly lived with their married sons, they received much more support from their sons, whereas if they lived with their married daughters, they received much more support from their daughters. With respect to financial support, if they lived with their married sons or unmarried children, they received significantly more support from their sons, and if they lived with their married daughters or unmarried children, they received more support from their daughters. Evidently, living with their married children, either sons or daughters, generally contributed much to the support for the elderly.

**Table 3** The mean scores of the support from sons and from daughters under different living arrangements

Support and support sources	Living arrangements				Total
	With married sons	With married daughters	With unmarried children	Other living arrangements	
<b>Emotional support</b>					
Sons*	2.55 (1.04)	2.28 (1.23)	2.47 (1.05)	2.39 (1.06)	2.47 (1.06)
Daughters	2.61 (0.99)	2.67 (1.11)	2.62 (1.00)	2.55 (1.00)	2.59 (1.00)
<b>Care when ill</b>					
Sons***	3.29 (0.90)	2.43 (1.30)	3.03 (1.03)	2.94 (1.12)	3.11 (1.03)
Daughters***	3.06 (0.91)	3.34 (0.97)	3.05 (0.94)	2.94 (1.04)	3.03 (0.97)
<b>Financial support</b>					
Sons*	2.23 (1.57)	1.94 (1.52)	2.37 (1.50)	2.02 (1.53)	2.16 (1.55)
Daughters***	1.96 (1.45)	2.45 (1.64)	2.36 (1.38)	1.91 (1.49)	2.01 (1.48)

\* $p < .05$  \*\*\* $p < .001$

Note: Numbers in parentheses are standard deviations.

Next, we analyse the effects of different living arrangements on the support for the elderly from their sons and daughters, after controlling for the effects of the characteristics and the family network of the elderly, and the help the elderly had provided to their children.

**Effects of living arrangements on emotional support** Regression analysis shows that living with married sons and with married daughters both had significant effects on emotional support, even after the effects of other factors had been controlled for. The basic pattern was that living with married sons promoted emotional support from sons, and living with married daughters increased the support from daughters. Living with unmarried children did not have any significant effects on increasing or decreasing the emotional support from either sons or daughters, compared to the arrangement of living independently or with others.

Although living with married sons and with married daughters both contributed to the sons' and daughters' emotional support for the respondents, their individual weight on the support was quite different. The standardized regression coefficient of living with married sons was 0.103, while that of living with married daughters was only 0.046, and it was the least important factor that significantly influenced daughters' support. These results suggest that for the sons' emotional support for the elderly, co-residence with married sons was much more important than other arrangements, but for the daughters' emotional support for the elderly, co-residence with married daughters was not so important. This also implies that the daughters' emotional support for the elderly was less influenced by the co-residence with married daughters than the sons' support was.

**Effects of living arrangements on care when ill** With respect to the effects of living with married children on the care for the respondents, the results shown in Table 4 reveal different patterns to some extent. Again, living with married sons and with married daughters both significantly influenced the support from sons and from daughters. As expected, living with married sons increased the care from sons, while living with married daughters significantly decreased it. There are two possible explanations for this pattern. On the one hand, the respondents who had sons, but who lived with their married daughters, might have a bad relationship with their sons or daughters-in-law, or their sons lived too far away to provide care. On the other hand, in many cases, those respondents living with their married daughters did not have any sons, as noted previously. In this case, they had no choice but to live with their married daughters, and naturally, they could not receive care from non-existent sons. As for the care from daughters, the pattern was contrary to that of the care from sons. The respondents who lived with their married sons also received more care from their daughters than those who had other living arrangements. This may suggest that the elderly who lived with their married sons generally still maintained good relationships with their married daughters. Furthermore, if the elderly had both sons and daughters, to live with a son would conform to the traditional norm, so even

Table 4 Effects of living arrangements on the support for the elderly from their sons and daughters

Variables	Emotional support		Care when ill		Financial support	
	sons	daughters	sons	daughters	sons	daughters
<b>Living arrangements</b>						
With married sons	0.219***		0.373***	0.150**	0.188**	
With married daughters		0.196*	-0.475**	0.543***		0.511***
With unmarried children (other living arrangements)						
<b>Parents' characteristics</b>						
<b>Age</b>						
60-69						
70-79 ( $\geq 80$ )			0.108*			
<b>Gender and marital status</b>						
Widowed father	-0.197*		-0.206*		0.442***	0.355**
Widowed mother (Married couples)					0.191*	0.241***
<b>Education</b>						
Senior primary school or above						
Junior primary school (No formal education)						
<b>Independent resources</b>						
Have (Do not have)		-0.203**			-0.621***	-0.656***
<b>Self-rated health</b>						
Bad (Good or very well)					0.178*	0.213**
<b>Parents' help</b>						
Help with daily activities						
Financial help to sons	0.116***	—		—	0.146***	—
Financial help to daughters	—	0.070**	—	—	—	0.151***
Financial help to grandchildren		0.084***	0.061*	0.053*		0.081*
Emotional support to immediate families	0.202***	0.158***	0.140***	0.130***	0.198***	0.155***
<b>Parents' family networks</b>	0.076***	0.072***	0.062***	0.063***	0.067***	0.059***
<b>Cities</b>						
Beijing	-0.249***	-0.196***				
Shanghai	0.219***	0.260***			-0.643***	-0.530***
Suzhou (Guangzhou)				-0.188***	-1.266***	-1.155***
<b>Constant</b>	1.115***	1.576***	1.942***	2.022***	1.737***	1.742***
<b>R<sup>2</sup></b>	0.206	0.170	0.155	0.135	0.302	0.296

\*  $p < .05$  \*\* $p < .01$  \*\*\* $p < .001$ 

Notes: 1. Categories in parentheses are reference-omitted categories.

