

China's Revolutions and Intergenerational Relations

Martin K. Whyte, Editor

**UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
CENTER FOR CHINESE STUDIES**

CHINA'S REVOLUTIONS
AND
INTERGENERATIONAL
RELATIONS

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CENTER FOR CHINESE STUDIES
THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
ANN ARBOR

*Open access edition funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities/
Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Humanities Open Book Program.*

MICHIGAN MONOGRAPHS IN CHINESE STUDIES
ISSN 1081-9053
SERIES ESTABLISHED 1968
VOLUME 96

Published by
Center for Chinese Studies
The University of Michigan
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48104-1608

© 2003 The Regents of the University of Michigan

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

China's revolutions and intergenerational relations / Martin King Whyte, editor.
p. cm. — (Michigan monographs in Chinese studies, ISSN 1081-9053 ; v. 96)
Includes bibliographic references and index.
ISBN 0-89264-160-6 (alk. paper)
1. Intergenerational relations—China. 2. Parent and adult child—China. 3.
Aging parents—China. 4. Family life surveys—China. I Whyte, Martin King.
II. Michigan monographs in Chinese studies ; no. 96.

HV740.Z9 I583 2003
305.2'0951—dc21

2002067723

ISBN 978-0-89264-160-4 (hardcover)
ISBN 978-0-472-03809-1 (paper)
ISBN 978-0-472-12755-9 (ebook)
ISBN 978-0-472-90150-0 (open access)

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Dedicated to the memory of

Professor Yuan Fang
(1918–2000)

Teacher, Sociologist, and Patron of International
Academic Collaboration

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PREFACE

China's Revolutions and Intergenerational Relations serves as the final report of a pioneering and complex collaborative survey involving Chinese and American researchers. Our collective goal was to understand how the many wrenching changes experienced by Chinese families in the twentieth century (detailed in chapter 1) affected the relationship between grown children and their aging parents. More generally, we wanted to capture and understand the balance of change and continuity in the family life of urban Chinese during the last decade of the century.

This volume is a testament to both the fruits and the difficulties of collaborative academic research between our two countries. The project whose primary results are reported in these pages was originally conceived in 1988. What was intended as a three-year project eventually stretched out for more than a decade, with additional years needed to prepare the resulting papers for publication. At a number of points the frustrations and delays experienced tempted those involved to throw up their hands and abandon the project. It is thanks to the dedication and support of funding agencies, researchers, and institutions in both China and the United States that this did not happen. Before presenting what we have learned about how relations between aging parents and their grown children were affected by China's multiple twentieth-century revolutions, I want to describe briefly the origins and history of this project and give thanks to those who helped bring it to a successful conclusion.

The 1980s were years of dynamic changes in Chinese society. After the death of Mao Zedong in 1976 and the launching of a broad program of reforms under the leadership of Deng Xiaoping in 1978, many past policies were reversed. The establishment of diplomatic relations between the United States and the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1979 made it possible for the first time in a generation for American researchers to conduct research within China, and raised the possibility of scholarly collaboration between Americans and the Chinese. But would this possibility extend to the discipline of sociology, a field with a problematic history within the PRC?

Following the Soviet precedent, sociology had been abolished as a discipline in the PRC in 1952, and an attempt by Chinese sociologists in 1957

to gain approval for sociology's "rehabilitation" was rejected, with the sociologists leading this effort branded as "rightists" and consigned to political and academic oblivion for the next two decades. However, by 1979 the political atmosphere in China had changed decisively, and sociology and a number of other previously banned disciplines were formally reestablished. Many of China's surviving sociologists were restored to academic positions, where they were given responsibility for rebuilding the institutional structures of the field. Courses and majors in sociology soon sprang up in a variety of Chinese universities, and sociology students and researchers traveled abroad to receive training and renew academic and personal ties to the international research community.

It was in this heady atmosphere that the announcement was made by the Luce Foundation in the late 1980s of a grant program to support collaborative academic research between the United States and China. I had already been involved in one collaborative social survey project in 1987 in Chengdu, working with sociologists at Sichuan University. I discussed the new funding opportunity announced by Luce with colleagues at the University of Michigan, where I then taught, and particularly with Ronald Freedman, the late Leslie Kish, Albert Hermalin, and Barbara Anderson. The general topic of continuity and change in Chinese families seemed an important as well as a politically noncontroversial focus for potential collaboration between American and Chinese sociologists, and Ron Freedman used the occasion of a planned trip to Beijing to explore collaboration possibilities there.

After encouraging talks and subsequent communications with sociologists at Beijing University (Beida), and particularly with Pan Naigu, Yuan Fang, and Yang Shanhua, my colleagues and I decided to apply for a Luce Foundation grant to study urban families in Baoding, Hebei, in collaboration with the Department of Sociology at that university. (Baoding was chosen because our Beida colleagues were already using it as a regular field research site for their students and had established the necessary bureaucratic contacts and approvals there.) Our plan called for two surveys to be conducted in Baoding, one in 1990 focusing on the process of mate choice and resulting husband-wife relations, and a second survey in 1991 focusing on aging and intergenerational relations. The surveys that Albert Hermalin was launching in Taiwan in 1989 focusing on aging and intergenerational relations on that island would serve as a model and comparative base for this second Baoding survey.

We were successful in obtaining a very generous grant in 1989 from the Luce Foundation to support our project, but then political events intervened

to interrupt our work almost before it had begun. The Tiananmen student demonstrations of 1989 disrupted all aspects of life in Beijing, not least at Beijing University. The June 4th military suppression of those demonstrations and the subsequent government crackdown threw into doubt the future of our planned collaborative survey project. Eventually, in consultation with our Beida colleagues from afar, we decided to proceed but to postpone our scheduled first survey on marriage until 1991. However, in 1990 China's State Education Commission, under whose authority Beida falls, issued a "secret directive" banning collaborative social survey projects involving foreigners. Our Beida colleagues decided to go ahead with the 1991 marriage survey in Baoding anyway, although on a reduced scale, since they could no longer formally collaborate with the University of Michigan or receive funds from our Luce grant. (Wang Feng, who had received a Ph.D. in sociology at Michigan in 1987 and then remained in the U.S. on a postdoctoral fellowship, was able to participate in the 1991 survey due to his Chinese citizenship.)

Our project stalled at that point for several years. Our Beida colleagues, led by Yang Shanhua, had completed the marriage survey in 1991 but were unable to share the data with us due to the State Education Commission ban. (One other Luce project involving the University of Michigan, in political science, had its survey data confiscated and held for several years.) Valiant efforts led by Alice Hogan of the Division of International Programs at the National Science Foundation (an additional supporter of the Michigan political science project) were made to lift the collaborative survey ban, initially to no avail. It was not until 1993 and changes in China's leadership that these efforts led to an easing of the ban, thus allowing collaboration on such survey projects to resume.

In the case of our project, the green light to resume work occurred as a result of negotiations to enlarge the scope of our collaboration. Xiao Zhenyu, who had earlier worked with Ron Freedman on projects involving China's population, had become second in command at the China Research Center on Aging (CRCA). The latter agency falls under the State Council and is not subject to China's State Education Commission. We negotiated a new arrangement involving Michigan and both Beida and CRCA to carry out the planned second Baoding survey in 1994, focusing on aging and intergenerational relations. As part of that new arrangement, Beida was able to share the data from the 1991 Baoding marriage survey with CRCA, and they in turn were able to provide those data to us at Michigan. (However, the current volume deals only with the second, 1994 survey.)

From that point onward our work proceeded without major problems. The only difficulties were normal ones of coordinating the efforts of such a complex, international crew of collaborators (as opposed to earlier problems caused by political interference.) The 1994 survey was planned and carried out very smoothly with full participation from the Michigan side, with Jieming Chen (then a doctoral student in sociology at Michigan) playing the leading role in coordinating the fieldwork with Beida and CRCA colleagues and preparing the data for analysis. An application to the Beijing Office of the Ford Foundation provided supplementary funds that made possible a workshop held at the East-West Center in Honolulu, HI, in 1996 to present and discuss initial papers reporting the results of the Baoding survey project. Earlier incarnations of several of the chapters in the current volume were presented at that workshop. Much of the further delay of the appearance in print of this volume is attributable to the fact that in the intervening time I changed “work units” (to use the Chinese parlance) three times—moving to the Sociology Program at the National Science Foundation in 1993, to George Washington University in 1994, and to Harvard University in 2000.

Given the long and somewhat tortuous history of this project, many individuals and institutions deserve special thanks for their support and patience. I am particularly grateful to the Luce Foundation and to its Vice-President Terry Lautz, who allowed us to keep their funds while hoping for a better day, even though this meant that a three-year grant eventually took eleven years to complete! The additional support received from the Beijing Office of the Ford Foundation, then led by Tony Saich, is also deeply appreciated. My wife Alice Hogan deserves credit and thanks on so many levels that it is difficult to know where to begin. Let me simply say here how proud I am of her often lonely but ultimately successful battle with China’s official bureaucracy on behalf of collaborative social science research, and how thankful I am for years of sage advice and patient support in my more mundane struggles to bring the project to completion.

All of the collaborating institutions involved (the Department of Sociology and Population Studies Center at the University of Michigan, the Department of Sociology at Beijing University, and the China Research Center on Aging) were also unfailingly supportive with resources, personnel, and administrative assistance. At Michigan, additional people playing key roles were Jim House, who designed our health-related questions and visited Beijing to work with our colleagues there; Emily Hannum and Shiauping Shih (Michigan graduate students at the time), who traveled to Baoding in 1994 to help supervise the

field interviewing stage; and Pat Preston in the Center for Research on Social Organization at the University of Michigan, who managed the project budget throughout its long history. I am grateful as well to Robert Mory, who through his diligent editorial efforts helped to make this volume more clear and coherent. Special thanks go to my former Michigan students, Wang Feng and Jieming Chen, who became my special advisors and “backbone elements” (to use another example of PRC jargon) throughout work on the project after 1993.

These expressions of thanks must end on a sad note. This volume is dedicated to the memory of Professor Yuan Fang, a tireless supporter of this project and of international collaboration in sociology in general, who died on June 14, 2000. He is my co-author in the second chapter in this volume, and it is sad that he was not able to see the results in print. Professor Yuan was born in 1918 in Hanshou County, Hunan. He studied sociology during World War II at the National Southwest United University (Xinan Lianda), where several of China’s key universities had combined to form a new university to escape Japanese occupation. After the war he joined the faculty of the Department of Sociology at Qinghua University in Beijing (one of the constituent partners in establishing Xinan Lianda). After sociology was abolished as a discipline in 1952, Professor Yuan worked in several other academic institutions, including People’s University and the Beijing College of Economics, where he focused on the study of labor issues and other topics peripherally related to his training in sociology. He joined the chorus of sociologists lobbying for the reinstatement of sociology in 1957, and as a result he also joined them in being branded as a “rightist” later that year.

By the time that sociology was “rehabilitated” in 1979, Professor Yuan had returned to work in the Beijing College of Economics. The following year he transferred to Beijing University, where he joined others in leading the effort to establish a Department of Sociology, becoming its first chair in 1982. His leading role in the discipline and its revival was recognized by his selection as President of the Beijing Sociological Association and then of the national China Sociological Association. He played a central role in training a new generation of Chinese sociologists within China and in fostering contacts and collaboration with sociologists overseas. He resumed an active research career and published widely, particularly through his studies of Chinese family life and the problems of the elderly.

I first met Yuan Fang in 1979 and was immediately impressed by his openness and dedication to sociological research and academic standards. Over

the subsequent years I was also very impressed by the obviously deep feelings of respect and gratitude that his Chinese colleagues and former students held toward him. In the somewhat treacherous currents of Chinese academic politics, it has not always been easy to retain one's honor, but it is clear that Yuan Fang was a notable exception to this tendency. Although Yuan Fang was not one of the primary Beida researchers involved in our Baoding project on a day-to-day basis, behind the scenes he was a tireless supporter of our efforts. I have no doubt that the successful completion of our work after so many frustrations and delays would not have occurred without his steadfast encouragement and support. I deeply regret that the shepherding of this volume through the publication process took so long that I will be unable to present him with the resulting volume and thank him for his support once again. The best I can do is to dedicate this volume to his memory.

Martin King Whyte
February 2003

PART I INTRODUCTION

1

CHINA'S REVOLUTIONS AND INTERGENERATIONAL RELATIONS

Martin King Whyte

The longevity and continuity of Chinese civilization are fabled. More than two millennia ago a unified Chinese state emerged, with a set of political and social institutions and values which, with some important modifications, survived into the twentieth century.¹ Throughout the rise and fall of subsequent dynasties, through periods of disorder and rebellion, and even when foreign invasions threatened the realm, it was not until the overthrow of the Qing dynasty in 1911 that this pattern of cultural continuity was broken. The Confucian moral order maintained by China's rulers over more than two millennia had at its core certain specified forms of family life and obligations.² Central to that family life was an ethic of filial piety, involving the absolute obligation for all Chinese to respect and cater to the needs of their elders, and particularly their parents. Well into the twentieth century, Chinese children continued to be socialized with the same sayings and lessons that had shaped the families of their ancestors many centuries earlier.

Twentieth century China was characterized by very little order or continuity. The collapse of the imperial order was followed by an era of warlordism, a fragile national unity broken by invasion by Japan, and then the victory of the Chinese Communists in 1949. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) brought national unity but hardly settled times. CCP rule has been filled with new forms of tumult, including the socialist transformation of the mid-1950s, the Great Leap Forward, the Cultural Revolution, the launching of a draconian family planning policy, and then the dramatic about-face represented by the post-1978 market-oriented reforms. How

have Chinese families responded to these many recent challenges? How much of the traditional set of family customs and obligations has survived to the present? Have revolutions and socialism transformed intergenerational relations in distinctive ways, so that the nature of family life in urban China today differs from the experience of Chinese living outside of the People's Republic of China? To what extent do grown children continue to feel a strong obligation to their parents, and to what extent do they fulfill this obligation? Is the welfare of China's elderly threatened by the hectic nature of social change, and by the undermining of filial obligations in particular? More generally, are Chinese family patterns today shaped more by ancient cultural traditions, by the level and pace of economic development, or by the shape of contemporary political and economic institutions? These are the central questions that motivated the research project whose results are reported in these pages.

The primary data to be used in examining such questions come from a survey conducted in the summer of 1994 in Baoding, a medium-sized city located in Hebei Province. Practical realities limited the extent to which we could explore all aspects of the "big questions" listed above. Obviously, we could not go back in time to collect information about Chinese family patterns in earlier decades or centuries. In most instances, the absence of survey research in China before the 1980s means that there are no comparable earlier data with which we can compare our results.³ It was also not possible to examine current family patterns throughout China. We are limited to profiling the complexity of intergenerational relations currently in one particular Chinese research site. Even with these limitations, we think our survey data represent the richest source currently available to those who want to know what has happened to intergenerational relationships in Chinese families.

The nature of the 1994 survey will be described in some detail later in this chapter. First, it is necessary to review the nature of the family system and values that traditionally governed parent-child relations and some of the events and forces that challenged filial obligations during China's tumultuous twentieth century.

Chinese Family Obligations and Filial Piety

In all premodern societies the family rather than the state is responsible for supporting the elderly. Naturally enough, in such societies, and perhaps

particularly in settled agrarian societies, parents devote a great deal of time and energy to teaching their children to be obedient and to be willing to support their parents in their old age.⁴ However, it is at least arguable that in China over many centuries the emphasis on subordination of the young to the welfare of their parents became elaborated to an unusual degree, and that the form of family life within which socialization for filiality occurred was distinctive. An extensive literature exists in support of these claims, and we can only scratch the surface in the present discussion.

Accounts in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century contain substantial agreement about the nature of the dominant forms of Chinese family life. Ideally, the preferred form of family was the patrilineal joint family composed of parents, several married sons and their wives and children, and perhaps even spouses and children of the grandsons.⁵ In practice, at any point in time most families were more modest—perhaps a nuclear structure involving just parents and immature children, or a stem form with parents and one married son, his wife, and grandchildren.⁶ Daughters almost always moved at marriage to live with their husbands' families. They might receive a dowry from their parents as part of the marriage negotiations, but they had no claim on family land or other property, which was to be divided evenly among the sons.⁷ After marrying, a daughter was expected to visit periodically her natal family and remain on close terms emotionally, but she had no obligation to support her parents in their old age. Instead she transferred her filial obligations to her husband's parents, and the duty to support her own parents rested solely with her brother or brothers (and their wives). Only if a family had daughters but no sons and managed to persuade a young man to marry into their household would this pattern be reversed, but this eventuality was seen as highly undesirable. In the great majority of cases, the rights to family property and the obligation to support parents followed the patrilineal lines by which Chinese kinship is structured.

Regardless of whether the family structure was nuclear, stem, or joint, Chinese family relations were organized in a very hierarchical fashion. The family head (generally the eldest male) controlled all family property, including the earnings of family members, and represented the family in public. Marriages of children were the product of parental arrangement, often in an extreme, "blind marriage" form in which the children not only had no say, but did not even meet until the day of the wedding. Hierarchy was heavily emphasized throughout the kinship system, as in the separate

terms used for older and for younger brothers, for older and younger sisters, and for uncles older than one's father versus younger, and so forth.

Children were expected to respect and defer to the opinions of their parents and other elders. A period of early indulgence of babies was followed after age six or seven by a strict regimen of learning family duties and obligations, with the father expected to be a remote and severe disciplinarian. Childrearing focused on teaching obedience and conveying the message that happiness could come only through serving the interests of the entire family. Themes emphasized by modern Western parents, such as learning to think for oneself and seeking personal fulfillment, were notable by their rarity. Even if a child disagreed with a parent, he or she was not supposed to express such disagreement openly. Rather, the recommended approach was to accept the verdict of the parents while hoping that circumstances might lead the latter to change their decision later. A child who argued back to a parent was in danger of being regarded as unfilial, thus bringing shame on the whole family. Under extreme circumstances it was permissible for parents to sell or even kill a disobedient child. Corporal punishment was allowed and expected in regard to children (even adult children), but striking a parent was a capital offense in Chinese law.

Unlike the situation in most premodern European families, children did not gain substantial familial authority or attain family headship when they married. Rather, they remained subordinate to their parents and particularly their father until either death or disability caused the latter to relinquish his familial power. If a dispute arose between a man's wife and his mother, as often happened, he was expected to side with his mother and bring his wife into line, using physical force if necessary. So great was the concern about maintaining the primary obligation to parents that no sign of affection could be shown between husband and wife beyond the confines of their bedroom. Under these circumstances, a wife's primary obligations became those to her parents-in-law, rather than to her husband. Even distance did not free an adult from meeting filial obligations, and a son or unmarried daughter off working in another place or even another country was expected to send home a substantial portion of his or her earnings as family remittances.⁸

While the details of turn-of-the-century Chinese family life described so far may not be much more patriarchal than many other agrarian family systems, the emphasis given to filial piety seems more distinctive. In the Confucian scheme of things, filial piety, or *xiao*, was often portrayed as the most important value, or the root of all virtue. In voluminous writings on

the topic over the centuries, Chinese moralists stressed that what was necessary was something much more than dutiful repayment of the debt of having been born and raised by parents, and certainly much more than compensation for one's expected share of family property. Rather, what parents should strive for was inculcation in their children of a sense of love, respect, and pleasure at putting parental needs ahead of their own. Discussions of filial piety are widespread in the Confucian canon, and they are the specific focus of one of the thirteen "sacred books" of Confucianism, the *Xiao Jing* (Classic of Filial Piety), dating from the third or second century B.C.

In later centuries children were also exposed to the imperative to meet parental needs through the *Twenty-Four Examples of Filial Piety*, stories that generations of children learned by heart. A few examples convey the flavor of this work.⁹ Number six is Lai-tzu, who, although over seventy himself, dressed in children's clothes and played with toys to bring amusement to his even more ancient parents; number eight is Tung Yung, who was so poor that he sold himself into servitude in order to pay for a proper burial for his father; number fourteen is Yang Hsiang, who without any weapon or regard for his own safety flung himself on a tiger that had attacked his father (the tiger fled and both father and son survived); number nineteen is Wang Hsiang, who took off his clothes and lay down on a frozen river in order to melt the ice to procure fresh fish for his step-mother, even though she had used her influence to get Wang Hsiang mistreated by his father; and number twenty is Wu Meng, who let mosquitoes swarm over his body so that they would not disturb the sleep of his parents. Perhaps the most dramatic example is Kuo Chu (number thirteen), whose family was so poor that he decided it was necessary to kill his three-year-old child in order to have sufficient food left for his mother. He persuaded his wife by pointing out, "Why not bury this child? Another child may be born to us, but a mother, once gone, will never return."¹⁰ Fortunately, when digging the hole into which to bury their child, they uncovered a pot of gold and did not have to complete the act. These examples and much else in Chinese culture conveyed the clear message that a worthy child is one who gladly exerts extra efforts to meet the needs of, and provide pleasure to, parents; who places the welfare of parents ahead of the welfare of himself (or herself) and his children; and who persists in such behavior even if the parents are cranky and unpleasant.¹¹

Obligations to Chinese parents extended beyond the grave. Prolonged mourning for parents was legally required. Officials were expected to resign

at the death of a parent and don coarse hemp garments for a period of more than two years. The ancestral cult motivated most Chinese regularly to place on family altars offerings of food, spirit money, and other items needed by their parents in the afterlife. Proper rituals for parents and other ancestors were seen as necessary for the continued well-being and prosperity of living family members and future generations.¹² Failure to observe proper ancestral rituals again brought shame to entire families. When Christian missionaries came to China, they reported that popular devotion to ancestor worship was perhaps the greatest obstacle to securing conversions.

Much of the discussion so far has focused upon official ideals and classic texts, and it may be wondered how much of the ordinary population of China conformed to these lofty standards of filial behavior toward parents. It is difficult to provide a simple answer to this question, especially given substantial class and regional variation across China as well as changes over time. From early twentieth-century ethnographic evidence it is clear that in some particulars ordinary Chinese did not completely follow the strictures of Confucian moralists. For example, relatively few families achieved a complex, joint family structure for any length of time, and ordinary farmers and craftsmen did not withdraw into deep mourning for more than two years. No doubt few ordinary Chinese attacked tigers or lay naked on ice in their effort to please their parents. However, in most respects what is striking is how fully the family patterns of even relatively poor families reflected these centuries-old ideals. At the end of China's imperial era there was no sharp gap between the elite and the masses in regard to family morality, and even illiterates in isolated villages were quite familiar with, and accepting of, the core Confucian messages about filial piety.¹³ The obligation to support aging parents seems to have been willingly and unquestioningly borne by sons, while daughters assumed a supporting role in meeting the filial obligations of their husbands toward their parents. Whatever other insecurities they faced, most parents could rest secure in the knowledge that their children would place parental needs ahead of their own.¹⁴

China's Twentieth-Century Revolutions

As noted earlier, the imperial order which had fostered Confucian morality lasted until 1911. The oldest respondents to our 1994 survey were thus born into that imperial order, and Confucian sayings and lessons remained popular even after the last emperor abdicated. However, even in

the closing decades of the Qing dynasty both domestic evolution and foreign influence began to challenge some elements of traditional customs.¹⁵ The abolition of the official examination system in 1905 prepared the way for a shift to modern schools based upon foreign models, in which the classical Confucian texts would no longer be the center of the curriculum. After 1911 came much more concerted assaults on the traditional legacy. The new republic established in 1912 rapidly fell into chaos, with only a tenuous national unity restored in 1927. During the intervening years, China was characterized not only by battles between rival warlords, but also by a searching reexamination of the traditional cultural legacy.

During what became known as the “May Fourth Period” (after a patriotic demonstration held on that date in 1919), young Chinese intellectuals influenced by Western ideals attacked Confucian values and family morality as sources of China’s backwardness. Freedom to choose one’s mate, gender equality, sexual freedom, and many other ideas found their champions, and filial piety was attacked as conducive to fatalism and passivity in the face of China’s many challenges.¹⁶ China’s most famous modern novel, Ba Jin’s *The Family* (originally published in 1933), had as its theme the struggle by several sons in a wealthy family to resist the demands of the family patriarch.¹⁷ This period is also referred to as the Chinese Renaissance, since one of the changes carried out at the time was a shift from use of classical Chinese texts to writing in vernacular Chinese. With this change the memorization of classical Confucian texts, including those associated with filial piety, gradually went out of style.

Both liberal and radical challengers of China’s Confucian legacy came of age during the May Fourth Period. For example, Hu Shih, a leading liberal and champion of language reform, described in 1919 his tortured and only partially successful attempt to follow modernized funeral observances at the death of his mother.¹⁸ On the radical side, in the same year Mao Zedong made one of his first appearances in print in a series of articles detailing the tragedy of a prominent young woman who committed suicide rather than enter into a marriage her parents had arranged for her.¹⁹ One may question whether these new intellectual currents had much impact on the family practices of ordinary Chinese. However, the collapse of the imperial order combined with such criticisms and increasing contacts with the West at least served to undermine popular confidence that the ways families had been ordered and children reared in the past were the only proper ways to do so.

After the Nationalist Party led by Chiang Kai-shek achieved national unity in 1927, much of the enthusiasm for reform of family customs abated in favor of a concern for promoting order by allowing or even fostering traditional morality. However, new forces continued to threaten traditional family norms even in the absence of a strong official commitment to family change. The growth of industry, the emergence of other new forms of employment, and the spread of Western ideas and institutions provided Chinese youths with new opportunities to live and work apart from their families, and with new support for individualistic inclinations. Studies conducted during this period report a variety of signs of change in Chinese family life, particularly the beginnings of an erosion in the custom of parentally arranged marriages.²⁰ Then, more than a decade of warfare, famine, and hyperinflation from 1937 to 1949 disrupted many families and made it difficult to fulfill filial obligations.

The successful ascent to power of the CCP in 1949 provided China with more political unity than that society had known for more than a century.²¹ However, as indicated earlier, CCP rule also brought new challenges to traditional family customs. The new government was hostile to much of China's Confucian legacy. Many traditional family customs were regarded as "feudal" and backward, in need of being replaced by modern "socialist" family norms modeled after those in the Soviet Union. For example, the entire set of funeral and mourning rites practiced for centuries was targeted for elimination in favor of a modern set involving armbands, a memorial meeting, and cremation with no subsequent ancestral rites.²² Similarly, wedding ceremonies, which traditionally had focused on a family feast and often included rituals of filiality (such as the bride kowtowing and serving tea to or even washing the feet of her new in-laws) were to be replaced by civil registration followed by simple tea parties.²³

As in the Soviet Union, a comprehensive set of institutions was set up to indoctrinate the younger generation into a new set of values.²⁴ Central to those institutions was an effort to persuade young people that loyalty to the nation, the CCP, and to Mao should come before loyalty to one's own family. In some highly visible cases, young Chinese were induced to publicly denounce parents who had fallen out of favor with the new regime.²⁵ Most Chinese were not put to so severe a test, but such examples forcefully conveyed the message that parental authority was no longer absolute.²⁶

The socialist transformation completed during the period 1955–1957 also served to undermine parental power. With all factories, shops, farms,

and other employment now controlled by the state, and with family property reduced to insignificance, parents no longer commanded the resources that their children depended upon to become adults. Increasingly state-run educational institutions and bureaucratic assignment to jobs and housing replaced job training and inheritance from parents. By the same token, in China's cities the security and fringe benefits which came with state employment provided many parents with pensions and other resources for their old age, potentially reducing their need for support from their children.

Although many of the new forces unleashed by the CCP potentially threatened filial obligations, there is another side of the picture. Although the 1950 Marriage Law of the PRC continued the May Fourth spirit by attacking arranged marriages and advocating sexual equality and increased freedom of divorce, at the same time that law made it a legal requirement for children to support their aging parents (as well as for parents to support their children).²⁷ In addition, the CCP not only denounced Confucian ideas, but also Western values. Within a year or two of assuming power in 1949, the CCP forced out of the country Western missionaries, businessmen, and other bearers of Western ideas. For a generation or more (until the launching of the open-door policy in 1978), Chinese were largely shielded from Western culture and family morality.²⁸ During this period a powerful force that has challenged traditional conceptions of family life throughout the world was temporarily held at bay.²⁹

Furthermore, the CCP at no point systematically attempted to get young Chinese to reject filial obligations. The main brunt of the CCP's effort in regard to family change was directed at the custom of arranged marriage. Even that effort was reined in somewhat after the early 1950s, in part due to signs of resistance from the new government's poor peasant allies in the countryside.³⁰ Although attacking arranged marriage certainly constitutes a threat to parental control, at the same time the CCP reinforced the obligation of children to support their aging parents, as noted above. And at no time was there any official attempt to discourage grown children from living with their parents. Moreover, as the chapters in this volume will show in some detail, in most periods the new bureaucratic systems developed by the CCP kept many grown children close at hand, rather than inducing them to move away and to make an independent life for themselves. These tendencies, in combination with the longer life spans brought by health improvements and the increased security of urban employment, arguably

made it more rather than less likely after 1949 that the Chinese elderly could achieve the sort of security and filial regard traditionally cherished.³¹

However, new threats to Chinese families arose in the latter years of Mao's rule. Although the class struggle and mass production campaigns of 1957–1958, which culminated in the Great Leap Forward and its ensuing famine, shook the new social order the CCP had created, these events disrupted urban families far less than did the Cultural Revolution launched by Mao and his radical supporters in 1966. The details of this tumultuous campaign are too complex to go into here. However, the specific events and policies that had the most impact on urban families deserve some attention. The encouragement of youthful Red Guards to rebel against authorities in their schools and workplaces sometimes spilled over into homes. As in the early 1950s, some youths whose parents had become targets of the Cultural Revolution were put on the spot and pressured to denounce them publicly. In a few instances a child even participated in the “Oppose the Four Olds” Red Guard raid on a parental home, helping to retrieve and confiscate treasured family heirlooms that were judged unsuitable to the new Maoist order.³² Even parents not targeted for criticism faced anxious times as their adolescent children rejected words of caution and went off to engage in Cultural Revolution battles.

These strains on parent-child relations were only a hint of things to come. Toward the end of 1966, millions of adolescents left home to travel over the face of China to “exchange revolutionary experience.”³³ Subsequently, many parents became so embroiled in Cultural Revolution struggles in their workplaces that they came home irregularly, and those who became targets of struggle were confined to “cowsheds” (makeshift jails in work units) and were unable to come home at all. Starting in 1968 millions of urban adolescents were required to leave their cities of origin and become rural laborers for extended periods of time, far from home and family.³⁴ During the same period millions of intellectuals and bureaucrats were also required to spend several years engaged in agricultural labor in “May 7th Cadre Schools,” again without accompanying family members.³⁵ As a result of these policies, large numbers of urban families were torn apart for a period of years. Some children too young to have been Red Guards or to go to the countryside spent several years as unsupervised street waifs, without either parents or older siblings to supervise them.³⁶

Family bonds and obligations were strained at other points by the events of these years. In the disorder and violence of the Cultural Revolution, some

individuals died and were collectively cremated, without any opportunity for family members to arrange for funeral observances or even to collect the remains. When a deceased parent or a child of that parent was in political difficulty, it was virtually impossible for family members to arrange even the minimal sort of memorial meeting observance allowed by the state. Many urbanites remember with anguish their inability to meet funeral obligations for family members during those troubled years.³⁷ Even though the factional violence of the Cultural Revolution was reined in by 1969, the prolonged separations and disruption of family lives continued for many families until after Mao's death in 1976.

In many respects developments during China's reform era since 1978 constitute a rejection of the social order of the late Mao years. Once again these developments are too complex to describe in detail here, but their potential implications for urban families need to be considered.³⁸ With the repudiation of the Cultural Revolution and the rehabilitation of its victims, many of the disruptions of family life of the Mao era were ended. The majority of the youths who had been sent to the countryside were allowed to return to the cities and obtain urban jobs; parents who had been sent to the countryside or incarcerated for alleged political faults were allowed to resume their lives; and the official renunciation of class struggle campaigns indicated to the populace that families could plan their futures somewhat more predictably.³⁹ Equally important was the modest relaxation in control over culture and private lives allowed by the CCP. As the political system became less totalitarian, families had more privacy and autonomy to arrange their affairs as they saw fit, without constant fear of being criticized for being insufficiently "proletarian." In this more relaxed setting, revivals of traditional family customs flourished, although more so in the countryside than in the cities.⁴⁰

One of the most notable rehabilitations during the reform era has been that of Confucius himself. The attitude of Chinese officialdom toward Confucius and his doctrines has shifted from total hostility toward ambivalent tolerance or even implicit encouragement. As CCP leaders during the 1980s recognized that acceptance and promotion of Confucian values has gone hand in hand with rapid economic growth in places like Japan, Taiwan, Hong Kong, South Korea, and Singapore, they began to contemplate whether the PRC might follow the same path. With the collapse of the Soviet Empire in 1989–1991 and the ensuing loss of faith in Marxism-Leninism within China, Confucian doctrines have become an obvious contender in the search for new sources of political legitimacy. As a result of these shifts,

Confucian shrines have been refurbished and reopened, Confucian texts have been republished, and international scholarly conferences have been convened in China to consider the positive legacy of Confucian doctrines.⁴¹ Within this more approving atmosphere, it has become common to see public discussions of the virtues of filial piety and other traditional familial values, with suggestions that promotion of traditional virtues will help not only with economic growth and political legitimacy, but also in combating such problems as juvenile delinquency and the rapid growth of China's elderly population.

Balanced against such potential trends in support of filial obligations are a number of other forces that may threaten those obligations anew. First, as indicated earlier, in the years since 1978 China's open-door policy has ended China's isolation from Western contacts and ideas. Furthermore, modern communications mean that awareness of the very different forms of family life prevailing in the West can spread much more widely than was the case prior to 1949. Young urban Chinese are growing up immersed in a popular culture influenced by Hong Kong, Taiwan, and world media images, a culture that is very different from the one in which their parents and grandparents were reared. Conservative elements in China regularly contend that reform era trends such as increases in premarital sex and divorce are attributable at least in part to "spiritual pollution" emanating from Western societies. There is also a widespread, popular perception that respect for the elderly has been declining, again at least in part due to the more individualistic values flooding into China from the West.

The economic reforms themselves present potential threats to Chinese filial obligations. There is substantial evidence from around the world that economic development tends to weaken filial obligations as it strengthens conjugal and individualistic orientations.⁴² The fact that China's economic growth since 1978 has been so rapid also increases the chances that China's young people will feel that the experiences of their elders are out of date and irrelevant, rather than objects of respect. In addition, the shift from state allocation to allocation controlled by markets in distributing employment, housing, and other resources means that young people have increasing options and are becoming less dependent upon both their parents and the state in planning their lives. Market reforms are also encouraging materialistic and acquisitive values among the young that contrast sharply with the Spartan socialist values in which their parents were reared and the moralistic Confucianism of their grandparents. In several related ways, then, market

reforms may be undermining the likelihood that urban youths will readily subordinate their interests to those of their parents.

One additional potential threat to filial obligations involves China's increasingly strict family planning policy. As chapter 2 notes, most of our Baoding respondents escaped the full effects of the "one child policy," which was launched in 1979. The youngest respondents in our survey, those in their 50s, started their families when urban residents were allowed to have two children, and older respondents completed their fertility before there were any strict limits on fertility.⁴³ Therefore, very few of the parents we interviewed had only one child. However, if present trends continue urban China will eventually consist almost entirely of parents with only one child. The potential implications of this rapid and dramatic shift are unclear but potentially monumental. In barely a generation, China has gone from a situation in which aging parents (such as those in the Baoding survey—see the discussion in chapter 2) have several grown children who can support and assist them in their old age, to a looming situation in which most aging parents in urban areas have only one child, and that child's filial attentions will have to be shared with another set of parents (their child's parents-in-law). There is a popular impression in China that the way children are being reared is changing in ways that may magnify the impact of altered demographic situation. If, as is commonly believed, parents of only children indulge and spoil their "little emperors," then it may be questioned whether those children will be willing to shoulder the heavy burden of filiality once they are adults.⁴⁴ In sum, recent changes in demography and childrearing practices may be undermining filial obligations even more than the political and cultural turbulence described above. However, any examination of the impact of the one child policy on filial obligations is of necessity a task for future research.

Also beyond the scope of the present study is the question of the impact on intergenerational relations of further economic reforms carried out since 1994. In ensuing years many aspects of urban life have undergone changes and become more competitive and insecure, with large-scale layoffs from state enterprises, market-based reforms of urban housing and medical care delivery, and in general a weakening of the "iron rice bowl" of security that was still largely unbroken at the time that we conducted our Baoding survey. Although we cannot be certain how these more recent changes have affected intergenerational relations, we will periodically offer speculations in the pages that follow. In the final chapter of this study we will return to the question of whether the nature of relations between parents and their grown

children that we observed in Baoding in 1994 was a very temporary product of the special circumstances operating at that time, or reflects deeper and longer-lasting forces.

The Baoding Survey

The social world faced by older Chinese today is vastly different from that experienced by their counterparts in earlier generations. Powerful forces that have reshaped family patterns in other societies—revolution, economic development, the spread of Western ideas and values, and state-directed family engineering—have swept through the lives of today's Chinese elderly in successive and overlapping waves. The impact of these tumultuous changes on intergenerational relations and filial obligations has been the subject of considerable speculation among outside observers as well as analysts within China. The research reported in the chapters that follow was designed to replace speculation with evidence. As part of a larger project on continuity and change in urban Chinese families, a survey was carried out in Baoding in 1994 to try to gain a clearer picture of the current state of relations between elderly residents of that city and their grown children.

The 1994 survey involved a complex collaboration between researchers affiliated with the University of Michigan, the Department of Sociology at Beijing University (Beida), and the China Research Center on Aging (CRCA).⁴⁵ At the suggestion of the Beida Sociology Department, Baoding was selected as our research site, since that city had already been used for research practicum exercises by students in that department. In retrospect we came to feel that the selection of Baoding was fortunate. In part this feeling stems from the excellent cooperation we received from local authorities in that city, which enabled us to carry out our survey there very efficiently. However, we also feel that the very ordinariness of Baoding is an advantage. While obviously no single city can be taken as representative of all of urban China, arguably a middle-sized city such as Baoding (whose urban population at the time of the 1990 census was just over 600,000) is more "typical" than are the cities in which most social surveys have been conducted, such as Beijing, Shanghai, and Tianjin.⁴⁶

Baoding is located about 100 miles southwest of the national capital, Beijing. The city has a history which can be traced back at least to 300 B.C. It became a regional capital during the Ming Dynasty (A.D. 1368–1644), and for extended periods during the Qing dynasty (A.D. 1644–1911) and up

through the 1950s it served as the provincial capital of Hebei Province (known earlier as Zhili), the province within which Beijing is situated. In 1965 the Hebei provincial government was relocated from Baoding to Shijiazhuang. In the early twentieth century Baoding was the site of the Baoding Military Academy, the second most important such institution in China (after Canton's Whampoa Military Academy). Baoding was also the site of significant Christian missionary activity, with a notable presence of Catholics in particular.

After 1949 Baoding went through the same basic transformations as other cities in China, which were designed to make them into industrial growth centers.⁴⁷ By the early 1980s, Baoding had over 500 key industrial enterprises, such as the Baoding Petrochemical Factory, the Number One Cotton Factory, and the State Bank-Note Paper Mill. One large plant, the Film Production Plant of the General Plastics Factory, produces about 60% of all the movie film and 25% of the commercial color film for the entire country. Industrial expansion led to the creation of an additional residential district (New District) to supplement the two existing urban districts of Baoding (North and South Districts), and by 1990 New District contained 44% of the city's total urban population.⁴⁸ Because of this profile of heavy reliance on state enterprises, Baoding has not been notable for its early or pioneering embrace of market-based reforms. Baoding is also located on one of China's major railway trunk lines, with all trains traveling between Beijing and Guangzhou stopping in Baoding. Several important higher educational institutions are also located in the city, including Hebei University, Hebei Agricultural University, and North China Hydroelectrical University. Even though the Baoding Military Academy no longer exists, military presence is still an important part of the Baoding scene, with the 38th Army based in the city. During the Cultural Revolution, Baoding fell under the influence of radical leftists, in particular Chen Boda, and was racked by intense factional infighting.⁴⁹ It is not obvious whether or how these distinctive features in Baoding's profile and recent history would make intergenerational relations in Baoding families in 1994 much different from the patterns to be found in other medium-to-large sized Chinese cities.

Once Baoding had been selected as our research site, probability sampling procedures were used to obtain a representative sample of individuals over age 50 residing in the three main urban districts of the city. The sampling was carried out in two stages. First, 30 residents committees (out of the total of 225) were selected using probability-proportional-to-size procedures. Then

household registration records were used to construct a list of all individuals residing in those thirty residents committee areas who were born before June 1, 1944. This enumeration produced a list of 11,389 eligible older Baoding residents in these thirty neighborhoods.⁵⁰ Then simple random sampling was used to select forty-five persons from each residents' committee, or a total of 1350 potential respondents. Last-minute checks prior to the interview stage determined that quite a few individuals on this list had either died or moved out of the city, reducing the number of eligible respondents to 1160. Utilizing two classes of undergraduate sociology students from Beida as well as selected graduate students and young researchers from both Beida and CRCA, the project interviewed 1002 of the selected individuals. Thus the effective response rate for older Baoding residents was 86.4% (1002/1160). (While this is a very high response rate compared to surveys in Western societies, it is lower than the close to 100% rates typical of many officially sponsored surveys in China.⁵¹) For each older respondent one grown child living in Baoding was randomly selected, and we managed to interview 753 of these grown children. The response rate for grown children was lower than for parents, about 69%, largely because a considerable number of the selected children were away from Baoding during our interviewing period. The idea of interviewing both parents and grown children about intergenerational relations was inspired by project member Albert Hermalin's pioneering surveys in Taiwan using a similar design. This design enabled us to examine how parent-child relations look to both generations, rather than having to rely on the perspective of only one or the other.

While we feel that our parent and grown child samples can be accurately taken as representative of the population in Baoding's urban districts, there are some distinctive characteristics of the sample that should be noted. As will be discussed in greater detail in chapter 2, it turns out that 52.5% of the Baoding parents we interviewed were male. When studying an older population, one normally expects to find a greater proportion of females, given the longer life spans of women in most societies, including China. We were concerned that the presence of more males than females in our final parent sample indicated a sampling bias problem. However, closer examination showed that in both the full lists from which the parent sample was drawn and in figures from the 1990 census for Baoding, there was also a slight excess of males over females in this age range.⁵² Our final sample does not contain significantly more males than we would expect, given the underlying characteristics of residents of Baoding over age fifty. However, we are

not certain why Baoding itself appears unusual in not having more older women than men.⁵³ In any case, our survey meets the highest standards for sample survey research in any country. Even though the Baoding data are cross-sectional (i.e., they come from a single survey in 1994, rather from repeated measurements over time), we feel they provide a useful basis for judging the state of intergenerational relations at that time in urban China, and a possible baseline for judging future changes.

Plan for the Volume

Through the remaining chapters, some of the primary results of our Baoding survey are presented and discussed and then placed in a comparative context. The three chapters in Part II of this book consider the general situation of the Baoding older residents we interviewed. Chapter 2, by Yuan Fang and Martin Whyte, presents an overview of the Baoding parents we interviewed in 1994.⁵⁴ The figures presented there on the family composition, marital status, employment status, health, and other social background characteristics of Baoding parents help to provide a context within which to place the more detailed analyses in the chapters that follow. This chapter also presents the first evidence that most Baoding parents feel good about their lives, and that continued close relationships with, and support from, grown children are primary sources of this satisfaction. In some sense most of the remaining chapters in the volume are devoted to analyzing in greater detail the robustly strong intergenerational relations that are the dominant pattern in our data and puzzling out how and why the threats to filial obligations detailed in previous pages have not had as much impact as expected.

Chapter 3, by Wang Feng, Xiao Zhenyu, and Zhan Jie, examines in greater detail the employment situation of older Baoding residents and the influences determining whether or not they remain in the work force. This issue is central to determining whether particular aging parents maintain their own sources of income or become dependent upon their children. As expected, factors such as age and gender have a powerful impact on labor force participation, since employed women generally retire at least five and often ten years before men.⁵⁵ The analysis in chapter 3 also reveals that multiple factors influence whether older individuals remain employed (or return to work after retirement), with aspects of human capital and job skills generally more important than financial need. The data on wages and on pensions presented in this chapter reinforce an important conclusion in

chapter 2 regarding intergenerational relations: The large majority of older Baoding residents continue to have their own sources of income and may even have higher incomes than most or all of their children. For most parents, then, any financial support received from grown children tends to be supplementary, rather than their primary means of support.

The issue of generational contrasts in attitudes and values is examined in chapter 4 by Martin Whyte. That chapter shows that parents and their children disagree fundamentally about some things but agree on others. In many realms grown children give less support to “traditional” values (both Confucian and socialist) than do their parents. However, when it comes to family obligations and filiality, children are if anything even *more* likely to voice support for traditional views than are their parents. A variety of tests designed to check whether this pattern of strong support for filial obligations among children might be biased or inaccurate yielded negative results. In general these robustly strong filial orientations appear grounded in a number of factors, and particularly in a recent historical pattern of intense mutual interdependence between generations.

The chapters in Part III of the volume then analyze the nature of the exchanges between generations, exchanges which appear to be both a source of, and reflection of, continuing strong filial obligations. In chapter 5, by Albert Hermalin and Shiauping Shih, the exchanges between parents and children in regard to physical care, help with household chores, financial assistance, and the provision of food or other goods are analyzed in detail. The general picture presented in this chapter reinforces the account in chapter 2, with most parents (and children) enmeshed in complex webs of intergenerational exchanges. Although there is some indication in these data that children claim they provide more support to parents than parents report receiving from them, at the same time very few parents claim they have needs for assistance that their grown children are not meeting.

In chapter 6, by Shengming Yan, Jieming Chen, and Shanhua Yang, a comparison is made between the adult children who live together with their parents and those who live separately. While in some realms, and particularly in helping with household chores, coresidential children do more than those who live elsewhere, the surprise in the Baoding data is that in so many other realms it seems to make little difference whether a child is living with the parents or not. Looked at from another angle, this finding indicates that parents do not have to bind their children to them in a joint residence in order to have the close emotional ties and receive the support and assistance

that provide satisfaction and security. Filial obligations can be fulfilled “at a distance,” and they do not require that parents and grown children live under the same roof.⁵⁶

Chapter 7, by Martin Whyte and Xu Qin, compares the pattern of support received by parents from their daughters vis-a-vis their sons. While data from the Baoding survey echo earlier studies in showing that it is about three times as likely for parents to live with a grown son as with a grown daughter, when it comes to the provision of support and assistance, no such gender gap is visible. Most Baoding parents receive support from daughters as well as sons, and relative to their abilities, daughters provide just as much or even more. These findings indicate that although the traditional obligation to support aging parents appears not to have weakened, the pattern of who provides that support has altered dramatically. This conclusion provides strong evidence in support of earlier research which claimed that the patrilineal basis of Chinese kinship has been breaking down in urban areas.⁵⁷

In chapter 8, by Jieming Chen, some of the family dynamics that have produced the sustained pattern of support for parents from grown children are probed. In addition to general features of the social order of contemporary Chinese cities that help sustain filial obligations, Chen’s analysis suggests that parental investment strategies are also involved. Those parents who at early points in their children’s lives provided considerable help and assistance are likely to receive more support from grown children today than are those who provided less. Urban Chinese parents may have lost much of the property and power used in the past to command filial obedience, but interdependence of the generations keeps these bonds strong.

Together, the analyses in Part III lead to a conclusion that Baoding parent-child exchanges in 1994 do not indicate that traditional patterns of behavior have survived unchanged throughout all the turmoil that has characterized China’s twentieth century. Rather, what is notable is that dramatic changes have occurred in the nature of parent-child relations—particularly reductions in the proportions of parents who live with and rely primarily on grown children for support and a major increase in the support received from married daughters. However, the net result of these markedly changed patterns is that most aging parents feel that their needs for support and assistance are well met, and this situation contributes to their physical and emotional well-being. Thus, while the outcome suggests cultural continuity, that continuity has in fact been achieved by adapting to changed circumstances.

It should be noted that there is some overlap between the various analyses presented in the chapters in Part III. For example, the support provided by daughters versus sons is the special focus of chapter 7, but a “child gender” variable is included in the statistical models of most of the other chapters as well. This tendency is unavoidable since we are all working from the same rich set of data to ask a variety of questions. These overlapping findings should not be regarded simply as duplications of effort. Rather, since the authors of these chapters tend to use different samples and subsamples of the Baoding data and employ somewhat different sets of variables in their statistical models, the similarity of findings across chapters can be seen as indicating the robustness of the conclusions we draw from these data.

The three chapters in Part IV focus on a comparison of intergenerational relations in Baoding and in urban Taiwan. Chapter 9, by Martin Whyte, Albert Hermalin, and Mary Beth Ofstedal, is an extended consideration of the contrasting development paths of these two Chinese societies. As indicated earlier, portions of the Baoding survey design and questionnaires were based upon a series of surveys that Albert Hermalin and colleagues conducted in Taiwan beginning in 1989. Although the Baoding survey was not an exact replication of those Taiwan surveys, enough common or similar questions were used to permit limited comparisons of results. Since Taiwan and the PRC share a common cultural heritage but have had very different recent histories and possess quite disparate contemporary institutions, this comparison presents a rare opportunity to explore the extent to which current attitudes and behavior regarding intergenerational relationships are rooted in cultural traditions versus the nature of the current social order. Chapter 9 reviews the recent history of these two Chinese societies in order to highlight contrasts that might be expected to influence the nature of parent-child relations.

Chapter 10, by Albert Hermalin, Mary Beth Ofstedal, and Shiauping Shih, then compares the pattern of exchanges between parents and grown children in Baoding and in urban Taiwan, in a manner somewhat parallel to the one presented in chapter 5. In chapter 11, by Jennifer Cornman, Jieming Chen, and Albert Hermalin, several categories of attitudes between parents and children of Baoding and urban Taiwan are compared, in a manner somewhat parallel to that presented in chapter 4. In general, the results presented in these chapters show that while strong filial obligations and extensive exchanges between generations are characteristic of both Chinese

settings, at the same time there are a number of ways in which the results in urban Taiwan and in Baoding diverge. To oversimplify somewhat, we found that although Taiwan is clearly a more economically developed locale than the PRC or even Baoding specifically, in certain ways the patterns in the Taiwan data appear more “traditional” than their counterparts in Baoding.

The volume concludes with a postscript chapter designed to sum up the most important conclusions of the Baoding survey project and the Baoding-urban Taiwan comparison. There we conclude that the variety of motivating puzzles with which we began this research project, as listed at the beginning of this chapter, can be boiled down two major questions:

1. To what extent have strong obligations for grown children to support their aging parents survived the tumultuous changes of recent Chinese history?
2. To what extent are family patterns in urban China today distinctive because of the legacy of revolution and socialism?

Using data from the 1994 Baoding survey as well as the comparative evidence from Taiwan, we attempt to provide answers to these fundamental questions.

NOTES

¹ The political unification of China was achieved by the emperor Qin Shihuang in 221 B.C. Although Qin Shihuang campaigned against the ideas of Confucius (551–479 B.C.) and Mencius (372–289 B.C.), with his death and the succession of the Han Dynasty in 206 B.C., Confucian teachings became the foundation for state orthodoxy in subsequent dynasties, including those based upon foreign rule, the Yuan (Mongol) dynasty of A.D. 1271–1368, and the Qing (Manchu) dynasty of 1644–1911. Important elements of Chinese culture and institutions can be traced back even further, into the Zhou dynasty originating more than three millennia ago, or even into the Shang which preceded the Zhou.

² The dates traditionally given for Confucius's life span are from 551–479 B.C. The versions of Confucian ideas that influenced social life in late imperial China reflected subsequent interpretations and codifications over many centuries. Particularly influential on the emergence of a revived Neo-Confucian orthodoxy were the writings and interpretations of the Song Dynasty philosopher, Zhu Xi (A.D. 1130–1200).

³ We note that on Taiwan, where systematic social surveys began earlier than in the PRC, it is possible to make such comparisons over time. One such effort, involving a 1963 survey in the capital city of Taipei, which was replicated in 1991, found clear signs of weakening of a variety of filial attitudes over this time period. See Robert M. Marsh, *The Great Transformation: Social Change in Taipei, Taiwan since the 1960s* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1996), chapter 6.

⁴ See, for example, various contributions to *Aging and Generational Relations over the Life Course*, ed. Tamara Hareven (New York: de Gruyter, 1996). The emphasis on children as insurance against old age is central to many accounts of high fertility in preindustrial societies. See, for example, J. C. Caldwell, *Theory of Fertility Decline* (London: Academic Press, 1982).

⁵ In fact the ideal was often stated as “five generations under one roof,” but limited life spans made this achievement extremely rare.

⁶ Under some circumstances Chinese families of other kinds, such as parents residing with a married daughter, were observed, but in most locales the patrilocal form was very strongly preferred. See the discussion in Burton Pasternak, *Kinship and Community in Two Chinese Villages* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1972); Arthur Wolf, “Chinese Family Size: A Myth Revitalized,” in *The Chinese Family and its Ritual Behavior*, ed. Hsieh Jih-chang and Chuang Ying-chang (Taipei: Academia Sinica, 1985.)

⁷ Marriage in China has long been virtually universal, particularly for women. This pattern means that there were very few daughters who remained unmarried and potential claimants on family resources, unlike the pattern in Western societies. For a discussion of the basic differences between Asian and Western European family patterns in the premodern era, see John Hajnal, “Two Kinds of Preindustrial Household Formation Systems,” in *Family Forms in Historic Europe*, ed. R. Wall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983.)

⁸ For a particularly dramatic example of this propensity to send remittances home, in this case from workers in successful London restaurants to their kin in a village in Hong Kong,

see James L. Watson, *Emigration and the Chinese Lineage* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975). For a comparison of the similarities and differences between parental authority in imperial China and the preindustrial West, see Gary G. Hamilton, "Patriarchalism in Imperial China and Western Europe," *Theory and Society* 13 (1984): 393–425.

⁹ Both the *Classic of Filial Piety* and the *Twenty-Four Examples of Filial Piety* are translated by Ivan Chen in *The Book of Filial Duty* (New York: Dutton, 1910). This source dates the compilation of the *Twenty-Four Examples* to the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644); however, at least some of the included examples were well known during the Han dynasty (206 B.C.–A.D. 220) or even earlier.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 48.

¹¹ For a review of survey evidence on filial attitudes in recent times in Hong Kong and Taiwan, see David Y. Ho, "Filial Piety, Authoritarian Moralism, and Cognitive Conservatism in Chinese Societies," *Genetic, Social, and General Psychology Monographs* 120, no. 3 (1994): 349–65.

¹² See the discussion of mourning and ancestral observances in Hugh Baker, *Chinese Family and Kinship* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979), chapters 4–5.

¹³ Early ethnographic studies of village life that support this conclusion of popular compliance with Confucian family norms include Daniel Kulp, *Country Life in South China* (New York: Teacher's College, 1925); Fei Hsiao-t'ung, *Peasant Life in China* (London: Routledge, 1939); Francis L. K. Hsu, *Under the Ancestors' Shadow* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1948); and Martin Yang, *A Chinese Village* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1945). For a description of some of the mechanisms used in the imperial period to ensure transmission of Confucian orthodoxy into rural China, see Kung-chuan Hsiao, *Rural China: Imperial Control in the Nineteenth Century* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1960).

¹⁴ A greater threat was posed by the possibility that a family would have no grown sons available to support parents in their old age. Fear of this possibility was conveyed in the statement attributed to Mencius that the most unfilial act a son could commit was the failure to produce any heirs.

¹⁵ One example of the weakening strength of traditional family customs concerns foot-binding. Infant daughters in a substantial portion of Chinese households had for centuries had their feet tightly bound, producing the tiny, deformed "lotus feet" in adult women that were the cultural ideal. In the last half of the nineteenth century, Chinese reformers and foreign missionaries joined forces to combat this practice, which began to be disappear early in the twentieth century. However, one can still see some older women in China with bound feet.

¹⁶ The classic study is Chow Tse-tsung, *The May Fourth Movement* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1960)

¹⁷ Pa Chin [Ba Jin], *The Family* (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1964).

¹⁸ Hu Shih, "My Reform of Funeral Rites," in *Autumn Leaves*, translated by E.T.C. Werner (Shanghai: Kelly and Walsh, 1928), 69–95. Hu wanted to adopt the black armband then

being popularized in place of hemp mourning garments and to omit all offering of sacrifices in honor of his mother. However, after pleading from his grandmother he allowed one consolidated sacrifice, but donned only a portion of the customary hemp garments, and would only bow rather than carry out the full kowtow expected.

¹⁹ See Roxanne Witke, "Mao Tse-tung, Women and Suicide in the May Fourth Era," *The China Quarterly* no. 31(1967): 128–47.

²⁰ See the discussion in Olga Lang, *Chinese Family and Society* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1946); Marion J. Levy, Jr., *The Family Revolution in Modern China* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1949).

²¹ During the period after the Opium War (1839–1842), imperial China lost territory and ceded extraterritorial privileges to foreign powers, while enduring the Taiping Rebellion and several other major rebellions. During the Nationalist era from 1927 to 1949 the central government held only nominal power over a number of outlying provinces still ruled by warlords, and then lost major territory to the Japanese invasion after 1937 and to the CCP in the Civil War after 1946.

²² See the discussion of these reforms in Martin K. Whyte, "Death in the People's Republic of China," in *Death Ritual in Late Imperial and Modern China*, ed. James Watson and Evelyn Rawski (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988). By the 1980s these changes had largely been accepted in China's large cities, but were only beginning to be implemented in Chinese villages.

²³ The difference between a bow and a kowtow may be indicative of the greater stress on deference toward parents in China than elsewhere. A kowtow involves kneeling and bowing the head to the floor, in the most exuberant form with the head knocking against the floor.

²⁴ For details on the Soviet ritual reform effort, see Christel Lane, *The Rites of Rulers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

²⁵ In one account of the "thought reform" process carried out by the CCP in the 1950s, the denunciation of a parent is portrayed as a culminating event leading to full submission to the world view of the CCP. See Theodore Chen, *Thought Reform of the Chinese Intellectuals* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1960).

²⁶ In the traditional Confucian moral code, only in the event of a child's treason against the state was a parent obligated to turn in the child; parents were obligated to conceal any lesser crime by a child and could be punished for failing to do so.

²⁷ See the discussion in C. K. Yang, *The Chinese Family in the Communist Revolution* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1959); M. J. Meijer, *Marriage Law and Policy in the Chinese People's Republic* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1971). A 1980 revised version of the Marriage Law contains only minor modifications of the provisions of the 1950 statute, and continues the legal obligation of children to support aging parents.

²⁸ During the 1950s a version of Western family ideas as conveyed in the Soviet model did have influence. However, after the withdrawal of all Soviet advisors in 1960, China's isolation from Western culture and communications was fairly complete.

²⁹ See the classic discussion of the combined impact of economic development and Westernization on family life in many parts of the world in William J. Goode, *World Revolution and Family Patterns* (New York: The Free Press, 1963).

³⁰ In particular, rural males and aging parents in general found the associated promotion of freedom of divorce threatening. After about 1953 the official stance shifted from promoting freedom of divorce to making it very difficult to get a divorce. See the discussion in Kay Ann Johnson, *Women, the Family, and Peasant Revolution in China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983).

³¹ The major existing study of China's elderly presents substantial evidence that on balance China's revolution has made it easier for China's elderly to achieve the sort of old age that was traditionally valued. See *Long Lives: Chinese Elderly and the Communist Revolution*, ed. Deborah Davis-Friedmann (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983; revised, expanded edition, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991).

³² The campaign against the four olds took place during the fall of 1966, and Chinese traditional art, classical and Western books, insufficiently proletarian clothing, and many other items were confiscated.

³³ During this period Red Guards were able to ride for free on China's trains and buses, and many also undertook new "long marches" to important revolutionary sites. A series of mass rallies were held in Beijing during this period, each attended by something like one million or more Red Guards.

³⁴ See the discussion in Thomas Bernstein, *Up to the Mountains and Down to the Villages* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977).

³⁵ For an account of life in such an institution, see Yang Jiang, *A Cadre School Life: Six Chapters* (Hong Kong: Joint Publishing Co., 1982).

³⁶ A recent Chinese film, *Yangguang Canlan de Rizhi* (The Days When the Sun Was Shining), directed by Jiang Wen, portrays the life of these Cultural Revolution-era street waifs.

³⁷ For one vivid account of such difficulties of a woman intellectual who had been declared a rightist in 1957 and whose mother died during the Cultural Revolution, see Yue Daiyun and Carolyn Wakeman, *To the Storm* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 187–93.

³⁸ Several general accounts of China's reforms exist. See, for example, Harry Harding, *China's Second Revolution* (Washington: Brookings Institution, 1987). For a collection of essays dealing with the impact of reform era developments on family life in general, see *Chinese Families in the Post-Mao Era*, ed. Deborah Davis and Stevan Harrell, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).

³⁹ For those charged with Cultural Revolution crimes and association with the purged "Gang of Four" (Mao's widow, Jiang Qing, and three other radical leaders, who were arrested one month after Mao's death in 1976), however, life during this period became much more perilous and unpredictable.

⁴⁰ For example, in rural areas traditional wedding and funeral rites, ancestor worship, and building of new lineage halls and ancestral tombs have been widely reported.

⁴¹ For a fascinating account of the post-1978 efforts to rebuild Confucian temples in one village of his descendants, see Jun Jing, *The Temple of Memories* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996).

⁴² See the discussion in Goode, *World Revolution*.

⁴³ The story of the phases of China's family planning effort is a complex one. After debate and indecision during the 1950s about whether China had a population problem, a vigorous family planning program began on a voluntary basis during the 1960s. Although this effort was disrupted by the Cultural Revolution, starting in 1970 a renewed and now much more mandatory effort was launched aimed at limiting urbanites to two children and rural residents to three children. In every year since 1974, fertility levels in Chinese cities have been below replacement level. (See the discussion in Judith Banister, "The Aging of China's Population," *Problems of Communism* 37, no. 6 (1988): 62–77.) In 1979 Chinese leaders decided that even this strict policy was too lenient, and they launched the "one child policy." That policy has produced fairly thorough compliance with the one child target in China's large cities, but compliance among China's rural residents has not been good, with many rural families failing to stop even at two children. According to one calculation, during the mid-1980s only 10–15% of residents of large Chinese cities were proceeding to have a second child, but at the same time 75–85% of rural residents were doing so. See Griffith Feeney and Wang Feng, "Parity Progression and Birth Intervals in China: The Influence of Policy in Hastening Fertility Decline," *Population and Development Review* 19 (1993): 61–101.

⁴⁴ To date existing research casts doubt, however, on this popular stereotype about the one child policy leading to selfish and spoiled children. See, for example, Dudley Poston, Jr. and Toni Falbo, "Effects of the One-child Policy on the Children of China," in *The Population of Modern China*, ed. D. Poston, Jr. and D. Yaukey (New York: Plenum Press, 1992). See also Jun Jing, ed., *Feeding China's Little Emperors* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000).

⁴⁵ The project was supported generously by a Luce Foundation grant to the University of Michigan. Supplemental support for the conference at which most of the papers included here were originally presented came from the Beijing Office of the Ford Foundation. All involved are very grateful for the support and encouragement provided by both foundations and their responsible officers. The large cast of characters involved in the project made the management structure complex. The author, formerly a member of the faculty at the University of Michigan, coordinated the overall project with the able assistance of Wang Feng and Chen Jieming. The primary responsibility for the project at Beida fell to Yang Shanhua, and at the China Research Center on Aging to Xiao Zhenyu. Hao Hongsheng, a former student at the University of Michigan now affiliated with People's University (and since 2000 working on leave at Westat, in Rockville, MD), was responsible for the sampling design and administration. The project also involved an earlier Baoding survey conducted in 1991 dealing with mate choice and marital relations, but only the results of the 1994 survey are dealt with in this volume.

⁴⁶ The three cities listed are not only China's largest, with over 10 million persons each, but are classed as "national-level" cities, which means that they have the same

administrative rank as a province. (Another of China's largest cities, Chongqing, achieved this rank in 1997.) Beijing also is particularly distinctive as the site of the national capital.

⁴⁷ For a general account of these transformations, see Martin K. Whyte and William L. Parish, *Urban Life in Contemporary China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984).

⁴⁸ As with other cities in China, Baoding has long contained suburban counties within its administrative area. The predominantly rural population in these counties is not included in the totals given here.

⁴⁹ Mark Selden, personal communication, based upon research for his forthcoming coauthored book manuscript (with Edward Friedman and Paul Pickowicz), *Revolution, Resistance, and Reform in Village China*. Chen Boda, a former personal secretary of Mao Zedong and key radical figure during the Cultural Revolution, was arrested along with the "gang of four" after Mao's death and tried and condemned to prison for his role in fomenting radicalism. The 38th army based in Baoding was long associated with Lin Biao, China's Minister of Defense after 1959 and Mao's radical "chosen successor" during the Cultural Revolution, who died in a mysterious plane crash in 1971.

⁵⁰ The use of household registration records has important implications for the nature of our sample. In recent years all Chinese cities have seen the influx of large numbers of migrants from the countryside. These members of the "floating population" are an increasing presence in urban life, but because they are not legally registered as urbanites, they are ineligible for inclusion in a sample based upon urban household registration documents, as was our study.

⁵¹ We were pleased with our "low" parent response rate, since it indicated that the sort of official control and compulsion that produces 100% response rates did not characterize our survey.

⁵² Due to our concern about the possibility of sampling bias, we asked our collaborators from Beida to carefully check the original sampling records and make revisits to Baoding in 1998 to inquire about the preponderance of males. Their recheck indicated that in the sampling lists from the 30 selected neighborhoods, the two genders were almost equally matched (males=49.6%), rather than showing the normal excess of females among those over age fifty. In the largest of the three districts sampled (New District), there was a slight excess of males (males=51.1%). Random sampling from within these neighborhoods produced a slight male preponderance (males=50.9%, New District=55.2%). A slight female excess in the number of chosen respondents who could not be interviewed raised the final figure to 52.5% male in the sample.

⁵³ One additional trait of our sample is related to the relatively even sex ratio. Only 11.2% of our respondents were widowed, while fully 88.4% were currently married (with the remaining 0.4% divorced), which represents a higher rate of marriage than is usually found in studies among older populations.

⁵⁴ For shorthand here and elsewhere we refer to our older Baoding respondents as parents. In fact there were a very small number of these older respondents (only 3 out of 1002) who reported that they had no living children.

⁵⁵ China since 1949 has followed Soviet-type gender differentiated retirement, with state enterprises decreeing that men should retire at age 60 and women at 55 (if in a mental labor job) or 50 (if in a manual labor job).

⁵⁶ It should be noted, however, that the “distances” involved for the majority of non-coresidential children are quite modest. As the evidence presented in chapter 2 and analyzed in more detail in chapter 6 shows, very few grown children of the parents we interviewed lived outside of the Baoding city limits.

⁵⁷ This claim was made in a number of earlier studies based on less systematic data, including Martin King Whyte and William L. Parish, *Urban Life in Contemporary China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984). In China's rural areas, in contrast, available evidence indicates that the obligation to support aging parents still falls overwhelmingly on sons and not daughters. See, for example, Hongqiu Yang, “The Distributive Norm of Monetary Support to Older Parents: A Look at a Township in China,” *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 58 (1996): 404–16. It should be noted that the finding that daughters provide as much support as do sons reinforces the claim in chapter 6 that coresidence is not a vital factor in intergenerational exchanges.

PART II THE BAODING ELDERLY AND
INTERGENERATIONAL RELATIONS:
THE GENERAL PICTURE

2

FAMILY SUPPORT FOR THE ELDERLY IN URBAN CHINA: AN INTERGENERATIONAL RELATIONS APPROACH

Yuan Fang and Martin King Whyte

One of the primary objectives of the Baoding survey project, as noted in chapter 1, was to determine how China's multiple revolutions have affected the well-being of the elderly in that country, and in particular whether they have weakened the traditional obligation of grown children to provide support and assistance to their aging parents. The current chapter presents a descriptive overview of the situation of the elderly and the nature of intergenerational relations in Baoding in 1994, based upon a wide range of measures included in our parent survey. This overview will help us examine whether and how China's revolutions have affected the urban elderly in that country. We are, of course, dealing with a "moving target," since rapid economic and social changes have continued since the time of our survey and will likely characterize Chinese society for many decades to come. Our survey data also help to establish a baseline against which these continuing and future changes can be judged.¹ Many aspects of the well-being of China's urban elderly reviewed in these pages will be subjected to more detailed examination in later chapters of the present volume.

Basic Demographics and Living Arrangements

As noted in chapter 1, the design for the Baoding survey called for a probability sample of residents of that city aged fifty and older. The final sample of 1002 older Baoding residents ranged in age from fifty to ninety-one. Given our lower limit of age fifty, our sample tends to be concentrated

in the “young old” range—493 respondents, or 49.2%, were between ages fifty and fifty-nine. Another 371 individuals, or 37%, were between ages sixty and sixty-nine, and the remaining 138 individuals, or 13.8%, can be considered the “old old”—those aged seventy and above. Since most other studies of the elderly focus on those over age sixty, many of the statistics presented in this chapter will be broken down into these three broad age-groupings so that any distinctive features attributable to including those between ages fifty and fifty-nine will be visible.

As noted in chapter 1, an excess of males in the sampled neighborhoods in Baoding led to our sample having a higher proportion of males than most studies of older populations. Overall 52.5% of our parent respondents were men. As the figures in Table 2.1 reveal, it is particularly in the oldest ages that men are most overrepresented, constituting 64.5% of those over age seventy in our sample (see the first panel of Table 2.1). The figures presented in the lower half of Table 2.1 reveal that an overwhelming 88.4% of our respondents were married at the time of our survey, again an unusually high figure for an older population. A portion of this high level can be attributed to the fact that in our fifty to fifty-nine age group, 96.6% of the respondents are currently married and only 3% widowed. However, even among those respondents over age seventy, more than two-thirds are currently married and less than one-third have been widowed.² The figures in the bottom half of Table 2.1 show two other striking features characteristic of older Chinese populations. First, there are not any individuals who have never been married, although never-married individuals were eligible for inclusion in our sample. Traditionally, high marriage rates in China went hand in hand with very low divorce rates, and that characteristic is also apparent in our figures. Only four individuals in the entire sample gave their current marital status as divorced. A separate question determined that another thirty-five individuals had earlier marriages that ended in divorce, with most of those individuals subsequently remarrying. Even taking the latter cases into account produces a total of less than 4% of Baoding respondents over age fifty who ever experienced a divorce.

These figures on marital status produce a distinctive context of aging. The majority of even the “old old” in our sample are currently married, and the possibility of relying on a spouse may make the need to rely on grown children less pressing. Of course, it is also possible that having a spouse who due to health problems requires extensive care may add to the burdens on the partner, thus increasing the need for assistance from children.

Table 2.1 Gender and Marital Status by Age Group (column %)

Gender	Age Group			Total
	50-59	60-69	70+	
Male	48.5	53.4	64.5	52.5
Female	51.5	46.6	35.5	47.5
N	493	371	138	1002
Marital Status				
Married	96.6	85.4	67.4	88.4
Widowed	3.0	14.3	31.9	11.2
Divorced	0.4	0.3	0.7	0.4
N	493	370	138	1001

During the 1970s state policy in China was aimed at enforcing a two child limit on urban families, and, after the launching of the “one child family” policy in 1979, that limit was reduced to one. However, as noted in chapter 1, most Baoding respondents had begun, and many of them had already completed, their fertility before these limits went fully into effect. The current number of children of our respondents ranged from zero (only 3 cases) to eight. The average number of living children for the whole sample was 3.24, and 71% of our respondents had three or more living children.³ This figure, it should be noted, is substantially below the “traditional” levels of fertility for urban China, which were in the range of five children or higher.⁴ However, despite some reduction in fertility compared to the historical norm, most of our respondents have several living children whom they might be able to rely on for support in old age.

Are these children available to provide family support? Availability would require at a minimum that a grown child lives in Baoding, although children located elsewhere could send funds to parents and visit occasionally. It is notable that of the total of 3249 living children of our Baoding respondents, fully 88% currently also live in that city. This figure signifies that most Baoding parents have more than one child available within the Baoding area (the precise average being 2.85 per interviewed parent). The bureaucratic system of job assignments and the absence of a labor market for most of the past 40 years have produced an unusual degree of immobility of grown children.⁵

How likely is it that Baoding parents will live with a child versus on their own? The figures computed from our survey differ markedly, depending upon whether we consider coresidence with any child versus with any married child. Overall, 64% of parents interviewed live with one or more child, but

only 35% live with one or more married child. These figures suggest an underlying pattern in which most unmarried children continue to reside in the parental home until married, but most married children do not remain in joint residence with parents for prolonged periods. Furthermore, there does not appear to exist a strong obligation currently for at least one grown child to remain coresident with aging parents. This conclusion is reinforced by the figures presented in Table 2.2. That table shows the percentages of interviewed parents in our three age groups who coreside with at least one grown child (i.e., age eighteen and up), and with at least one married child. For the “young old,” those between ages fifty and fifty-nine, the large majority have at least one child coresiding (78%), but only a minority (32%) have a married child in the home. When we get to those parents over age seventy the picture changes. Predictably, most grown children have gone off to live elsewhere, and only 47% of those in this age group have any grown child at home. But in most of these cases (41% out of 47%) that child is a married child. These figures also indicate that a slight majority of the “old old”—those over age seventy—do not have any child living in their household.⁶

Table 2.2 Coresidence with Children by Age Group (column %)

	Age Group			Total
	50-59	60-69	70+	
With a Grown Child				
Yes	77.9	51.2	47.1	63.8
No	22.1	48.8	52.9	36.2
N	493	371	138	1002
With a Married Child				
Yes	32.3	36.1	40.6	34.8
No	67.7	63.9	59.4	65.2
N	493	371	138	1002

Our data yielded several other statistics of interest in regard to the living arrangements of older Baoding residents. First, the average number of members in the households of parents is 3.6, with the range from one to twelve. In our sample there were thirty-three older Baoding residents interviewed, or 3.3% of the sample, who live by themselves—mostly widowed individuals living alone. Another 28.1% of the sample involved two person households, and in the great majority of cases these are older married couples living by themselves. More than two-thirds of all households include others besides the respondent and spouse, and most often these others are children. Looked at in terms of the conventional categories of

family structure, 3.3% of our respondents live alone, 61.9% live in nuclear families, another 32.3% in stem families (with one married child coresident), and only 2.5% in the traditionally favored joint families.⁷ Our results coincide with much previous research that indicates that joint families are now fairly rare, particularly in urban China.⁸ What is more novel are the further indications in our data that there is no longer a strong obligation or expectation for Chinese parents to end their days living with a married child. Living on their own seems to be the norm for aging parents in Baoding these days, by a modest margin.⁹

Is the percentage of aging Chinese parents in Baoding low or high, compared to other Chinese populations? In order to answer this question we recompute coresidence figures for parents over age sixty, since that is the age conventionally used in such computations. Of the Baoding parents who were sixty or older, 50% were living with a grown child, but only 38% were living with one or more married child. A recent compilation yields estimates from Taiwan ranging from 69 to 85% of those over sixty living with a grown child, and 56–71% living with a married child. The same compilation cites earlier surveys from urban areas of the PRC with ranges from 56–71% of individuals over age sixty living with a child, and 38–52% living with a married child.¹⁰ The 1989 survey data for Taiwan used later in the current volume yield figures of 50% of urbanites over age sixty living with a married child, and 63% among the majority Taiwanese population, in contrast to the 38% for Baoding (see Table 9.2). Thus our Baoding figures show a tendency toward slightly lower coresidence with children than found in earlier PRC surveys and levels substantially below those found in surveys on Taiwan.¹¹ The Baoding figures are also substantially lower than figures derived from rural surveys in the PRC. For example, one recent study of a village in Heilongjiang Province yielded a figure of 70% of those over age sixty living with a grown child, and 64% living with a married child.¹²

In the past when parents lived with one or more married child, that child was most likely to be a son. The strong patrilineal bias of the Chinese kinship system dictated a pattern in which daughters married out and joined other families, and only a son or sons remained. In our Baoding sample there are 253 parents (25.2%) who live with one or more married son, but only seventy-nine parents (7.9%) who live with one or more married daughter.¹³ Thus in Baoding it is still about three times as common to live with a married son as with a married daughter. Most of the parents we interviewed have several grown children, as indicated earlier, and fewer than 10% of

them have no sons at all. Since we have also noted that there are very few older Baoding residents living in joint families, it turns out that having a particular constellation of grown sons and daughters available makes little difference in whether parents reside with a grown child or not. For example, while the overall percentage of parents living separately from all married children is 65%, for those with only one married son, only one married daughter, and two or more married children of one sex and at least one married child of the opposite sex, the comparable percentages are 64%, 65%, and 64%.¹⁴ It is not the case, then, that the fairly high proportion (for a Chinese population) of parents living separately from children can be attributed to not having children of the appropriate age and sex available for coresidence.

The figures reviewed so far do not tell us how willingly or unwillingly parents entered their current residential arrangements. To get at this issue, we asked parents who do not live with a grown child an open-ended question about why they reside separately, and about 18% gave answers that indicated some concern for potential conflicts with children. However, the most common reasons cited for residing separately were housing space considerations (either insufficient space in the parent's home or the ability of children to obtain better housing on their own) or convenience factors (e.g., workplaces of children being too far away), with these reasons accounting for about 58% of the cases of separate residence. On a similar note, the most common reasons cited for residing with a grown child involve constraints on housing availability and having children not yet married, rather than any strong preference for tradition or need for care from a child. Furthermore, most parents told us that the decision about residing separately or together with one or more child was made either by the parents themselves (38.1%) or jointly with the children (46.9%), with children dictating the decision in only 7.3% of the cases (others outside the family dictated the decision in the other 7.6% of the cases). In most cases (87%) the housing that parents lived in was owned by or allocated to them or their spouse, rather than to a child.¹⁵ It might also be noted that 96% of the parents we interviewed perceived themselves or their spouses to be the head of the household. Furthermore, of those who live with one or more grown child, about 76% said that household money is managed by themselves or their spouse and 90% are satisfied or very satisfied with the amount of voice they have in family decisions.

In general the scattered pieces of evidence reviewed so far paint a fairly consistent picture. Most Baoding parents have children living with them

until those children marry, and many have had one or more married child residing with them in the past.¹⁶ However, over time most coresiding married children obtain separate housing elsewhere and move out, and it appears that the decision to do so is usually a mutual one based upon pragmatic considerations, rather than the product of tensions between the generations. Similarly, those parents who do reside with one or more grown child usually do so for practical reasons, and as a result of a decision made by the parents or jointly. Usually such coresiding parents do not become highly dependent, but instead continue to play a strong role in family management. Additional evidence reviewed in chapter 4 indicates little difference between parents and children in views toward the advantages and disadvantages of coresidence. We find no sign that substantial proportions of Baoding parents who live separately would prefer to reside with a grown child but are prevented from doing so by family conflicts and the unwillingness of their children. At the same time, coresidence does not usually indicate a high level of dependence upon the grown child.

Employment and Income

The extent to which older Baoding residents need to rely on assistance from their grown children depends partly on whether they retain independent sources of income. The most common sources of continuing income for the elderly are wages from current employment and pensions. While the patterns of continued employment of older Baoding residents are analyzed in some detail in chapter 3, it is useful here to preview the general situation. Overall, 34% of our parent respondents are currently employed. Of these, 25% are still working at their original workposts and another 9% had retired but then started working for pay again. As the figures in Table 2.3 make clear, being in the paid labor force is more likely if the respondent is male and in the younger age groups. Overall, 55% of respondents under age 60 are still employed, in contrast to only 7% of those over age 70; for female respondents the corresponding figures fall to 30% and 0%.¹⁷

Table 2.3 Work and Pension Status by Gender and Age Group (column %)

	Age Group							
	50-59		60-69		70+		Total	
Work Status	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Working	75.7	19.7	7.6	2.3	0	0	37.3	11.3
Retired, reemployed	5.9	9.8	19.7	1.2	11.2	0	12	5.7
Retired, not working	17.6	56.7	72.2	67.6	85.4	32.7	49.6	58.2
Other, not working	0.8	13.8	0.5	28.9	3.3	67.3	1.2	24.8
N	239	254	198	173	89	49	526	476
Pension Received?								
Yes	22.6	63	88.9	65.9	95.5	28.6	59.9	60.5
No	77.4	37	11.1	34.1	4.5	71.4	40.1	39.5
N	239	254	198	173	89	49	526	476

The other primary source of personal income for older Baoding residents is pensions, and overall 60.2% of our respondents have pension incomes. This level of pension eligibility is substantially higher than in urban Taiwan, where mostly only retirees from government agencies, the military, and large corporations qualify.¹⁸ Those receiving pensions tend, not surprisingly, to be older and predominantly male, for those over age 60. The figures in the lower panel of Table 2.3 show that for males the percentage receiving a pension increases from 23% for those under age 60, to 96% for those over age 70; for women, on the other hand, the percentage for pension receipt actually falls from 63% to 29% in the same age groups. From these figures it is clear that the group receiving pensions least often is women in the oldest age group who were primarily housewives and never or only irregularly in the labor force.¹⁹ Taking these two sources of earnings into account, overall about 15% of our Baoding respondents have neither wage nor pension income, 25% have only wage income, 51% have only pension income, and 9% have both wage and pension income. Once again, age and sex differences affect which category a respondent is likely to belong to, with the gender contrast most clear in the over seventy age group. Among the "old old" in our survey, only 5% of males have no income, while 84% have pensions and 11% have both pensions and wages; for females in this age group, fully 71% have neither wages nor pensions, and only 29% are receiving pensions (with the other categories vacant). Any conclusion about older women living in poverty must be qualified, however, by recalling that most of even these older women are still married, rather than widowed. Thus most benefit from the pensions and perhaps additional earnings enjoyed by their husbands.

The general conclusion that the great majority of Baoding parents have some earnings of their own to rely on is reinforced by examining data on cash incomes from our survey. The average personal income of parents was 323 yuan per month in 1993, based upon respondent recall. This figure is slightly lower than the average personal earnings reported by the children we interviewed, which was 363 yuan per month. (If we consider only those parents who had some income, the average parental income was 372 yuan per month, slightly higher than the average child income.) The long-standing stress on seniority in the Chinese wage system means that, with pensions generally calibrated at 70–80% of pre-retirement pay, a retired parent may still have a higher personal income than many of their children do.²⁰ There is no clear tendency for older Baoding residents to be in a weak and dependent position financially. A final statistic further reinforces this conclusion: on average the personal income of each older Baoding respondent we interviewed constituted almost half (46%) of the total income of their families.²¹

Although the economic problems of those older Baoding residents who have no personal income at all should not be minimized, the overall context revealed by these figures is a positive one. Most aging parents in Baoding have some earnings of their own, and they are not in the position of depending entirely upon financial assistance from their children (or others). Insofar as such assistance from children is rendered, it is often supplementary, rather than constituting the primary means of subsistence of the parent. Furthermore, in many cases the parent may still earn more than some or all of their children do, and in such cases the tables may be turned, with children turning to parents for financial assistance. (The extent of this reversal of dependency will be documented later in this chapter.)

As a broad generalization, the living arrangements and financial situation of the elderly in Baoding differ from their counterparts both in China's rural villages and in Taiwan. As we have seen, fewer older Baoding residents live with a married child than is the case in these other Chinese locales. However, it is less vital financially that they do so, and coresidence is a less contentious issue, since unlike older residents of China's villages or Taiwan, most receive pensions and some have other sources of income. The relatively low level of coresidence with grown and married children is not perceived as a problem by aging parents in Baoding.²²

Health Status and Medical Problems

We noted at the outset of this chapter that familial support for the elderly involves much more than simply financial support from children. We will discuss later a variety of other kinds of assistance that children may provide, but first it is important to consider the health status of our Baoding parent respondents. If parents are financially secure and healthy, usually they can continue to function on their own. If either economic needs or health problems become serious, they may have to turn to other sources for assistance. The traditional source of assistance with the physical and health problems of the elderly in China was, once again, grown children. As noted in chapter 1, throughout the centuries Chinese children were raised with stories of heroic efforts by children to provide comfort to parents and to cater to their daily needs and infirmities. What sort of physical shape are older Baoding residents in today, and to what extent do they need assistance due to health problems?

We asked our sample of older Baoding residents a number of questions about their health status and medical problems, and their answers can be used to present a general picture of their situation. When asked to list any ailments they were currently suffering from, almost half (49.3%) of Baoding parents did not list any problems at all. Another 10.8% said that they had one or more ailments, but none that caused them any daily inconvenience. Then there were 26.5% who said they suffered from some inconvenience as a result of health problems, and 13.3% who reported substantial inconvenience. Looked at in a different way, 26.7% of Baoding parents reported one current ailment, 15.6% reported two current ailments, and 8.4% reported three or more such ailments. We also asked our respondents what level of difficulty they might have in performing eight simple physical chores: shopping, climbing two or three flights of stairs, walking 200–300 meters, lifting and carrying a ten-kilogram object, opening by hand a tightly sealed bottle, standing in place for two hours, riding a bicycle for five kilometers, and getting on a public bus without assistance. Just over half of our respondents (56.3%) said that they could perform all of these tasks without difficulty. Another 18.1% said they would experience some difficulty performing one or more of these chores, but no major difficulty with any of them, while 15.5% said they would experience major difficulty or be unable to perform one or two of these tasks, and 10.2% said they would be unable to perform three or more of these tasks. The subjective self-evaluations of our respondents

coincide fairly well with these figures. Overall, 50.4% of Baoding parents rated their health as good or very good, 33.9% as so-so, 13.4% as not so good, and 2.3% as poor. It might also be noted that 9.9% of Baoding parents reported that they had been hospitalized within the last six months.