2. The symbol '—' indicates that the variable is not included in the model.

if the daughter would like to live with the elderly, she could still accept this arrangement and it would not affect her care for her elderly parents.

The patterns of the effects of living arrangements, on the care and on emotional support provided from sons and daughters were also different. Results show that the standardized regression coefficients of living with married sons and living with married daughters were 0.373 and  $-0.066$  respectively for the sons' care, and 0.076 and 0.132 for the daughters' care. Apparently, both the negative effects of living with married daughters on the sons' care for the respondents and the positive effects of living with married sons on the daughters' care were not very great. On the other hand, both the effects of living with married sons on the sons' care and those of living with married daughters on the daughters' care ranked as the third most influential among the effects of all the factors that influenced support. Nevertheless, the effects of living with married sons on the sons' care for the respondents were much greater than those of living with married daughters on the daughters' care. These results suggest once again that the daughters' support in caring for the elderly when they were ill was much less influenced by co-residence than the sons' support was.

***Effects of living arrangements on financial support*** As for the effects of different living arrangements on financial support from sons and daughters, once again, living with married children had significant effects, even after the effects of other factors had been controlled for. For the financial support from sons, living with married sons significantly promoted it, and by the same token, living with married daughters also increased the financial support from daughters. Other living arrangements had no significant effects.

The weight of the effects of these two living arrangements on the sons' and daughters' financial support respectively seemed to present an opposite pattern compared to those of emotional support and of care. The effects of living with married sons on the sons' financial support were somewhat less than those of living with married daughters on the daughters' support (the standardized regression coefficients were 0.061 and 0.083 respectively). This suggests that financial support from sons was less likely to be influenced by the co-residence with married sons than was financial support from daughters by the co-residence with married daughters.

## ■ Discussion and Conclusion

Using survey data gathered in the new urban areas of four big cities in mainland China, this chapter analyses the elderly's living arrangements, and



the effects of different living arrangements on adult children's support for the elderly.

Results show that after these previously rural areas had been encroached upon by the cities and transformed into new urban areas, the preference of the elderly for the traditional living arrangement — co-residence with married children — was relatively not so strong, reflecting to some extent the impact of urbanization and modernization. On the other hand, however, the traditionally preferred and dominant living arrangement of living with married sons seemed to be generally less influenced by this process. Education was identified as having negative effects on the preference for living with married sons and on both the actual co-residence with married children and with married sons, but the effects were not as strong as suggested in the typical urban areas. In addition, different from the pattern suggested in typical urban areas, widowed parents were more likely to actually live with their married children or married sons, while only widowed mothers preferred to live with either their married children or married sons. Elderly respondents of a more advanced age were only more likely to prefer living with their married children, but were not different from other elderly respondents in other preferred and actual living arrangements. Parents with independent resources were less likely to prefer living with either their married children or married sons, but did not have any differences in their actual living arrangements from those without independent resources. Housing constraints had no significant effects on the preferred and actual living arrangements. Moreover, there were differences in the preferences of the elderly in different cities. Discrepancies between the preferred and actual living arrangements were also identified in the new urban areas.

As for the effects of the traditional co-residence with married children on their support for the elderly, the results unmistakably and consistently show that the co-residence, by and large, had a significantly positive contribution to the sons' and daughters' support. The general pattern was that living with married sons increased the support from sons, and living with married daughters increased the support from daughters, even after the effects of other factors had been controlled for. This suggests that in the new urban areas, the traditional living arrangement — co-residence with married children — still played a more important role than other living arrangements in supporting the elderly. This probably explains to some extent why there was a relatively larger proportion of respondents who still preferred living with married children and were actually living under this arrangement. These findings were generally consistent with relevant results in other research on urban areas. Interestingly, co-residence with married sons seemed to some extent especially beneficial to the care for the elderly in the new urban areas. As noted previously, although this pattern could be interpreted as showing

that most of the elderly who lived with their married daughters did not have any sons, further analysis needs to be done so as to better estimate to what extent this interpretation is correct and with what factors this pattern is associated. Another point worth noting is that although co-residence with either married sons or married daughters increased the support for the elderly from sons and daughters, the importance of these two types of co-residence was different in terms of the support from sons and the support from daughters. Co-residence with married sons was much more important for getting emotional support from sons and care from both sons and daughters, but less important for getting financial support, while co-residence with married daughters was more important for the elderly in receiving care and financial support from daughters, but less important for getting emotional support.

It is generally assumed that the elderly in the rural areas of China are more traditional than their urban counterparts in terms of their preference for living arrangements. However, the above results seem to suggest that the preferred and actual living arrangements of the elderly in the new urban areas were mixed, with some characteristics of the elderly found in both rural and urban areas.

In sum, the above findings have shed some light on the living arrangements of the elderly in the new urban areas of mainland China, and the effects of living arrangements on the support for those elderly from their sons and daughters. To some extent, some results are consistent with those of other research on typical urban areas, and some conform to the generally held assumptions about the typical rural areas. However, more detailed and refined research is needed, given the limits of the survey data used in this chapter, i.e., some information which could have been associated with these topics is missing, and proxy variables had to be used in the present study. Nevertheless, this study has provided a beginning for ongoing research.

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## ■ Note

1. For details of the sampling procedures, definition of new urban areas and other information about the project, please refer to Chi 1998.

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