As expected, these health indicators vary across age groups, with the “young old” in better shape than the “old old.” As the figures in Table 2.4 show, as we move from those under age sixty to those over age seventy, the percentage reporting no health problems declines from 56% to 38%, while the proportion reporting serious inconvenience as a result of health problems rises from 7% to 19%. Looked at in terms of the number of current ailments, the proportion suffering from three or more health problems rises from 4% among those under sixty to 15% among those over seventy. In terms of our index of difficulties in performing eight physical tasks, when we go from those under sixty to those over seventy, the percentages who say they can perform all the indicated tasks without difficulty falls from 69% to 34%, while the number who would have considerable difficulty performing three or more of these tasks rises from 3% to 28%. There is a weaker contrast in the same direction visible in the subjective perceptions our respondents hold about their health, with the percentage reporting good or very good health falling from 54% among those under age sixty to 50% among those over age seventy, and those reporting not so good or poor health rising from 12% to 17%. Hospitalization within the past six months also varies modestly by age group, with 8.5% of those under age sixty having been hospitalized, in contrast to 15.2% of those over age seventy.²³

Without comparable figures from other times and places, it is difficult to know what to make of these statistics. However, on balance the picture they yield of the health status of older residents of Baoding seems fairly positive. Depending upon which indicator we use, overall only 8–16% of Baoding parents report health problems serious enough to cause them major difficulties in life. Even among those over age seventy, the proportion experiencing serious health problems rises to only 15–28%. Although there is a sizable minority of Baoding parents, particularly among those over age seventy, who have health problems and infirmities that may make the care and assistance of grown children important, most seem to be healthy enough not to require regular care of this type.²⁴

We also attempted in a rough way to judge the psychological health of Baoding parents and the prevalence of signs of depression. Obviously the measures one can include in a questionnaire are less satisfactory than what

could be obtained in a clinical examination. We presented each respondent with a series of statements about moods and emotional states and asked whether they often, sometimes, rarely, or never had each specific feeling.

Table 2.4 Health Condition of Baoding Parents by Age Group (column %)

	Age Group			Total
	50-59	60-69	70+	
Health problems				
None	56.1	44.5	38.4	49.3
Minor inconvenience	12	10.2	8	10.8
Some inconveniences	24.5	26.1	34.8	26.5
Major inconveniences	7.3	19.1	18.8	13.3
Chronic conditions				
None	55.8	44.7	38.4	49.3
1-2	40.2	43.7	46.4	42.3
3 or more	4.1	11.6	15.2	8.4
Physical infirmity index				
None	68.6	48.2	34.1	56.3
Minor infirmities	18.5	18.3	15.9	18.1
1-2 major infirmities	10.1	20.2	21.7	15.5
3+ major infirmities	2.8	13.2	28.3	10.2
Health self-rating				
Good or very good	53.6	46.4	50	50.4
So-so	34.9	32.8	33.3	33.9
Not so good	10.8	17.3	12.3	13.4
Poor	0.8	3.5	4.3	2.3
Hospitalized in last 6 mos.?				
Yes	8.5	9.7	15.2	9.9
No	91.5	90.3	84.8	90.1
N	493	371	138	1002

Responses to thirteen of these questions were closely related to one another, and these items were used to compute a mean depression index for each respondent.²⁵ Judged by these individual measures and the summary scale, relatively few Baoding parents are experiencing serious levels of depression. Generally only 5–10% reported experiencing often any of the negative emotional states listed, and another 10–25% sometimes. The mean score on this depression index for all Baoding parents was 3.3 (on a scale from 1=often experienced these problems to 4=never), which indicates a predominance of “rarely” and “never” answers. It is also interesting to note that there was no overall tendency for the “old old” to report more depression symptoms than the “young old.” The correlation between age

and the depression index score was $-.06$, which is not statistically significant. However, there was a clear gender difference, with females on average reporting more depression symptoms than males.²⁶ Generally about 15% of Baoding mothers interviewed often experienced the various negative emotional states we used, in comparison with about 5% of fathers; at the other end of the scale, generally about 35% of the mothers reported they never experienced the various negative emotions, in comparison to about 45% of the fathers. The correlation between gender and our summary depression index was statistically significant ($r=-.18$, $p<=.001$), and among mothers there is also a statistically significant tendency for older women to be more depressed ($r=-.13$, $p<=.01$). In sum, most Baoding parents report themselves to be in quite good emotional as well as physical condition. However, women report more symptoms of depression than men, and older women are the most likely to experience emotional problems

Exchanges and Relations between Parents and Children

While the figures presented thus far indicate that relatively few Baoding parents are in serious need of financial and health-related support from their children, they do not reveal much about the extent of exchanges and the nature of the relationship between the generations. The Baoding parent survey contained a wide variety of questions designed to obtain reports of respondents about these topics. Although subsequent chapters explore many of these issues in fuller detail, a general overview will be presented here.

Our parent survey contained questions about the extent to which parents currently receive four specific types of support from any source, and whether they provide others with these and one additional type. Overall, only 3.8% of parents were receiving physical assistance with such things as bathing, getting dressed, and going to the bathroom; 31.6% were receiving help with domestic chores; 24.6% were receiving financial support; and 34% were receiving material gifts—i.e., things to wear or eat. Overwhelmingly, these forms of assistance were being provided by a spouse (particularly for physical care and help with chores) or by children. Although in China the government encourages work units, neighborhood committees, and other organizations to provide assistance to the elderly, only 7.4% of Baoding parents report receiving any regular assistance from outside of the family.²⁷ Those parents who were not receiving any of these kinds of assistance were asked who they

would turn to if they needed them, and again, overwhelmingly, they mentioned various children, but rarely a work unit or other outside agency.

Family exchanges are not always in one direction, and many parents are regularly providing support to others, and particularly to their children. Again, looking at overall figures, 8.4% of parents reported helping others with physical care, 9.1% with domestic chores, 24.5% with money, 18.5% with gifts of food or clothing, and 35.3% with child care (the added category). In Table 2.5 the exchanges in both directions are examined for the three separate age groups. In general the figures in the table reveal an expected pattern. Younger parents tend to provide assistance somewhat more often, and to receive assistance somewhat less often, while with older parents these patterns are reversed. However, the differentials are fairly modest, and a majority of "old old" parents are not receiving the specific kinds of assistance inquired about, and significant minorities of those over age seventy are still providing assistance to others.

In general it appears from these figures that assistance from grown children to parents is somewhat more common than assistance from parents to those children, although childcare is an obvious exception to this generalization. These figures appear to contrast with the patterns of intergenerational exchanges found in contemporary Western societies in several ways. In general in the West parents are less likely to regularly receive assistance from grown children. And usually the balance of intergenerational exchanges is reversed, with parents helping grown children more often than they receive assistance from their children.²⁸ Although the figures for Baoding support a picture of mutual assistance between generations, the filial "tilt" is nonetheless visible, making obligations on grown children generally heavier than on aging parents.

We can examine the pattern of financial dependency versus independence for parents in greater detail by utilizing the results of follow-up questions about the average monthly amounts of money received from others and provided to others. Following the scheme proposed by Wang Mei and her colleagues, we can categorize the monetary flows involving parents into four categories.²⁹ "Independence" refers to cases in which cash is neither given nor received, "supported" involves cases where parents receive cash and do not provide any, "fostering" refers to parents who provide cash but do not receive any, and "mutual benefit" refers to instances in which cash is both received and provided. By these definitions, 56.7% of Baoding

Table 2.5 Intergenerational Exchanges of Baoding Parents by Age Group (% yes)

Family Exchanges	Age Group			Total
	50-59	60-69	70+	
Receive Assistance?				
Physical care	0.8	5.1	10.9	3.8
Domestic chores	24.7	33.2	51.8	31.6
Receive money	16.8	30.7	35.5	24.6
Receive goods	22.7	41.6	54	34
Provide Assistance?				
Physical care	10	8.1	3.6	8.4
Domestic chores	9.5	8.9	8	9.1
Provide money	29.9	20.2	16.7	24.5
Provide goods	23.6	15.6	8	18.5
Child care	37.5	37.8	20.6	35.3
N	493	371	138	1002

parents are classified as independent, 19.8% as supported, 19.4% as fostering, and 4% as mutual benefit. If exact amounts of cash flowing in both directions are compared, then 22.2% of parents are net recipients, 57.1% are neither net recipients nor providers, and 20.7% are net providers of cash support. Once again, these flows vary across age groups in a predictable way, with older parents more likely to be net recipients of cash support, and less likely to be net providers of such support, than younger parents.³⁰ These results reinforce conclusions reached earlier in this chapter. The most common situation is for Baoding parents to be relatively independent or to be involved in balanced exchanges with their children, rather than to be highly dependent. With advancing age the balance tips toward greater dependency, but only modestly.

There are other ways in which parents provide assistance and support to their grown children besides those already described. We asked Baoding respondents about the extent to which each individual child had relied on family assistance in a number of important past transitions. On average parents said 25–40% of their children had received some or a good deal of family help with their homework, 8–13% in getting into the desired school, 35–40% with getting their first job, 30–35% with changing jobs, 15–35% in obtaining housing, and 25–30% with finding their spouse.³¹

For those parents who live with one or more married child, we also inquired about the pattern of division of chores across generations. Most parents reported that they or their spouse do most or all of the grocery shopping, cooking, and cleaning, with children shouldering primary responsibility for these chores in only a small minority of families.³² Care for grand-

children was also said to be more often done by the grandparent/respondent and his or her spouse than by the parental generation. Laundering clothes was the one chore we inquired about for which there was a rough balance, often with each generation or even each individual washing clothes separately. The only domestic chore we asked about that children performed more than their parents was purchasing and carrying home heavy objects, such as propane gas canisters and sacks of grain. Although the particular set of questions we asked may skew the picture, in general these results suggest that grown children often benefit more than they are burdened in domestic chore exchanges when they live together with an aging parent or parents. The relationship between parental assistance to children and the provision of support from children to parents is explored further in chapter 8 in this volume.

Support from children to aging parents, as noted at the outset, takes many forms. Even if the provision of financial and physical assistance are the most essential forms for those in need, the provision of emotional and social support is also vital to parental well-being. Evidence from our survey indicates that most Baoding parents are doing quite well in terms of these kinds of support as well. The context here needs to be kept in mind: most interviewed parents have several adult children living in Baoding, even if only a minority are actually living with a married child.

Contact with non-coresident children appears to be frequent. We asked about the frequency of contacts with each grown child, and generally about 30% claimed daily or almost daily visits, and another 30% said several times a week. In only 6–8% of the cases did parents report infrequent contacts (once a year or less), and these mostly involved children who lived far away from Baoding. For the sake of comparison, we found one study that reported that 8% of non-coresident adult children in Japan saw their parents on a daily basis, and similar data for the United States showing the same was true for 16% for sons and 24% for daughters.³³ Since the average Baoding parent has about three adult children residing nearby, these figures mean that most have multiple children they see on a daily or almost-daily basis. Most parents reported visits with grown children as more frequent than with any other kind of relative or with neighbors or friends. For example, 41% of the parents interviewed said that there was no single friend or neighbor that they got together with as often as once a week.

We also asked parents a variety of questions about their relations with each child when that child was growing up and at present. The responses to these questions also indicate parent-child relationships that are primarily

positive. For example, generally about 75% of parents report that arguments with any particular child were rare or never occurred, although 45–50% said that when their children had opinions that differed from those of their parents they would sometimes or usually express them.³⁴ When disputes with a child did occur, parents claimed that about 65–70% of the time the parent would prevail in the argument. Parents reported that 25–30% of their children were very obedient when young, and another 65–70% fairly obedient; fewer than 5% were characterized as even somewhat disobedient. On a similar note, 25–30% of grown children were described as currently very filial, with another 65–70% fairly filial, with under 5% characterized as somewhat or very unfilial. Elsewhere in the questionnaire, only 6.7% of parents said they did not get sufficient respect from their grown children. In contrast, 86.3% of parents felt that the respect they received was sufficient, while 7.1% said they got too much respect! These responses contrast with parental evaluations of what is happening in Chinese society generally. Two-thirds of parents claim that respect for elders has diminished in China compared with twenty years earlier, but few appear to see signs of such a deterioration in relations with their own grown children.³⁵

A variety of more specific questions about family relations yield a similarly positive picture. Parents report that they are often (64%) or sometimes (24%) consulted about important family decisions; seldom (29%) or never (43%) criticized by their grown children; always (50%) or sometimes (38%) asked for advice by children facing important decisions; and that they often (24%) or sometimes (48%) offer unsolicited advice to their children and that often (64%) or sometimes (33%) their children pay attention to such parental advice. Furthermore, 44% of the parents reported that if a married child and his or her spouse were having conflicts, the respondent might be asked to mediate. In Chinese extended families of the past, conflict between the mother-in-law and daughter-in-law was an endemic source of family tension, but only 6% of the parents whose households contain this dyad claim that this kind of conflict occurs with any regularity.³⁶ Summing things up, the overwhelming majority of Baoding parents describe themselves as either very satisfied (15.1%) or satisfied (81.5%) with the emotional support they receive from their children, with less than 5% expressing any degree of dissatisfaction.

In Table 2.6, age group variations in responses to general questions about relations with grown children are displayed. Some of the contrasts across age groups are statistically significant, while others are not. Those over age seventy are significantly less likely than younger parents to report that

they are consulted about important family decisions (line one), asked for advice by their adult children (line three), or that they offer children unsolicited advice (line four), and older parents are slightly less likely to be asked to mediate the marital disputes of their children (line six). However, at the same time these older parents are significantly more likely to report that they are never criticized by their children (line two). These responses are consistent with an interpretation of parents becoming more removed from intense involvement in family decisions at older ages, but in the process being treated even more deferentially. Overall there is no significant difference across the age groups in satisfaction with the emotional support received from children (line seven), and parents over age seventy are actually slightly more likely than others to feel that they receive “too much” respect from their children (line eight).

Table 2.6 Parent-Child Relations by Age Group of Parent (% giving responses)

Family Relations	Age Group			Total
	50-59	60-69	70+	
Consulted about important decisions? (often)	72.6	56.8	56.5	64.4
Criticized by children? (never)	35.6	48.1	54.9	42.8
Asked for advice by children? (always)	60	43.1	32.8	50.1
Parent gives instructions to children? (often)	31.5	20.1	9.7	24.3
Children pay attention to parental instruction? (often)	64.6	65.5	55.4	63.9
Parent asked to mediate child marital dispute? (yes)	47.3	41.9	37.5	43.6
Satisfied with child emotional support? (very)	12.7	15.6	18.1	15.1
Sufficiency of respect from children? (too much)	3.5	9.2	14.3	7.1
N	493	371	138	1002

Perhaps there is a degree of bias built into these answers, with Baoding respondents not willing to reveal the extent of family problems and dissatisfactions to outsiders—our interviewers. We have no way to independently judge the state of relationships in Baoding families.³⁷ However, there is a degree of congruency in the various kinds of information collected in our interviews. The figures presented on parental financial and health status, on parents giving and receiving various kinds of support, on the frequency of contacts with non-coresident children, and on the quality of parent-child relations, all seem consistent with one another.

Although this chapter has relied almost entirely on data from interviews with parents, rather than from our child interviews, there is a certain plausibility in this positive picture from the standpoint of grown children as well. The modal situation for such a child is to have benefited in the past and

to be benefiting currently from parental assistance, to live separately but not too far away from the parents, and to have parents in fairly good physical and economic health. Such children do not face a one-sided burden of providing constant support to needy and infirm parents; instead they can provide modest supplementary support in a variety of ways while continuing to benefit from parental assistance. At a later stage in the life of the parent or for the minority of cases involving a destitute or disabled parent, the burden of support may be much greater. However, in such cases there will usually be a legacy of positive parent-child relations in the past that is likely to induce children to bear this burden. (See further discussion of this point in chapter 8.)

Conclusions

Although subsequent chapters in this volume will explore in greater detail many of the issues raised here, some preliminary conclusions are in order. In some ways the statistics reviewed here reveal sharp differences from the patterns of China's past. In particular, older Baoding residents are more likely to live independently now, rather than with one or more grown children. However, this trend cannot be interpreted as a sign of breakdown of traditional obligations for family support. Indeed, the Baoding data provide very few signs of such a breakdown, or of any impending crisis in support for the elderly. Rather, our data provide evidence of a successful but partial transition away from the traditional system of familial support. Pensions and other public benefits have bolstered the position of the elderly without apparently weakening the obligation of children to assist their aging parents.

Of course, our survey deals with only one medium-sized city, not urban China generally. We have also noted that the situation in China's rural areas, where about 70% of the population still resides, is different in important ways. However, in general the elderly in Baoding appear to be doing fairly well by relying on a combination of public and familial sources of support.

Most of the Baoding parents we interviewed have some source of independent income and only minor health problems. The great majority are still married. Most also have several adult children living close at hand, or at least within the city boundaries of Baoding. The average parent has frequent contacts with those grown children who are not coresident, receives a variety of forms of assistance from children, and reports quite harmonious relations with them. No exact comparisons are possible due to lack of comparable data, but it appears that Baoding parents are involved in much

more extensive and frequent exchanges with their grown children than would typically be the case in Western societies. Even in selected comparisons with other Asian societies, Baoding parents seem well-connected to their grown children. Although proportionally fewer of them coreside with a married child than is the case in Taiwan, more of their grown children live nearby, and the level of contacts with such non-coresident children appears higher than in Japan. The result of all of these features is that most respondents express considerable satisfaction with their lives and families. Generally only 5–15% of Baoding parents say they face situations involving hardships—of poverty, physical incapacity, and inattentive or disrespectful grown children.

The one partial exception to this generally positive situation concerns older women. In certain respects women over 70 in our sample are more vulnerable than others—few have any independent source of income, and more of them are suffering from serious physical and emotional problems. However, in other respects these older women share the benefits of their male and younger counterparts, with frequent visits and exchanges with grown children, and with a somewhat higher likelihood of living with a married child.

Although we lack comparable surveys for Chinese cities in the past, the many revolutions China has faced in the twentieth century do not appear to have substantially undermined family support for the elderly, at least in Baoding. Indeed, we have suggested that some parts of those revolutions may have enhanced the situation for China's elderly—for example, by keeping children close at hand and providing improved health care and pensions for most older urbanites.³⁸

Although the situation of the Baoding elderly as of the mid-1990s appears quite positive, it remains unclear what the future will hold. Several elements that bolster the current positive picture are likely to be threatened in the future. In particular, as indicated in chapter 1, in the future very few elderly in China's large cities will have three or more grown children to turn to for support, and most will have only one. Furthermore, fewer grown children are likely to remain close at hand, as economic reforms and revived labor markets open up possibilities for jobs and residence elsewhere. The impact of the reforms on the economic situation of the urban elderly is also uncertain. Continued rapid growth may improve living standards, increase the richness of leisure activities for the elderly, and make it easier to cope with daily chores. However, state work units that have provided the bulk of urban pensions are under great pressure to “smash the iron rice bowl” of

benefits to their employees, with no substitute society-wide source of such benefits yet in place. Since the mid-1990s, in many Chinese cities pensioners have complained publicly that the pensions to which they were entitled were not being paid due to the financial difficulties of their former enterprises. It seems that elderly urbanites are becoming more economically vulnerable just when the number of children available to provide assistance is declining sharply. However, it is also possible that as reforms proceed further, the need of both parents and children to rely on special help from their families may decrease, as more needs can be met through market exchanges.

For these and other reasons, the role that various forms of familial support will play in the lives of China's elderly urbanites in the future remains unclear. However, familial support of China's elderly has remained central in the face of much turmoil and many challenges over the past century. Therefore, we should not be too hasty in concluding that in the future this support will weaken dramatically. For the foreseeable future, grown children are likely to retain a central role in the lives of China's elderly, a role that is much greater than has generally been the case in recent times in Western societies.

NOTES

¹ In many recent analyses, the changes in China since Mao's death are seen as ushering in a more "normal" phase in which economic development and societal modernization common to many developing societies have an impact on family relationships. If this scenario is accurate, then debates about whether such global changes necessarily undermine the status of the elderly and require the state to increasingly replace the family as the basis for support of the elderly are clearly relevant to the Chinese case. For one effort to examine such arguments critically, see Yuan Fang, "The Role of the Chinese Elderly in Family and Society," *Beijing University Journal (Philosophy and Social Sciences)*, no. 4, (1987) (in Chinese). However, before analysts can judge the applicability of these debates about global changes to the Chinese case, it is necessary to know what impact the unique and tumultuous changes that China experienced in the twentieth century have had on the elderly and intergenerational relations.

² For comparison purposes we note that in the five largest cities included in the 1989 Taiwan survey that will be used in chapters 9–11 in the current volume, 61% of those over age sixty were married, compared to 81% of the same age group in our parent sample in Baoding.

³ Separate questions were asked about the number of children ever born to respondents and any spouses they had had. Those figures were more variable, ranging from zero (twenty-six cases) to 25 (two cases)! The mean number of children ever born to respondents and spouses was 3.52. Twenty-five respondents had adopted children from others, and ten respondents acknowledged giving up a child for adoption by others.

⁴ Even among those over age sixty in Baoding, fertility is slightly lower than in urban Taiwan. For this age group the mean number of living children was 3.7, compared to 4.3 for their counterparts in Taiwan's five largest cities, and 4.8 for Taiwanese in those cities (see the figures in Table 9.2 in the current volume).

⁵ It is difficult to find exactly comparable figures for other societies. However, the results of one survey conducted in the Albany, N.Y., area in 1988 provide some context for our Baoding findings. In that survey roughly half of the adult children of parent respondents were reported by the parents to live within a half hour travel time away, a percentage much higher than the authors had expected to find. See John Logan and Glenna Spitze, *Family Ties* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1996), 99. Nonetheless, it is a level much lower than the almost 90% of grown children of our Baoding parents who live within a roughly comparable distance (if we can assume that children living anywhere in Baoding can travel to their parents' home in thirty minutes or less). More comparable perhaps are figures from Taiwan, where the 1989 survey used in later chapters of the current volume revealed that 70% of the grown children of parents over age sixty living in the five largest cities on that island were living "nearby," compared with 84% of the grown children of Baoding parents in this age range (see Table 9.2 in the present volume).

⁶ Widowhood increases the likelihood of living with at least one married child, particularly for women. About 53% of widowed parents live with one or more married child. If the parent is widowed and over age seventy, the figure rises to 61%, and for "old old" widowed females the figure is 65% (as compared to 56% of males in this situation). These

differentials correspond in a rough way to differences in expressed attitudes. Overall, 71% of parents agreed or strongly agreed with a statement that if they remained healthy, an old person should remain independent, rather than relying on grown children. However, at the same time 75% agreed with a statement that a widowed older person should not continue living independently. Note, however, that even among the oldest widowed females, the actual level of coresidence with a married child (65%) is below the level of general support for coresidence in this situation (75%).

⁷ Some of the nuclear families are incomplete nuclear units, which refers to married couples with no coresiding unmarried child, a widowed parent living with an unmarried child, etc. A joint family refers to a parent or parents living with two or more married children. At the extreme end of the range, there were three parents in our sample who were living in a joint arrangement with three or more married children.

⁸ See, for example, Martin K. Whyte and William L. Parish, *Urban Life in Contemporary China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984). There is some dispute in the Western literature about how common or rare joint families were in earlier times. Many studies have argued that although the joint family was the traditional ideal, only a few relatively rich families could hope to keep such a complex unit together, and that most people even in the past lived in nuclear or stem families. However, Arthur Wolf has provided evidence that under some circumstances, joint families could be widespread among the ordinary population. See Arthur Wolf, "Chinese Family Size: A Myth Revitalized," in *The Chinese Family and its Ritual Behavior*, ed. Hsieh Jih-chang and Chuang Ying-chang (Taipei: Academia Sinica, 1985).

⁹ There is only a weak relationship between the distribution of family structures and parental age group. The percentage living in nuclear or subnuclear units goes from 68 to 64 and then to 59 as we move from those under age sixty to those seventy and older, while the percentage of stem families goes from thirty to thirty-three and then to thirty-eight in the same comparison (with joint families constituting 2%, 3%, and 3% in the three age groups).

¹⁰ See John R. Logan, Fuqin Bian, and Yanjie Bian, "Tradition and Change in the Urban Chinese Family: The Case of Living Arrangements," unpublished paper, Table 1.

¹¹ The levels of coresidence between parents and grown children shown in all such Chinese surveys are considerably higher than found in contemporary Western societies. For example, the 1988 survey in the Albany area cited earlier yielded a figure of 23% of parents over age sixty who had an adult child coresiding, with national surveys in the United States yielding figures in the same range (well under 30%, compared to the 50% in our Baoding survey). See Logan and Spitze, *Family Ties*, 42–43, 205. Still, these figures from surveys on Chinese populations help to dispel the stereotype that virtually all elderly Chinese live with a grown child.

¹² Figures computed from Yunxiang Yan, "Elderly Support and the Crisis of Filial Piety," chapter 7 from *Private Life under Socialism: Individuality and Family Change in a Chinese Village, 1949–1999*, Table 9 (Stanford: Stanford University Press, forthcoming).

¹³ These figures involve a small amount of double-counting, since there were seven parents who live in unusual arrangements with both one or more married son and one or more married daughter.

¹⁴ Only those parents with no children at all and with two daughters but no sons were substantially more likely to live alone (100% and 81%, respectively). It should be noted, once again, that a good portion of those parents who do not live with any married child still have one or more unmarried child at home.

¹⁵ It is important to understand that there is still little in the way of a private housing market visible in Baoding. Overall, only 6% of parents live in privately owned housing (5% owned by themselves and 1% owned by others), with the remainder living in public housing allocated by work units (78%) or by city housing offices or others (16%). A slightly higher proportion of the children we interviewed—16%—live in privately owned housing.

¹⁶ Forty-five percent of our parent respondents told us they had lived with another married child in the past, and some parents had lived with several. A not unusual pattern is for an older son to marry and temporarily reside with the parents and then move out when independent housing becomes available or when a second son is about to marry. However, our data indicate that in a good many instances the sequence does not end with the parents residing with the youngest married son, but instead living independently of any children.

¹⁷ In the 1950s the Chinese government, following the Soviet precedent, enshrined a gender differential in retirement from state units by mandating sixty as the retirement age for men, fifty-five for women in mental labor jobs, and fifty for women in manual labor jobs.

¹⁸ Among Baoding parents over age sixty, 77% had pension income, compared to 27% among urbanites in Taiwan in 1989, and only 13% for Taiwanese, who were much less likely than Mainlanders to retire from covered employers (see Table 9. 1 in the present volume). In more recent years pension reform efforts in Taiwan have spread pension eligibility somewhat more broadly.

¹⁹ Since the end of the 1950s most women under age fifty have been regularly employed for wages, but the older women in our sample established their families prior to this mobilization. Even when employed, women are more likely than men to work in smaller firms in the collective sector, rather than in state firms. Small collective-sector firms less often have pension systems, while pensions have long been mandatory in state firms.

²⁰ Adjustments have been made in the pensions of many work units to take inflation into account. As a result, the cash value of the average pension among our respondents was about 2 1/2 times the (unadjusted) level of their final pay prior to retirement (again, with all figures based on respondent recall). However, see chapter 3 for a discussion of the problem of income “slippage” faced by retirees.

²¹ More specific comparisons between parent and child incomes are possible using the Baoding survey data. For the 731 pairs of parents and children interviewed in the survey, the recollected parent monthly income in 1993 was higher than the interviewed child in 47.7% of the cases, exactly the same in 6.5% of the cases, and lower than the child in 45.8% of the cases. On a more subjective question to parents about their economic well-

being compared to each one of their grown children, parents reported that they had a better living standard than 39% of their children, about the same in comparison with 32.9% of their children, and a worse standard than 28.1% of their children. In general, all of the figures available convey a story of parents on average doing about as well as their children, or slightly better.

²² For more on the comparison with Taiwan, and particularly on the scarcity of pensions for the elderly on that island, consult chapter 9. The struggles and tensions surrounding the issue of whether the rural elderly will live with their grown children are vividly described in Yunxiang Yan, "Elderly Support and the Crisis of Filial Piety," *op. cit.* See also Haiou Yang and David Chandler, "Intergenerational Relations: Grievances of the Elderly in Rural China," *Journal of Comparative Family Studies* 23 (1992): 431–53; Guo Yuhua, "The Aged and the Young: A Case Study of Disputes about Supporting the Aged in a Village in North China," unpublished paper based upon fieldwork in a village in Hebei; Qin Zhaoxiong, "The Process of Change in the Chinese Rural Family: Government Policy and Confucianism," unpublished paper based upon fieldwork in a village in Hubei.

²³ Particularly at the older ages, the figures in Table 2.4 conceal significant gender differences, with women on average reporting more health problems than men. For example, 46.1% of men over age seventy reported no current ailments, but this was the case for only 24.5% of women over seventy. Similarly, 10.1% of men over age seventy reported three or more current ailments, while this was the case for 24.5% of women over seventy. Not surprisingly, an even clearer difference emerged in regard to the difficulty of performing physical tasks, with 49% of men over age seventy reporting that they could perform all eight indicated tasks without difficulty, but only 6% of women making the same claim. Along the same lines, about 9% of men over age seventy reported their health status as not so good or poor, but this was the case for more than 30% of women in that age group. Curiously, despite these differences, women in all age groups had slightly lower rates than men of reported hospitalization within the last six months.

²⁴ Again these generalizations apply less well to elderly women in Baoding. Among women over seventy as judged by the same standards used in the text, 20–40% have health problems or infirmities serious enough to interfere with their lives in major ways.

²⁵ The thirteen statements were: I worry about little things; I have no appetite; I can't concentrate; I feel happy (reversed); I feel lonely; I feel depressed; I enjoy life (reversed); I feel my life is a failure; I feel disliked by others; I feel full of energy (reversed); I don't sleep well; I can't find the energy to get things done; and I feel everything is an effort. The reliability coefficient alpha for this scale was a very robust 0.85. Given the wording of these questions, a high score actually indicates the relative absence of depression symptoms.

²⁶ Most research in Western societies has also found higher reported rates of psychological distress for women than for men, with substantial debate about the reasons for this disparity. See, for example, the discussion in R. Kessler and J. McLeod, "Sex Differences in Vulnerability to Undesirable Life Events," *American Sociological Review* 49 (1984): 620–31; Walter Gove, "Gender Differences in Mental and Physical Illness: The Effects of Fixed Roles and Nurturant Roles," *Social Science and Medicine* 19 (1984): 77–91.

²⁷ The reader should keep in mind, however, that most respondents are receiving pensions from their former work units, as well as other public benefits not listed here, such as medical insurance. Obviously these forms of support for the elderly are not being considered by respondents in answering our questions about receiving support from others. In Part III of this volume, and particularly in chapter 5, intergenerational exchanges are analyzed in great detail, including a comparison of the reports of children and their parents for the same exchanges.

²⁸ For example, in the study of intergenerational relations in Albany cited earlier, the authors conclude that parents receive help from children "somewhat rarely," with only 15% or less of parents reporting specific kinds of assistance from any child, and only 27% reporting that they received any of several kinds of assistance. On the other hand, 58% of parents reported providing some assistance to one or more children. See Logan and Spitze, *Family Ties*, 32–33.

²⁹ Wang Mei and Xia Chuanling, "Some Tentative Analysis on Family Support of the Elderly in Contemporary China," *China Population Science*, No. 4, 1994 (in Chinese).

³⁰ To be specific, among those parents under age sixty, 25.3% provide cash support to others (almost always children) and 13.2% receive such support; among those over age seventy, 11.5% provide cash support and 29.8% receive it.

³¹ These figures include a range of percentages because our parent questionnaire had a section asking separately about exchanges with each of their children, with the responses differing somewhat from child to child. Other research reinforces the picture of parents and other relatives playing an important role in the employment of their children in both the socialist and reform eras. See Yanjie Bian, "Guanxi and the Allocation of Urban Jobs in China," *China Quarterly*, No. 140, (1994) 971–99.

³² Specifically, for grocery shopping 74.8% of parents reported that they or their spouse is primarily or solely responsible, while the children are primarily or solely responsible in only 13.7% of the families. For cooking the comparable percentages are 71.4% and 13.2%, and for cleaning 62.8% and 16.1%. (These percentages do not add to 100 because the category "each generation equally" is omitted, and because in some cases other family members perform these chores.)

³³ See Larry L. Bumpass, "A Comparative Analysis of Coresidence and Contact with Parents in Japan and the United States," in *Tradition and Change in the Asian Family*, ed. Lee-Jay Cho and Moto Yada (Honolulu: East-West Center, 1994), 229. If we include adult children who coreside with their parents then the Japanese figures for sons are much higher than those for the United States—48% of sons in daily contact (and 22% of daughters).

³⁴ The format of these questions involved asking a respondent a series of questions about their relations with child one, then repeating the same questions with regard to child two, and so forth through all of their grown children. The figures presented in the text are rough averages of the percentage totals for the first five children. (The small Ns at higher parities make the percentages unstable.)

³⁵ Note that the reference point for this subjective comparison is the year 1974, which is toward the end of the "Cultural Revolution decade." That period is usually seen as characterized by low respect for all authority, including parental authority. Nonetheless,

most parents (as well as most of their children, who were asked a parallel question) perceive a decline in respect for the elderly since that time.

³⁶ Traditional family morality dictated that in the event of such a conflict, the son was supposed to side with his mother and against his wife. Although such conflicts are described as uncommon today, when they do occur our respondents claim that the most common approach is for the son to remain neutral (58%), with siding with the mother only slightly more common than siding with the wife (25% versus 17%).

³⁷ We do have responses in the child questionnaires to many of the same questions—responses not summarized here. Those responses in general yield a similarly positive picture about family relationships. However, since the children we interviewed might also be affected by a desire to minimize the extent of family problems in front of strangers, this corroboration cannot be viewed as an independent check.

³⁸ The contention that post-1949 changes have on balance benefited more than undermined China's elderly is not new. The most extensive earlier Western analysis of this topic came to similar conclusions. See Deborah Davis-Friedmann, *Long Lives: Chinese Elderly and the Communist Revolution*, rev. ed. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991).

3

PRIVILEGE OR PUNISHMENT? RETIREMENT AND REEMPLOYMENT AMONG THE CHINESE URBAN ELDERLY

Wang Feng, Xiao Zhenyu, and Zhan Jie

Confucian norms about obligations for grown children to support aging parents emerged in China's agrarian past. In such an agrarian society, without significant wage employment, pensions, or public support for the elderly, individuals no longer able to earn their own keep through arduous agricultural labor necessarily depended upon their families, and particularly upon grown children. The emergence of modern forms of wage employment and pensions began to change the picture even before 1949. In China's socialist era, roughly the years from 1955 through the mid-1980s, wage employment in nonfamily (mostly state-run) firms providing a wide range of benefits, including retirement pensions, came to dominate urban China. This chapter is concerned with several questions. To what extent do wages and pensions "liberate" Baoding parents from reliance on support from their grown children? What factors determine whether particular older Baoding residents will be able to remain employed, either by avoiding retirement or returning to work after retirement? Finally, to what extent have the post-1978 reforms begun to erode the employment-based financial security enjoyed by older urban residents in previous decades?

Background

From the mid-1950s until the late 1970s, urban Chinese parents were led to believe that, unlike the generations before them who relied solely on their families for old-age support, for the first time in China's history they

could also count on the state as a major source of such support. Urban Chinese not only enjoyed guaranteed life-long employment and other economic and social benefits from the government and through their workplace; at the end of their productive career, they were also promised something unheard of in the past: guaranteed income in the form of a retirement pension.¹ Socialism not only guaranteed the right to work, but also promised a secure old age when one would not have to rely only on family, relatives, and friends to provide support.

Such socialist provisions in employment and retirement undoubtedly began to change Chinese parents' perceptions and calculations of their lives in old age. Chinese parents, while maintaining close ties with their children, could also begin to contemplate a life in old age involving less dependency upon their children. A major reason for such confidence in old-age independence was their belief that they could count on their own income from either employment or a retirement pension. Indeed, an overwhelming majority of urban retirees in Baoding receive pensions from their work units. As shown in the previous chapter, 88.9% of males aged sixty to sixty-nine and 95.5% of males aged seventy and above have pensions, and 65.9 and 28.6% of females of these ages receive pensions.² Partly because of such economic independence, the majority of Baoding elderly also believe that they should lead an independent life in old age. When presented with the statement, "As long as health permits, an elderly person should live independently and not depend on children," over 70% of Baoding parents reported they "strongly agreed" or "agreed."

The more recent reversal of the good fortune for urban Chinese, and especially for the elderly, has been dramatic. Beginning in the late 1970s, when the first large cohorts of urban employees entitled to receive these promised benefits reached retirement age, a quiet revolution started to engulf China. Urban residents soon realized that with far-reaching economic and social reforms under way, both the rules of employment and of retirement had started to change drastically. Step by step, the state has withdrawn its commitments based on earlier socialist ideals. Guaranteed life-long employment began to be phased out and was replaced by labor contracts, and the government no longer assumed total responsibility in allocating jobs. At the same time, unemployment is no longer an ideological taboo. More critically relevant to the lives of the urban elderly, the universal pension system previously mandated by the central state is now subject to all kinds of new experiments and has become the responsibility of each enterprise or

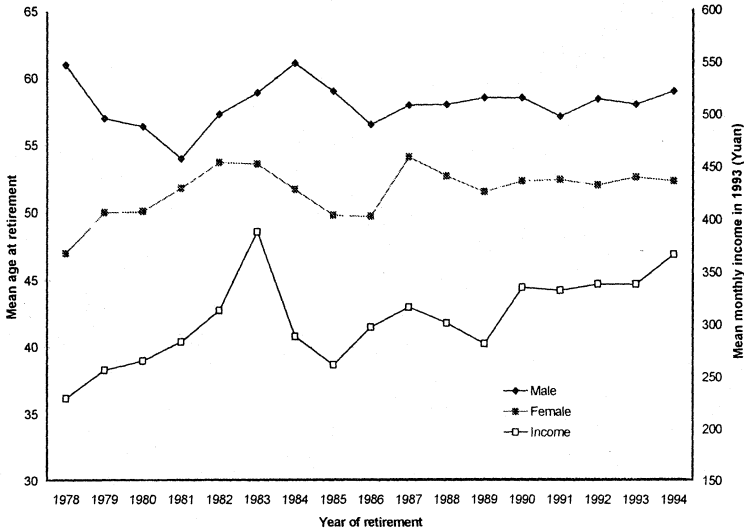
local government.³ When some urban enterprises have a retiree-to-current-employee ratio as high as two to three, and when a significant number of urban enterprises cannot even pay wages to currently working employees, pension payments to retirees have been downgraded on the list of priorities. Chinese urban elderly, who used to enjoy a privileged position after the Chinese socialist revolution, now face the need to reconsider their old age security. One important consideration is their participation in the labor force in old age.

Since the late 1970s, two demographic and social trends have imposed additional pressure on the urban elderly's labor-force participation. With the arrival in the labor market of the large birth cohorts of the 1950s and 1960s, a massive number of urban youths have been in need of jobs. Recent rapid economic growth, especially outside of the state sector, has created new employment opportunities, but these opportunities have not matched the increased urban supply of labor. The difficulty in supplying enough urban jobs is further exacerbated by a change in migration policy, which has allowed underemployed rural labor to enter the cities. Estimates have placed rural to urban labor migrants at sixty to one hundred million, a number equivalent to at least one quarter and perhaps closer to one half of the 1990s labor force of those with urban residence status. Faced with such high pressure to create jobs, many local governments and urban enterprises have initiated early retirement schemes in which men are asked to retire before age sixty and women before age fifty-five, or fifty for female manual laborers, the legal ages of retirement for most of the Chinese labor force since the 1950s. One early effort of this type was the *dingti* (substitution) system of the late 1970s and early 1980s, where parents were asked to retire in order to make space for their children, often in the same work unit. Although the *dingti* practice was ordered terminated in the early 1980s, the pressure for older employees to leave early has continued.⁴ (We will see evidence later in this chapter that *dingti* early retirements did not cease immediately even when the state prohibited them.)

Such pressure on the older generation to leave space for the young can also be detected among the Baoding elderly we surveyed. As shown in Figure 3.1, while the female mean retirement age has not changed much, the male retirement age has declined somewhat during the period from 1978 to 1994. Though the overall trend in mean retirement age is less than clear because of two dips, one between 1979 and 1981 when the *dingti* system was in practice, and one in the mid 1980s, it is clear that since the early 1980s, the male

retirement age has stabilized at about age fifty-eight and for females, around fifty-two.

Figure 3.1 Trends in retirement age by gender and in income, Baoding, 1978-1994



At the same time that the length of employment of the older generation is being cut short and their employment opportunities reduced, the need for more income among at least some in the older generation has increased. The pressure among the elderly to have more income comes on two fronts. First, with inflation resulting from economic reforms, the purchasing power of a retiree's pension runs the risk of declining in real terms.⁵ Given this situation, it is to the employee's advantage to retire late, not early, in order to end up with a higher retirement pension income as a way to safeguard against future income "slippage." In fact more recent retirees do end up with a higher income. As also shown in Figure 3.1, with the exception of 1983 when a few high-income respondents who retired that year pushed up the mean income, there is a clear upward trend in retirees' income between 1978 and 1994. Retirees who left the labor force in the late 1970s had on average a monthly income in 1993 of no more than 270 yuan; those who retired in the 1980s received about 300 yuan, and those who retired after 1989 got close to 350 yuan. While such a measure does not control for the changing characteristics of the retirees, the rising income trend does suggest that those who stay at

work and retire later are better protected against future income erosion due to inflation.

A second source of pressure is that the older generation is worried about lagging behind the income of the younger generation during the economic transformation. Reversing the earlier arrangement under socialism when the older generation was privileged over the young, recent economic growth has begun to create an economic structure that favors the young over the old, the more educated over less educated, and the more entrepreneurial over the more conservative. Indeed, when asked to compare their living conditions with those of their children, many elderly respondents reported that they are worse off.⁶ For these reasons, the elderly feel a strong need today to make up for their declining income, both in absolute and relative terms.

The elderly population in Baoding, as in most other places in urban China, is caught in the middle of roller-coaster changes in political ideology, economic institutions, and social organizations. Retirement, once the expected golden stage of one's life, is now mixed with uncertainties and anxieties. With the privileges associated with retirement partly taken away and with the expectation of long years to be spent in retirement, the focus now is on how to stay on in the labor force or return to work after retirement. In order to be economically independent, parents need to have sufficient income to support themselves. In a society where private property for most was a rarity under socialist rules, labor-force participation is just about the only means to raise current income and secure a higher future income.

In this chapter, we examine the pattern of labor-force participation among the elderly in Baoding and analyze the factors that motivate, force, or enable them to participate in the labor force in old age. We begin by presenting a profile of labor-force participation among the elderly in Baoding and continue with more in-depth analyses on two specific aspects of labor-force participation among the elderly: why some urban Chinese retire earlier than others; and why some elderly return to work after retirement while others do not. We focus our analyses on the effects of the elderly's personal as well as familial characteristics, and also of organizational characteristics related to the elderly's labor force participation. We conclude with observations on the implications of these labor force participation patterns for the Chinese elderly, for Chinese society, and for Chinese parent-child relationships.

Labor-force Participation among the Elderly

We have already suggested that labor-force participation among the elderly in Baoding reveals a bifurcated pattern. On the one hand, a significant proportion of urban Baoding residents continue to be economically active well into old age. On the other hand, a large proportion of them also retire from their jobs rather early. Of the 1,002 respondents in Baoding aged fifty and above, 25% were working and had not retired in 1994, when the survey was conducted. Whereas most of the nonretirees are residents below normal retirement ages, a notable percentage of the elderly above the general retirement ages are also still active in the labor force. As shown in Table 3.1, 34.2 % of all male respondents aged sixty to sixty-four are working either as late retirees (12.6%) or as retirees who reentered the labor market (21.6%). Even at ages seventy to seventy-nine, over 10% of elderly men are still working after retirement. For females, over 20% among those aged fifty-five to fifty-nine are also still in the labor force. These percentages are comparable to, if not higher than, those found in other large Chinese cities in the 1980s.

As noted in chapter 2, the distribution of labor force participation status varies considerably by age and gender. The percentage of the population employed drops quickly with age, and males consistently outnumber females in active employment. Among those aged fifty to fifty-four and fifty-five to fifty-nine, 86.9% and 64.6% of men have not retired. For women, the comparable percentages are only 36.3% and 10.1% (Table 3.1). Also, an increasingly higher percentage of women at older ages are reported to be housewives, reflecting the fact that some of them may never have had a paid job outside of the household. Men are also much more likely to return to work after formal retirement. At ages sixty to sixty-four, when most men begin to enter their postretirement life, more than one out of every five are working again. Even at age sixty-five to sixty-nine, one out of every seven is working. For women, at ages fifty to fifty-four, only less than 5%, and at age fifty-five to fifty-nine, only 10% are rehired. After age sixty virtually no women are reemployed.

In contrast to those elderly who remain active in the labor force well beyond formal retirement age, a significant proportion of urban Baoding residents exit the labor market quite early, even by Chinese standards. Some Baoding residents, as shown in Table 3.1, retired before the government-

Table 3.1 Employment Status among the Elderly in Baoding, China, 1994

Status (%)	Age						
	50-54	55-59	60-64	65-69	70-74	75-79	80+
	Male						
Working	86.9	64.6	12.6	1.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
Retired/rehired	1.0	9.0	21.6	14.6	11.7	11.8	0.0
Retired/not working	12.1	22.9	64.0	84.3	85.0	82.4	90.9
Housework	0.0	2.1	0.0	0.0	1.7	0.0	0.0
Other	1.0	1.4	1.8	0.0	1.7	5.9	9.1
N	99	144	111	89	60	17	11
	Female						
Working	36.3	10.1	4.0	0.0	0.0	7.7	0.0
Retired/rehired	3.9	10.1	1.0	1.5	0.0	0.0	0.0
Retired/not working	50.0	60.4	68.3	62.7	40.0	30.8	11.1
Housework	5.9	16.5	24.8	34.3	60.0	61.5	88.9
Other	3.9	2.9	2.0	1.5	0.0	0.0	0.0
N	102	139	101	67	25	13	9

stipulated retirement ages. For example, among males aged fifty to fifty-four, 13.1% were reported to have retired, and among those aged fifty-five to fifty-nine, 31.9% had already retired. For females, over half had already retired among those aged fifty to fifty-four. By fifty-five to fifty-nine, over 70% had retired.

Why do some elderly retire early while others stay on for much longer in the labor force? What makes an elderly person go back to the labor force after retirement? In the remaining sections of this chapter we shall focus on the patterns of these different labor force participation behaviors among the Baoding elderly and analyze the factors forcing or enabling them to retire or to continue working in old age. We begin with early retirement.

Early Retirement: A Choice or an Obligation?

What are the reasons that some urban Chinese retire early? Early retirement could be a personal choice, due to an elderly person's desire for leisure, a wish to spend more time with family and friends, or because of a health condition that prevents one from working. Early retirement could also

involve lack of choice, with older workers forced to retire either by government or work unit regulations or in order to meet the needs of the family. By retiring early, parents sometimes can vacate their employment slots in favor of their children and can help with raising grandchildren. Moreover, even with current regulations, differences in the organizational characteristics of the workplace might also make a difference. A money-losing firm may force its employees to retire early as a way to cut costs, while a government organization might need to follow retirement policies more closely than other employers by asking its employees to retire at the regulated ages.

Many retirees in Baoding regard retirement as a requirement rather than a choice. In the Baoding survey, we asked retired Baoding respondents the reasons they retired, and we obtained the responses shown in Table 3.2. To highlight the characteristics among those who retired early, defined here as those having retired before the age of sixty, we also list these respondents' answers separately. For slightly over half of all retirees, the reason given was "reached retirement age." We cannot be certain whether it is choice or the lack of it that led to retirement in these cases. This response could mean either that the respondents had no choice but to retire, in order to observe retirement rules, or that they were glad to reach that age so that they could retire. We can, however, make better sense of the reasons involved from the half of the respondents who provided other, more specific, reasons. Answers from these respondents seem to indicate a considerable amount of pressure to retire, either from the family or from their work unit. Less than 10% indicated clearly that it was their own preference to retire ("do not want to work any more"), and about 8% gave health reasons. Modest proportions of respondents specified they were required by their work units to leave (about 13%) or retired due to family pressures (about 5%).

Males and females differ very clearly in why they were pressured to leave their employment posts. For men, the pressure was more likely to come from the workplace, and for women, from the family. The percentage citing family pressure as the reason to retire is less than 3% for men but over 7% for women among all retirees. The contrast is even sharper among early retirees; 6.7% of women retired due to family pressure while no men retired for this reason. In addition, more men among elderly retirees also cited "other" reasons for retirement.

Table 3.2 Reasons for Retirement

Reason:	Among all retirees (%)		Among early retirees (%)	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
No longer want to work	9.7	8.8	15.6	8.9
Required by work unit	15.0	10.0	11.1	7.4
Family pressure	2.6	7.3	0	6.7
Reached retirement age	55.4	56.7	40.0	58.5
Illness	3.7	12.6	4.4	7.4
Other	13.5	4.6	28.9	11.1
N	267	261	45	135

Some Baoding parents did in fact leave their employment early in order to let their children work in their place in their own work units. From a separate tabulation, not included in Table 3.2, we find that among the early retirees (before age sixty), about 11% gave the reason of “leaving space for children’s employment.” Most of these early retirees were women. There were sixteen females in this situation versus only three males. As a result, 11.9% of all females who retired before age sixty gave the reason of giving their children a chance, whereas only 6.7% of males gave this reason. This gender difference in taking early retirement for the sake of children suggests a family strategy, as females often earn less in the labor force and can provide more useful help at home after leaving formal employment, given long-standing biases in how domestic tasks are divided. The practice of replacement employment also seems to be a phenomenon associated with a specific time period. All except one of these cases occurred before 1988. Apparently the policy of allowing one’s child to replace a parent’s space, officially forbidden since the early 1980s, was finally phased out in the late 1980s in Baoding.

To better understand what made some Baoding elderly retire early while others continued to work, we need to look beyond age and gender differences. Specifically, we need to look at what other factors helped an employee retain formal employment and not retire early. In this chapter and often in later chapters we will employ a variety of multivariate statistical techniques in order to examine questions such as this. What do these techniques tell us? In contrast to Tables 3.1 and 3.2, in which the relationship between a single factor (age and gender, respectively) and the outcome we are trying to explain (early retirement in this case) is examined, multivariate analysis allows us to simultaneously see how a large number of factors are related to a chosen outcome. In the process we are trying to answer the

question of how much *net* impact a particular factor (for example, gender or educational attainment) has on that outcome when all of the other factors considered are controlled for statistically. Employing multivariate analysis also helps us to detect and then discount spurious associations. For example, if men have more education than women and men also tend to retire later than women do, is the earlier retirement of women (as seen in Table 3.2) perhaps due to their lower educational levels, rather than to their gender per se? Multivariate statistical techniques allow us to compare men and women at the same educational level (and at the same level in terms of other predictors) to try to determine the “pure” effect of gender on the timing of retirement.

Oversimplifying somewhat, there are two primary types of multivariate statistical analysis that will be employed in subsequent chapters. Linear regression is employed when the outcome measure we are trying to explain can take a range of values that can be considered as having the same intervals—for example, age or income. The coefficients in a table of results from linear regression tell us how much change in the outcome measure occurs for each unit change in a particular predictive factor while other predictors are held constant. If the outcome measure is instead a dichotomy (as in this case, with 1 = early retirement and 0 = all other cases), then linear regression is not suitable, and logistic regression is employed instead. The coefficients in a table for logistic regression tell us how much change in the log-odds of our outcome variable (early retirement versus its absence, in this case) occurs for changes in each predictor variable, again with the other predictors controlled for statistically. Linear and logistic regression tables will look fairly similar, although the meaning of the coefficients shown will be different. However, in general a larger coefficient shows stronger net effects of a predictor variable. We will also display statistical significance symbols indicating how likely a coefficient of that size might have occurred due to chance alone, rather than due to a “real” association between predictor and outcome. (Usually a coefficient without an asterisk indicates an association that could occur on a chance basis more often than 5 times out of 100, with one or more asterisks indicating associations that would be found less than 5 times out of 100, less than 1 time out of 100, and less than one time out of 1000.) Finally, at the bottom of multivariate analysis tables we will display statistics that summarize how well all of the predictors considered collectively explain variation in the outcome measure.

With this extended introduction out of the way, we can proceed to examine a variety of possible predictors of early retirement in Baoding. We

consider a retirement early if it occurred before age sixty, and code such cases as 1. All other cases, which do not involve early retirement, are coded 0.⁷ We consider the following factors that may influence a person's retirement:

Personal characteristics

A number of personal characteristics of the elderly can make a difference in deciding early retirement. Here we focus on the following: age, gender, educational attainment, political status, and health status.

Education. In addition to age and gender, the education of the respondent might make a difference in early retirement. Those with higher education, and presumably with better skills and a greater ability to adapt to the changing economy, should have an advantage over those less educated in being retained by work institutions. To examine the effect of educational attainment of a respondent on retirement timing, we differentiate education into three categories, those with senior high schooling and more, as the high education group; those with junior high school education, representing the middle group; and those with only primary school education or less, as the low educational group. Among the respondents aged fifty to fifty-nine, the percentage distribution of these three groups is: 35%, 30%, and 35%.

Political status. The Chinese urban workplace not only rewards human capital, which can be represented by educational attainment, but also political capital, which can be represented by a number of indicators. One such indicator is membership in the Chinese Communist Party.⁸ Party members, known as the vanguards of the working class, not only receive more political trust, but also preferential economic treatment when it comes to promotion, pay raises, and perhaps retirement as well. Without being in the Party, one has little chance of being trusted in a management position or government office. At the same time, Party members may also have cultivated better personal connections with officials that could give them some advantage in not retiring early. Here we compare early retirement between Party members (8.5% of our parent sample) and non-Party members.

Health condition. Poor health conditions can lead to a voluntary decision to retire early. As shown in Table 3.2, a small proportion of respondents did cite poor health as a reason for retirement. In our survey we asked a wide variety of questions about respondents' health (see the discussion in chapter 2). One involved asking respondents to evaluate their own health, from very poor to excellent. We group those who reported 'poor' and 'very poor' as reporting poor health, and compare them with those who chose other

responses (11.3% fall into the poor health category). We should note, however, that this measure of health status is based on the evaluation of health at the time of the survey, not before retirement. We assume in this case that the two are closely related, as our sample for this analysis only includes those aged fifty to fifty-nine, for whom retirement would have occurred fairly recently.

Familial characteristics

Another important factor that may affect an elderly person's retirement decision is his or her family conditions. While there are many indicators of family circumstances, we choose to use the number of children to represent familial characteristics. An older person with more children may retire early for several reasons: to vacate a space for a child's employment; more children may provide more support to the parents and therefore produce less need for the elderly to work; and more children could also mean more household work needed by those children, either in cooking, cleaning, or in caring for grandchildren.

Organizational characteristics of the workplace

In addition to the personal and familial characteristics we list above, retirement timing may be an outcome of the nature of the workplace an individual is associated with, rather than individual preferences. Enterprises or institutions with more economic or political resources are less vulnerable to ongoing changes, and as a result, individuals working in such places may have a better chance to avoid early retirement.

We include in our analysis two aspects of a workplace: ownership type and the industrial sector of the workplace. Workplaces in Baoding, as elsewhere in urban China, can be roughly classified into the following ownership types: 1) self-employed, 2) private firm, 3) collective enterprise, 4) state-owned enterprise affiliated with the city or a district, 5) state-owned enterprise affiliated with province, 6) state-owned enterprise affiliated with ministry or central government, and 7) other. The higher the level of ownership, such as those affiliated with a ministry or central government, the more resources and privileges the unit has, at least in the days before economic reforms. Centrally controlled enterprises have enjoyed preferences regarding capital investment, loans, technology, taxes, and welfare provisions. Given Baoding's status as an important industrial city in China, a large proportion of urban employees aged fifty to fifty-nine (36.8%) work or used

to work for enterprises controlled either by a central ministry or by the province. A similarly large proportion (41%) work for city or city-district owned enterprises or institutions. We compare the retirement impact of being in these two categories of workplace with those employed in other types of ownership.

Another dimension of the workplace type is its industrial sector—that is, whether it is an enterprise associated with production, a government organization, a service firm, or something else. We are interested in finding out whether those associated with manufacturing (who account for 50% of our respondents) were more likely to retire early due to the physical demands of this type of employment or an earlier retirement age. We also want to know whether those who worked in government organizations (8.5% of our sample) were able to retire later due to their higher political status and a less demanding working environment. Other industrial types include service enterprises and public nonmanufacturing organizations. The comparison group we use in this case is those working in government organizations.

As noted earlier, we use logistic regression to examine the relative importance of these factors. In addition to the factors listed above, we also control for age and gender, as these are the underlying determining factors for retirement in general. The results of the multivariate analyses are presented in Table 3.3.

In the first multivariate analysis model we include only personal and familial characteristics. Age is clearly an influential factor in determining retirement, with each additional year being associated with 27% (the exponential of the regression coefficient being 1.27) higher likelihood of being retired. Also, females are much more likely to retire than males, controlling for age and other factors. This difference is the largest in the model, with females about 22 times as likely to retire early as males. Retirement during this relatively young age range depends on several other personal characteristics. For example, self-perceived poor health is associated with early retirement.

More interestingly, however, both cultural and political capital, measured by education and Party membership, help a person avoid early retirement. Urban residents with an educational level of senior high school or more have a retirement likelihood that is only 11% of those with primary education or less. Being a Party member, net of other factors, reduces the chance of early retirement by 75% or so. Controlling for these individual characteristics, our indicator of familial circumstances, the number of children an elderly person has, does not have a significant effect on early retirement.

Table 3.3 Logistic Regression Results on Early Retirement among Respondents, Ages 50 to 59

Variable	Model 1		Model 2	
	<u>B</u>	<u>Exp(B)</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>Exp(B)</u>
Personal and family characteristics				
Age	.2420**	1.2737	.2590**	1.2957
Female (Male = reference)	3.0963**	22.1164	3.1892**	24.269
Jr. High school	-.1868	.8296	-.1167	.8899
Sr. High school or more (Primary school or less = reference)	-2.1736**	.1138	-1.9904**	.1366
Poor health	.8885*	2.4315	.9867*	2.6823
Party member	-1.4228**	.2410	-1.3687**	.2544
No. of children	.2274	1.2553	.1703	1.1857
Organizational Characteristics				
<u>Ownership</u>				
City			-.0284	.9720
State or Province (Collective, private = reference)			-.5589	.5718
<u>Sector</u>				
Production			1.5096*	4.5250
Service			-.2084	.8119
Public organization (Government organization = reference)			1.0022	2.7242
Constant	-14.0168		-16.6034	
Number of cases	410		410	
Chi-square	213.064		231.123	
Degree of freedom	7		12	

Note: * indicates statistically significant at 0.05 level and ** indicates statistically significant at 0.01 level.

In Model 2 we add two characteristics of the workplace: its ownership type and its industrial sector. Compared with those working for collective or private enterprises, those affiliated with state-owned institutions (whether at the city or higher levels) do not appear to have an advantage in avoiding early retirement. The same personal characteristics that are significant in Model 1 retain their significance in Model 2. Early retirement does seem to

occur more often among those working in manufacturing enterprises. As shown in Model 2, compared with those working in government organizations (the reference category), employees in production enterprises (factories, essentially) are more than four times as likely to retire early. Other nonproduction workplaces, service firms and public nonmanufacturing organizations (*shiyè danwèi*), do not seem to differ from the government offices in their rates of early retirement. Earlier retirement among employees in factories is partly a result of government regulations, which set a lower retirement age for female production workers, but also demonstrates the effectiveness of retirement enforcement within enterprises directly linked to production and concerned for making profits.

In sum, while some elderly persons in Baoding may indeed prefer to retire early, for many others early retirement does not seem so voluntary. Rather, differences in retirement age among urban residents reflect interesting patterns of social stratification along the lines of age, gender, political status, educational level, and the type of workplace. Government retirement regulations, which differ by type of enterprise and especially by gender, play a dominant role in determining who retires early. From this perspective, retirement is enforced, rather than voluntary. These retirement rules, however, are by no means enforced uniformly across the board, influenced only by age and gender. Instead, retirement enforcement favors those with more education, as well as those who maintain a closer political alliance with the Communist Party or work in government offices. For them, the privilege of employment extends later into old age.

Postretirement Employment: Necessity, Privilege, or Market Demand?

At the same time that a large number of Baoding parents retire early, a substantial proportion of them also manage to get back to work after retirement. As shown in Table 3.1, among male retirees, about 10% or more between the age groups of fifty-five to fifty-nine and seventy-five to seventy-nine have returned to work. Among those males aged sixty to sixty-four, one out of every five is a reemployed retiree. Even at ages sixty-five to sixty-nine, about 15% are in the reemployed category. While the percentages are much lower for women, 10% of women in the relatively young age group of fifty-five to fifty-nine also returned to work after retirement. Who are these reemployed individuals and what makes them go back to work?

Postretirement employment could be a necessity or a privilege or special opportunity. It is a necessity for some elderly because they need the additional income from reemployment. For others, a return to work may represent special treatment. Perhaps those same groups that are able to remain at their original jobs until a later age are also advantaged when it comes to gaining a new job after retirement. However, postretirement employment could also be defined by a new factor, market demand. With the shortage of jobs and mounting employment pressures in urban China, getting back into the labor force may be easier for those elderly persons who possess characteristics in particular demand in the reformed economy—those who can make concrete and meaningful economic contributions.

Here we examine the effects of three sets of factors on reemployment of the elderly in Baoding. First, we look at the effects of the same individual and familial characteristics used in our analysis of early retirement above. These factors include age, gender, education, political status, and the number of children. In addition to Party membership, we add one more indicator of a retiree's status: whether the retirement was one with special honor (*lixiu*) rather than ordinary retirement (*tuixiu*). The category of retirement with special honor is reserved for those who joined the revolution before the founding of the People's Republic or who have reached a relatively high level in the Chinese bureaucracy.⁹ We are interested in finding out whether those who had high political status before retirement, as reflected in a *lixiu* retirement, are especially likely to return to work.

The second set of variables involves the nature of the preretirement workplace. Again, as in the analysis of early retirement, we employ two kinds of measures, one on ownership type of the workplace and the other on preretirement industrial sector. We are interested in testing whether retirees from various ownership types enjoy differing chances for reemployment. Also, since those in manufacturing are more likely to retire early when compared with employees in other industries and professions, we want to know whether they are also more likely than others to return to the labor market.

The last factor we include in this analysis is preretirement income. Controlling for other characteristics, an individual with low income may have a stronger desire to work, in order to prevent further income slippage associated with retirement. Lower pre-retirement income also means lower pension payments, which are normally 70% of pre-retirement wages.¹⁰ Alternatively, it could be those with higher preretirement incomes who find more incentive to return to work, as the monetary returns from reemployment are

also likely to be higher. We define those with monthly preretirement income of less than 150 yuan as low income; between 150 and 299 yuan as middle income, and between 300 and 499 as high income. We excluded those with no income and those with higher than 499 yuan per month.¹¹

We use logistic regression to examine the effects of these three groups of factors on reemployment of older Baoding residents. We code those who were retired but had been rehired by 1994 as 1, and those retired but not rehired as 0. The results of this analysis are presented in Table 3.4.

Several interesting results are shown in Table 3.4. First of all, after taking all other factors into consideration, age itself is not a significant factor. Surprisingly, a younger retiree does not have a greater chance to return to the labor market than an older one. Rather, there are other factors that determine a retiree's chances for reemployment. Second, unlike in the case of early retirement, Party membership no longer brings a significant advantage. Moreover, those who retired with honor (*lixiu*) are much *less* likely to return to work. This pattern could be due to the fact that these retirees were mostly government officials and once retired, their positions are filled by other people, while their expertise in administration and Party affairs is not much in demand elsewhere. Their higher pensions might also reduce their economic need for reemployment. It is noteworthy, nevertheless, that these very high-status retired cadres have not been able to use their previous power to regain access to the labor market. The number of children, as in the case of early retirement, does not have a significant effect on reemployment. Also similar to results in regard to early retirement is the finding that elderly persons with poor health are less likely to return to the labor market.

There are a number of other important factors affecting the reemployment of the elderly in Baoding. The first such influential factor is gender. A female is not only over twenty times *more* likely to retire early, but also 74% *less* likely to be reemployed after retirement. Human capital, represented by level of education, not only helps one to stay in the job longer, but also facilitates a return to the workforce after retirement. Compared with those with only primary school education or less, retirees with senior high school completion or more are not only 86% *less likely* to retire early (Model 2, Table 3.3), but more than three and half times *more* likely to be reemployed (Table 3.4, likelihood ratio of 4.7).

Moreover, types of industry and ownership of the preretirement employment organization also affect a retiree's chances for reemployment. In contrast to the pattern of early retirement, where the production sector is the

Table 3.4 Logistic Regression Results on Re-employment among Baoding Retirees, 1994

Variable	B	Exp (B)
Personal and Family Characteristics:		
Age	-.0152	.9850
Female (Male = reference)	-1.3588**	.2570
Jr. High school	.5893	1.8028
Sr. High school or more (Primary school or less = reference)	1.5482**	4.7028
Poor health	-1.3699*	.2541
Party member	.4881	1.6292
<i>Lixiu</i> status	-3.5071**	.0300
No. of children	.0858	1.0896
Organizational Characteristics:		
<u>Ownership</u>		
City	-1.3515**	.2589
State or Province (Collective, private = reference)	-1.3556**	.2578
<u>Sector</u>		
Production	.0832	1.0868
Service	1.2556**	3.5098
Public organization (Government organization = reference)	-2.344	.7911
Pre-retirement Income:		
High	1.4895**	4.4348
Middle (Low = reference)	.9920*	2.6965
Constant	-1.2344	
Number of cases	540	
Chi-square	115.658	
Degree of freedom	15	

Note: * indicates statistically significant at 0.05 level and ** indicates statistically significant at 0.01 level.

one penalized, here one industry stands out as privileged—service firms. Compared with those who worked in government organizations, those who worked in the service sector before retirement have a likelihood of being reemployed that is 2.5 times higher. Compared with state-owned institutions, either at the city government or the national or provincial level, those who were employed in nonstate sectors before retirement (in collective owned enterprises or private businesses) are also much more likely to be reemployed (about three times more likely). One reason for the difference may be that retirees who worked in nonstate owned firms before retirement possess skills more needed

in the reformed economy and also have personal ties with these firms that facilitate their return to the labor force. (In other words, the hiring of retirees may be more common in collective and private firms than in state enterprises, benefiting those who worked outside the state sector prior to retirement.)

Finally, preretirement income has a *positive* effect on reemployment. Retirees who had high preretirement incomes are also much more likely to return to work. Compared with those with low preretirement monthly incomes, retirees with middle level income are 1.7 times more likely to return to work, while retirees with high preretirement income are 3.4 times more likely to return to the labor market. Interestingly, however, the size of the pension received is not a significant factor affecting reemployment (results not shown in the table).¹²

Combined, these findings yield a picture of reemployment among the Chinese urban elderly quite different from that governing early retirement. Whereas retirement timing follows government regulations and policies, and favors those who held privileged positions in their old work organizations, postretirement employment seems to follow a different set of principles. Those who possess superior human capital and skills, represented here by a higher educational level and higher preretirement income, are more likely to find new jobs. Moreover, those who were associated with nonstate-owned enterprises and service industries before retirement are more likely to find new jobs after retirement than those with other types of work histories. This pattern suggests that postretirement employment favors not those who are politically more privileged, but those who are better positioned, both personally and institutionally, to fit into the reformed economy. Postretirement employment, in other words, reflects more demands for those who are qualified for work in a market economy, rather than the institutional privileges enjoyed by those who were favored in the planned economic system.

Conclusions

China's urban elderly, once the envy of the rest of the population, found themselves caught in the middle of rapid economic and social changes in the 1990s. Not only do they need to reevaluate their reliance on the state for their old-age support; they also need to face the pressures of the labor market both in terms of retirement and reemployment. In order to lead an economically independent and comfortable life, older Chinese urbanites increasingly have to consider ways of staying in, or returning to, the labor force.

Labor force participation among older Chinese urbanites demonstrates a clearly varied pattern: on the one hand, a substantial proportion of the urban elderly remain economically active well into old age. On the other hand, an even higher percentage of them leave employment quite early. Whereas some of these early retirees have been able to get back to the labor market through reemployment, the *majority* of them have not.¹³

If Baoding can be viewed as fairly representative of urban China in the 1990s, then much can be learned about the impact of economic and social reforms on China's elderly. These reforms have not only redefined the parameters of old-age security for older Chinese. They have also changed the rules of labor-market exit and reentry. During a time when both rapid increases in income and surges in inflation are taking place, being able to retire late not only means more years of higher pay while working, but also a higher pension. Retirement, once a privilege that provided a secure income, guaranteed health care, and respected social status, is now associated with elevated risks of income slippage and less secure benefits. Delaying retirement, rather than early retirement, therefore, becomes a privilege mostly reserved for those who occupy important positions in the preexisting political, economic, and social hierarchy.

In the 1980s and early 1990s, retirement in urban China reflected more the enforcement of policy than a voluntary choice. Males who are Communist Party members, who work in nonproduction sectors, and who have more years of schooling are much less likely to retire. It is those workers who have the lowest levels of education, who are not Party members, and especially female workers, who are most likely to exit the labor market early, and to end up with a lower pension. This pattern of early retirement testifies to the legacy of the socialist system. To be able to work into old age in urban China today, in other words, represents a privilege reserved for those who have occupied high social and political status in the socialist order. The contrary trend of retiring early represents a disadvantage suffered by those of lower status in that social order.

Unlike early retirement, where the socialist stratification principles of age, gender, political status, and education still prevail, the reentry of the urban elderly into the labor force is mostly governed by a set of new rules shaped by the emerging market economy. In such an economy, employment is based not on seniority or political status, but on human capital and market connections. Political traits such as Party membership, cadre status, and affiliation with government organizations do not bring any advantage. Instead,

those who work for nonstate owned businesses and those with higher endowments of human capital, represented by higher levels of education and pre-retirement income, have a much better chance of being reemployed. In other words, whereas the exit from formal employment in the urban Chinese labor force is still subject to the rules of socialism, reemployment has begun to follow the principles of capitalism, with only those who can make concrete economic contributions welcomed back.

Unequal access to labor-force participation in old age may well result in different kinds of intergenerational relations among the Chinese elderly. Those who are more privileged, either by retiring late or by being able to return to the labor market, should be able to maintain a greater degree of economic independence and a more comfortable life in old age. This economic independence of the parents can conceivably translate into better relations with grown children. Those parents who have provided more support to their children in the recent past are also the ones who are more likely to receive old age support when needed. (See the analysis in chapter 8 in this volume.) Not all parents, however, are equally fortunate in participating in the labor force, as our results in this chapter have shown. Ordinary workers who had jobs in state-owned industries and who have low preretirement and pension incomes are more likely than others to retire early and less likely to be reemployed. For them, maintaining close ties with their children may remain much more of a financial necessity.

The ability to retain their own earnings, through a combination of current wages and pensions, is one of the factors that transformed the lives and the intergenerational relations of China's urban elderly after the 1950s. On the financial side, at least, support provided by grown children often was supplemental or even mostly symbolic, rather than vital for survival. The "iron rice bowl" of secure wages and pensions for the majority of urbanites employed in state enterprises was also a key difference from the situation in China's villages, where even today support from grown children (sons, in fact) remains essential for the elderly. The financial security provided the urban elderly by the state in the socialist era is now increasingly threatened by the post-1978 market reforms, designed to "smash the iron rice bowl." Older urbanites cannot always count on being able to retain their jobs until the formal ages of retirement; many will have difficulty finding new jobs to replace lost earnings; and some work units, hard-pressed by their own financial difficulties, may not be able to pay the pensions promised to their retirees. In this shifting and more uncertain terrain there are new winners and losers among the

urban elderly, as described in the present chapter. Those who lose their independent sources of income will in all probability have to turn to their grown children for financial assistance. In the absence of any meaningful alternatives, familial support will once again become essential for many urbanites, rather than supplemental. The fact that in the future most urban elderly will have fewer grown children to share this burden, and often only one, makes this trend even more worrisome, as noted in chapters 1 and 2.

The evidence reviewed in chapter 2 suggests that up to the mid-1990s most elderly Baoding residents felt satisfied with the support they were receiving from their grown children (financial and otherwise). In the present chapter we examine variations in the employment situation of the Baoding elderly in order to determine which subgroups were most and least secure. In the remaining chapters, and indeed in the years ahead, it will be important to look for signs of whether rising demands on children from anxious parents are beginning to threaten the intergenerational bond.

NOTES

¹ Deborah Davis, "Unequal Chances, Unequal Outcomes: Pension Reform and Urban Inequality," *China Quarterly* 114 (1988): 223–42; Martin K. Whyte and William L. Parish, *Urban Life in Contemporary China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984).

² The low percentage of females with pensions in the age group of seventy and above is a result of these women's labor force participation history. Most of them never worked in the labor force outside of the household or only did so in collective enterprises lacking pension benefits.

³ Davis, "Unequal Chances"; Charlotte Ikels, "New Options for the Urban Elderly," in *Chinese Society on the Eve of Tiananmen: The Impact of Reform*, ed. Deborah Davis and Ezra F. Vogel (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990), 215–42. Prior to these recent experiments, pensions were paid by, and came out of funds provided by, the former work units of retirees, rather than directly being paid from a central retirement fund. However, the state specified the levels of pensions that had to be paid and the eligibility criteria, and state funds were automatically used to cover any deficits of enterprises that had trouble meeting their pension and other obligations. In the reform era it is still the work units that pay the pensions to retirees, but now they have some flexibility in determining pension eligibility, and state funds are not automatically available to cover losses.

⁴ Davis, "Unequal Chances."

⁵ The late 1980s witnessed the most drastic inflation in the history of the People's Republic. The cost of living index for urban employees, an indicator of inflation, escalated. Compared with 1980, prices in 1984 were 9.6% higher, in 1985 22.6 % higher, in 1986 31.2% higher, in 1987 42.7% higher, and in 1988 72.2% higher. *Zhongguo shehui tongji ziliao* (China Social Statistics) (Zhongguo tongji chubanshe: Beijing, 1990), 81.

⁶ Compared with those of their first child, 33.6 % of elderly respondents reported that their living conditions were comparable, 28.3 % percent felt their children were worse off, but 38.2 % believed their children were better off. Comparisons with the second child yielded figures of 35.8, 28.6, and 35.6 %. Most Baoding parents did report, however, that their housing conditions were better than their children's.

⁷ Retirement here is restricted to retirement that was not followed by reemployment. This restriction makes retirement a clear exit from the labor force, and filters out the influences of other retirement cases where an early retirement may be taken as a strategy to be reemployed in a better job.

⁸ Andrew Walder, *Communist Neo-Traditionalism: Work and Authority in Chinese Industry* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986); Yanjie Bian, *Work and Inequality in Urban China* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994).

⁹ Davis, "Unequal Chances."

¹⁰ Those who retire in the *lixiu* category, however, receive higher pensions—in some cases 100% or more of their final wage.

¹¹ An exploratory analysis showed thirty-four cases to be at the extreme, with preretirement monthly income at 500 yuan or more. In order to present a more representative

picture of the effect of preretirement income on re-employment among the majority of respondents, we treat these thirty-four cases as outliers and exclude them from the analysis here.

¹² We examined the effect of current pension level on likelihood of reemployment with a hypothesis that those with low pensions may have a greater need to go back to work. Results from a logistic regression analysis show that this variable is not significant. The re-employed elderly, in other words, are not pushed by economic necessity to go back to work, but rather are pulled by their background and skills.

¹³ As shown in Table 3.1, among fifty-five to fifty-nine year-old males, the ratio between retired/not working and retired/rehired is more than two to one, and for females aged fifty to fifty-four, the ratio is more than ten to one.

4

THE PERSISTENCE OF FAMILY OBLIGATIONS IN BAODING

Martin King Whyte

As noted in the introductory chapter, in the Chinese tradition the family was at the center of both public philosophy and private morality. The obligation to provide financial and emotional support for aging parents was rooted in an ancient and widely shared consensus on the priority of family claims against individual desires in general, and the specific ethic embodied in filial piety in particular. Virtually every society places a high value on family life, but observers claim that in Chinese culture this emphasis was unusual in its power. In the words of one account, “family loyalty has been an overriding motive in Chinese life at every social level to an extent generally considered to have few if any parallels.”¹ The result was a general propensity of even grown Chinese children to follow parental decisions, reside in extended households with aging parents, and show marked deference and respect toward their elders. The contrasts of these patterns with the socialization for independence, preference for nuclear families, and lack of deference toward elders characteristic of modern Western family systems could hardly be sharper.²

What has happened in contemporary China to this strong sense of family obligations, and to the tradition of supporting aged parents in particular? We have already seen indications, in the data presented in chapter 2, that most Baoding parents feel satisfied with their lives and well treated by their grown children. Thus no “crisis” in the system of support for older urban Chinese is apparent from the data in our survey. What is not yet clear is how this tradition of support has been maintained. In particular, do grown children provide comfort and assistance to parents reluctantly and grudgingly,

as a consequence of social pressure and restricted alternatives? Or do they fully accept traditional filial values and willingly provide such support? While many of the other chapters in this volume are focused on behavior, in the form of actual exchanges between parents and children, the current chapter is concerned mainly with attitudes and values. What has happened to the values traditionally associated with Chinese familism and filiality?

There are a number of a priori reasons to suspect that the attitudes associated with strong family obligations may have weakened substantially in the PRC, as noted in chapter 1. To recapitulate, there are three analytically distinct but overlapping forces that have worked in this direction. The first is the loss of power of families to China's bureaucratic party/state. During the Mao era, in particular, official propaganda regularly stressed that ultimate loyalties should be directed toward the party, the nation, and Mao Zedong personally, and not toward one's family. As a result of socialist transformation in 1955–57, families were deprived of property, enterprises, and other means to provide future lives and careers for their children, who became overwhelmingly dependent upon schools, workplaces, and other bureaucratic appendages of the socialist state. Families even lost much of their ability to remain together, with substantial numbers split apart as a result of work assignments, political campaigns, and other tumultuous events of the socialist era. As a result of experiences such as these, Chinese parents had substantially less control than their predecessors in earlier generations over the supervision and socialization of their children. In urban China, in particular, young people knew that they had to make their way in life primarily by pleasing bureaucratic authorities, rather than their parents.³

A second threat to family obligations and filial sentiments stems from economic development. Although China's rate of economic growth has been particularly dramatic during the reform era since 1978, for most of the post-1949 period the country sustained a record of quite substantial growth. As a result, China today is significantly more industrialized, better educated, and in other ways more "modern" than was the case in 1949. Research around the world has demonstrated that the transformation from an agrarian to an industrial society has a predictable impact on patterns of family life.⁴ In the formulation of sociologist William J. Goode, development into a modern society tends to foster the emergence of more "conjugal" patterns of family life. A conjugal emphasis means that the husband-wife bond becomes the primary focus of family life, and spouses make decisions about their own lives and those of their young children with relatively little influence or

interference from their parents or other extended kin. In the wake of this shift, young people are more likely to choose their own marital partners, more likely to set up a new household rather than coresiding after marriage with their parents, and more likely to stress and accept independence in child socialization, rather than stressing obedience and extended family obligations.

We know from other research that there have been major changes in urban China along these lines, particularly a shift from arranged to free choice marriages.⁵ This shift is reflected in the experience of our Baoding respondents as well. About 87% of the members of the younger generation interviewed reported that they, and not their parents, had dominated the decision about whom to marry. We also know that in Taiwan, where economic development has also been very rapid, support for filial obligations weakened between the 1960s and the 1990s.⁶ Is it not logical to assume, then, that in Baoding we will also find evidence of a new spirit of independence and a weakened emphasis on filial obligations and loyalty to the larger family unit?

A third set of influences that threaten family obligations in urban China is the combination of rapid and even traumatic shifts in official policies, popular culture, and contacts with the West. Among China's current population there are still a few individuals who grew up at the end of the Qing dynasty with its stress on Confucian orthodoxy, some who came to maturity during the Republican era with its capitalist and Western orientation, and then others who came of age in the years of the Sino-Soviet alliance, during the radical years of hostility toward both the USSR and the West, and during the post-Mao era, with its renewed emphasis on markets, conspicuous consumption, and Westernization. These sharp breaks in formative experiences could be expected to produce clear generation gaps in personal orientations and values.⁷ One might suppose that the different experiences and outlooks of various generations would produce threats to parental socialization of the next generation not unlike those experienced by immigrants in societies such as the United States or Australia. Children might be respectful on the surface but nonetheless feel that their parents are out of touch and not to be obeyed strictly when it comes to setting standards of behavior for today and the future. Since a major element in cultural change in China since 1978 has been heightened exposure to Western culture and individualistic values, as conveyed in such varied forms as Hollywood movies, translated Western books, and visits abroad, one might

suspect that this influence would reinforce the enthusiasm of Chinese young adults for autonomy from their parents.

Popular accounts of contemporary life in the PRC and conventional wisdom are very much in accord with these expectations.⁸ Parents who were reared on the Confucian verities of pre-1949 China or the spartan socialist principles of the Mao era are seen as confronting children who carry cellular phones and dress in trendy Western styles, who find appeal in the alienated messages of new-wave Chinese film directors and avant garde poets, or who frequent discos and karaoke bars. What basis for filial and familial obligations can exist when the generations live in such different mental and moral worlds?

Research Procedures

There are thus multiple, and quite powerful, reasons for expecting that the filial attitudes that Chinese youths had been expected to display toward their elders have weakened over the years. Does practice, in the form of actual family experiences, accord with theory? What is the evidence regarding whether today's generation of Chinese youth are less willing and likely than those of earlier generations to honor traditional family obligations? Unfortunately, we cannot provide a fully satisfactory answer to such questions, since to do so would require historical data on familial attitudes and behavior stretching back over decades. Considerable anecdotal information of this type is available, but there have been no systematic and reliable surveys of the Chinese population available until very recently. Even though the Baoding survey data are cross-sectional—they come from a single survey conducted in 1994, rather than the sort of repeated surveys over time that would be desirable—they do provide at least a partial way to investigate whether the attitudes associated with familial and filial obligations are being eroded or not.

In the analyses that follow we compare the responses we received from parents and their children, and for that purpose we restrict our attention to the 731 complete parent-grown child pairs in our Baoding data. As noted above, the concern here is primarily with the questions we asked about attitudes toward parents, the family, and filial obligations. Do young adults in Baoding fully honor and support obligations to their parents and the larger family unit, or do they resist and resent these obligations? If the combined impact of the demanding political system, economic development, and the traumatic pace of change has produced the expected weakening of family

obligations and filiality, we should find children expressing less support and enthusiasm for traditional family obligations than do their parents.

Results: Contemporary Support for Filial Obligations

The theoretical arguments discussed above, and the conventional wisdom to which they correspond, are contradicted by our survey evidence. The Baoding data yield a picture in which familial and filial obligations are robustly intact, with little sign that parents and children are separated by a “generation gap” when it comes to these attitudes. In Table 4.1 are arrayed the responses of parents and children to a number of different questions regarding obligations toward the family and toward the older generation. The data presented in Table 4.1 come from two sets of attitude questions included in both the parent and child questionnaires. In both sets, the respondent listened to a number of statements and then was asked to express his or her agreement or disagreement with the particular statement.⁹ What do the patterns in Table 4.1 reveal?

If one considers the overall degree of support for familial and filial obligations, and disregards for the moment the comparison of parents and children, it is not clear what one would conclude from the percentages in Table 4.1. As noted, we lack comparable figures from surveys in China in earlier eras, and thus we cannot say confidently how “traditional” or “modern” these figures are. In terms of a generalized conception of traditional Chinese family norms, the patterns revealed in Table 4.1 appear somewhat inconsistent. A very high percentage of both parents and children (95–96%) say that grown children should always be filial to their parents, no matter how their parents may have treated them when they were young (line 7). It is hard to imagine children raised in a Western family system responding in this fashion. Along similar lines, over 60% of both parents and children say that the older generation should have the final say in important family decisions, even if the children are adults (line 2).¹⁰ However, at the same time, fairly high percentages of both parents and children disagree with statements that family obligations should be primary, that happiness can come only through serving one’s family, and that obligations to parents should come before obligations to one’s children and career (lines 3–6). Without a comparison of parent and child responses, these figures do not yield a clear picture of how family-oriented or filial contemporary Baoding residents are.

Table 4.1 Parent and Child Views of Family Obligations (row %)

Question Content	Parent			Child				
	Agree	Don't Know	Disagree	Total Cases	Agree	Don't Know	Disagree	Total Cases
1. Marriage-continue family line***	46		54	716	21		79	728
2. Old generation has final say	64	4	32	723	61	4	35	731
3. Family obligation primary	34	9	57	720	36	13	51	729
4. Happiness depends on family	43	9	48	719	45	10	45	729
5. Child vs parent obligation***	46		54	712	31		69	723
6. Career vs parent obligation***	71	6	23	719	38	13	49	729
7. Always be filial	95	1	4	724	96	2	3	729

Statistical significance levels: * = $p < .05$; ** = $p < .01$; *** = $p < .001$

Item Wording:

1. The main purpose of marriage is to produce children to continue the family line.
2. The older generation should generally have the final say in making important family decisions, no matter how old their children are.
3. The obligations to the family should override any other obligations.
4. An individual can only find true happiness by contributing to the welfare of his/her family.
5. People should be more concerned about caring for their own children than about caring for their parents or parents-in-law.
6. Young people should be more concerned about their careers than about caring for their parents.
7. No matter how they were treated when they were young, once they are grown children should always be filial toward their parents.

Once we compare the responses of parents and children, things become clearer. In only one instance did parents express stronger support for traditional family obligations than children, as shown in line 1 of Table 4.1. Parents were significantly more likely than their children to agree with the statement that the main purpose of marriage is to continue the family line.¹¹ However, in all other instances either there was no significant difference between the pattern of responses of parents and their children, or children gave significantly more "traditional" responses. In particular, the differences between parents and children in responding to the questions in lines 2–4 and line 7 of Table 4.1 were too small to be statistically significant. In responding to the questions in lines 5 and 6, in contrast, children were significantly more likely to disagree with putting obligations to children or careers ahead of obligations toward parents. In other words, adult children of Baoding residents gave more support than did their parents to the notion that filial obligations should come first.

The conclusion that adult children are as likely, or more so, than their parents to express support for traditional family obligations is strengthened by the figures presented in Table 4.2. The format of this table is similar to the

preceding one, with parent and child response patterns presented side-by-side. However, the question format is somewhat different. Each respondent, parent or child, was presented with a hypothetical list of eight possible benefits of coresidence with the older generation, and then with a similar list of eight possible problems stemming from residence in such an extended family. As each hypothetical benefit was read out, the respondent was asked to say whether he or she thought this was an important benefit, a benefit, a small benefit, or not a benefit at all; correspondingly, they were asked to state whether they thought each hypothetical problem was a serious problem, a problem, a small problem, or not a problem at all. After going through both lists, each respondent was asked to give a summary judgment based upon his or her own experience—was coresidence with an older family member something that brings lots of benefits, some benefits, some problems, or lots of problems?¹²

Again we can begin by examining the overall pattern of responses shown in the table, ignoring for the moment the comparison of parents and children. In general one is struck by the fact that both parents and children tend to see the benefits of coresidence in an extended family as being numerous, and the problems as being fewer and less serious. This emphasis is conveyed most clearly in the final row of the table, where 82–92% of all respondents end up stressing the benefits of coresidence.¹³ Furthermore, the features stressed as the main benefits and the main problems by parents and their children are virtually identical. Both generations regard the primary benefit of coresidence as enabling each generation to provide assistance and support for the other (line 7 in panel 1 in Table 4.2); facilitating respect for the older generation and making family life more lively are also widely mentioned (lines 2 and 6 in panel 1). Somewhat surprisingly, the practical matters of gaining access to better housing by coresiding and economizing by pooling resources were the hypothetical benefits mentioned *least often* by both generations (see lines 5 and 8 in panel 1). In a parallel fashion, lack of privacy, noise and bother, and possible conflicts over life styles were seen as the major problems with coresidence by both generations (lines 1, 2, and 8 of panel 2). Very few members of either generation were willing to acknowledge that the burden of supporting aged parents or the restriction of residence choices for grown children were major problems with coresidence (lines 6 and 7 of panel 2).

Table 4.2 Parent and Child Views of Coresidence (row %)

Coresidence	Parent			Child		
	Benefit	Not a	Total	Benefit	Not a	Total
Benefits		Benefit	Cases	Benefit	Benefit	Cases
1. Keep family tradition*	67	33	718	69	33	725
2. Respect elderly***	78	23	719	84	17	727
3. Contact with grandchildren	68	32	718	67	33	727
4. Make better decisions	60	40	714	61	39	720
5. Economies of scale	42	48	715	45	55	724
6. Family life lively**	71	29	711	74	26	725
7. Mutual help between gens.***	84	17	716	89	12	726
8. Get better housing*	20	80	717	26	75	727
Coresidence	Problem	Not a	Total	Problem	Not a	Total
Problems	Problem	Problem	Cases	Problem	Problem	Cases
1. No privacy	51	49	724	52	48	727
2. Noise and bother	44	57	723	40	61	727
3. Disagreements-hh mgmnt	26	74	723	23	76	727
4. Disagreements-childrearing	23	77	718	24	77	715
5. Older gen. demand too much	19	80	720	19	82	727
6. Older gen. financial burden***	11	89	719	5	96	725
7. Younger gen. tied to home	14	86	720	12	88	727
8. Disputes on ideas	29	72	722	26	73	728
Overall Evaluation	Benefits	Problems	Total	Benefits	Problems	Total
of Coresidence***	82	17	697	92	9	712

Statistical significance levels: * = $p \leq .05$; ** = $p \leq .01$; *** = $p \leq .001$

Benefits:

1. Maintain family traditions; 2. respect elders; 3. a good way for grandparents and grandchildren to be together; 4. more people leads to better decisions; 5. by pooling money can save on expenses; 6. life is more interesting and days are lively; 7. mutual support, with each generation helping out as it is able to; 8. by living together, can obtain better housing conditions.

Problems:

1. Not convenient for privacy, too little space; 2. too much noise, bother each other; 3. get into conflicts over management of the household; 4. get into conflicts over how to care for the children; 5. older generation places too many demands on the younger; 6. having older people in the family is an economic burden; 7. younger people tied down, can't go off or move to a new place; 8. in morality, ideology, life styles, etc. there can be disagreements.

Overall Evaluation:

In general, do you think that having an older member in the family has more benefits or problems? Would you say that the way you have arranged it brings many benefits, some benefits, some problems, or many problems?

Shifting now to a comparison of parent and child responses, we can see that in every instance there is either only a small difference in the pattern of responses between the two generations, or a larger difference in which the child expresses *stronger* support for coresidence than does the parent. This overall pattern is then reflected in the summary evaluation in the last row of the table. Adult children are significantly *more likely* than their parents to perceive overall benefits, and significantly *less likely* to perceive problems,

from coresidence in an extended household. Taken together, the data from Tables 4.1 and 4.2 provide no evidence to support the notion that familial obligations have been eroded by time and social change in the PRC. Instead, these data indicate that the younger generation in Baoding is if anything more supportive of Confucian family obligations than are their parents.

The figures on perceived advantages and problems of coresidence with aging parents reported in Table 4.2 are directly contrary to both conventional wisdom and some previous research.¹⁴ Although there is a fair amount of evidence that sizable proportions of older Chinese in both the PRC and in Taiwan coreside with grown children, it is usually assumed that, for the younger generation at least, this situation represents a reluctant compromise rather than a desirable situation. The preference for extended family living is often seen as a relic from China's centuries as an agrarian society. Members of the younger generation, having escaped from parental dictation of their jobs and marriage choices, and having been exposed to foreign cultural influences in which independence and privacy are part of the very definition of modernity, increasingly would prefer to live on their own, rather than to share a home with their parents. However, through a combination of circumstances and pressures, including the difficulty of obtaining decent or perhaps any housing on their own, pleas from tradition-minded parents to remain in the nest, and the difficulty of coping with child care and other daily tasks by themselves, they end up agreeing to share a household with parents or parents-in-law. Given this compromise, they are likely to resent their situation and look for opportunities to establish a separate, nuclear household. Even some older Chinese, it is assumed, would prefer to live on their own if they could manage to do so. (Recall the figure cited in chapter 2—about 70% of Baoding parents agreed that parents whose health permitted should continue to live independently. In later chapters we will see evidence that if the parent is widowed, support for residential independence drops.) However, this conventional image is not borne out by our Baoding evidence. Both senior and junior generations appear to see substantially more benefits than problems in extended family living. The younger generation, rather than showing signs of chafing under this arrangement, expresses more support for extended households than do their parents.¹⁵

How can this unexpectedly strong support by grown children for filial obligations be explained? We can use our survey responses to investigate a number of potential explanations for this pattern of results. Perhaps our data are flawed, either in how we did the study or in the nature of Baoding itself,

in ways that yield a misleadingly “conservative” picture of youth attitudes toward family obligations. In order to investigate this possibility, we constructed two summary scales of different aspects of child attitudes toward family obligations, drawing on selected items used in Tables 4.1 and 4.2.¹⁶ In the remainder of this chapter extensive use will be made of the resulting scales, which I will refer to as Family Obligations and Coresidence Benefits Scales.¹⁷

One possible source of bias in our survey concerns the fact that children were often interviewed in sequence with a parent, and in the same place, with a parent sometimes present and listening in.¹⁸ One would expect children to express more filial attitudes if parents were present than if they were interviewed in private. In order to check this possibility, we can utilize information recorded by our interviewers at the close of each interview session. Interviewers were required to enter codes indicating for how much of the child interview any other family members were present and the extent to which the interviewer felt that any family member present had an inhibiting impact on the child's responses. Neither of these codes was significantly related to child scores on our Family Obligations or Coresidence Benefits Scales.¹⁹ Thus our inability to carry out all interviews in private does not seem to have produced a “traditional” bias in the expressed attitudes of children.

Another possible source of bias is that we sampled and interviewed only adult children living in Baoding, rather than all adult children, no matter where they lived. It is a commonplace of migration research that those who move are likely to be more independent and adventurous than those who stay put. Thus it is logical to worry about whether our selection procedure meant that we ended up with a subset of children who were more conservative and filial than the total universe of children of our parent respondents. We cannot investigate this possibility directly, since to do so would require having responses from children who have moved elsewhere. It was the great difficulty and expense of tracking down and interviewing such migrant children that led us in the first place to adopt a procedure of sampling only children residing in Baoding. However, we do have two ways to obtain partial confirmation (or its absence) of the idea that children close at hand are selectively more filial than children who live away from the parents. We asked whether child respondents had spent an extended period prior to age eighteen living away from the parents, and we also asked whether, after they had grown and married, they spent any period living away (prior to returning to Baoding again). These two measures were again not correlated with child scores on our two summary measures of family orientations.²⁰

Although this is not a definitive test, given the absence of data from children of Baoding parents who currently live elsewhere in China, the lack of associations here is not too surprising. Since China has long lacked a labor market and has emphasized bureaucratic assignment to jobs and state controls over migration, it seems unlikely that personal predispositions toward independence would be an important factor in determining which youths born in Baoding have remained in that city and which have migrated elsewhere. (The reader should also recall from chapter 2 that 88% of all the living children of our Baoding parent sample currently reside in Baoding. By drawing our child sample from adult offspring living in the same city, we were not selecting from an unusual minority of such children.)

One additional possible source of bias is that Baoding is in some fashion insulated from contemporary change influences. Some have suggested to us that Baoding has an unusually strong presence of the military, or an unusual dominance of traditional state-owned industry and a low level of employment in private enterprises, and that these characteristics might produce atypically conservative children. Once again, we lack comparable data from other cities, but we can make a partial test of these possibilities by comparing respondents who do and do not have ties to the military or to private versus state enterprises. It turns out that our respondents who had ties to the military were not any more filial, and those employed in private enterprises not any less, than were other respondents.²¹ None of these possibilities for bias can explain the pattern of results found in Tables 4.1 and 4.2.

We can examine further the possibility that there is something unusual about Baoding that makes it a very conservative place, relatively untouched by the forces and social changes that our initial discussion suggested should be eroding support for traditional family obligations. We do this by looking elsewhere in our survey data. We asked both parents and children questions about a number of other issues unrelated to familial and filial obligations. In Table 4.3 are displayed the responses of parents and children to most of the remaining attitude items contained in our questionnaires. As the reader can see, these questions cover a range of topics, including other family issues (marriage, premarital sex—lines 1–4), gender inequality (lines 5–7), socialist values (lines 8–10), individual versus societal interests (lines 11–13), and fatalism versus personal control (lines 14–16). The format of this table follows those that preceded it, with parent and child response patterns displayed side-by-side and percentaged by rows.

Detailed examination of the figures in Table 4.3 reveals a pattern quite different from Tables 4.1 and 4.2. In some cases (five out of sixteen) there are no significant differences in the overall patterns of parent and child responses. However, for all of the remaining items children express views that differ significantly from those of their parents *in a direction that coincides with the conventional wisdom*. In other words, children express less support for “traditional” attitudes (both those stemming from the Chinese tradition and the socialist tradition) than do their parents, and more support for liberal or even Western-origin attitudes. To be specific, children are significantly less likely than parents to feel that spouses from different backgrounds will have marriage problems (row 1), more likely to approve of premarital sex (row 2), more likely to feel that men and women can have happy lives without marrying (rows 3–4), less likely to favor male breadwinners and female child-rearers (rows 5 and 7), much less likely to prefer public to private property and comradeship to friendship (rows 8–9), less likely to feel that a single set of orthodox values is needed in order to avoid social chaos (line 13), and more cynical than parents, in the sense of being less likely to believe that good and bad deeds of individuals produce good and bad fates (lines 15–16).

Although we are limited by the kinds of questions included in our questionnaires, the evidence presented in Table 4.3 seems quite consistent. Here the younger generation in our Baoding survey often does *not* appear to share many of the same attitudes that their parents express (or even more “traditional” ones). Rather, in a number of realms the younger Baoding respondents express attitudes that differ from their parents in a nontraditional direction, sometimes quite dramatically so. The contrasts in two out of the three items intended to tap socialist attitudes are particularly striking (lines 8–10 in Table 4.3).²² Note, in particular, that a majority of parents still hold the traditional socialist view that comradeship is more laudable than friendship, whereas a majority of their children clearly reject this view and prefer friendship.²³ However, this overall pattern of more “liberal” or nontraditional responses of the young does not extend to the realm we considered first: family loyalty and filial obligations.

The conclusion that there is no general conservatism of Baoding youths is reinforced further by the figures presented in Table 4.4. The figures in this table derive not from attitude questions, but from a series of queries to both parents and children about cultural and media preferences. Each subject was

Table 4.3 Parent and Child Views on Other Attitudes (row%)

Question Content	Agree	Parent / Child		Total Cases
		Don't Know	Disagree	
1. Marriage requires homogeneity***	45/32	6/10	49/58	725/731
2. Premarital sex if engaged***	7/22	4/9	89/69	720/731
3. Single woman can be happy***	16/24	13/19	71/57	725/731
4. Single man can be happy***	14/22	13/19	73/59	724/731
5. Men work, women stay at home***	43/29	4/3	54/68	726/731
6. Men should get jobs	39/37	5/5	57/59	720/730
7. Mother main child rearer***	39/20	4/2	57/78	722/730
8. Public property > private***	76/56	14/21	10/23	716/728
9. Comradeship > friendship***	51/26	23/21	26/53	716/730
10. Mental labor > manual	65/62	11/10	24/28	717/729
11. Pursuit of individual happiness OK	94/96	2/1	4/3	721/728
12. Self-interest benefits society	51/49	14/13	36/37	704/731
13. Chaos if no orthodoxy***	88/75	7/9	5/16	718/729
14. Death decided by Heaven	26/30	5/5	69/65	716/731
15. Bring on own misfortune***	50/34	11/11	39/55	723/730
16. Good deeds get rewarded***	74/64	6/9	20/27	721/731

Statistical significance levels: * = $p \leq .05$; ** = $p \leq .01$; *** = $p \leq .001$

Item Wording:

1. When the husband and wife come from different social backgrounds, the marriage is bound to have problems.
2. If an unmarried couple love each other and plan to get married, they should be allowed to have sex before marriage.
3. A woman can have a full and happy life without marrying.
4. A man can have a full and happy life without marrying.
5. If a family is to be happy, it is better for the husband to work and achieve in his career and for the wife to take care of the family.
6. If job opportunities are scarce, men should get preference over women in getting jobs.
7. Mothers should take on more of the duties of child rearing than fathers do.
8. Public ownership of the means of production is superior to private ownership.
9. In interpersonal relationships, comradeship is a higher form than friendship.
10. Mental labor is more worthy than manual labor.
11. Every individual should have the right to pursue his/her own happiness.
12. When each person has freedom to pursue his/her own interests, society as a whole benefits.
13. Unless a single set of common values is enforced throughout society, there will be chaos.
14. When you die and whether you become rich and famous are decided by Heaven.
15. People who meet with misfortune have often brought it on themselves.
16. In the long run, people will be rewarded for the good things or punished for the bad things they have done.

presented with a list of five possible types of television programs, five types of movies, five types of music, and five kinds of books. The different examples we presented in each case were intended to cover a range of types that included traditional Chinese, contemporary Chinese popular, socialist, and more Western-oriented cultural streams.²⁴ We asked them which of these would be their first choice and then their second choice. Because each list of five types was only selective, rather than exhaustive of all the possibilities, we also allowed respondents to reply “none of the above.” However, our intent was to get respondents to select within the five possibilities and tell us which of those was most preferred and next most preferred, rather than to name their own individual preferences separate from our lists. The first and second choices named by parents are shown on the left side of Table 4.4 (now with column percentages), with the first and second choices of the children shown on the right hand side.

The figures in Table 4.4 reveal very substantial differences between parents and children in their cultural preferences, differences which once again are in line with the conventional view that a sharp generation gap has developed in urban China. For example, parents are much more likely than children to list traditional Chinese operas as a favored television program, but much less likely to mention programs made in Hong Kong or Taiwan or Western-made programs. Parents are also much more likely than children to prefer viewing films devoted to revolutionary history or past dynasties, and again less likely to favor films made in Hong Kong or Taiwan, or Western-made films. The figures for music and books in the lower two panels of Table 4.4 reinforce these conclusions, while revealing that it is contemporary Chinese popular as well as foreign cultural products that children favor more than parents.²⁵

On balance, the data in both Tables 4.3 and 4.4 support a view of parents as more traditional, in regard to both Chinese and socialist traditions, and less favorable to contemporary Chinese popular and Western-oriented culture and values.²⁶ As such, this evidence does not support a view that Baoding young people display support for traditional family obligations because they are generally very conservative. The reader should keep in mind as well the earlier figure that 87% of married child respondents reported that they dominated the mate choice process, rather than relying on parental arrangements. While we have no data from other locations to compare with those presented in Tables 4.3 and 4.4, it would appear that the younger generation in Baoding has developed substantially different views

Table 4.4 Parent and Child Cultural/Media Preferences (column %)

	Parent#1 Choice	Favorite TV Programs		
		Parent#2 Choice	Child #1 Choice	Child #2 Choice
1. Patriotic/rev.	29	29	26	22
2. Western-made	1	5	9	17
3. Current affairs	39	31	34	27
4. Traditional opera	18	25	3	5
5. HK/Taiwan-made	5	8	20	27
6. None of the above	8	2	9	2
Total N	671	449	688	503
		Favorite Movies		
1. HK/Taiwan-made	12	5	27	18
2. Rev. history	55	11	23	15
3. New Chinese films	8	21	23	28
4. Western-made	2	9	14	24
5. Past dynasties	11	50	6	15
6. None of the above	12	4	8	1
Total N	129	76	355	257
		Favorite Music		
1. Traditional opera	43	25	7	6
2. Western classical	7	9	17	6
3. Chinese pop	12	23	34	34
4. Rev. songs/opera	29	34	8	12
5. HK/Taiwan pop	4	9	31	40
6. None of the above	7	1	4	2
Total N	260	163	571	446
		Favorite Books		
1. Chinese classics	25	16	22	18
2. Cont.socialist nov.	11	26	16	20
3. Western lit-trans.	2	14	7	17
4. Detective stories	8	22	21	20
5. Romances	0	6	6	18
6. None of the above	54	17	28	8
Total N	265	90	510	271

and preferences from their parents, and that they are quite willing to make their own decisions and set their own course in life in some realms. There is clear evidence in these figures for a generation gap between parents and their children. However, as noted earlier, there does not appear to be any “spillover” into attitudes toward family obligations. The younger generation in Baoding appears to be quite “traditional” in their views toward family obligations, even as they display much less traditional attitudes in other realms.

Filial Attitudes and Filial Behavior

Another possible problem is that the kinds of child attitudes reported in Tables 4.1 and 4.2 might be relatively superficial and misleading. Perhaps the members of the younger generation we interviewed know that it is acceptable and even desirable to claim to be devoted to their families and properly filial, even if they are not. Could such a "social desirability response" be creating a false picture of how filial the younger generation is in Baoding? Perhaps we should refer to this tendency as an ethic of "family altruism," with children reporting more approval for obligations to parents than do parents, while parents report more approval for obligations to grown children (something not considered here) than do children themselves. This pattern of responses is not unique to China. Research in the United States indicates that in some instances elderly parents express less approval for the notion that they be supported by their children than do younger parents or the children themselves.²⁷ We need to consider here whether there is an exaggeration factor involved in child reports about their attitudes toward family obligations. Do they approve of filiality verbally while behaving in an unfilial fashion?

In our Baoding questionnaire there were a wide variety of questions about actual patterns of behavior of children toward their parents. We can use these to gauge whether Baoding children are exaggerating how dutiful and loyal they are toward their families and parents. Let us start by considering the actual pattern of coresidence from the perspective of the parents. As noted in chapter 2, currently 64% of our parent respondents live with an adult child, leaving just over one-third who do not have such a child living with them.²⁸ The figure for parents residing with a *married* child is 35%. There we also noted that surveys of coresidence in other locations in China and in Taiwan indicate that our Baoding figures are on the low side, although arguably "within the range" of other Chinese cultural settings.²⁹ Certainly the proportion of grown children who coreside with parents is much lower than the more than 92% of child respondents who emphasize the benefits of coresidence (as shown in Table 4.2). Does this gap between stated residential preferences and actual housing arrangements show that Baoding children are in reality less filial than they claim?

The discussion in chapter 2 indicated that "exaggerated filiality" is not a major factor behind this gap between residential preferences and behavior. There it was noted that most Baoding parents described family housing

decisions as being made jointly with the younger generation or dominated by the parents. In most instances when a grown child lives elsewhere the reasons are practical ones—for example, cramped housing of the parents, the ability of the child to obtain better housing elsewhere, and a desire to minimize commuting difficulties for both generations. These practical concerns may override the pleasures and conveniences of coresidence in the minds of both parents and their grown children. We detected no clear evidence that Baoding children were being hypocritical in their assessments of residential preferences, or that separate residence by such children was interpreted by parents as a sign of lack of filiality.

We also asked parents whether their children had been relatively obedient or disobedient when growing up, and whether they were relatively filial or unfilial toward them today. For every parent, these questions were asked about each specific grown child, and the overall percentages varied somewhat, but generally 95–96% of all parents described each child as either obedient or very obedient and filial or very filial. We also asked parents about how satisfied they were with various aspects of their relationships with grown children, and generally they reported quite high levels of satisfaction, as noted in chapter 2. To recapitulate, about 96% reported they were satisfied or very satisfied with the amount of emotional support they get from their children, over 90% reported that their adult children ask for their advice and listen to their opinions, and for those parents who coresided with a grown child, 88% reported they were satisfied or very satisfied with how chores are divided in the family, and about 90% claimed they were satisfied or very satisfied with the amount of say they have in family decisions.³⁰ Only 6% of our parent respondents felt they did not get sufficient respect from their grown children, and a counterbalancing 7% reported that they got too much respect!³¹ Similarly only 1–4% of our parent respondents reported that they had needs for physical care, help with household chores, financial assistance, or help with the provision of goods that were not currently being met.³² (For more detail on the support grown children provide to their parents, consult chapters five to eight.)

In general, then, parents present a picture of their current family life in which they are fairly or very satisfied with their situation and feel they are being treated well by their grown children—both those who live with them and those who do not. Figures such as these do not support the idea that there is a significant gap between the filial attitudes children express and how they actually treat their parents.³³ Perhaps children like to put the best

interpretation possible on reports of their attitudes toward parents and family, but even if we discount these reports somewhat or rely primarily on how parents see things, we would have to conclude that the younger generation in Baoding is fulfilling traditional family obligations quite well.

Interpretation and Further Analysis

We have now considered and rejected a variety of possible reasons to discount our finding that the younger generation in Baoding is as much, or more, supportive of traditional family loyalties and filial obligations as the older generation. It appears that we can have some confidence in this finding, rather than suspecting that it is a misleading conclusion produced by biases in our data. Is this pattern really so surprising, however? Earlier we noted that some survey results in individualistic America also display a pattern of grown children expressing more approval of obligations toward parents than do parents themselves, a pattern sometimes referred to as "familial altruism." Why did we expect it to be otherwise in China?

The answer to this question is that there is a "conventional wisdom" about the weakening of filial obligations in post-1949 China, as noted at the outset of this chapter.³⁴ That conventional wisdom is based on distinctive features of the Chinese experience. America may be an individualist society, but it is also a well-institutionalized society in which the ties between generations have not been challenged by the kinds of dramatic economic, political, and cultural changes and direct challenges to parental authority that urban Chinese have lived through. But it is now apparent that this conventional wisdom is wrong. Chinese have a more extensive and demanding set of obligations toward their elders than exists in Western societies, and there are no signs in our data that those obligations are weakening.

We do not have a convincing explanation yet for why the younger generation remains so filial and family-oriented, in the face of powerful forces expected to erode such orientations. In the remaining pages I present a variety of considerations that may help explain the unexpected support for traditional family obligations among the younger generation in Baoding. Once again we are hampered in our efforts to explain these findings by the absence of comparable surveys in other places and in earlier time periods, surveys that might allow us to test some plausible explanations for the robustness of family obligations in Baoding. We can at least discuss some

policies and practices in the PRC and some experiences of our Baoding respondents that may help explain this pattern of findings.

First, it should be noted that there are a number of historical and structural forces not discussed earlier that tend to reinforce, rather than erode, intergenerational and family obligations. As noted in chapter 1, in both the 1950 and 1980 versions of the Marriage Law of the People's Republic of China, children are given the legal obligation to support their aging parents. If necessary this obligation can be enforced through mandatory deductions from the wages of an unfilial child, although this sanction is very rarely required. Another consideration is the very sharp housing shortage that has existed in urban China for much of the post-1949 period. National statistics reveal that the per capita living space available to China's urban residents declined by something like 20% between the early 1950s and 1978.³⁵ During the Mao era, Stalinist economic priorities were followed, with expenditure on housing construction considered an "unproductive" investment. As a result, existing housing stocks deteriorated while the urban population grew, and very little new housing was built. Since 1978 there has been a major effort to build new housing and relieve this shortage, but the urban housing supply in China is still tight. This shortage has made it difficult for many young urban adults to secure housing on their own, even after they have married. Even if they could secure housing on their own, the propensity for scarce housing to be distributed according to criteria such as rank and seniority during the socialist era means that young people could often obtain better housing with their parents than they could on their own, even if one takes into account the resulting larger size of the family. As a consequence, the tendency of the younger generation to live in an extended family with their parents was reinforced.³⁶

This tendency for family bonds to remain close has been reinforced also by the practice of bureaucratic assignment to jobs and the absence of a labor market in urban China for much of the post-1949 period. Even in the mid-1990s, a labor market was only in the process of reemerging, with most work assignments still depending more upon bureaucratic decisions than market forces. Of course, if decisions about where young people are assigned to work are made by bureaucrats rather than by the young people themselves, this might lead to many youths being sent far away. Indeed, in some periods, and particularly during the campaign to send urban educated youths to the countryside in the decade after 1968, many urban youths were forced to leave the cities in which they had grown up.³⁷ However, this sort of

campaign was the exception, and almost all youths sent to the countryside were able to return to their cities of origin after 1979. In general, in a city such as Baoding, bureaucrats in the Labor Bureau and other agencies in charge of work assignments only had responsibility for work organizations within the city.³⁸ As a consequence, youths had very little ability to go off and work elsewhere, and most ended up living and working in the same city with their parents.

We can gain some idea of the strength of this tendency by looking again at figures on the locations of the adult children of our Baoding parents. Fully 78% of sampled Baoding parents had no grown children residing outside of Baoding, and, overall, 88% of all their adult children resided in Baoding in 1994, as noted earlier. While I do not have tabulated figures at hand for other societies and populations, these figures seem an extraordinary testament to intergenerational *immobility* in a residential sense.³⁹ During a period from the Cultural Revolution until at least the early 1980s, one additional practice reinforced the ties between generations in urban China even more strongly. Under the *dinqti* system, a parent could retire early from work and arrange to have one child given a job in the work organization from which he or she was retiring, as noted in chapter 3.⁴⁰ Youths who obtained jobs in this fashion would end up tied to parents by work unit membership as well as by housing.⁴¹

An additional factor that may contribute to the high level of support for filial and family obligations in contemporary Baoding is the “rehabilitation” of Confucius and Confucianism since 1978, already noted in chapter 1. During the Mao era there were periodic efforts to criticize as feudal and pernicious the ideas and doctrines derived from Confucius, which had formed the basis of China’s dominant orthodoxy for centuries. By implication, at least, support for filial piety and other core values of Confucianism was discouraged, and in this atmosphere parents might feel reluctant or afraid to stress age-old messages and justifications for family loyalty and subordination to family elders. However, during the reform era this hostility toward Confucian ideas has been toned down considerably, and there are even officially promoted discussions of the extent to which family loyalties and filial obligations can contribute to China’s economic development.⁴² The legitimacy crisis faced by the CCP after the death of Mao, and the general loss of faith in socialism and in the ideology of Marxism-Leninism and in the thought of Mao Zedong, have also encouraged a pursuit of alternative ideologies, with a revived or modified

Confucianism the focus of considerable discussion and interest. These developments mean that parents no longer have to feel embarrassed or afraid to stress traditional family values, and this newly confident espousal of filial piety and related concepts may to some extent counteract more individualistic ideas flowing into China from the West.

A final important feature of urban life in contemporary China that may reinforce the tendency of young people to accept traditional family values involves the scarcities and arbitrariness produced by post-1949 China's highly bureaucratic system. Individuals over the years have not been able to simply trust the system to provide for their needs and protect them. In order to survive it was necessary to cultivate personal ties and a network of people with whom one could exchange favors and who would provide protection in the face of political threats. Reliance on such *guanxi* networks is, of course, a long-standing feature of Chinese social life, but the extreme bureaucratization and political uncertainties of recent decades have accentuated this tendency.⁴³ *Guanxi* networks can be constructed on the basis of friendship, common school ties, and many other grounds, but in general one's family is the most secure and readily available basis for building ties with outsiders. Furthermore, during times of particular political threat, such as during the Cultural Revolution decade, other ties may become less reliable or more dangerous, reinforcing the tendency for individuals to turn to family members for help and assistance. Even though the levels of bureaucratic domination and political insecurity have declined since Mao's death, the tendency to rely primarily on family ties and assistance remains strong.

I am suggesting, then, that the discussion that began this chapter was one-sided. While in certain respects the post-1949 changes in China removed power from parents and families and made individuals heavily dependent upon the bureaucratic state, in other respects something quite different resulted. Even though formally the jobs and residences of young people depended upon the decisions of bureaucrats rather than parents, in most cases those decisions placed young adults close at hand to their parents, and parents and other family members remained vital sources of assistance in coping with the system and obtaining access to the necessities in life. This need to rely on families in many ways was sustained throughout the Mao era without much open cultural approval and support, but in the reform era the return to favor of Confucian ideas has provided renewed cultural legitimacy for this reliance.

We can examine the consequences of this sustained reliance on parents in the life experiences of the children in our Baoding survey. In 1994, 44% of the adult children we interviewed lived with a parent or parents, and some of the remainder lived with parents-in-law, rather than on their own. If we consider coresidence in a longer-term perspective, the figure is considerably higher. About 74% of all of the married children we interviewed had lived with one or the other set of parents right after they married, rather than on their own. It might also be noted that 52% of all adult children interviewed said they relied on their families somewhat or totally in gaining their present housing. Housing is by no means the only realm in which young Baoding residents have relied on and continue to rely on their families. About 25% of Baoding children reported that their families provided some or a great deal of help in getting them into the schools they attended; 55% said that their families provided some or a great deal of help in getting their first job, and another 45% of those who subsequently changed jobs relied on their families to some extent in making the shift. Furthermore, 69% reported having received financial assistance from their families at some point, with 19% currently receiving such assistance; 65% had received help from parents with domestic chores in the past, with 26% receiving such help currently; and 86% of child respondents with their own children had received some family assistance with childcare in the past, with 44% receiving such assistance currently. These figures do not exhaust the variety of ways in which adult children may continue to depend upon their parents. For example, to finance and organize a wedding, to gain access to good quality medical care, or to help purchase a scarce item, young people are quite likely to turn to their families in general, and their parents in particular, even if they live in a separate household.

These various figures are the other side of the coin we considered earlier, in which parents reported relying on their children in multiple ways. Here we see that the contemporary situation can best be described *not* as one generation depending upon the other, but as a high level of mutual interdependence existing between the generations in contemporary Baoding families. The reader will recall from Table 4.2 that it was the ability of each generation to provide different kinds of assistance and support to the other that was seen by both parents and children as the prime benefit of coresidence. Given this situation, grown children are likely to see parents more as a resource than a burden or obligation. In chapter 8 the consequences of this interdependence between the generations will be explored in greater depth. In this

context the fact that most adult children express approval of family obligations and stress the benefits rather than the problems of coresidence no longer seems so surprising.

Table 4.5 Child Family Obligations Scale Correlations and Regressions

Predictor Variables	Bivariate Correlation	Beta Coefficient (model 1)	Beta Coefficient (model 2)
1. Child female	-0.03	-0.04	-0.01
2. Child's age	0.09*	0	-0.05
3. Child is married	0.11**	0.07	-0.01
4. Child educational level	-0.22***	-0.18***	-0.13**
5. Child political status	-0.2***	-0.15***	-0.18***
6. Child born in Baoding	0.08*	0.04	0.04
7. Child's current income	0	-0.01	0.03
8. Child's occupational status	-0.09*	0.01	0.01
9. Child coresides with parent	-0.06	0.03	-0.01
10. Child marriage arranged	0.07		-0.04
11. Parent has helped—child care	.08*		0.02
12. Past dependence on parent	0.11**		0.11**
13. Child finances from parent	-0.03		0.02
14. Child's own <i>guanxi</i>	-0.02		-0.02
15. Parent's current income	-0.14***		-0.07
16. P/C attitude differences	-0.09*		-0.04
17. C perceive generation gap	-0.13***		-0.11**
18. C traditional gender attitudes	0.27***		0.22***
19. P family obligation scale	0.23***		0.2***
Adjusted R2		0.07	0.2

Statistical significance levels: * = $p \leq .05$; ** = $p \leq .01$; *** = $p \leq .001$

In an effort to examine the arguments just presented, two final tables are presented. In Tables 4.5 and 4.6 I present correlation and regression analyses of a variety of background characteristics of children and measures of their experiences, as these relate to our two summary scales, which measure the child's emphasis on Family Obligations and Coresidence Benefits. In each table I include a variety of predictor variables: basic background characteristics of the child (rows 1–9), a variety of measures of past or present dependence on the parents versus independence (rows 10–14), the parent's current income level (row 15), objective and subjective measures of the generation gap between parent and child in other attitude realms (rows 16–17),⁴⁴ a measure of the child's traditionalism in another area (gender attitudes—row 18), and a measure of how much stress the parent places on that particular aspect of family obligations (row 19).⁴⁵ The bivariate corre-

lations of each measure with a particular family scale, without taking into account the influence of other factors, are given in the first column of figures. The remaining two columns contain two different models designed to predict scores on the family scale in question. The middle column of figures includes only the basic demographic or background variables, and the final column includes all the other measures indicated. The beta coefficients shown indicate the relative influence of each predictor variable on the summary family scale, once the effect of all the other predictors in the model has been taken out or controlled for. At the bottom of these two final columns is listed the adjusted R^2 indicating how much of the variation in our summary scale the predictors in the model, taken together, have been able to explain. Statistical significance levels of the correlations and beta coefficients have been indicated, where appropriate.

Looking first at Table 4.5, how can we explain the variation among our child respondents in support for general family obligations? In our most complete model, about 20% of the variation in Family Obligations Scale scores is explained. Several predictors that appear important at the bivariate level drop out of the picture once other factors are controlled in regression analysis. Among the remaining factors, however, it is important to note that well-educated individuals, and those who are members of the Chinese Communist Party, are significantly less likely than other respondents to express support for traditional family obligations. No other basic background factors retain a significant independent influence on our measure of general family obligations. In the lower half of the table, we can see that a summary measure of past reliance on parental help is significantly associated with expressed support for family obligations.⁴⁶ The coefficient is not very large, but it does provide some support for the argument in the last few pages that a web of actual interdependency between generations helps to sustain traditional family obligations. We also can see that children who perceive that their ideas and lifestyles are very different from their parents are less likely than others to express support for family obligations, while children who hold traditional attitudes in other realms or whose parents express strong support for family obligations are significantly more likely than others to express support for such obligations also.

Table 4.6 presents comparable statistics for our Coresidence Benefits Scale. Note that row 19 in the table is now the comparable parent summary scale of expressed emphasis on the benefits of coresidence in an extended household, rather than the parent's Family Obligations Scale score; otherwise

the predictors included are identical. We are somewhat less successful than in the previous table in explaining variation among child respondents in support for coresidence—the adjusted R^2 for our fullest model says we have only succeeded in explaining about 15% of the variation in our summary scale. In this case only one of our basic background factors is significantly associated with expressed support for coresidence, and that factor is not too surprising. It turns out that children who currently live with a parent are more likely than others to stress the benefits of coresidence. However, what is most notable about the actual coresidence coefficients (in row 9 of Table 4.6) is how modest they are, and that is an important finding in its own right. Whether a grown child lives together with parent(s) or not is only very weakly related to that child's appreciation of the benefits versus the costs of such coresidence. The constraints and needs faced by the child and by the parents are more likely to shape where the child lives than his or her personal preferences.⁴⁷

Table 4.6 Child Coresidence Benefits Scale Correlations and Regressions

Predictor Variables:	Bivariate Correlation	Beta Coefficient (model 1)	Beta Coefficient (model 2)
1. Child female	-0.03	0	0.01
2. Child's age	0.02	0.02	-0.07
3. Child is married	0.03	0.13**	0.05
4. Child educational level	-0.03	0	0.01
5. Child political status	-0.03	-0.03	-0.05
6. Child born in Baoding	0.02	0.04	0.04
7. Child's current income	0.01	0.01	0.03
8. Child's occupational status	-0.01	0	0.02
9. Child coresides with parent	0.11**	0.21***	0.12**
10. Child marriage arranged	0.14***		0.08
11. Parent has helped—child care	0.09*		0.08*
12. Past dependence on parent	0.11**		0.04
13. Child finances from parent	0.15***		0.09*
14. Child's own <i>guanxi</i>	0.09*		0.08*
15. Parent's current income	-0.03		-0.09*
16. P/C attitude differences	-0.02		-0.02
17. C perceive generation gap	-0.22***		-0.24***
18. C traditional gender attitudes	0.01		0.03
19. P coresidence benefit scale	0.26***		0.16***
Adjusted R2		0.02	0.15

Statistical significance levels: * = $p \leq .05$; ** = $p \leq .01$; *** = $p \leq .001$

Returning to the figures in Table 4.6, some of the measures of dependence on the parents included in the final model are also important. Both children who have received past help with childcare from parents and who have received financial help from the parents are significantly more likely than others to stress the benefits of coresidence. Curiously, an item in which the child told us how much independent *guanxi* he or she has, a measure which we expected to reflect independence from the parents, has a statistically significant *positive* association with our Coresidence Benefits Scale scores. Contrary to our expectations, adult children who feel they can mobilize their own *guanxi* networks are significantly *more* likely than others to stress the benefits of coresidence. We can also see that respondents whose parents had low incomes were significantly less likely than others to stress the benefits of coresidence. Finally, the strongest coefficients in the table duplicate patterns found in Table 4.5. Respondents who perceive lots of differences in their and their parents' ideas and life styles are significantly less likely than others to stress the benefits of coresidence, while those whose parents voice strong support for coresidence are significantly more likely than others to echo that support. It is interesting to note that in both Tables 4.5 and 4.6 it is the child's subjective perception of a generation gap (row 17), rather than our more objective measure of attitude differences between parent and child (row 16), that is significantly related to weaker support for traditional family obligations.

In general these figures present a mixed picture. We find some support for the notion that past and present reliance on parents and family in multiple ways helps to sustain a sense of family obligations, and thus to explain the strong support by grown children for those obligations that was evident in Tables 4.1 and 4.2. (See the related discussion in chapter 8 in the present volume.) However, that is not the entire message of these figures, and on balance we do not see a picture in which these attitudes are likely to be immune to the kinds of corrosive forces discussed at the outset of this chapter. Higher education, party membership, perceptions of a generation gap, the opportunity not to coreside—a number of factors may weaken support for traditional family obligations. Social changes in Baoding to date have not produced a younger generation of autonomous individualists, but rather people whose life experiences more often than not have convinced them of the necessity and benefits of fulfilling family obligations. It is also worth noting that 51% of child respondents say that it is either very likely or somewhat likely that they themselves will live in an extended household

with grown children in the future. If this expectation were to become reality, it would produce a level of coresidence not far different from the situation at the time of our survey (keeping in mind that about 50% of our Baoding parents over age 60 currently live with one or more grown children, as reported in Chapter 2).⁴⁸

It is by no means obvious that the current situation will continue to exist in the future. The discussion at the outset of this chapter of the forces that may weaken family obligations may not have been wrong, but simply premature. To date other powerful considerations have counterbalanced the forces that might undermine filiality and have helped sustain a strong sense of family obligations in Baoding. Whether or not these counterbalancing forces will continue to be important depends on the nature of social change in the future. Such change could enable young people to make their way in life without relying so heavily on their parents and families. Baoding young people may not be autonomous individualists of the type honored in Western societies, but in the future they could become at least somewhat more so.⁴⁹

NOTES

¹ Quotation from Charles Madge, "The Relevance of Family Patterns in the Process of Modernization in East Asia," in *Social Organization and the Applications of Anthropology*, ed. Robert J. Smith (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1974), 164.

² These differences have been widened as a result of the industrial revolution occurring first in Western societies, but even in the preindustrial era they were clearly visible. Even though aging parents in the preindustrial West were more likely to live with grown children than they are today, the likelihood of residential and psychological independence of grown children was greater than in Imperial China. See the discussion in John Hajnal, "Two Kinds of Preindustrial Household Formation Systems," *Population and Development Review* 8 (1982): 449–94; Alan MacFarlane, *Marriage and Love in England: Modes of Reproduction, 1300–1840* (New York: Basil Blackwell, 1986). On the decline in intergenerational coresidence in American society over time, see Steven Ruggles, "The Transformation of American Family Structure," *American Historical Review* 99 (1994): 103–28.

³ In rural China families remained less dependent upon the bureaucratic state throughout the Mao era, and more reliant on their own internal cooperation. The contrast is discussed further in my paper, "The Social Roots of China's Economic Development," *The China Quarterly* 144 (1995): 999–1019. Since the threats to family solidarity and obligations were most pronounced in urban China, my focus in subsequent pages is on Chinese families in cities.

⁴ The classic account of these changes is William J. Goode, *World Revolution and Family Patterns* (New York: The Free Press, 1963).

⁵ See, for example, Martin K. Whyte, "Changes in Mate Choice in Chengdu," in *Chinese Society on the Eve of Tiananmen*, ed. D. Davis and E. Vogel (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990).

⁶ See the comparison of survey data collected in Taipei, Taiwan, in 1963 and again in 1991, as reported in Robert M. Marsh, *The Great Transformation* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1996), chapter 6.

⁷ A recent popular sociology book published in China emphasizes this perspective. See Zhang Yongjie and Cheng Yuanzhong, *Di Sidai Ren*, (The Fourth Generation) (Beijing: Eastern Publishing House, 1988.) The four generations with such different formative experiences and personal characters, as described in this work, are those who came of age prior to 1949, those who matured during the 1950s and early 1960s, those who came of age during the Cultural Revolution decade, and those who have achieved maturity since 1978.

⁸ See, for example, Jianying Zha, *China Pop* (New York: The New Press, 1995); Nicholas Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn, *China Wakes* (New York: Times Books, 1994); Geremie Barmé and Linda Jaivin, eds., *New Ghosts, Old Dreams: Chinese Rebel Voices* (New York: Times Books, 1992).

⁹ For complex reasons, the closed-ended responses read out to respondents were different in the two sections; in the first section the alternatives given were "strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree." In the subsequent set of attitude statements, the alternatives read out were "agree or disagree," with a separate response category provided

for “don’t know,” “neutral,” and other intermediate responses. For the sake of simplicity, in Table 4.1 the categories “agree” and “strongly agree” are combined, as are categories “disagree” and “strongly disagree.”

¹⁰ In the conceptual scheme of William Goode, the pattern of responses to this particular question would be considered quite “unconjugal,” to say the least.

¹¹ For the sake of simplicity, the response categories “important benefit” and “benefit” are combined under the label “benefit,” and “small benefit” and “not a benefit” under the label “not a benefit.” Similarly, in regard to coresidence problems, the categories “serious problem” and “problem” are combined under the label “problem,” and the categories “small problem” and “not a problem” under the label “not a problem.” In this and subsequent tables, a paired sample t-test was used to assess statistical significance.

¹² In the final row of Table 4.2, the response categories “lots of benefits” and “some benefits” are combined under the label “benefits,” and the response categories “some problems” and “lots of problems” under the label “problems.”

¹³ For comparison purposes, we note that surveys in the United States show much lower support for coresidence of the generations, as expected. Over the years the General Social Survey (conducted nationally in the U.S. with annual samples of about 1500 adults) asked the following question: “As you know, many older people share a home with their grown children. Do you think this is generally a good idea or a bad idea?” From the 1973 to 1991 the average response was “it depends,” with as many or more respondents saying it was a bad idea as said it was a good idea. See Duane Alwin, “Coresidence Beliefs in American Society—1973 to 1991,” *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 58 (1996): 393–403.

¹⁴ See the chapter on China in Goode, *World Revolution and Family Patterns*. For a recent review of evidence relating to preferences for nuclear versus extended family residence in urban China, see Jonathan Unger, “Urban Families in the Eighties: An Analysis of Chinese Surveys,” in *Chinese Families in the Post-Mao Era*, ed. Deborah Davis and Stevan Harrell (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).

¹⁵ It is not entirely clear how to reconcile the Baoding findings with the figures reported by Jonathan Unger from surveys in other cities during the 1980s (in “Urban Families in the Eighties,” p. 35) that 63–88% of young unmarried adults would prefer to live separately after they marry, rather than with either set of parents. It could be that as urban youths grow older and marry they develop a greater appreciation of the benefits of coresidence with parents. However, the Baoding data include both unmarried and married adult children, and figures to be presented later (in Table 4.6) show that there is very little relationship between the child’s age or marital status and their responses to our questions about the benefits of coresidence. A more likely explanation of the difference in findings between those studies and the Baoding survey is simply the format of the questions asked. In the Baoding surveys we asked about the benefits versus the problems of coresidence; the studies cited by Unger appear to have been probing the perceived benefits of coresidence versus separate residence. Perhaps young urbanites feel that coresidence has more benefits than problems but would still prefer more often than not to live on their own. Studies in Japan show young people expressing as much approval as

older people for coresidence of the elderly with grown children, and much higher levels of such approval than in Western societies. See the figures presented in Hiroshi Kawabe and Hiroaki Shimizu, "Japanese Perceptions of the Family and Living Arrangements: The Trend toward Nuclearization," in *Tradition and Change in the Asian Family*, ed. Lee-Jay Cho and Moto Yada (Honolulu: East-West Center, 1994).

¹⁶ The child questionnaire versions of the first four items listed in Table 4.1 were used to construct a scale of familial and filial obligations. Then child versions of the first four items and then items 6 and 7 listed in the coresidence benefits portion of Table 4.2, plus the overall evaluation item listed at the bottom of that table, were used to construct a summary scale of the perceived benefits of coresidence with a parent or parents. We reversed the direction of some items as needed so that in all cases a high score indicated more "traditional" attitudes. We then computed standardized scores (Z scores) for each separate item and then computed a mean score of all the included items. The Cronbach alpha coefficient for the reliability of the Family Obligations Scale was a marginally satisfactory $\alpha=0.43$; for the Coresidence Benefits Scale the value of alpha was much better, $\alpha=0.75$.

¹⁷ The Family Obligations Scale has a mean value of 0, a standard deviation of 0.60, and minimum and maximum values of -1.25 and 1.52 (N=731). The Coresidence Benefits Scale has a mean of 0, a standard deviation of 0.64, and minimum and maximum values of -2.04 and 1.29 (N=728).

¹⁸ In our research design, the adult children of selected parents were enumerated in advance of interviewing the parent, and the randomly selected child was contacted and instructed to turn up—usually at the parent's home—to be interviewed. This procedure was adopted to cope with the difficulty of locating and tracking down children all over the city. Obviously the use of this procedure required extensive cooperation from Baoding city and work unit authorities, a level of cooperation for which we are very grateful. However, this procedure made it difficult to avoid having other family members listening in while one of their number was being interviewed, even though we instructed our interviewers to try to obtain interviewing privacy.

¹⁹ To be specific, the association between our measure of the presence of others during the child interview (which ranged from 0=not at all, to 3=most of the time; in 32% of the interviews some other person was present most of the time) and the Family Obligations Scale was $\text{Tau}=0.05$ and with the Coresidence Benefits Scale it was $\text{Tau}=0.00$; for the measure of the inhibiting effect of others present (which was a dichotomy, with 0=others not present or had no apparent influence and 1=some or much influence, with 10% of our child interviews given a score of 1), the corresponding correlations were $r=0.05$ and -0.03 . None of these associations was statistically significant.

²⁰ To be specific, the correlation between whether the child had lived apart from the parents prior to age eighteen (20% had done so) and the Family Obligation Scale was $r=-0.04$ and with the Coresidence Benefit Scale it was $r=0.02$; the correlations between our measure of having spent some period in adulthood living away from Baoding (the situation in 6% of all cases) were -0.01 and -0.06 , respectively. None of these correlations was statistically significant.

²¹ A measure of whether the child had spent any time in military service (8% had done so) correlated at the level of $r=0.00$ with the Family Obligations Scale and $r=0.04$ with the Coresidence Benefits Scale. An alternative measure of whether either the child had served in the military or the parent reported the military as either the current or longest employer (11% of our cases) was correlated at 0.01 and -0.02 with our two scales of filial obligations. A measure of whether the child was either self-employed or employed in a private enterprise (as a total of 3.4% of our paired children were) was correlated at 0.00 and 0.02 with the two scales. Once again, none of these correlations was statistically significant.

²² Responses to the third of these items, concerning the value of mental versus manual labor, do not differ significantly between parent and child (line 10), with parents very slightly more likely to agree that mental labor is more valuable. This belief obviously contradicts the socialist claim that manual labor is more valuable. In this case traditional Chinese values, in viewing mental labor as more valuable than manual, are directly contrary to socialist values. Given our general claim that parents are more approving than children of both Chinese and socialist traditions, with this item these contradictory influences may wash out any significant contrast with children.

²³ For the officially promoted conception of comradeship in China, see the discussion in Ezra Vogel, "From Friendship to Comradeship: The Change in Personal Relations in Communist China," *The China Quarterly* 21 (1965): 46–60.

²⁴ This format was based on an argument that in reform era China there are three distinct cultural systems that are in active competition for attention and loyalty among the Chinese population: elements deriving from China's pre-1949 culture, elements deriving from Marxism-Leninism and socialism, and elements deriving from the West. See the discussion in my article, "Evolutionary Changes in Chinese Culture," in *Asian-Pacific Report*, ed. Charles Morrison and Robert Demberger (Honolulu: East-West Center, 1989).

²⁵ The figures in this table reveal another pattern, as shown in the figures for the number of responses received. Some parents had more difficulty than their grown children answering these questions, with fairly large numbers indicating that they did not engage in any of the cultural activities listed.

²⁶ Contemporary Chinese popular culture is an amalgam that reflects attempts to appeal to popular tastes (rather than to shape those tastes, as in the socialist realist era) and also reflects influences from Hong Kong and Taiwan and from the West. See the account in Zha, *China Pop*.

²⁷ See, for example, John Logan and Glenna Spitze, "Self-Interest and Altruism in Intergenerational Relations," *Demography* 32 (1995): 353–64.

²⁸ Some of the remaining one-third of parents who do not live with an adult child live with one or more children under the age of 18.

²⁹ See the review of a large number of studies reported in John Logan, Fuqin Bian, and Yanjie Bian, "Tradition and Change in the Urban Chinese Family," Table 1. The detailed figures provided by Logan, Bian, and Bian are cited in chapter 2 of the present volume.

³⁰ In questions regarding relative satisfaction, the response categories used were very satisfied, satisfied, unsatisfied, and very unsatisfied. Questions regarding frequency had response categories of always or often, sometimes, seldom or occasionally, or never. The percentages in the text are a sum of the first two categories in each case. The figures given here differ slightly from those in chapter 2 because they are based only on the 731 parents for whom a grown child was also interviewed, not the full sample of 1002 parents.

³¹ We also asked whether respondents felt that older people got less respect in society at large than they did twenty years earlier. Overall about 65% of the parents (and 59% of the children interviewed) reported that older people got less or much less respect today. But in their relations with their own children, most parents have no such complaint.

³² The proportion of parents who reported currently receiving these four kinds of assistance was, respectively, 4%, 33%, 26%, and 35%. Most of the remainder, in other words, said they did not currently need these types of assistance. It should be noted, however, that others besides grown children might be providing these various types of assistance. We did inquire about who was providing the assistance, but for present purposes I will not present more detailed figures here, since I am mainly interested in the extent to which parents report having unmet needs that grown children are ignoring. The answer is that very few parents report being in this situation.

³³ We also asked children to report on many of these same aspects of intergenerational relations. I do not include the corresponding figures from child reports here because my interest is in conveying how matters look to the parents. However, in general and not surprisingly, children report high levels of filial behavior as well as attitudes. There are some discrepancies in the direction of parents reporting slightly less filiality than their children claim—for example, more children report giving parents financial assistance, and in larger sums, than parents report (see the discussion in chapter 5). Still, this variation is within the context of general agreement that children are behaving quite filially toward their parents.

³⁴ This is not simply the conventional wisdom of journalists and analysts from Western countries, but of most Chinese themselves.

³⁵ See the discussion in Martin King Whyte and William L. Parish, *Urban Life in Contemporary China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984).

³⁶ My emphasis on the multiple influences in the PRC that bind grown children to parents is hardly novel. See earlier analysis along similar lines in Deborah Davis-Friedmann, *Long Lives: Chinese Elderly and the Communist Revolution* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983); Whyte and Parish, *Urban Life in Contemporary China*; and Unger, "Urban Families in the Eighties."

³⁷ An estimated seventeen to eighteen million urban youths were sent to the countryside nationwide during the years 1968–78. See the discussion in Thomas Bernstein, *Up to the Mountains, Down to the Villages* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977). That campaign is the primary reason for the unusually high number of child respondents (20%) who had spent an extended period living apart from their parents before the age of eighteen, as noted earlier (in footnote 20).

³⁸ Youths who graduate from the university may be subject to a wider geographical range of job assignment possibilities, particularly if it is a provincial or national-level university, but in all periods only a small percentage of youths have received this much education. Most urban youths in recent decades complete only lower or upper middle school and are thus subject to local job assignments (if they are assigned jobs at all).

³⁹ A recent survey study of Shanghai and Tianjin found that only 10% of non-coresident children lived outside the city in which the parents lived (N=1886). See Fuqin Bian, John Logan, and Yanjie Bian, "Intergenerational Relations in Urban China: Proximity, Contact, and Help to Parents," *Demography*, 35 (1998): 115–24. The comparable figure derived from parent responses in the Baoding survey is 16% of non-coresident children living outside of the city (N=1709). The Taiwan survey used for comparison purposes in the present study shows a somewhat lower figure of about 70% of grown children of urbanites interviewed on that island in 1989 who lived "nearby." See the figures in Table 9.2.

⁴⁰ See the discussion in chapter 3. This practice was formally abolished in 1983, although it may continue in some locales and units on an informal basis. Unfortunately, we did not ask in our questionnaires whether individuals had made use of this practice.

⁴¹ Retiring parents continue to receive pensions from their work unit, usually remain in unit-supplied housing, and in general still participate in the community life structured by China's relatively all-encompassing work units. See the discussion in Andrew Walder, *Communist Neo-Traditionalism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986). Retirement does not therefore make it likely that parents will have reduced ties with their grown children, particularly if the children are employed in the same unit.

⁴² It has not escaped the attention of China's leaders and general public that Taiwan, Singapore, and Hong Kong have developed rapidly while continuing to emphasize Confucian family values.

⁴³ See the discussion in Mayfair M. Yang, *Gifts, Favors, and Banquets: The Art of Social Relationships in China* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994); Yanjie Bian, "Guanxi and the Allocation of Urban Jobs in China," *The China Quarterly* 140 (1994): 971–99.

⁴⁴ The parent-child attitude differences measure is based upon the sixteen questions included in Table 4.3. Instances in which the parent and child answered a question identically were given a score of 0, and instances of different responses were given a score of 1, and then this score was summed for all sixteen items. The subjective measure is simply the child's response to a question about whether comparing his or her life styles and ideas and those of the parents there were no differences, some differences, or big differences.

⁴⁵ Ideally I would like to have a measure of how much relative stress the parent had placed upon a particular set of family obligations while socializing our child respondent, in order to assess the effectiveness of parental socialization. However, lacking a time machine I instead have to rely on a current measure—how much emphasis the parent places on that aspect of family obligations now, as revealed by his or her answers to the same questions the child answered, and summed up into a comparable scale.

⁴⁶ To measure past dependence of a child upon various kinds of parental help, we constructed a scale based upon a series of questions dealing with such assistance. We included

responses to questions about whether the family had provided the child with help in completing homework, in getting enrolled in a particular school, in obtaining a job, in making a job change, in obtaining housing, and in finding a spouse. We arbitrarily treated each of these six forms of assistance as equivalent and simply summed up the scores for each item (with 1=not at all, 2=some, and 3=a great deal) to form a resulting scale that in theory could range in value from 6 to 18. This is our summary general measure of past dependence upon parental or family help in row 12 of Tables 4.5 and 4.6, but we also include measures of other specific types of parental assistance we asked about elsewhere in our questionnaire.

⁴⁷ Specifically, the coefficients in the table indicate that only a little more than 1/100 of the variation in the measure of whether the child coresides might be explained by the child's score on the Coresidence Benefits Scale. And even this weak association might be attributable to causation in the other direction, with coresidence leading to an appreciation of that arrangement. Other research indicates that the needs of parents tend to have a stronger influence on coresidence than the needs of the child. See Logan, Bian, and Bian, "Tradition and Change in the Urban Chinese Family." Indeed, the correlation between whether the parent coresides with a grown child or not and a parental version of the Coresidence Benefits Scale is slightly stronger, $r=0.22$. Even this figure indicates that less than 5% of the variation in one measure might be accounted for by variation in the other.

⁴⁸ Obviously I am not making a prediction here. A number of factors, and particularly the impact of the one child policy, will have an impact on tendencies toward coresidence in an extended family in the future. Also, as noted earlier, the evidence from our survey indicates that personal preferences may play a quite small role in determining whether people coreside in an extended family or not.

⁴⁹ My argument here parallels Goode's discussion of the impact of modernization on the family around the world (in his *World Revolution and Family Patterns*). If modernization occurs in ways that sustain the ability of parents to play a strong role and help arrange the future lives of their children, then the shift toward conjugal family patterns may be stalled or delayed. Goode argued that this was exactly what happened in Japan during the Meiji era, a development explaining the still relatively low level of conjugality of contemporary Japanese families. My contention is that a similar claim could be made about urban China today. The impact of modernization and other forces on family patterns has been blunted by the continued strong role of parents in the lives of their growing and adult children, but if that strong role weakens, family patterns could yet still move toward a more conjugal form.

PART III THE CONTOURS OF
INTERGENERATIONAL EXCHANGES

5

SUPPORT RECEIVED BY THE ELDERLY IN BAODING: THE VIEW FROM TWO GENERATIONS

Albert I. Hermalin and Shiauping R. Shih

Previous chapters have already indicated that there does not appear to be a “crisis” in support for the elderly in Baoding. However, we still do not have a full picture of the amount of assistance and support older residents of that city are receiving, and of how central (or peripheral) are members of their families, and their grown children in particular, in providing such support. Chapters 5–8 present detailed analyses of a variety of dimensions of, and influences on, the provision of support to the Baoding parents we interviewed. The analyses in these chapters rely primarily on a set of questions included in our 1994 Baoding survey about assistance parents were currently receiving in four areas of daily life: physical care (with activities such as bathing, dressing, and going to the bathroom), household assistance (with activities such as shopping, meal preparation, transportation, or managing finances), financial support, and material support (the provision of goods such as food items or clothing). Obviously, these simple questions do not cover the full range of possible areas in which older Baoding residents could be needing or receiving support and assistance. However, these four questions do capture key elements of the three major “currencies” of exchange—space, money, and time.¹ (Living arrangements reflecting the currency of space are treated in chapter 6.) Furthermore, these questions were specifically patterned after the questions used in the Taiwan surveys in 1989 and later years, thus permitting the Taiwan-PRC comparisons that will be presented in chapter 10.² For all of their simplicity, then, we think these

questions provide a sound basis for drawing conclusions about the patterns of assistance provided to Baoding parents.

Introduction

This chapter has several goals. First, it takes a close look at the extent to which those age fifty and older in Baoding are receiving various types of support and how this support varies with the characteristics of the individual. Second, it investigates who provides each type of support and the characteristics that distinguish providers from nonproviders among the children. In the final section, we compare the degree to which the reports from the parents agree with those from the children, making use of the fact that a randomly selected child was also interviewed in a high proportion of the cases.

The nature of the Baoding Survey on Aging and Intergenerational Relationships and the characteristics of the parents and children were described in chapters 1–2. Because of the broad aims of this chapter, we note that the first two sets of analyses will be based on the full set of 1002 parents interviewed but that the third section, which focuses on agreement between parents and children, will of necessity be restricted to the 731 cases in which a matching parent–child dyad was successfully interviewed.

Figure 5.1 describes the structure of the questions on support received by parents and provided by children that will form the basis of the analyses to follow. The left side of the figure gives the questions addressed to the parents. For four types of support—physical care, assistance with household activities, financial support, and provision of material goods—respondents were asked to indicate whether they were receiving that type of assistance. If so, they were asked who provided such assistance and they were allowed to name up to four specific sources including children, other family members, and nonfamilial sources such as neighbors or community and governmental sources. They were also asked to identify the primary provider and to evaluate the sufficiency of the support that they received. Those who said they did not receive a given type of support were asked if they needed that type of support.

To ensure that the nature of the question did not lead to an overemphasis on familial as against nonfamilial sources of support, there was an additional question (not shown) that asked if any of these types of support was provided by a governmental agency or work unit. The questions

addressed to the children as potential providers paralleled those asked of the parents and will be examined further in the last section of this chapter.

Figure 5.1 Format for Questions Regarding Exchanges of Support

Questions in parent questionnaire	Questions in child questionnaire
<p>B16. Is there anyone who currently helps you with (type of support)?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p> <p>B16d. Do you need such assistance?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Need <input type="checkbox"/> Don't need (To next support category)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p> <p>B16a. Who provides such assistance? Anyone else?</p> <p>_____</p> <p>(Four blanks to write in persons mentioned)</p> <p>B16b. In the past year, who was the primary person in helping you with (type of support)?</p> <p>_____</p> <p>B16c. Do you feel that in these aspects you could use more help, the help is about right, or you do not need so much help?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Could use more help. <input type="checkbox"/> The help is about right. <input type="checkbox"/> Do not need so much help. (To next support)</p>	<p>C1. Now I have some questions about your relations with your parent(s). In your opinion, do(es) your parent(s) need any assistance with (type of support)?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No → To C1b.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p> <p>C1a. (If both parents living) Which of your parents needs assistance?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Father <input type="checkbox"/> Mother <input type="checkbox"/> Both</p> <p>C1b. Regardless of whether or not (he/she/they) requires this type of help, do you currently provide assistance in (type of support)?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>C1c. Are there any other relatives or friends whom you currently assist with (type of support)?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No → (To next support)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p> <p>C1d. Who are they? Anyone else?</p> <p>1st person _____ 2nd person _____ 3rd person _____</p>

Note:

A. Types of support include:

1. Personal care such as bathing, dressing, or going to the bathroom.
2. Household activities such as shopping, meal preparation, transportation, or managing finances.
3. Financial support.
4. Material goods such as food items or clothing.

B. Questions regarding financial and material support from children to parents do not distinguish which parent is the receiver.

The sociocultural underpinnings of the support arrangements of the elderly in Chinese societies and the transformations that may occur as a result of socioeconomic and demographic changes have been discussed in detail in

earlier chapters and are further pursued in chapter 9. In translating these theoretical considerations into the analysis of microdata, the focus is on the characteristics of those receiving and providing support. We would expect, for example, that those elderly who have greater needs, as reflected in advanced age, poor health, poverty, or widowhood, are more likely to be recipients. We would also expect support to be a function of the size of the support network and their ability to provide support, as reflected in numbers and sex-composition of children and their socioeconomic characteristics. In terms of social change, although the absence of longitudinal data will limit any strong inferences, the microdata can provide some indication of whether governmental sources have started to supplant familial sources for the four types of support under consideration. In addition the data can reveal whether there have been changes in traditional providers in terms of sons versus daughters and in the role of daughters-in-law as a result of the growing role of women in the labor force and other social changes.

The next section examines the types of support received by persons age fifty years and over and the sources of that support. Although the characteristics of the sample have been described in detail in chapter 2, it is helpful to keep the main contours in mind. First, as the data in chapter 2 show, the age structure is sharply tapered, with about half the sample between fifty and sixty, somewhat more than a third between sixty and seventy, and one-seventh age seventy or older. The sample is almost equally divided between men and women, with a slight preponderance of men, and with a high proportion of respondents currently married. They are widely distributed in educational attainment, with close to a half of the sample having primary schooling or less, but a quarter with a senior high school (or its equivalent) or college education. Despite the young age of the sample, more than three-fifths are no longer working, reflecting in large part the relatively early retirement age in urban China (as described in chapter 3).

Reflecting the young age structure, 29% of respondents live only with their spouse and another 29% live only with unmarried children (usually with a spouse as well). Most of the remainder live with married children. Almost half consider their health as good or very good, but more than a third say it is only fair, and a sixth report that their health is poor or not too good. Finally, the previous high levels of fertility in China are evidenced by the large number of children among these respondents. Over 70 % have three or more children alive. Due to this high fertility and low geographic

mobility, all but a handful have one or more children in Baoding, as noted in previous chapters.

Types of Supports Received and Their Providers

Table 5.1 displays the proportion receiving each type of support, by age and sex. Overall less than 4% of the Baoding elderly are receiving personal care support, but substantial proportions are receiving each of the other types, ranging from about one-quarter for financial support to about one-third for assistance with household activities and receipt of material goods. The proportions receiving support are uniformly ordered by age and sex. For each type of support the proportion receiving assistance increases with age, with the sharpest increment usually occurring after age seventy. For each type of support and within each age category, women are more likely to receive assistance than men. Both patterns suggest that the provision of support is responsive to needs, as discussed further below.

Table 5.2 presents the percentage distribution of main providers for those elderly who receive each type of support, separately for men and women. For the small number of men receiving personal care support, almost two out of three specify their wives as the main provider, while one out of four name a son. For women receiving physical support, the pattern is quite different: almost 50% name a daughter, 16% each name their husband or a daughter-in-law, and only 11% a son. For help with household activities there is a similar asymmetry between the main providers named by men and women. For men, not surprisingly, wives are named by 57%, with sons and daughters accounting for most of the remaining providers. For women, husbands are mentioned by less than 20%, while sons, daughters, and daughters-in-law are each indicated by 20 to 30% of the women receiving this type of support.

For those receiving financial support or assistance with material goods, the pattern of main providers is much more similar for men and women. Spouses are rarely mentioned, most likely because couples view themselves as pooling or sharing resources, rather than transferring to one another. Both men and women list a son as the main provider in about 60 % of the cases of financial support, with daughters listed about a third of the time. For material goods, sons and daughters are mentioned with about equal frequency by both men and women. Outside of sons and daughters, few other sources of financial or material goods support are noted.

Table 5.1 Percentage of the Elderly Receiving Each Type of Support

	Physical Care	Household Help	Financial Support	Material Support	N
Percent Receiving	3.8	31.6	24.6	34.0	1002
Men (total)	3.4	29.0	18.4	29.0	526
Age 50-59	0.4	20.9	12.1	18.0	239
Age 60-69	4.5	29.3	21.7	31.3	198
Age 70 +	9.0	50.0	28.1	53.4	88
Women (total)	4.2	34.5	31.3	39.6	476
Age 50-59	1.2	28.3	21.3	27.2	254
Age 60-69	5.8	37.6	41.0	53.5	172
Age 70 +	14.3	55.1	49.0	55.1	49
Number Receiving	38	316	246	340	--

Table 5.2. Percentage Distribution of Main Providers for Those Receiving Support of Each Type

Distribution of Main Providers	Physical Care		Household Help		Financial Support		Material Support	
	Men	Women	M	W	M	W	M	W
Spouse	64.7	15.8	56.6	19.5	1.2	0.0	0.0	0.6
Sons	23.5	10.6	16.8	23.4	61.9	58.5	44.8	43.6
Daughters	5.9	47.4	14.7	28.9	29.8	32.5	44.1	44.2
Daughters-in-law	5.9	15.8	6.3	22.8	0.0	0.8	2.9	6.1
Relatives ¹	0.0	5.3	4.9	5.3	6.0	6.4	8.0	5.4
Non-relatives	0.0	5.3	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Government	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.6	0.0	0.0
Number Receiving	18	20	152	164	97	149	152	188

¹ Includes son-in-law, siblings, and grandchildren

Respondents were also asked to name all sources of support on these dimensions and Table 5.3 presents the percentages who named each of the sources shown. (Since there are multiple responses, the percentages add to more than 100.) The main effect of Table 5.3 is to show more clearly the role of children and daughters-in-law in the provision of physical assistance and help within the household, and the widespread involvement of both sons and daughters in the provision of financial and material support. The asymmetry in the role of husbands and wives in providing personal care or household assistance to the other is still present, however, as is the tendency for male respondents to name sons as providers rather than daughters or daughters-in-law, in contrast to the response pattern of women.

Tables 5.2 and 5.3 also reveal the absence of certain support providers. Beyond spouses, children, and daughters-in-law, other relations (siblings, sons-in-law, etc.) are rarely mentioned, nor are friends, neighbors, or other unrelated individuals. Formal sources of support such as a work unit or other governmental entity also are rarely mentioned, although the nature of the question permitted such replies. Apparently, although the work unit may be a major economic influence in terms of provision of pensions, housing, and the like, it is not thought of as the source of *assistance* in the particular spheres under examination here.

The detailed questions on sources of support and specific providers permit analyses of the structure of support from a number of dimensions. For example, it is possible to determine how many types of support older respondents receive, what combinations predominate, and how concentrated or diffuse the providers of multiple support are. Select results of these analyses are presented in chapter 10, where the patterns of support in Baoding are contrasted with those in Taiwan.³

The other questions about support shown in Figure 5.1, which ask whether those not receiving support need assistance, and whether the amount of support received is adequate, permit estimates of the levels of need and the sufficiency of support. In comparison with the proportions receiving support shown in Table 5.1, the proportions reporting that they needed help and were not receiving any ranged between 1% and 4% across the four types of support. Similar ranges were observed for the proportions reporting needing more help than they were receiving. Although these percentages are small, taken together they are not trivial relative to the percentage of persons who receive assistance, and this suggests the possibility of shortfalls in the support network of some Baoding elderly. However, our

main conclusion is that the great majority of Baoding parents feel they are receiving as much assistance as they need, and that family members, and grown children in particular, are the primary providers of such assistance.

Table 5.3 Percentage Receiving Support from Each Source, for Those Receiving Support of Each Type, by Gender of Respondent

Distribution of Providers	Physical Care		Household Help		Financial Support		Material Support	
	Men	Women	M	W	M	W	M	W
Spouse	61.1	15.0	59.9	22.6	0.0	0.0	0.7	0.5
Child								
Son	61.1	20.0	34.2	37.8	72.2	73.2	72.4	62.2
Daughter	16.7	60.0	24.3	42.1	73.2	78.5	76.3	76.1
Other Kin								
Parent (in-law)	0.0	0.0	1.3	0.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Daughter-in-law	22.2	25.0	19.7	37.8	1.0	4.7	10.5	14.4
Sibling	0.0	0.0	2.0	0.6	7.2	5.4	5.3	3.7
Other	0.0	15.0	4.6	9.8	3.1	3.4	6.6	4.8
Non-kin	0.0	5.0	1.3	1.2	0.0	0.7	1.3	0.5
Formal Source								
Gov or work unit	0.0	0.0	0.7	1.2	6.2	7.4	2.0	0.5
Number Receiving	18	20	152	164	97	149	152	188

Note: Percentages may add to more than 100% since respondents could name multiple providers.

Table 5.4 examines in a multivariate framework the characteristics affecting the receipt of each type of support, with the exception of personal care, for which the number of cases is insufficient. These analyses test the theoretical expectations of the patterning of support discussed earlier. In general the expected relationships emerge. The likelihood of receiving assistance with household chores, finances, and material goods increases with the age of the respondent and is greater among women and those not currently married (though the marital status effect is not statistically significant). The effects of the other characteristics tend to vary by the type of assistance in ways that generally reflect needs and opportunities. For example, the education of the respondent has no effect on the receipt of household assistance or

Table 5.4 Estimated Effects of Demographic, Socioeconomic, and Health Factors on the Log-Odds of Receiving the Specified Type of Support

Characteristic	Household Help	Financial Assistance	Material Assistance
Age	.06 ***	.04 **	.05 ***
Sex			
Male	--	--	--
Female	.26	.43 *	.51 **
Marital Status			
Married	--	--	--
Not married	.15	.36	.19
Education			
No formal education	--	--	--
Primary education	-.28	-.43+	.03
Junior high	-.13	-.76 **	-.23
Senior high or higher	-.01	-1.07 ***	-.21
Work Status			
Retired/not working	--	--	--
Currently working	.21	-.06	.01
Health Rating			
Poor	.55 **	.12	-.27
Good	.31+	-.19	-.004
Very good	--	--	--
Household Composition			
Alone or with spouse only	--	--	--
With married child	.79 ***	-.24	.03
With unmarried child	.08	-.23	-.75 ***
Number of Children Nearby	.05	.31 ***	.28 ***
Constant	-5.21 ***	-3.82 ***	-4.51 ***

+ $p < 0.10$; * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$

Notes:

1. Base n for each model = 1002.
2. Respondents living exclusively with persons other than spouse and children are excluded from the analysis due to small number of cases in this category.
3. Dependent variable is coded '1' if elderly respondent received specific type of support, '0' otherwise.

material goods, but there is a sharp negative gradient on the receipt of financial support, presumably because those with greater education have more resources of their own. Health makes a difference in the receipt of assistance with household chores but not for the other two forms of assistance, again reflecting the likelihood of greater need for help with shopping, transportation, etc. among those with poor health. The differential effects of household composition on the receipt of support display the importance of the situation-specific context. Those coresiding with married children are much more likely to receive help with household activities, reflecting both the ready availability of assistance and the possibility that coresidence was prompted by the need for this type of help. By contrast, those coresiding with an unmarried child or children only are the parents least likely to be receiving assistance with material goods, presumably because at this stage parents are mainly providing support to children rather than vice versa. The importance of the size of the provider network emerges quite clearly in the positive relationship between number of children living nearby and the likelihood of receiving assistance with finances and material goods.

Children as Support Providers

The previous section has noted that children, both sons and daughters, are an important source of all types of support. They predominate as providers of financial and material goods support, and they play a considerable role as well with physical support and household assistance.

In this section we inquire whether certain children, as defined by their sociodemographic characteristics and by their family composition, are more likely to supply assistance than others. Table 5.5 presents the characteristics of *all* the children of the 1002 parents who are the focus of this analysis. In total, these parents have 3226 children; most are between twenty-three and thirty-five years old, married, have one or more siblings, have senior high or more education, and are working. It is worth noting that only 11% live outside of Baoding, while 27% are coresiding with parents. The remaining three-fifths reside in Baoding but are not coresiding with parents.

Table 5.5 Percentage Distribution of Children by Selected Socio-demographic Characteristics and Family Composition

Characteristics	Percent Distribution
Age	
Less than 22	7.9
23 to 35	54.5
36 to 45	31.4
46 and older	6.2
Sex	
Male	50.8
Female	49.2
Marital Status	
Married	82.5
Divorced/widowed	1.4
Never married	16.1
Birth Order	
Eldest child	31.0
Other	69.0
Sib Composition	
Sons only	10.6
Daughters only	6.4
Mixed gender	83.0
Sib Size	
No sibling	2.0
1-2	46.4
More than 3 siblings	51.6
Work Status	
Working	94.8
Not working	5.2
Education	
Illiterate	1.3
Primary	6.4
Junior high	36.9
Senior high	31.1
Technical	7.2
College and up	17.3
Residence	
Live with parents	27.1
Live in Baoding	61.5
Live outside of Baoding	11.4
Total Number of Children	3226

Table 5.6 indicates for the children in each category the proportion who have been named as a provider, whether as the main provider or not. The table is restricted to the elderly who receive support and have more than one child. Perhaps the most striking finding revealed in this table is the relatively high proportion of children that were identified as support providers in almost every category. There are some differences that emerge by characteristic and type of support. Daughters are consistently more frequently named than sons; the youngest children (under twenty-two), who are also less apt to be married, are least frequently named as providing assistance. Beyond these differences, however, there are few sharp patterns that emerge from this tabulation, especially when the small numbers involved in certain categories (e.g., children who are illiterate) are kept in mind.

Accordingly, we move to a multiple regression in Table 5.7 and show the log-odds of being named as a support provider by the elderly respondent for household, financial and material assistance. The units of analysis in these models are all children from families that contain two or more children when the parents indicate receiving support from at least one child. We omit personal care support because of the small number of recipients.

Certain characteristics of the child exert significant influence over the likelihood of their providing support. A female child is significantly more likely to provide support of each type than a male child. The likelihood of providing support appears to increase with the age of the child, and the oldest children are significantly more likely to provide material goods and assistance with household chores than the youngest child. The size of the sibship has a significant effect on each type of support, but not always in the same direction. Children with a larger number of siblings are less likely to provide household assistance or financial assistance, presumably because other siblings are providing such support, but they are more likely to provide material goods. There is no difference by education of child in the provision of material goods but, compared to those who are illiterate (a very small group), those with education tend to be more likely to provide household and financial assistance. Division of labor across children is suggested by the

Table 5.6 Percentage of Children Named as a Support Provider in Each Sociodemographic Category

	Physical Care	Household Help	Financial Support	Material Support
Age				
Less than 22	0.0	38.8	28.6	16.7
23-35	50.0	43.5	41.2	32.3
36-45	48.3	46.1	49.0	38.8
46 and up	46.4	54.5	51.1	39.4
Sex				
Male	37.1	40.2	35.7	29.7
Female	60.3	50.7	53.0	40.0
Marital Status				
Married	46.3	45.7	47.3	36.3
Divorced/widowed	50.0	20.0	20.0	16.7
Never married	75.0	45.4	25.8	24.2
Work Status				
Not working	45.5	69.4	41.7	34.9
Working	48.4	44.2	45.0	35.2
Residence Status				
Live with the elderly	37.9	43.6	30.0	22.8
In Baoding	49.4	47.8	50.0	39.7
Outside Baoding	57.9	38.5	40.7	30.9
Education				
Illiterate	33.3	29.4	14.3	20.0
Primary	50.0	48.8	51.1	49.5
Junior high	55.2	46.7	43.7	37.8
Senior high	39.4	41.7	46.6	31.7
Technical / college up	44.8	48.1	45.3	31.5
Sib Composition				
Sons only	0.0	43.1	42.6	37.7
Daughters only	100.0	66.7	59.6	49.4
Mixed gender	49.2	44.3	44.1	33.9
Birth Order				
Eldest child	49.0	45.8	44.3	35.4
Other	45.7	44.1	46.4	34.4
Sib Size				
1 sibling	40.0	42.5	46.7	27.7
2 siblings	39.4	47.2	43.7	33.0
More than 2 siblings	52.2	44.8	45.2	37.0

Note: Analysis includes only children whose parents are receiving each type of support and who have more than one child.

Table 5.7 Estimated Effects of Demographic, Socioeconomic, and Sibship Characteristics on the Log-Odds of Providing Each Type of Support, among Children Whose Elderly Parent Receives the Specific Type of Support from a Child

	Household Help		Financial Support		Material Support	
Sex (male)						
Female	0.924	***	0.733	***	0.393	***
Age (less than 22)						
23-35	0.299		0.467		0.544	
36-45	0.715		0.655		0.647	
46 and up	1.021	*	0.894		0.937	**
Marital Status (married)						
Divorced/widowed	0.074		-0.908		-1.659	**
Never married	-0.40		-0.103		0.162	
Work Status (not working)						
Working	0.159		0.277		-1.177	***
Residence (with the elderly)						
In Baoding	1.069	***	1.092	***	-0.014	
Outside Baoding	0.296		0.858	***	-0.560	**
Education (illiterate)						
Primary	0.993	*	1.253	*	0.761	
Junior high	0.699		0.783		0.803	
Senior high	0.804	*	0.988		0.642	
Technical/college and up	0.939	*	1.072	*	0.958	
Sib Size	-0.264	***	-0.252	***	0.127	**
Birth Order (eldest child)						
Other	-0.326	*	-0.224		-0.087	
Sib Composition (sons only)						
Daughters only	-0.218		0.013		0.673	
Mixed gender	-0.308		-0.980	***	-0.223	
Constant	-0.156		-0.054		-0.859	

*** = significance level at 0.01; ** = significance level at 0.05; * = significance level at 0.1

Note: Dependent variable is coded '1' if the child provided support, '0' otherwise. Analysis includes elderly respondents who received specific type of support and families with more than one child.

pattern of assistance according to the location of children vis-a-vis parents. Compared to children who coreside with parents, those living in Baoding but not coresiding are more likely to provide assistance with needed household activities, and along with children outside of Baoding, are more likely to provide financial assistance. On the other hand those outside of Baoding are less likely to provide material goods. (For further analysis of the effects of child distance on the provision of support to parents, see chapter 6.)

In general, within the context of the high proportions of children in each socioeconomic and demographic category being involved in provision of assistance (as shown in Table 5.6), the multivariate analysis of Table 5.7 suggests that children's resources (as reflected in age and education) and location come into play, as do issues of division of labor across the sibship. The strong role of daughters in each form of support is noteworthy and may signal an emerging pattern at sharp variance with past practice. Nevertheless, as Table 5.2 has shown, sons may be the major providers of financial assistance.⁴ (See the more detailed discussion of support from sons versus daughters in chapter 7.)

Agreement between Children and Parents on Support Arrangements

A distinguishing feature of the 1994 Baoding survey is that both the elderly and a randomly selected child were interviewed. To this point all the data presented have reflected reports from the elderly. For the 731 pairs of parents and children who were interviewed, we can determine whether the parent named the interviewed child as a support provider and whether that child indicated that he or she provided support of each type to the parent. Hence, we can examine the degree of agreement between parent and child reports of the assistance provided to parents.

Table 5.8 provides the basic distributions for agreement on each type of support. Although there is a fairly high level of agreement, ranging from 50% for household assistance to 77% for physical support, this arises mainly from the agreement by parent and child that the parent did not receive support from that child.

Levels of disagreement are also high, however, and they arise mainly from the situation in which the parent did not indicate receipt of support from the interviewed child, but the child reported providing assistance to the

Table 5.8 Percentage of Parent-Child Dyad Agreement on Support Provided and Received by Type of Support

	Physical Care	Household Help	Financial Support	Material Support
Agree				
Parent received, child provided	1.1	9.5	12.4	17.7
Parent did not receive, child did not provide	76.3	40.6	54.0	32.5
Disagree				
Parent received, child did not provide	0.6	2.8	3.9	4.1
Parent did not receive, child provided	22.0	47.1	29.7	45.6

Note: Table is based on 731 pairs of elderly and child respondents. For every child interviewed, the agreement is based on whether the child reported giving a specific type of support and whether the parent named that specific child as a provider.

parent. In all these cases, it should be noted, the parent may be receiving assistance from other children or sources, and we are examining here the agreement on transfers between a specific child and parent. Thus a parent may know that the specific child interviewed provided some support, but failed to mention that child because the degree of assistance was slight compared to the amount received from other sources.

As before, we turn to multivariate analysis to examine the characteristics of parents and children that are associated with higher levels of agreement on the reporting of receipt and provision of support. In Table 5.9, the dependent variable is dyad agreement, coded "1" if the parent and child agree and "0" if they disagree.

There are few patterns that carry across all types of support. For physical support and assistance with household activities, agreement is lower when the child is a female. Agreement on physical support is also significantly lower if the child is working, and it decreases with age of parent. If the parent is not receiving any support there is more agreement, as one might expect.

For agreement on the provision and receipt of household assistance, agreement is significantly higher when the child is not coresident and when the parent is in poor health. Non-coresidence is also positively associated with agreement in the case of financial support. The effect of numbers of children is seen for financial and material support. Agreement is significantly lower as the number of children increases, suggesting possible selectivity as to whom

Table 5.9 Estimated Effects of Demographic, Socioeconomic, and Sibship Characteristics on the Log-Odds of Agreement on Exchange Between the Parent and the Child

	Physical Care	Household Help	Financial Support	Material Support
Parent (father)				
Mother	-.0922	-.1746	-.233	-.2986*
Child Sex (male)				
Female	-.7863***	-.4336***	-.002	-.0711
Parent's Age	-.0636***	-.0023	-.0300*	-.0322*
Child's Age	.0062	.0030	.0129	.0211
Number of Children	.0560	-.0865	-.1622**	-.1705**
Parent's Marital Status (married)				
Not married	.2215	.0833	.353	.1309
Child's Work Status (not working)				
Working	-.7395**	.1613	-.9681***	-.3602
Parent's Health (very good)				
Good	-.2791	.0506	.0871	.2708
Poor	.1430	.3893*	.1937	-.0216
Coresidence (yes)				
No	.4380	.4804***	.5846***	.0494
Eldest Child (no)				
Yes	.0109	-.1264	-.072	-.3997**
No. Support Received (four support received)				
None	1.2413	-.7119	.0561	1.3545*
One	.8668	-.7157	.2497	1.3594*
Two	1.0790	-.3451	-.0518	-.9398
Three	.9608	-.3300	.1349	-.5478
Constant	4.6299***	.7718	3.1597***	3.6422***

*** = significance level at 0.01; ** = significance level at 0.05; * = significance level at 0.1

Note: Dependent variable is coded '1' for agreement and '0' otherwise.

the parent names vis-a-vis the interviewed child. Older parents show more disagreement with children on financial and material support, and mothers are more likely to disagree than fathers on material support. Disagreement on material support is also more likely when the eldest child is interviewed, suggesting there is normative pressure to display filial piety.

Overall, Table 5.9 indicates that both characteristics of parents and children come into play in affecting agreement in reporting of support, as well as family characteristics such as the size of the sibship and living arrangements. These patterns suggest that the situation-specific context, the expectations of parents, and differential perceptions of what constitutes support all come into play in determining the level of agreement in reporting.

The levels of disagreement reported here point to the value of collecting data on transfers from both parents and children, since all too often our estimates of the level of intergenerational support come from only one generation. Multiple sources can provide sounder estimates of the magnitude of support and point to data collection strategies that will reduce the level of generational disagreement.

Conclusions

This chapter has examined the degree to which the elderly and near elderly in Baoding are receiving four types of support, the sources of that support, and the characteristics associated with the receipt and provision of support. It also investigated the degree to which parents and children agree in their reports of the exchanges taking place.

Although relatively few are receiving personal care assistance, a substantial portion of those age fifty and over in Baoding are receiving assistance in household activities, finances, or material goods, with the percentages ranging from one-quarter for finances to one-third for material goods (such as food and clothing). This assistance comes overwhelmingly from family members, with both sons and daughters figuring prominently in each type of assistance. Taken together, these figures indicate that the needs of older Baoding residents are not primarily met through their work units or governmental programs, and that family ties and traditions of filial piety remain very strong, as indicated in earlier chapters.

When the characteristics of those receiving assistance are examined in a multivariate context, it appears that receipt is responsive to need as evidenced by the role of gender, age, health, and education; to the situation-

specific context as revealed by the importance of household composition; and to the size of the pool of potential providers, as reflected in the number of children in and around Baoding.

The characteristics of the children who do and do not provide assistance were also explored. A striking finding was that a high proportion of children in all socioeconomic and demographic categories were named as providers by parents receiving support.⁵ In the multivariate analysis, daughters were significantly more likely to provide support than sons for each type of support, and younger children were somewhat less likely to assist than older children. The size of the sibship and location of the child also entered into the picture differentially according to the type of support in question.

Finally, this chapter took advantage of the fact that the survey interviewed parents and a randomly selected child and obtained enough detail on the nature of transfers to test the degree of agreement between parents and children in their accounts. Overall agreement ranged from 50% to almost 80% of the dyads across the four types of support, with most of this agreement arising from the circumstance in which both the parent and child agree that no support was provided. At the same time, there was a substantial level of disagreement, stemming mostly from situations in which parents did not name the child in question but the child claimed to be providing support.⁶ Interestingly, dyads involving daughters were more likely to be in this category when support in the form of personal care or household assistance was at issue.

It thus appears that, although daughters are frequently named by parents as providers (see Tables 5.2 and 5.3) and they emerge more often as providers than sons when characteristics of children are examined (Tables 5.6 and 5.7), their contributions may still be underestimated to some extent by their parents, judging by the pattern of disagreement in parent-child reports. This parental “discounting” of the assistance from daughters will be examined further in chapter 7. To better understand the multiple sources of these disagreements will require further research.

Overall, the analyses in this chapter confirm the persistence of strong family traditions in urban China. A high proportion of the elderly, commensurate with needs, are receiving support from family members, and a high proportion of children are involved in the provision of that support. Even the tendency of children to report doing more than parents recall may signal the importance the children attach to being seen as maintaining their obligations of filial piety, the “family altruism” ethic discussed in chapter 4.

The explicit values that parents and children express, analyzed in chapters 4 and 11, also point in this direction. These conclusions reinforce once again the preliminary generalizations discussed in chapter 2: The large majority of Baoding elderly feel that their needs for support and assistance are being met, and that their families, and their grown children in particular, are central in providing such care. Intergenerational bonds and assistance remain strong despite the tumultuous changes that characterized China's twentieth century.

NOTES

¹ See Beth J. Soldo and Martha S. Hill, "Intergenerational Transfers: Economic, Demographic, and Social Perspectives," *Annual Review of Gerontology and Geriatrics* 13 (1993): 187–216; A. I. Hermalin, M. B. Ofstedal, and M. C. Chang, "Types of Support for the Aged and Their Providers in Taiwan," in *Aging and Generational Relations Over the Life Course*, ed. T. K. Hareven (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1996).

² Taiwan Provincial Institute of Family Planning, Population Studies Center and Institute of Gerontology, University of Michigan, *1989 Survey of Health and Living Status of the Elderly in Taiwan: Questionnaire and Survey Design*, Comparative Study of the Elderly in Four Asian Countries, Research Report No. 1 (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Population Studies Center, 1989).

³ Other analyses of similar data from Taiwan can be found in Hermalin, A. I., M. B. Ofstedal, and M. C. Chang, "Types of Support for the Aged."

⁴ It should be noted that these analyses do not take into account that children within the same family are not independent and that, ideally, one would like to reflect the "joint" characteristics of the children. A simultaneous-equations approach to handle this problem has been developed by D. A. Wolf and could be incorporated into future analyses (Wolf, "Caregiving within Family Networks," unpublished manuscript (1988); Wolf and B. J. Soldo, "Household Composition Choices in Older Unmarried Women," *Demography* 28 (1988): 383–403). This approach has been used to study living arrangements in Taiwan by M. B. Ofstedal, "Coresidence Choices of Elderly Parents and Adult Children in Taiwan" (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 1995). Chapter 11 addresses the non-independence issue by selecting a random child within each family in analyzing the Taiwan data, as does Chapter 7 in analyzing the Baoding data.

⁵ It should be noted that the amount of support in terms of money or time is not measured here, but simply whether a child is listed by the parent as a support provider.

⁶ A similar pattern was found in Taiwan in a related analysis. See C. L. Roan et al., "Intergenerational Contact and Support in Taiwan: A Comparison of Elderly Parents' and Children's Reports," *Elderly in Asia Research Report Series*, No. 96–36 (Ann Arbor: Population Studies Center, University of Michigan, 1996).

6

LIVING ARRANGEMENTS AND OLD-AGE SUPPORT

Shengming Yan, Jieming Chen, and Shanhua Yang

Introduction

Does coresidence promote intergenerational exchange between grown children, especially married ones, and their parents? How different are the relationships between parents and their grown children who live with them and the relationships with those who live in separate residences nearby? Although the relationship between household structure or living arrangements and family relations has motivated much research in family studies for a long period of time,¹ we still know relatively little about the extent to which living arrangements influence continued association between generations.² A living arrangement defines, for the most part, the degree of physical proximity between generations. Continued association between generations, on the other hand, pertains to emotional attachment and identification with each other, and it is frequently manifested as assistance and aid exchanged between aging parents and their grown children. Our research question becomes whether physical distance between residences produces social distance between generations. While an affirmative answer is often implied or assumed,³ investigations that directly address this issue are few.

The tendency in past research has been to view family structure as, in the words of Levy,⁴ “especially strategic in social analysis,” and social inquiry on family change often ends at this juncture. This tendency rests on the assumption that family structure is determinative of the nature of family relations and therefore is pivotal for our understanding of family life and its impact on society at large. However, if living arrangements are to be understood as being determined by a range of factors—demographic,

economic, and political, as well as interpersonal—as suggested by many studies⁵—the relationship between living arrangements and intergenerational exchanges in a specific setting remains an open question. In this chapter, using evidence from our survey in Baoding, we seek to provide some answers to the question of what impact coresidence has on intergenerational exchanges.

The traditionally preferred arrangement for the elderly in China, as in other East Asian societies, was to live with one or more married child, typically sons, for old age security. Ideally under such an arrangement, the elderly received various kinds of assistance mainly from their coresident children (and the children's spouses). The available evidence indicates that in pre-1949 China the majority of elderly people lived under a coresidential arrangement, suggesting that the needs of the elderly for old age security were fulfilled largely through this family structure.⁶

However, since the founding of the People's Republic of China, profound social transformations, coupled with impressive economic development, have changed the old ways of family life. One of the conspicuous changes has been a shift in family size and composition. Over the years, the size of the family household has been in steady decline. For instance, in 1947 the average household size was about 5.35 persons.⁷ In 1964 it was 4.47 persons per household. The results from the third population census in 1982 indicated that it decreased further to about 3.81 person per household. In 1993 it was also estimated that the average family size was 3.81. Correspondingly, the percentage of the households composed of one or two persons has increased from 10.8 in 1931 to 18.1 in 1982.⁸

The change in family size and composition also suggests a change in living arrangements. Results from large-scale surveys at the national and regional levels confirm the change: more and more elderly people now live alone or with their spouse or other relatives, rather than with grown children. A 1987 national survey of the population of age sixty and older indicated that about 26% of the elderly in urban areas did not coreside with their children. According to results from cross-sectional surveys of the elderly in Shanghai, in 1983 some 20% of people aged sixty or older did not live with children; by 1990 the percentage had risen to 28%.⁹ In 1992, the percentage increased further to 37%.¹⁰ In Beijing, the 1990 population census revealed that 24.1% of the elderly population lived alone or only with spouse and other relatives.¹¹ In chapter 2 in this volume it was noted that 49.9% of Baoding parents over age sixty were not living with any grown child, a figure substantially higher than in the surveys cited above. With a dramatic decline of

fertility since the 1970s, greater mobility of children, and a claimed weakened commitment of the younger generation to the traditional value of filial piety, some have suggested that the trend toward independent residence of older urbanites is likely to continue in the future.¹²

What would be the implications of this trend in living arrangements for old-age support? Does a decline in coresidence also foretell the weakening of old age support by children? While to date there has been little research directed specifically at this question, some studies have touched upon it. In general, there are three different views on the effect of the change in living arrangements for the elderly. First, there are those who argue that the shift of the norm of living arrangements from coresidential to non-coresidential will inevitably weaken familial support as a social institution. As more and more elderly people end up, either willingly or reluctantly, in a living arrangement separate from their grown children, the role played by children in old-age security of elderly parents will diminish.¹³

In contrast, the second view contends that the change of living arrangements basically has little adverse impact on the support elderly parents receive from their children. According to this view, non-coresidence does not necessarily preclude old-age support from the non-coresident children, and especially from those non-coresident children who live in close proximity. Indeed, it is argued that the arrangement of separate residences makes it possible for older parents to both reap the benefits of receiving assistance from children and minimize potential conflicts with children, conflicts which occur more frequently with coresidence. Furthermore, some proponents of this view predict that this arrangement, which sometimes is referred to as “divide but not depart” (*fen er bu li*), and which presumably entails a new type of intergenerational relations, will (and should) become the dominant one in the future.¹⁴

A third point of view is a compromise. On one hand, the supporters of this view acknowledge that coresidence is instrumental in promoting intergenerational exchange, and they argue that there is little doubt that the increase in non-coresidence will undermine the social institution of familial support. On the other hand, they maintain that non-coresidence does not signal or amount to a complete abandonment on the part of children of their obligations to their aging parents. Hence, although the elderly who coreside with grown children are more likely to receive assistance and help from coresiding children than those who do not, those children living in separate households still provide some much needed help to their parents.¹⁵

Which of these three views is closest to reality? Given the issues involved, an assessment of these views cannot be made purely on theoretical grounds. All three views are speculative in nature. The central question addressed in this chapter is whether coresidence is important in order for older parents to receive support of various kinds from their children, or conversely, to what extent does non-coresidence prevent parents from receiving such support from their grown children. We will attempt to answer these questions by examining the effects of different living arrangements on the likelihood of old age support by children. Although generalizing from our cross-sectional Baoding data to determine future trends is not appropriate, our findings will at least yield hypotheses about the probable implications of future changes in living arrangements in urban China.

Measures and Methods

Since the Baoding child questionnaire contained more detailed questions about the exchange of resources between the child respondent and his or her parents than the parent questionnaire, the data from the child sample are used for the analyses presented in the following pages. Only those respondents whose parents were also interviewed are included in these analyses. Therefore, the size of the study sample is 731.

Dependent variables

In this study, we consider two sets of dependent variables, one concerning self-reported actual support rendered currently by children to their elderly parents, and the other measuring subjective perceptions of changes of support after marriage. All analyses presented below revolve around an assessment of the effects of living arrangements on these dependent variables.

During the interview, child respondents were asked whether they were currently providing assistance in personal care, household chores, cash giving, and economic support in kind to their parents (for the format of these questions, see Figure 5.1 in the previous chapter). In addition, there was a question about whether the respondent was providing any other support beyond the four types just mentioned.¹⁶ Answers to these five questions constitute the first set of the dependent variables. The first two variables measure assistance in services, or “instrumental support” in the jargon of gerontology. The second two variables, assistance in cash and assistance in kind, measure economic old-age support. The variable of “other support”

can be understood as a “grab bag” measure, probably capturing any kind of assistance that is less tangible than either instrumental or economic support. For all these variables, the coding is 1 if support is provided, and 0 otherwise.

The second set of measures consists of two dependent variables. The values come from questions about whether respondents who were married felt the emotional and economic support they provided to parents had decreased after marriage.¹⁷ The estimates of change in economic support and emotional support after marriage presumably measure the perceived impact of marriage on intergenerational relations. Our rationale for including these two additional dependent variables is as follows: Marriage is an important life course event that signals not only the marrying child's economic independence but also a change of their sense of family affiliation and obligation, or at least it has the potential to do so. A married child develops obligations to a spouse and eventually in most cases also to children, and these obligations might reduce support provided to parents. Therefore, an analysis of self-estimated post-marital change in old-age support for parents may reveal whether or to what extent coresidence plays a role in maintaining the economic and emotional bonds between married children and their aging parents. However, it should be noted that these questions are subjective and global as well as retrospective, rather than objective reports of the current situation. We recognize the possibility that responses to these questions may be influenced or even “contaminated” by other factors besides actual changes that occurred after marriage in relations between parents and children.

These additional variables are also coded as dichotomies, with a value of 1 if support is reported to have remained the same or even increased and 0 if support is reported to have decreased after the child married.

Living arrangements

To answer the question of whether children who do not coreside with parents but live in proximity are more likely to provide support to their parents than those who live at a distance, we create a trichotomous measure of living arrangements. The variable of living arrangements is coded as follows: (1) live with parents, (2) do not live with parents but in daily contact with parents, (3) do not live with parents and not in daily contact with parents. The purpose of dividing non-coresidence into these two separate categories is to examine and compare the effects of coresidence with these two contrasting situations. Given the arguments reviewed earlier that non-coresidence “in proximity” does not necessarily reduce the probability of

providing old age support, combining all instances of non-coresidence together would obscure this possibility and muddle our understanding of how living arrangements and old age support are related.¹⁸ However, no direct information about physical distance between parents and non-coresiding children is available in the child survey. As a substitute, we use frequency of contact as a proxy for distance. Clearly those children who are in contact with their parents on a daily basis live in close proximity. However, it is not entirely clear that those children who are not in daily contact with parents all live at some distance. Hence, there is a chance that the effect of distance is underestimated.

Other independent variables

Two sets of measures are used in this study mainly as control variables. They are (1) variables measuring the child respondent's socio-demographic characteristics, and (2) variables describing the sociodemographic characteristics and health condition of the parents interviewed. Specifically, the children's characteristics included are age, sex, marital status, whether they have children, education, and monthly income; the parents' characteristics included are age, sex and marital status combined, monthly income, and self-rated health. Self-rated health has been regarded as an adequate indicator of the health status of elderly people.¹⁹ Detailed categorical breakdowns of these variables, separately for coresident and non-coresident children (and for non-coresident children of our two separate types), and for the whole sample, are presented in Table 6.1.

Before we start our analyses of the effects of living arrangements on old age support, a few features in Table 6.1 deserve comment. First, as is evident from the summary numbers at the bottom of the table, our child respondents were fairly evenly spread across our three living arrangements categories, with 42% coresident, 30% residing separately but in frequent contact, and 27% residing separately and in less frequent contact. It is notable that more than half of all the children who do not coreside with their parents live close enough so that they can be in contact on a daily basis, which means that 72% of all adult children we interviewed were in daily contact. As expected, sons are overrepresented among those who coreside with parents, and they are less likely to live in the two non-coresidential situations than daughters (67% versus 47% and 47%). Those who live with parents tend to be somewhat younger than those who live in separate households. Children who live with

Table 6.1: Characteristics of Child Respondents and their Parents by Living Arrangements (means and column %)

	Living arrangements			Total Sample
	Coreidence	Non-coresidence In daily contact	Less than daily contact	
1. Child's characteristics				
Sex				
Male (%)	67.0	47.1	47.3	55.5
Female (%)	33.0	52.9	52.7	44.5
Age				
	28.2	32.5	34.5	31.2
Marital status:				
Currently married (%)	48.5	98.6	98.5	77.4
Not married (%)	51.5	1.4	1.5	22.6
Having own children				
Yes (%)	43.4	87.3	87.5	68.1
No (%)	56.6	12.7	12.5	31.1
Education				
Elementary school (%)	1.9	3.2	7.5	3.8
Middle school (%)	25.2	31.7	34.3	29.7
High school and vocational school (%)	54.7	48.9	37.8	48.3
College and higher (%)	18.1	16.3	20.4	18.2
Monthly income (yuan)	311.8	352.5	376.3	341.9
2. Parent's characteristics				
Age:				
50-59 (%)	60.5	47.5	32.8	49.0
60-69 (%)	27.8	35.7	51.7	36.8
70 + (%)	11.7	16.7	15.4	14.2
Sex and marital status:				
Widowed or divorced mother (%)	7.4	5.9	10.0	7.7
Widowed or divorced father (%)	3.9	3.2	4.5	3.8
Married couple (%)	88.7	91.0	85.6	88.5
Monthly income (yuan)	327.6	294.7	336.2	319.9
Self-rated health:				
Very good /good (%)	47.2	51.8	48.3	48.9
So-so (%)	36.2	31.4	35.3	34.5
Not good /Very bad (%)	16.5	16.8	16.4	16.6
Number of observations	309	221	201	731

Source: 1994 Survey on Aging and Intergenerational Relations in Baoding, child sample.

their parents are much more likely to be unmarried than children who live separately (51.5% versus 1.4% and 1.5%). Conversely, those children who have children of their own are more likely to live separately. (These age and life cycle differences probably explain why non-coresident children also tend to have higher incomes.) Hence, marriage appears to be a major life event

that signals not only the formation of a new family unit, but often (although not invariably) a shift to a separate residence as well.

As for parents, only age appears to be an important factor that differentiates those who coreside with a grown child respondent and those who don't.²⁰ Furthermore, the results show that parents in the "old old" category (seventy and above) are less likely to live with the child respondent than those in younger age groups. This rather surprising pattern suggests that children's nest-leaving continues even after parents reach relatively advanced ages. Overall 7.7% of the parents of child respondents are widows and 3.8% are widowers. Widowhood does not appear to influence living arrangements much. Likewise, in terms of personal income and health conditions, the differences between those parents who are living with a child respondent and those who are not appear small. Finally, note that children's characteristics appear to be more significant predictors of living arrangements than parents' characteristics, a pattern that might suggest that the decision on a specific type of living arrangement is determined more by the life situation of the children than by the situation and needs of the parents.

However, we note that the parents who are not living with the child we interviewed may be living with another child. If we were using data from the parent questionnaires to examine the impact of coresidence, it is likely that we would observe parent characteristics having more impact, and child characteristics less, than in the present analysis.²¹

Results

Table 6.2 describes both the distribution of the support variables and the degree of association between living arrangements and old age support. A separate analysis not shown here indicates that some 82% of child respondents claim to be providing at least one of the five kinds of support to their parents. The most common type of support provided is in-kind assistance. In terms of personal care, there appears to be little difference between those children who coreside with parents and those who do not. Children living separately but nearby are the most likely to provide this type of assistance, by a slight margin. For financial support, similarly, living arrangements seem to make little difference, although those children who live separately and are not in daily contact are slightly less likely than the other categories to provide cash assistance. In regard to the most common form of support provided, gifts to parents in kind, non-coresident children of both types are substantially *more*

likely to provide support than coresident children. However, for support in household chores and for “other support,” it is the coresident children who seem most likely to provide a helping hand. In sum, these initial results suggest that coresidence is not essential and is only selectively important in fostering support from grown children. Children who live separately, and particularly those who live nearby, appear to be almost as much or in some instances even more likely than coresident children to provide their parents with assistance.²²

Similarly, Table 6.3 presents both the distributions of estimated changes in support after marriage and the degree of association between living arrangements and these estimates. Note that 573 of the 731 grown child respondents were married. The majority of these married children claimed that the economic support and emotional support they had provided to parents remained unchanged after marriage (59.7% and 78.7%, respectively). However, a comparison of the distributions for different living arrangements suggests that coresident children are somewhat less likely to report reduced economic and emotional old age support after marriage than non-coresident children. Among non-coresident children, those who live close by are less likely than those who live at a distance to report having reduced their economic and emotional support. The results in Table 6.3 appear to provide stronger support than the results in Table 6.2 for the argument that a coresident living arrangement promotes old age support.²³

Before drawing firm conclusions, however, we need to subject these findings to multivariate analysis. We do this in order to learn whether a particular living arrangement *per se* is associated with more or less support provided to parents, or whether the variations shown in Tables 6.2 and 6.3 might instead be explained by disparities in other characteristics of the children or of their parents, as revealed in Table 6.1. In the multivariate analyses that follow, two dummy variables are created out of our three-category measure of living arrangements, with non-coresident children who are in daily contact with their parents treated as the omitted reference category. (This somewhat unconventional choice of the intermediate, “separate but in frequent contact” category as our reference group reflects our desire to see whether parents benefit by coresidence *per se*, rather than simply by having children close at hand to assist them.)

Table 6.2 Old Age Support by Children Under Different Living Arrangements (column %)

Assistance provided to parents	Living arrangements			Total Sample
	Coresidence	Non-coresidence		
		In daily contact	Less than daily contact	
Personal care				
Yes (%)	25.9	28.4	23.0	25.9
No (%)	74.1	71.6	77.0	74.1
Household chores				
Yes (%)	67.8	58.5	44.7	58.6
No (%)	32.2	41.5	55.3	41.4
Financial support				
Yes (%)	43.0	44.6	37.9	42.1
No (%)	57.0	55.4	62.1	57.9
In-kind support				
Yes (%)	55.6	68.8	69.3	63.3
No (%)	44.4	31.2	30.7	36.7
Other support				
Yes (%)	17.5	11.4	8.5	13.2
No (%)	82.5	88.6	91.5	86.8
Number of observations	309	221	201	731

Source: 1994 Survey on Aging and Intergenerational Relations in Baoding, child data.

Table 6.3 Change in Support After Marriage Under Different Living Arrangements (column %)

Change in support after marriage	Living arrangements			Total Sample
	Coresidence	Non-coresidence		
		In daily contact	Less than daily contact	
Economic support ^a				
Remain unchanged or more (%)	75.2	59.4	47.7	59.7
Less (%)	34.8	40.6	52.3	40.3
Emotional support ^a				
Remain unchanged or more (%)	88.5	82.7	66.7	78.7
Less (%)	11.5	17.3	33.3	21.3
Number of observations	157	219	197	573

Source: 1994 Survey on Aging and Intergenerational Relations in Baoding, child data.

^a For detailed descriptions, see footnote 17.

The effects of living arrangements on instrumental support

Table 6.4 presents the estimates of the effects of living arrangements (dummy coded) on instrumental support (personal care and household chores), with and without control variables included. Model 1 is a simple bivariate regression. To control for the effects of child characteristics, we added variables measuring the child's sex, marital status, whether they have children of their own, education (dummy coded), and personal income (logged values) into Model 2. In the final model, Model 3, both variables describing the characteristics of the child respondent and of the parent interviewed—age (dummy coded), sex and marital status combined, personal income (logged values), and self-rated health—were included.

In terms of the effects of living arrangements on instrumental old age support, the results in Table 6.4 are mixed. For personal care, without controlling for any other variables (Model 1), there is no significant difference among different living arrangements, and coresident children actually appear slightly less likely to provide this type of care than those who live separately but visit daily (as was observed in Table 6.2). When the characteristics of children are taken into consideration (in Model 2), and then when child and parent characteristics are controlled for (in Model 3), coresidence reverses sign and has a positive effect, but still one that is not statistically significant. The gender of the child appears to be the cause of this reversal of sign.

As shown earlier in Table 6.1, sons are more likely than daughters to live with their parents. On the other hand, as shown in Table 6.4, daughters tend to be more supportive of parents than sons in terms of personal care (see also the analysis in chapter 7). Hence, once the variable of gender is included in the equation, the net effect of coresidence becomes slightly positive rather than negative. In other words, for personal care, the gender of the child appears to play a role of suppressor variable on the “true” effect of living arrangements. Still, children who live separately but nearby are not significantly less likely to provide personal care to parents than are coresident children.

For household chores, the picture is quite different. The results present consistent evidence that coresidence increases the chance that a child will help parents with family chores, even compared to children who live nearby. Without controlling for any other variables, those who live with parents are about 1.5 times as likely to help with chores as those who live separately but are in daily contact with their parents ($e^{0.398} = 1.49$). Similarly, children who live separately and do not see their parents on a daily basis are significantly less likely to help with chores than either coresident or daily visiting children.

Table 6.4: The Effects of Living Arrangements on Assistance in Services to Older Parents: Logistic Regressions

	Personal care			Household chores		
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Living Arrangements						
Coresidence (Non-coresidence— daily contact)	-0.129	0.259	0.155	0.398 *	0.778 ***	0.730 **
Non-coresidence— less than daily contact	-0.285	-0.273	-0.287	-0.556 **	-0.587 **	-0.558 **
Child's characteristics						
Sex						
Male (Female)		-0.640 ***	-0.608 **		-0.706 ***	-0.787 ***
Marital status						
Married (Not married)		-0.131	0.035		0.305	0.236
Having own children						
Yes (No)		0.661 *	0.181		0.074	-0.033
Education:						
(Elementary to middle school)						
High school and vocational school		0.109	0.201		0.056	0.067
College and higher		0.436	0.437		0.381	0.350
Income: logged values		0.074	0.047		0.053	0.045
Parent's characteristics						
Age						
(50-59)						
60-69			0.629 ***			0.057
70 +			1.247 ***			0.978 **
Sex and marital status						
Widowed/divorced mother			-0.369			0.436
Widowed/divorced father (Married couple)			-0.444			0.010
Family income logged values			-0.085			0.115
Self-rated health						
Not good / very bad			-0.202			0.023
So-so (Very good / good)			0.024			0.063
Constant	-0.923 ***	-1.647 ***	-1.070	0.344 *	-0.051	-0.767
Model χ square (log likelihood)	1.6	25.8	42.6	26.4	50.887	60.3
Degree of freedom	2	8	15	2	8	15

* $p < .10$; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

Note: Results are generated by logistic regression. The parenthesized categories are reference-omitted categories.

The effect of living arrangements is further increased after the influence of child characteristics is taken into consideration (in Model 2) and remains as strong when parental characteristics are also included as controls (in Model 3). This pattern indicates that there is a strong effect of living arrangements on the likelihood of old age support in household chores, independent of the personal characteristics of both parents and children.

The presence of a strong effect of living arrangements on household chores is certainly as expected. However, it is difficult to understand why living arrangements have no clear impact on support for parents in personal care, which involves help in bathing, getting dressed, and going to the bathroom. A possible explanation is that whereas household chores assistance is very much conditioned by distance, the need for personal care, with its implied urgency of parental physical condition, may push children, whether coresident or not, to come to the rescue.²⁴

The effects of living arrangements on economic and other support

Table 6.5 presents estimates of the effects of living arrangements on two types of economic support and on “other support.” For cash giving, the regression coefficients of living arrangements in Model 1 are not statistically significant, with the omitted reference category of nearby but non-coresident children slightly more likely to give cash to parents (as shown in Table 6.2). When controls for child characteristics and parent characteristics are added to the equation (in Models 2 and 3), the net effect of coresidence reverses and becomes positive. However, the tendency for coresident children to be more likely to give cash to parents remains nonsignificant statistically.

For in-kind economic support, the results from Model 1 make it appear that coresidential children are significantly *less* likely than other children to provide parents with assistance. However, this difference disappears when the effects of child characteristics are taken into account. Apparently the variables of gender and child income explain away the effect of living arrangements. In other words, the strong effect that we see in Model 1 is due largely to the fact that sons and children with lower incomes tend to live with their parents and also are less likely to give parents gifts in kind. When the variables of parents' characteristics are added in Model 3, the basic pattern remains the same. As with cash giving, living arrangements do not have a significant net effect on the likelihood that children will provide parents with gifts in kind.

Table 6.5 Effects of Living Arrangements on Economic Assistance and Other Miscellaneous Support to Older Parents: Logistic Regressions

	Cash giving			Material goods			Other miscellaneous support		
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Living Arrangements									
Coresidence (Non-coresidence - daily contact)	-0.065	0.185	0.380	-0.568 **	-0.058	-0.036	0.497 +	0.317	0.277
Non-coresidence - less than daily contact	-0.278	-0.243	-0.216	0.025	-0.015	-0.077	-0.327	-0.328	-0.421
Child's characteristics									
Sex:									
Male (Female)		0.036	-0.023		-0.547 **	-0.625***		0.515 *	0.466 +
Marital status:									
Married (Not married)		0.470	0.494		0.221	0.271		-0.977 *	-1.016 +
Have own children:									
Yes (No)		-0.369	-0.587 *		0.384	0.186		0.928 *	0.720
Education:									
(Elementary to middle school)									
High school and vocational school		-0.143	-0.084		0.003	0.056		0.599 *	0.907 **
College and higher		-0.478 *	-0.396		-0.081	-0.050		-0.026	0.344
Income: logged values		0.354***	0.370***		0.167***	0.155***		0.027	0.026
Parent's characteristics									
Age:									
(50-59)									
60-69			0.198			0.558 **			0.513 +
70 +			0.680 *			0.722 *			0.571
Sex and marital status:									
Widowed/divorced mother			0.683 +			0.981 *			-0.768
Widowed/divorced father (Married couple)			-1.376 *			-0.715			0.953
Family income: logged values			-0.384 **			0.013			0.018
Self-rated health:									
Not good / very bad			0.258			0.261			0.617 +
So-so (Very good / good)			0.145			0.206			0.389
Constant	-0.217	-2.239***	-0.154	0.791***	-0.402	-0.803	-2.049***	-2.671***	-3.498 **
Model χ square (log likelihood)	2.1	43.2	71.3	13.8	48.7	69.7	9.5	26.3	39.0
Degree of freedom	2	8	15	2	8	15	2	8	15

+ $p < .10$; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$. *Note:* Results are generated by logistic regression. The parenthesized categories are reference-omitted categories.

It is interesting to note that for economic support both in cash and in kind, widowed or divorced mothers are more likely than married mothers to receive support from children. Widowed or divorced fathers, however, are less likely than married fathers to receive such support from children, a gender difference for which we have no ready explanation.

From our “other support” question it appears that coresidence is conducive to providing parents with miscellaneous other kinds of assistance (see Model 1). However, this weak effect is reduced and is no longer statistically significant once child and parent characteristics are controlled for.

In sum, we have examined five measures designed to record the current support provided to aging parents. For three of these (chore assistance, gifts in kind, and other support), living arrangements initially appeared to make a significant difference in the likelihood of providing support to parents. However, once child and parent characteristics are controlled for, only in the case of chore assistance is the impact of living arrangements still significant. We conclude that coresident children are more likely to help their parents with household chores than are non-coresident children generally. However, for other kinds of assistance studied here, we are surprised to learn that children who live separately but nearby are about as likely to provide assistance as coresident children. Living arrangements appear to have a much more limited impact on the provision of support to parents than the existing literature generally implies. However, before drawing final conclusions we must examine our remaining measures, which concern child perceptions of changes in support given to parents after they married.

The effects of living arrangements on post-marital changes in support

Table 6.6 summarizes logistic regression analyses of the effect of living arrangements on perceived changes after marriage in the support provided to parents. The results show that, once child and parent characteristics are controlled for, coresident children are significantly more likely than nearby non-coresident children to report that marriage did *not* reduce the economic and emotional support they provided to their parents. By the same token, non-coresident children who do not see their parents on a daily basis are significantly more likely than nearby non-coresident children (and hence also coresident children) to report that their economic and emotional support to their parents *did* decline after they got married. These patterns appear to indicate that coresidence, and to a lesser extent non-coresidence in proximity, helps married children to continue to maintain strong bonds with

their parents, hence facilitating the continuation of economic and emotional support even after they get married and have their own spouses and children.

However, a puzzle arises from the apparent conflict between the results in Table 6.5 and Table 6.6. How can it be the case that non-coresident children are no less likely to supply economic support to their parents currently than coresident children, but at the same time are significantly more likely to report that the economic support supplied to parents declined after they got married? One way to reconcile these two generalizations would be to conclude that those children who provide more financial support to their parents than the norm prior to marriage would be the ones particularly likely to leave and set up an independent residence. Once established in separate households, their economic support to parents might be reduced to a “normal” level similar to coresident children. However, this scenario does not appear very plausible. This puzzle is pursued further below.

Conclusions

There is ample evidence that living arrangements in China, and especially in urban areas, have gradually shifted away from the traditional pattern of coresidence of aging parents with at least one grown child. It has been shown, both by large-scale surveys conducted previously and in our Baoding survey, that a significant proportion of the elderly now live separately from all their grown children. Given the long-established tradition that aging parents live with married sons (and daughters-in-law) and are cared for primarily by the coresiding children and their families, this evolving pattern has been the source of some concern. Given the additional fact that China has not been able to establish a public welfare system to care for the elderly, a question of both academic significance and policy importance is whether the increasing “nucleation” of living arrangements is detrimental to the well-being of the elderly. The main purpose of this chapter has been to search for a definitive answer to this question.

In order to approach this question, we analyzed how the measures of support from children to parents available in our Baoding child questionnaire were related to the living arrangements of those children. In contrast to most previous studies of this topic, we divided living arrangements into three categories, rather than two. Among non-coresident children, we separated those children who reported they were in daily contact with their parents (and presumably live nearby) from children who were in less frequent

Table 6.6 The Effects of Living Arrangements on Perceived Change of Assistance to Older Parents after Marriage: Logistic Regressions

	Change in economic support			Change in emotional support		
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Living Arrangements						
Coresidence (Non-coresidence— daily contact)	0.728 **	0.639 **	0.523 *	0.483	0.480	0.585 +
Non-coresidence— less than daily contact	-0.470 *	-0.433 *	-0.564 **	-0.868 ***	-0.822 ***	-0.862 ***
Child's characteristics						
Sex						
Male (Female)		0.359 *	0.390 *		0.021	-0.015
Having own children						
Yes (No)		0.075	-0.286		0.105	-0.040
Education						
(Elementary to middle school)						
High school and vocational school		0.307	0.408		-0.089	-0.009
College and higher		0.109	0.078		-0.397	-0.325
Income: logged values		-0.037	-0.026		0.031	0.035
Parent's characteristics						
Age						
(50-59)						
60-69			0.267			0.466 +
70 +			0.555 +			0.479
Sex and marital status						
Widowed/divorced mother			0.559			-0.471
Widowed/divorced father (Married couple)			-0.092			-0.901
Family income logged values			0.113			-0.056
Self-rated health						
Not good / very bad			-0.051			0.047
So-so			0.029			-0.385
(Very good / good)						
Constant	0.379	0.193	-0.493	1.561 ***	1.392 **	1.694
Model χ square (log likelihood)	28.1	33.3	42.0	27.9	27.4	37.2
Degree of freedom	2	7	14	2	7	14

+ $p < .10$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Notes: 1. Results are generated by logistic regression. The parenthesized categories are reference-omitted categories.

2. The coding for change of both economic and emotional support after marriage is 1 = no change or more support, and 0 = otherwise.

3. Number of cases for analysis: 573.

contact. We think this distinction is important because of indications in other analyses of the Baoding data and in previous studies of urban China generally²⁵ that having several nearby children sharing support for aging parents may increasingly be seen as an effective substitute for, or even preferable alternative to, having one coresident child primarily obligated to provide such support. Therefore, we wanted to determine whether coresidence per se makes a difference in the provision of support to parents, and we do this by specifically focusing on a comparison of coresident children with other grown children living separately but nearby.

When we performed multivariate analyses of predictors of old age support using this three-category measure of living arrangements, the results were mixed. Once we controlled for the characteristics of children and parents, of our five measures of current assistance provided to parents, for only one was there a significant difference between coresident and nearby non-coresident children. Only in the provision of household chore assistance did coresidence per se appear to make a difference. However, both of our measures dealing with recollected changes in support provided to parents after the child married make it appear that coresidence per se does make a difference. Nearby non-coresident children are more likely than coresident children to report that their economic and emotional support to their parents declined after they got married, and such reports are even more likely in the case of children who live at some distance.

These mixed results present some difficulties in terms of our effort to summarize the impact of living arrangements on support for aging parents. There are various ways to view these mixed results. It might be concluded that we face a standard "is the glass half full or half empty" dilemma in summarizing the impact of coresidence. Coresidence per se appears to make a significant difference for three of our measures, and not for four others. However, as indicated above, two of our current support measures and one "change after marriage" variable concern economic support provided to parents, and the results for these measures appear directly contradictory. Non-coresident children living nearby are significantly more likely than coresident children to report that their economic assistance to their parents declined after they married, and yet the current levels of economic support they provide are not significantly lower than those coming from coresident children. How can these contradictory indications be reconciled?

We noted earlier that one possible reconciling hypothesis does not appear very plausible—the idea that those grown children providing the most

economic support to parents prior to marriage are the ones most likely to establish separate residences after marriage, so that their lowered levels of economic support after marriage would bring their contributions into line with those of children who remain in the parental home after marriage. Are there other possible explanations for the conflicting findings from different measures of economic support? Earlier we noted that the two “change after marriage” measures involve global reports about events that in some cases occurred many years ago. Could there be other considerations that are biasing these recollections so that the changes in support to parents after marriage are exaggerated for those who no longer coreside?

One possibility is that some grown children who move into separate residences after marriage feel anxious about whether they are doing enough to honor their filial obligations to their parents. (Recall the evidence presented in chapter 4 that filial attitudes remain very strong within our child sample.). Perhaps non-coresident children are particularly likely to feel that they are not shouldering as much of the burden of parental support as their siblings who remain coresident with their parents. If these speculations are accurate, then such feelings may motivate non-coresident children to make extra efforts to maintain their economic and emotional support of their parents. Thus their assistance may end up being very similar to the levels provided by coresident children, while their perception of reductions in support after marriage may reflect their anxieties about filiality more than any objective decreases in levels of support they provide.

Another possible explanation of the apparent contradiction is that when married children move out their likelihood of providing monetary support may not decline, but the actual sums provided may decrease. These alternative scenarios are speculative, and we have no way of testing them with our Baoding survey data. Properly testing for changes in levels of support for parents after marriage would require longitudinal data, with children interviewed prior to marriage and at later time points after they have married. It is also worth restating the fact that a majority of all non-coresident children claim that their economic and emotional support for their parents did *not* decline after they married (true for 60% for economic support and 79% for emotional support—see Table 6.3). Clearly there is not a necessary or automatic connection between marrying or moving away from the parental household and reduced support to parents. These considerations lead us to have more confidence in the data on current support levels reported in

Table 6.5 than in the apparent reductions in support for parents reported in Table 6.6.

In conclusion, although our results are mixed, on balance we end up stressing that the glass of water is “half full” rather than “half empty.” Coresidence may be important for parental support in certain realms, and the area of household chores is the one clear case of that effect in our data. However, in several other realms there is no clear difference in the support provided by coresident children and those who live separately, particularly those who live close by and who are in daily contact. In other words, coresidence per se is not generally important for the maintenance of support to parents. From the standpoint of parents, it is not clear that having a coresident child is to be preferred to having several non-coresidential children living nearby. Thus we end up siding with the second viewpoint with which we began this chapter: The trend toward independent living by the urban elderly need not imply a deterioration of the familial support system.

The analysis in this chapter reinforces one of the conclusions reached in chapter 2. The patterns of family organization in urban China have changed from the patterns that were traditionally seen as ideal, which involved three or more generations living together under one roof. However, to date (or at least as of 1994 in Baoding) these changes do not appear to be endangering the support elderly urbanites receive from their grown children. An increasingly common pattern is for aging parents to live in a separate, nuclear family unit, but with several grown children living nearby and providing a variety of kinds of emotional and economic support. Even if parents live with one of their grown children, other, non-coresident children actively share in the support obligation. The increasing dominance and acceptance of this pattern has produced a new term from Chinese social scientists—a “networked family” (*wangluo jiating*)—to convey the idea of family obligations and exchanges that extend beyond the coresidential unit.²⁶ In a networked family it is relatively unimportant whether any children coreside with their aging parents. Parents need not worry about whether they can induce a child to remain in the parental nest, and even if none remain, very few parents report needing support and not receiving it (as noted in chapter 5).

However, it is not clear that this conclusion should lead to optimism and complacency about the future. The sustaining of high levels of familial support despite the trend toward independent residence by the elderly is premised on several circumstances. Those circumstances were largely intact still in the mid-1990s when we conducted our Baoding survey, but they may

not persist into the future. In particular, the maintenance of high levels of familial support for parents who live independently is premised on having several grown children, on those children retaining strong feelings of filial obligation, and on having many of those children living close enough to be in daily contact.²⁷ Will these conditions continue to prevail in Chinese cities?

With economic reform and the revival of systems of market distribution for labor, jobs, and housing, in the future grown children of aging parents may be less likely to live nearby, and increasingly they may even find opportunities that lead them to move to other parts of China. On a similar note, dramatic urban fertility reductions since the 1970s will eventually produce many elderly urbanites who have only one grown child, rather than the three or more that is typical of our Baoding parent respondents. Even if filial sentiments do not weaken among those children, the strategy of parents relying on joint assistance from several nearby children will not be viable. In other words, the shift in the familial support system from reliance on coresidence with children to shared support from several nearby children may be a temporary solution produced by the special features of China's socialist era (such as bureaucratic assignment of grown children to local jobs). In the future as the conditions that have maintained this pattern are undermined, the familial support system for elderly urbanites may yet be endangered.

NOTES

¹ See George P. Murdock, *Social Structure* (New York: The MacMillan Co., 1949); Marion J. Levy, Jr., "The Limits of Variation in Family Structure," in *Aspects of Analysis of Family Structure*, ed. Ansley Coale et al. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965), 41–60; William J. Goode, *World Revolution and Family Patterns* (New York: Free Press, 1963); J. Hajnal, "Two Kinds of Preindustrial Household Formation System," *Population and Development Review* 8 (1982): 449–94; Alan MacFarlane, *Marriage and Love in England 1300–1840* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, Inc., 1986); Peter Laslett, *The Household and Family in Past Time* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972).

² Lynn White, "Coresidence and Leaving Home: Young Adults and Their Parents," *Annual Review of Sociology* 20 (1994): 81–102.

³ See MacFarlane, *Marriage and Love*; Edward Shorter, *The Making of the Modern Family* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1977); Goode, *World Revolution*.

⁴ Levy, "The Limits of Variation."

⁵ See Deborah Davis-Friedmann, *Long Lives* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991); William Lively and Xinhua Ren, "Patrilocality and Early Marital Co-residence in Rural China," *China Quarterly* 130 (1992): 378–91.

⁶ See C.K. Yang, *Chinese Communist Society: The Family and the Village* (Cambridge: The M.I.T. Press, 1959); Davis-Friedmann, *Long Lives*.

⁷ Chunyuan Shang, "Zhongguo Jiating de Guimo, Jiegou Jiqi Fazhan Qushi" (The Size, Structure and Trends of Chinese Family), *Renkou Xinxu* (Population News) no. 1 (1987).

⁸ ZGRKNJ [Zhongguo Renkou Nianjian] (China Population Yearbook) (Beijing: China Statistics Press, 1985); ZGRKNJ (1994).

⁹ Jihui Yuan and Z. R. Zhang, eds., *Laonianhua Dui Zhongguo De Tiaozhan* (The Challenge of Aging Facing China) (Shanghai: Fudan University Press, 1991).

¹⁰ CNAOA [China National Committee on Aging], eds., *Zhongguo Laonian Wenti Duice Yantaohui Lunwenji* (Proceedings of National Symposium on the Policy of Aging in China) (Beijing: China National Commission on Aging, 1994).

¹¹ Lunchun Zou et al., eds., *Beijing de Laonianren* (The Elderly in Beijing Municipality) (Beijing: Beijing Statistical Bureau, 1994).

¹² See IPSCASS [Institute of Population Studies, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences], eds., *Zhongguo Laonian Renkou Wenxuan* (Selected Papers on the Old Population in China) (Beijing: Press of Economic Development, 1990); Yuan and Zhang, *Laonianhua*; Chunyuan Zhang, ed., *Zhongguo Laonian Renkou Yanjiu* (The Study of the Old Population in China) (Beijing: Peking University Press, 1991). However, see the contrary evidence on continuing youth support for filial obligations and coresidence in chapter 4. One scholar has also argued against the notion that declining fertility will promote more nuclear family units. Zeng Yi contends that there will actually be a rise in the proportion of stem families, with parents living with one grown child. Zeng Yi, *Family Dynamics in China: A Life Table Analysis* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991).

¹³ IPSCASS, eds., *Zhongguo Laonian*; Zhang, ed. *Zhongguo Laonian*; Yuan and Zhang, *Laonianhua*.

¹⁴ Zhang, ed., *Zhongguo Laonian*; Shuxin Wang, "Lun Chengshi Zhongqing Yu Laonian Fen Er Bu Li De Gongyang Guanxi" (On the Supportive Relationship between Young and Middle-Aged Family Members and the Elderly in Urban Areas Provided by Living Separately But Not Isolated), *Zhongguo Renkou Kexue* (China Demography) no. 3 (1995); CNCOA, eds., *Zhongguo Laonian Wenti*; IPSCASS, eds., *Zhongguo Laonian*; Ge Lin et al., "Jianle Yi Jiating He Shequ Fuwu 'Xiang Jiehe de Zhongguo Shehui Baozhang Tixi'" (Establishing a "Chinese Social Security System" Integrating Family with Community Services), *Population Research* no. 2 (1999).

¹⁵ CNCOA, eds., *Zhongguo Laonian Wenti*; IPSCASS, eds., *Zhongguo Laonian*; Zhang, ed., *Zhongguo Laonian*.

¹⁶ The English translation of these four support questions is as follows. (1) No matter whether your father/your mother/your father and mother need assistance with personal care, are you currently helping them with it? (2) No matter whether your father/your mother/your father and mother need assistance with household chores, such as shopping, cooking, taking the bus or managing the money, are you currently helping them with it? (3) No matter whether your father/your mother/your father and mother need financial aid, are you currently helping them with it? (4) No matter whether your father/your mother/your father and mother need in-kind support such as food and clothes, are you currently helping them with it? (5) In addition to above-mentioned support (i.e., personal care, household chores, financial and material support), are you currently providing other support to your parents? For all the four questions, the preselected choices were "yes" and "no."

¹⁷ The English translation of the two support questions is as follows. (1) What do you feel about the financial support you have given to your parents after you got married? (2) What do you feel about the emotional support you have given to your parents after you got married? The preselected choices include (1) "having given much less," (2) "having given somewhat less," (3) "remained unchanged or having given more."

¹⁸ John Knodel et al., *Familial Support and the Life Course of Thai Elderly and Their Children. Comparative Study of the Elderly in Asia*. Research Reports No. 91-12. (Ann Arbor, MI: Population Studies Center, University of Michigan, 1991).

¹⁹ See Yi Chi, *Zhongguo Neidi He Xianggang Diqu Laonianren Shenghuo Zhuangkuang He Shenghuo Zhiliang Yanjiu* (Comparative Study on the Life of the Elderly in Mainland China and Hong Kong) (Beijing: Peking University Press, 1998); Ellen L. Idler and Yael Benyamini, "Self-Rated Health and Mortality: A Review of Twenty-Seven Community Studies," *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 38 (1997): 21-37.

²⁰ It should be noted that some of the parents who do not coreside with the respondent may coreside with a different child. In other words, since these calculation are based upon data from the child surveys, they are not a reliable guide to the factors that influence whether a parent coresides with a grown child or not.

²¹ See John R. Logan et al., "Tradition and Change in the Urban Chinese Family: The Case of Living Arrangements," *Social Forces* 76 (1998): 851–82.

²² The bivariate associations between coresidence and three of these forms of assistance to parents are statistically significant—for household chores, material goods, and other support—see Tables 6.4 and 6.5, Model 1.

²³ Both bivariate associations of living arrangements with perceived changes after marriage are statistically significant—see Table 6.6, Model 1.

²⁴ However, in that case it remains puzzling why our measure of self-rated health status of the parent does not have a strong relationship with child provision of personal care assistance.

²⁵ Jonathan Unger, "Urban Families in the Eighties: An Analysis of Chinese Surveys," in *Chinese Families in the Post-Mao Era*, ed. Deborah Davis and Stevan Harrell (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).

²⁶ See the discussion in Unger, "Urban Families," 40–49. There are superficial similarities between a Chinese "networked family" and the term coined by Eugene Litwak to characterize the dominant form of family life in mid-twentieth century America—a "modified extended family." See Eugene Litwak, "Geographic Mobility and Extended Family Cohesion," *American Sociological Review* 25 (1960): 385–94. This term was proposed to counter Talcott Parson's characterization of America as stressing "isolated nuclear families." Both "networked family" and "modified extended family" convey the idea of a psychological sense of unity and obligation among close relatives living in different households. However, the two family forms are different in several ways. For example, substantially higher proportions of aging parents in China do coreside with a grown child in China than in America, and exchanges are more vertically structured by the ethic of filial piety in China than in America. However, perhaps the most critical difference is that Litwak sees the support of non-coresident kin as facilitating geographic mobility, while Chinese networked families are premised on close proximity and the immobility of children.

²⁷ Recall from chapter 2 that 88% of all the grown children of our parent respondents continue to reside in Baoding, and the fact noted earlier in this chapter that more than half of the non-coresident children interviewed were in daily contact with their parents. The net result of these figures is that the average parent respondent in our Baoding survey has approximately two children who are in daily contact with them.

7

SUPPORT FOR AGING PARENTS FROM DAUGHTERS VERSUS SONS

Martin King Whyte and Xu Qin

The Chinese family system is famous for its strong emphasis on patrilineal ties and obligations. As noted in chapter 1, for most of Chinese history married sons have been expected to coreside with their aging parents, while daughters have been expected to marry out into other families and communities. In the countryside rules of village and lineage exogamy often prevailed, so that “marriage out” meant moving to another, often distant, village. After they had married out, daughters retained emotional ties with their natal families and periodically visited their parents, but they were not expected to contribute to the old-age support of the latter. Rather, upon marriage the filial obligations of daughters were redirected to the support of their husbands’ parents. Thus support for aging parents came predominantly from sons and daughters-in-law, with married daughters playing little role in most instances. Much of the dynamic tension within extended Chinese families was seen as originating in the difficult struggle of young brides to establish themselves among strangers, for the combination of arranged marriage with village exogamy forced women to reside among people she had often never met before the day of the wedding. Only over the years and through the birth of children (preferably sons) might the terrified bride be transformed into a proud matriarch, only to have her place questioned by a new generation of brides in need of retraining, the wives of her sons.¹ Patrilineal family units had such a powerful place in popular consciousness and in the social structure that divided loyalties (between one’s own parents and one’s husband’s) were strongly discouraged.²

Partly because of this crucial difference in the expected roles of sons and daughters, the birth of a son was usually celebrated much more elaborately as a “big happiness” event than the birth of a daughter (referred to as “small happiness”). Customary phrases such as “the more sons the more wealth” and “raising sons to guard against old age” contrasted with the terms used to describe daughters: “a married-out daughter is like spilled water” (*jia chuqu de nuer, po chuqu de shui*), and a daughter is an “unprofitable commodity” (*pei qian huo*). Brides who produced daughters but no sons were blamed for this serious fault, and if the family had enough resources she might be displaced in the husband’s favor by a concubine in the quest for sons to continue the family line. In extreme circumstances newborn daughters might be abandoned or killed, a fate much less likely to occur to newborn sons. What was at stake was not simply the posterity of the family, but the ability of the parents to survive once they could no longer support themselves. Parents without any sons were faced with the prospect of trying to entice a young male to reverse the usual pattern. Instead of bringing a “stranger” bride into his parental home, he would have to marry as a stranger into his wife’s family and agree that future children (or at least male children) would bear his wife’s surname, rather than his own. Given the overwhelming emphasis on patrilineal ties, it was often difficult to find a male willing to accept a compromised status in his wife’s home.³ Other solutions to the problem of old-age support existed, such as adopting a son from another family, but the same patrilineal culture obstructed these options as well.

Despite the dramatic changes that have swept China in recent decades, as reviewed in chapter 1, available evidence indicates that the patrilineal, patrilocal nature of social life still prevails in the countryside.⁴ As a result, old-age support in Chinese rural areas continues to depend primarily on sons, with married daughters playing only a marginal role. For example, one survey conducted in a rural area in Shandong Province in 1992 found that there was a strong gender difference in support for older parents.⁵ Similarly, research conducted on Taiwan indicates that financial support to aging parents from sons remains more important there than support from daughters. One recent study on that island concluded that “daughters’ support still remains very supplementary.”⁶ (We will present our own data on this question comparing Baoding and urban Taiwan in chapter 10.)

The continuing gender disparity in old-age support in rural China is a major factor explaining the problems of enforcing official family planning targets in Chinese villages. It is still the case that if rural parents give birth to

daughters but no sons, they face the prospect of having nobody to care for them and support them in old age. This is so because most rural localities have no substantial public source of old-age support available. The patrilineal basis of old-age support is the primary reason why rural parents in large numbers continue to try desperately to have a son.⁷

In China's cities the situation has changed in many ways. Available evidence indicates that married daughters are now expected to, and do, contribute to the support of their own parents as well as their husbands' parents.⁸ In addition, the majority of urban retirees receive pensions, as noted in chapter 2, and if so they do not have to rely entirely or even primarily on grown children in their old age. For these reasons, among others, urban parents are less likely than their rural counterparts to feel that it is essential to have at least one son, and enforcement of the "one child policy" has been relatively successful in China's large cities. At the same time, as noted in chapter 2, it is still two to three times as likely that aging parents will live with a married son as with a married daughter. In other words, the traditional patrilineal bias of Chinese kinship has not disappeared entirely in urban China. However, the evidence presented in chapter 6 indicates that coresidence is not as important as it presumably once was, in terms of providing a basis for old-age support. Daughters (as well as sons) may provide multiple kinds of support to aging parents, even when they do not live under the same roof. Anecdotally, urban Chinese sometimes claim that they prefer to rely on a married daughter, since reliance on a son also implies reliance on a daughter-in-law, and the mother-in-law/daughter-in-law relationship is traditionally prone to conflict. The goal of the present chapter is to go beyond these contradictory indicators to investigate the current situation in regard to the gendered roots of old-age support in Baoding. Do grown and married sons still contribute the major share of the care and support that parents receive from their children in that city, even if daughters help out to some degree? Or do grown and married daughters now contribute as much or even more than do sons?

Relations with Parents—the View from Their Children

The data from our Baoding surveys yield a number of ways to look at the issue of how much daughters versus sons participate in the care and support of their aging parents. As the analyses in chapter 5 indicate, parents and their children do not always agree precisely on how much each child

provides. In the present analysis we will examine first a variety of indicators of the sorts of ties and exchanges that Baoding grown children report having with their parents, and whether the extent of those ties and exchanges varies depending upon the gender of the child. Subsequently we will focus more narrowly on financial support given to parents, and in that analysis we will switch to the perspective of the parents: Of those parents receiving some financial support from grown children, what is the relative contribution received from daughters versus sons?⁹

The Baoding child questionnaire contained a wide range of questions about relations between grown children and their parents, questions that we will use to see whether the patterns for daughters differ from those for sons. We focus first on some of the questions dealing with attitudes toward traditional filial obligations that were included in our child questionnaire. The primary issue of interest here is whether there is a difference in filiality between grown sons and daughters, particularly in regard to obligations toward their own parents (rather than their in-laws). In making this comparison we exclude cases of families with daughters but no sons, and those with sons but no daughters. This exclusion is adopted because we assume that gender specialization in relations with parents will only be revealed when siblings of both genders are available. This exclusion reduces the number of child interview cases from 753 to 648, a modest reduction that means that 86% of all the Baoding parents whose children we interviewed had at least one child of each gender.¹⁰ Since we are particularly interested in whether daughters, after marriage, have weaker ties with their parents than do sons, in general we will also restrict our attention here to cases of married children.¹¹ That restriction reduces our child sample further to 523 cases.

In Table 7.1 are displayed figures from our child sample on the level of agreement of married (and siblinged) sons and daughters with various questions about filial obligations. The answers to the question most directly relevant to the present inquiry are shown in the first row of the table. There we can see that only a minority of either sons or daughters agrees with the traditional attitude that married daughters have a lesser obligation to support their own parents than married sons. It seems evident not only that daughters expect to share the burden of supporting aging parents, but that most brothers share this expectation. However, this question also revealed the strongest gender disparity in the table, with daughters much more likely than sons to disagree with the traditional view.¹² In other words, in some cases

daughters feel obligated to share the burden even if their brothers do not think they should feel so obligated.

Table 7.1 Comparing the Filial Attitudes of Sons and Daughters (% agreement)

Question	Sons	Daughters	N
Daughters less filial duty***	33.8	13.1	522
Married child ask no help	85.8	86.2	515
Child make parent happy*	47.7	38.1	523
Elder better with married child	65.2	63.9	523
Old generation get final say	60.9	61.5	523
Child should always be filial	97.8	95.9	521
Own child more important than parent	34.5	35.3	516
Career more imp. than parents*	43.7	33.3	522

Statistical significance of gender differences: * = $p < .05$; ** = $p < .01$; *** = $p < .001$

Detailed item wording:

1. A married daughter has less responsibility to support her parents than a married son. (strongly agree + agree)
2. Married children who live separately should not ask their parents for financial help. (strongly agree + agree)
3. A married child who lives separately should still do everything possible to see that his or her parents have a happy old age. (strongly agree)
4. If possible, it is best for old people to live together with a married child. (strongly agree + agree)
5. When a family is making important decisions, no matter how old the children are, it is best if the older generation has the final say in the decision. (agree)
6. No matter how they were treated when they were young, grown children should always be filial toward their parents. (agree)
7. People should care for and nourish their own children more than they care for their parents and parents-in-law. (strongly agree + agree)
8. Young people should put more dedication into their careers than they do into caring for their parents. (agree)

For most of the remaining filial attitude questions shown in Table 7.1, there is no significant difference between the views of daughters versus sons. In only two of the other items shown in the table is there such a difference, and those two instances point in opposite directions. A slightly higher percentage of sons than daughters agreed with the statement that “even when children have married and live elsewhere, they should do as much as possible to see that their parents have a happy old age.” However, sons were also more likely to agree with the not-so-filial view that “young people should pay more attention to their careers than to caring for their parents.” On balance these attitudinal items provide support for the view that the feelings of obligation toward parents of married daughters are now much the same as those of their brothers. (See also the results presented in chapter 4,

Table 4.5.) But do filial attitudes translate into similar patterns of relations with parents? Several more sets of figures help illuminate this question.

Table 7.2 Gender Differences in Coresidence and Visiting Parents
(% with described behavior)

Behavior	Sons	Daughters	N
Coreside with parents***	37.3	14.8	523
See father > several X / week	85.2	86.8	366
See mother > several X / week	85.3	87.5	369
See f-in-law > several X / week***	46.5	54.6	350
See m-in-law > several X / week***	47.5	52.9	380

*Statistical significance of gender differences: * = p <= .05; ** = p <= .01; *** = p <= .001*

In Table 7.2 we examine the reported frequency of contacts between married children and their parents and parents-in-law.¹³ The first row in the table shows once again the familiar pattern of married sons living with their parents much more often than married daughters—in this specific comparison the differential is about 2 ½: 1.¹⁴ The responses in the rest of the table come only from non-coresident children, and concern the frequency of visiting parents. The figures in this table make clear that there is no significant difference in the frequency with which non-coresident daughters and sons visit their own parents. However, there is a significant difference in the frequency of contacts with parents-in-law, with daughters in more frequent contact than sons. We can conclude from these figures that in terms of keeping in touch and visiting, married daughters do “double duty” more often than married sons. Daughters are likely to keep in regular touch with both their own parents and those of their husbands, while sons keep in close touch with their own parents but are more likely to leave social contact with their parents-in-law to their wives. Note also that married daughters visit their own parents more often than they visit their in-laws.¹⁵ The picture of contacts revealed by these figures for married women is quite different from that yielded by previous (mostly rural) ethnographic accounts. Those accounts portray women who had married being expected to visit their natal families only occasionally, and mostly for customarily set events, such as during seasonal festivals, weddings, and funerals.¹⁶

Table 7.3 displays the pattern of responses of married daughters and sons to a variety of other questions about the pattern of current relations with parents. As in the previous two tables, the most common pattern is one in

Table 7.3: Gender Differences in Relations with Parents
(% reporting described behavior)

Behavior	Sons	Daughters	N
Less \$ support after wed**	36.7	49.4	521
Less emot. support after wed	19.8	24.6	522
Very filial to parents	26.6	31.6	522
Parents usually win disputes	70.7	68.5	475
Parents sometimes criticize**	52.3	44.7	523
Child sometimes crit. parent	30.2	39.3	522
Child always ask for advice	45.3	41.2	521
Parents sometimes advise	78.5	79.8	522
Child listen to parent advice	56.9	57.2	463
Parent asked to mediate	39.5	33.0	455
No difference in life styles*	22.7	32.5	521

Statistical significance of gender differences. * = $p \leq .05$; ** = $p \leq .01$; *** = $p \leq .001$

Detailed item wording:

1. After you got married, do you feel that the economic help you gave your parents was much less, somewhat less, or was there no change? (much less + somewhat less)
2. After you got married, do you feel that the emotional support you gave your parents was much less, somewhat less, or was there no change? (much less + somewhat less)
3. In general how filial do you feel you are currently toward your parent(s) and other elders in your family? Would you say you are very filial, relatively filial, relatively unfilial, or very unfilial? (very filial)
4. When you get into disputes with your parent(s), in the end who generally wins out? Is it usually your parents, somewhat more your parents, about equal, somewhat more you, or usually you? (parents usually + somewhat more)
5. Do your parents often, sometimes, rarely, or never criticize you and the things you do? (often + sometimes)
6. Do you often, sometimes, rarely, or never criticize your parents and the things they do? (often + sometimes)
7. When you have to make decisions about important things in your life, such as getting married, work, or moving, how often do you discuss things with your parents and get their advice? Do you feel you always do this, sometimes, occasionally, or never talk with them and seek their advice? (always)
8. How frequently do your parents give instructions to their grown children? Does this happen often, sometimes, rarely, or never? (often + sometimes)
9. How much do you listen to their instructions? Do you often, sometimes, rarely, or never listen? (often)
10. If you have a conflict with your spouse, would you ask your parents to come and help mediate? (would)
11. How large do you feel is the difference between your lifestyle and ways of thinking about things and those of your parents? Is there no difference, some difference, or a big difference? (no difference)

which there are no significant differences between married sons and daughters in their reported relationships with their parents currently. However, it is interesting that daughters are slightly more likely than sons to report that

after they married their level of emotional support supplied to their parents declined (row 2), and they are significantly more likely to report that their level of financial support to parents declined (row 1).¹⁷ The only other differences shown in the table that are statistically significant hint that sons may be less emotionally close to parents than daughters. A higher proportion of sons than daughters report that they are sometimes or often the target of parental criticism (line 5), and fewer sons than daughters report agreement with the parents on life style and ideas (last line in the table). Once again the dominant pattern favors an interpretation of similarity in relations between married daughters and sons and their parents, rather than the differentiated pattern stressed in the Confucian past.

If we turn our attention now to the four kinds of support of parents we asked about systematically—physical care for parents (i.e., things like help going to the bathroom and getting dressed), help with daily chores, financial support, and providing material goods—the figures in Table 7.4 reveal some surprises.¹⁸ Daughters appear slightly more likely than sons to provide three of these kinds of support (personal care, help with daily chores, and provision of material goods); sons, in contrast, are slightly more likely to provide financial support to parents. Only the tendency for daughters to more often give food and other material gifts to their parents is statistically significant. The bottom two rows in Table 7.4 provide additional information about the last two kinds of material support. The figures in these rows come from follow-up questions asking those married children who provided support to recall the average amount provided to parents, per month in the case of financial support, and per year in the case of material goods provided. When it comes to monthly financial support to parents, sons report providing significantly more than daughters on average (34.3 yuan versus 17 yuan). Daughters provide somewhat more support than sons to parents in the form of food and other goods (252.3 yuan per year versus 229.7 yuan per year), but this difference is not large enough to be statistically significant. Overall, if we were to accept these retrospective estimates as fully accurate, they tell us that married sons on average provide 641.3 yuan to parents per year, while married daughters provide 456 yuan. These figures might be interpreted as indicating that, whereas daughters are now more actively involved in contacts with and support for their parents than was generally the case in the past, when it comes to what matters most—financial assistance—sons still do significantly more. (Recall also that the analysis presented in chapter 5 pointed to a similar conclusion.) This interpretation

would also be consistent with the pattern observed in the first row of Table 7.3, with daughters more often than sons reporting that they reduced their financial support to parents when they got married.

Table 7.4 Gender Differences in Support Provided to Parents (% providing type of support indicated)

Behavior	Sons	Daughters	N
Gives parents physical help	24.0	28.7	523
Gives parents chores help	55.9	59.0	523
Gives money to parents	45.9	42.2	523
Gives in kind to parents*	63.8	72.5	523
Monthly cash to parents (yuan)***	34.3	17.0	500
Annual goods to parents (yuan)	229.7	252.3	480

Statistical significance of gender differences: * = $p \leq .05$; ** = $p \leq .01$; *** = $p \leq .001$

Before accepting this conclusion we need to recognize the fact that married sons and daughters differ in a number of ways that affect this comparison. For example, married sons are much more likely than their sisters to live with their parents, and they also are likely to have higher incomes.¹⁹ Once we recognize these differences, we are led to a further question—if we control for other factors, does being a married daughter versus a married son per se affect the various forms of support provided to parents? To answer this question we need to carry out multivariate analysis of our support measures.

In order to examine the impact of the gender of the child on the four forms of parental support in a multivariate context, we need to include in our analysis a range of variables that we expect may also have an impact on levels of support. The tables that follow utilize the following set of predictor variables, a selection based upon preliminary analyses and the results reported in other chapters in this volume:

Male (gender of child, 1 = male, 0 = female)

Coresidence (child lives with parent = 1; non-coresident = 0)

Education:

College education (college education or higher = 1; otherwise = 0)

Upper middle school (upper middle school or senior polytechnical school = 1; otherwise = 0)

(Junior middle school or below—omitted category)

Rural origins (grew up in rural area = 1; otherwise = 0)
Parental age:
Parent old old (parent 70 or older = 1; otherwise = 0)
Parent mid old (parent 60-69 = 1; otherwise = 0)
(Parent young old: 50-59—omitted category)
Number of siblings
Number of children ²⁰
Ln child income (Natural logarithm of the child monthly income)
Ln parent income (Natural logarithm of parent monthly income) ²¹
Parent health problems ²²
Parent provision of child care help in the past (1 = yes; 0 = no)
Parent provision of domestic chore help in the past (1 = yes; 0 = no)
Parent provision of financial support in the past (1 = yes; 0 = no) ²³

In Table 7.5 we display the logistic regression coefficients showing the relationship between these predictor variables and our four measures of whether the child is currently providing the four forms of parental support measured (in each case with 1 = yes and 0 = no).

A variety of interesting results are displayed in this table, results which generally reinforce conclusions reached in earlier chapters. For example, only in regard to the child helping the parents with domestic chores does coresidence between parent and child make a significant difference (line 2; see also chapter 6). The best educated children are more likely to provide assistance with the physical needs of the parents and with domestic chores, but they are slightly less likely to provide cash and gifts in kind to parents (lines 3-4). On the other hand, children who grew up in rural areas are significantly more likely to provide parents with assistance in cash and in kind, but not particularly to provide physical and chore assistance (line 5). The older the parents are, the more likely they are to receive physical, chore, and goods support, but they are not more likely to receive monetary assistance (lines 6-7). The number of siblings and the number of one's own children do not appear to have a net impact on support provided to parents, except for the curious and unexpected finding that those with many siblings are *more* likely to provide cash support than those with few siblings (lines 8-9).

Table 7.5 Logistic Regression Analysis of Support to Parents
(logistic regression coefficients)

Predictor	Physical care	Chore help	Cash gifts	In kind gifts
1. Son	-.42*	-.47**	-.08	-.63***
2. Child coresides	-.08	.90***	.19	-.16
3. Child college education	.72**	.50*	-.34	-.12
4. Child upper middle school	.33	-.02	-.11	.05
5. Child rural origin	.13	.11	.42*	.85***
6. Parent old old	1.02***	.70**	.22	.68**
7. Parent mid old	.69***	.10	-.13	.75***
8. Number of siblings	.01	-.09	.19**	-.04
9. Number of children	-.22	-.36	-.21	-.02
10. Ln child income	.06	-.04	.31**	.15
11. Ln parent income	-.07	-.05	-.22***	-.00
12. Parent health problems	.13	.18**	.00	.06
13. Parent helped-childcare	.32	.45*	.13	.21
14. Parent helped-chores	.38	.32	.79***	.56**
15. Parent helped-money	.73***	.86***	.10	.94***
Constant	-2.58***	-.13	-1.75**	-1.17
N	505	505	505	505
-2 log likelihood	527.5	616.7	630.5	569.6

* = $p \leq .05$; ** = $p \leq .01$; *** = $p \leq .001$

Note: Analysis based on data from child questionnaires.

Parent and child incomes are important only as they affect the provision of monetary support from children, with the expected pattern visible in which children with higher incomes are more likely to contribute, and parents with higher incomes are less likely to receive, such support (lines 10–11). The level of parental health problems has a significant association only with the likelihood of the child providing assistance with domestic chores; the association with assistance to the parent in meeting physical needs is positive but not statistically significant (line 12). Finally, we see here the pattern also visible in chapter 8 in which past parental provision of support to children is significantly related to current provision of support by the child to the parents (lines 13–15). In this case past parental provision of monetary support has the most general and strongest effect, but measures of past parental provision of child care and chore assistance also show consistently positive associations, which in some instances are statistically significant.²⁴

The result of greatest interest in this table is, of course, that shown in the first row. There we can see that when the other predictors are controlled for statistically, married daughters are more likely than married sons to provide all four kinds of assistance to parents, and in three of these instances the relationship is statistically significant. In other words, when compared with the bivariate relations displayed in Table 7.4, the contributions of daughters emerge even more strongly here. Even in regard to providing monetary assistance, once we control for other predictors, daughters are now revealed as a little bit *more* likely than sons to provide such assistance to their own parents, rather than less likely.

However, it might still be the case that while daughters are more likely to contribute to the financial support of their parents than sons, the amounts they provide might be less. If that is the case then we would still have parents relying more heavily on sons than on daughters, with the larger contributions of the former outweighing the more token amounts provided by the latter. To see whether this supposition is correct, we need to subject our measures of the actual amounts provided to parents in cash and in kind to multivariate analysis (in this case via ordinary least squares regression analysis). The results of that analysis are shown in Table 7.6.

In Table 7.6 are displayed the linear regression coefficients between the natural log of the average monthly amount of cash sent to the parents and the estimated annual value of the gifts in kind provided to the parents.²⁵ For the most part the coefficients in the table appear reasonable and lead to a picture similar to those seen in the previous table, and for that reason these results will not be discussed further here. Our primary interest, once again, is in the figures in the first row of the table. Those coefficients reveal that there is not a significant difference between married daughters and sons in the average amount of money contributed to the parents each month, once other predictors have been factored out (although the relationship is positive, indicating that sons may contribute slightly more). However, controls for other predictors do not eliminate the association between child gender and the cash value of the food, clothing, and other gifts in kind given to the parents. Even when other factors are controlled for, daughters are significantly more likely than sons to provide a large cash value of such gifts in kind—by an average of 71 more yuan per year contributed. Thus the total monetary value of the support provided by married daughters (cash plus material goods) *significantly exceeds* that provided by married sons, once other predictors have been factored out.

Table 7.6 OLS Regression Analysis of Value of Gifts to Parents
(linear regression coefficients [B])

Predictor	Monthly Cash (ln)	Annual Gifts (ln)
1. Son	.07	-.73***
2. Child coresides	.46**	-.03
3. Child college education	-.20	.06
4. Child upper middle school	.04	.22
5. Child rural origin	.25	.76**
6. Parent old old	.09	.85**
7. Parent mid old	-.19	.94***
8. Number of siblings	.12	-.02
9. Number of children	-.16	.04
10. Ln child income	.23***	.30**
11. Ln parent income	-.17***	.02
12. Parent health problems	-.03	.02
13. Parent helped-child care	.16	-.04
14. Parent helped-chores	.68***	.63**
15. Parent helped-money	.07	1.29***
Constant	.36	.32
N	467	448
R-squared	0.09	0.11

* = $p \leq .05$; ** = $p \leq .01$; *** = $p \leq .001$

Note: Analysis based on data from child questionnaires.

We have now concluded our examination of what the data from the Baoding child questionnaire tell us about the amount of support provided to parents by married daughters versus married sons. The results are quite clear and consistent. In regard to one form of support, the provision of monetary assistance to parents, there is not a statistically significant difference between the assistance provided by daughters versus sons.²⁶ Children of both sexes often help out monetarily, and neither in likelihood of providing monetary support nor in the average amount supplied do sons do significantly more. In regard to the other three kinds of support we examined, provision of physical care, help with domestic chores, and the provision of gifts in kind, married daughters are significantly more likely than married sons to provide such assistance, and the amounts of in kind assistance are also significantly larger.

This pattern of greater support to aging parents from married daughters is a striking result, one of the most dramatic findings of our entire Baoding research project. According to these data, the traditional attitudinal bias in favor of support by sons has been eliminated in contemporary Baoding, in

favor of a view supporting equal obligations by daughters as well as sons. But in the reality of the support actually provided, insofar as we can measure it with our data, the traditional bias has actually been *reversed*! Now, married daughters are significantly *more* likely to provide support for their own parents in various forms than are their brothers. Since we have indications in these data that daughters are also more likely to have obligations toward their in-laws than do their brothers, the net result is one in which the overall obligation of support for the elderly falls disproportionately on women. This pattern is one that is often found in other societies. However, that it now occurs in China's strongly patrilineal culture is striking. We note once again that evidence cited earlier from rural China in the 1990s, and from contemporary Taiwan, does not show a comparable elimination or reversal of the patrilineal basis of parental support.

However, before proceeding to say more about this pattern of findings, we need to see whether parents report the same reality as do their children. Perhaps even if sons and daughters are providing similar amounts of support, their parents still perceive that they are primarily dependent upon their grown sons, a possibility suggested in chapter 5. In other words, perhaps the traditional patrilineal bias of Chinese culture prevents parents from recognizing and giving full value to the contributions they are receiving from their grown and married daughters. The remainder of this chapter is therefore devoted to examining similar data, but reported by our Baoding parents.

The Balance of Monetary Exchanges between Generations

In our Baoding parent questionnaires, we collected information on support of parents in several places in different formats. Much of the analysis in other chapters in this volume (particularly chapters 5 and 10) relies upon a set of questions to parent respondents about whether they received assistance in physical care, domestic chores, finances, and provision of material goods, and if so from whom (and did they provide assistance in any of these four realms, and if so to whom). That set of questions was designed to collect information on all providers (and recipients) of assistance, and not simply grown children. In a separate part of the parent questionnaire we asked respondents to enumerate each of their grown (age eighteen and above) children, and then to report how much cash they received from, and gave to, each such child each month. With access to this exclusive and exhaustive

treatment of monetary exchanges with grown children, we rely on data from this latter set of questions for the analyses that follow.

The first question of interest is simply what is the overall balance of monetary exchanges with all children? We computed a measure indicating whether parents received any cash at all from their children, whether they gave any cash to their children, and if they both gave and received cash from children, whether they received more than they gave. According to these calculations, 40.3% of all our Baoding parents neither receive nor give cash in exchanges with any of their children. In other words, a substantial minority of parents interviewed are operating independently of all their children in a financial sense. It is important to stress the size of this group, since it has often been assumed that giving at least token amounts of cash to parents on a regular basis is culturally obligatory in Chinese society. Our Baoding results indicate otherwise. Of the remaining parents, 8.4% only give cash to children but do not receive any, 2.9% both give and receive but are net givers to children, 6.7% both give and receive but are net recipients, and 41.8% receive cash from children but do not give children cash (N = 958). In other words, from the parents' point of view, the two predominant patterns are generational financial independence and an exclusive upward flow of support to parents.²⁷

In order to examine the parents' reports on cash giving by individual children (rather than by all children taken together), we need to first take into account the fact that some parents we interviewed had more children than others. The number of adult children ranged from zero to eight, and from our 1002 parents we have intergenerational monetary exchange data on 3219 parent-child dyads. Since it seems likely that financial exchanges for those with many children will differ from those with few children, we do not want to simply pool together all parent-child dyads.²⁸ Instead, for all of those parents with two or more grown children, we randomly select one child and examine the financial exchanges for that randomly chosen parent-child dyad (N = 995).²⁹ In addition, because our primary interest here is in whether, among sets of siblings, married sons give more to their parents than do married daughters, we further select only those parent-child dyads in which the child was married and had at least one opposite sexed sibling. That restriction reduces our number of parent-child dyads to 722.

When we examine the parents' reports on cash giving by individual children using this random parent-married child data set, we discover that 32.7% of such married children are reported to give or send cash to parents,

with the figures for sons and daughters being essentially identical—32.7% and 32.6%, respectively. However, for those children who do provide cash support to parents, there is some tendency for sons to be reported as providing more per month than daughters. The average contribution per married son is 23.8 yuan, which is significantly higher than the 11.6 yuan average per married daughter ($N = 710$; $p < .001$).³⁰ These figures can be compared with the averages we computed earlier from the data supplied by the particular children we interviewed. Recall from Table 7.4 that 45.9% of married sons and 42.2% of married daughters claimed they gave cash to their parents, and that the average monthly contributions claimed by child respondents were 34.3 yuan and 17.0 yuan, respectively.

The figures computed from parents' reports of cash from children compared to the reports of the children interviewed show a tendency toward some combination of parental underestimation or child overestimation that was commented upon in chapter 5. However, on the issue of contributions of daughters versus sons the two sources of data tell the same story. Parents and children alike agree that daughters and sons are about equally likely to provide cash payments to their parents, but that on average the amount of cash provided by sons is roughly double that provided by daughters. There is no tendency visible in these results for parents to report greater reliance on sons over daughters than we would have assumed from the data the children provided.

We also can compute figures on the cases in which parents send cash to their children, rather than receiving support. Although we have seen that a downward flow of funds to the younger generation is much less common than the traditional upward flow to parents, it turns out that when it does occur it is somewhat more likely to involve payments to married sons rather than married daughters. To be specific, in our randomly chosen parent-child dyads, 9.3% of married sons but only 3.3% of married daughters were receiving some cash from parents, and the average payment to sons of 19.1 yuan contrasted with the average payment to daughters of only 2.4 yuan ($N = 714$).³¹ These figures suggest the possibility that the greater cash contributions by sons to parents may be cancelled out by the greater support that sons receive from their parents. In fact, that is the net result. We constructed a measure of the net flow of cash per month between the parent and a particular child, which was simply the cash provided to the parent minus the cash received from the parent. In our randomly chosen parent-child dyads, the average net flow of cash to parents was 4.6 yuan from married sons and 9.3 yuan from married daughters ($N = 706$). In other

words, sons may provide more but they also receive more, and, on balance, parents actually receive slightly more financial support from married daughters, although the difference is not statistically significant.

The final step in this analysis of financial exchange data provided by parents is to examine in a multivariate context the predictors of these flows in order to see whether the gender of the child has any net influence. In Table 7.7 we present a multivariate analysis using two alternative outcome measures: the natural logarithm of the monthly cash the parent reported receiving from the randomly selected child, and the natural logarithm of the *net* monthly cash received from that child (money given to parent minus money received from parent).³² The predictor variables we use in this analysis are mostly the same as those we used in Tables 7.5 and 7.6, except that more characteristics of the parent are available and included, and fewer of the child.³³

A number of interesting findings emerge from the figures in Table 7.7. We find the expected pattern in which child cash payments and net payments to parents are greater if the child has a high income, and less if the parent has a high income. Coresidence with the parent is closely related to both size of cash payments from the child and net payments.³⁴ More educated children provide lower cash contributions to parents but, presumably because they also receive less cash from parents, our education measures are not significantly related to net payments to parents. Other predictors, such as the age of the parent, the parent's health and marital status, and the number of siblings and children of the child, do not have a significant net impact on either measure of intergenerational monetary exchanges.

Our primary interest, once again, is in the figures in the first row of the table for the net effect of whether the child is a son or a daughter. We see in Table 7.7 that the gender of the child does not make a significant difference for either of our monetary exchange measures. We find the same associations that we found at the bivariate level, with sons likely to provide more cash to parents each month but daughters more likely to provide slightly larger net contributions to parents. However, once the other predictors are controlled for, neither relationship is statistically significant. This finding essentially duplicates what we found earlier in this chapter when analyzing data from our child questionnaires (see Table 7.6). Sons appear to be providing more support to parents, but once other predictors are taken into account, sons are not found to be providing a significantly larger sum. To put the matter in other

Table 7.7 OLS Regression Analysis of Cash to Parents and Net Flow to Parents (linear regression coefficients [B])

Predictor	Monthly Cash (ln)	Net Flow (ln)
1. Son	.05	-.000
2. Child coresides	.69**	.006***
3. Child college education	-.56**	-.000
4. Child upper middle school	-.39*	-.000
5. Number of children	.21	.002
6. Ln child income	.39**	.002*
7. Number of siblings	.02	.002
8. Parent education	-.18	-.000
9. Parent married	-.12	.000
10. Parent party member	-.14	-.002*
11. Parent rural origin	.17	.002
12. Parent old old	-.28	-.003
13. Parent mid old	-.20	-.002
14. Parent health problems	-.05	-.001
15. Ln parent income	-.14***	-.001*
Constant	-.05	8.291***
N	590	586
R-squared	0.06	0.05

* = $p \leq .05$; ** = $p \leq .01$; *** = $p \leq .001$

Note: Analysis based on random sample of parent-child dyads from parent questionnaire.

terms, the apparently larger cash contributions from sons are produced in large part by the fact that sons tend to have higher incomes than daughters and are more likely to coreside with parents. But with income and coresidence status controlled, the effect of child gender disappears. In other words, when daughters have high income or coreside with parents, they are also likely to contribute significantly larger sums to support their parents, with no visible tendency to contribute less just because they are daughters. In fact, given our finding that the *net* contribution of daughters to parents is slightly larger, and that gifts in kind from daughters are significantly larger (see Table 7.6), the total monetary burden on married daughters to support their parents is somewhat greater than on their brothers.

Throughout this chapter we have looked primarily at contributions from sons and daughters to their aging parents. In closing, we briefly look at the other side of the picture. Do parents make greater efforts to assist their sons than they do their daughters? We have already seen that there is some indication that parents are more likely to provide cash payments to married

sons than daughters, although such “downward payments” are the exception rather than the general rule. Do we find the same pattern if we examine other kinds of parental assistance and support? In our parent and child questionnaires we obtained data on several kinds of parental assistance to children: help in completing homework, help in getting into the schools they attended, help in getting the first job, help in changing jobs later on, help in finding a spouse, and cash contributions to the wedding of the child. In Table 7.8 we display the results of a comparison of daughter versus son reports of receiving these various kinds of parental assistance.³⁵

We can see from Table 7.8 that there is no significant difference between the assistance that married daughters versus married sons recall receiving from parents in completing homework assignments, getting into school, changing jobs, and finding a person to marry. One curious reversal is apparent in the traditional pattern of preferential treatment of sons. Married daughters report relying somewhat more on parents to obtain their first job assignments than do married sons. It seems likely that this daughter preference is related to the 1970s practice (now discontinued) of allowing a parent to retire early in order to have a child assigned to a job in the parent’s work unit, with daughters using this route to escape from Cultural Revolution-era rural exiles, while sons were seen as more able to endure such exiles.³⁶ However, we do not have detailed enough evidence in our Baoding data to test this supposition.

The strongest differentials visible in Table 7.8 concern two traditional forms of son preference. Married sons are more than twice as likely as married daughters to report they relied on parents for access to housing. That difference is a product of the bias (noted repeatedly in this volume and in Table 7.2 in this chapter) of parents coresiding with a married son much more often than with a married daughter. Coresidence usually occurs when the son lives in parental housing, rather than through the parent moving into housing allocated to the son. This pattern thus exemplifies reliance of sons on their parents. The other large difference appears in the last row of the table, where married sons report parents contributing about 45% more to the costs of their weddings than married daughters report. This gap is again a product of adherence to “traditional” patterns, with Chinese custom dictating that the groom’s parents pay the bulk of wedding expenses. However, in this case it is notable that the average family contribution to the weddings of daughters is far from minimal—3255 yuan (versus 4725 yuan for sons). Since we do not have comparable data from the prerevolutionary period, we cannot be certain that these Baoding figures represent a shift toward more balanced

Table 7.8 Gender Differences in Help Provided to Children by Parents
(% reporting total reliance on parents, or monetary value)

Behavior	Daughters	Sons	N
Helped child with homework	10.3	10.8	520
Helped child school placement	3.1	3.6	474
Helped child get 1st job*	38.2	27.1	518
Helped child change jobs	21.5	19.2	213
Helped child obtain housing***	19.3	43.0	523
Helped child find spouse	4.6	7.6	515
Family contribution to wedding**	3255 yuan	4725 yuan	494

Statistical significance of gender difference: * = $p \leq .05$; ** = $p \leq .01$; *** = $p \leq .001$

Note: Data derived from child questionnaire.

contributions to the weddings of sons and daughters than in the past.³⁷ In sum, there is not a general pattern of preferential investment in the futures of sons over daughters revealed by these figures. Instead we see a pattern in which parental investments seem comparable for children of both sexes except where particular traditional customs are involved (coresidence with sons and the obligation of a groom's family to pay for the wedding, but greater responsibility to protect daughters).

Conclusions

In the preceding pages we have engaged in a wide-ranging review of the evidence contained in the Baoding survey regarding intergenerational exchanges between parents and their sons and daughters. The findings from this review are mixed, but on balance the major conclusion we have reached is that the traditional pattern of reliance on sons has disappeared. Aging Baoding parents are as much or more likely to rely on married daughters as on married sons, and in several realms daughters provide significantly more assistance. Where sons are providing more assistance, factors such as higher incomes and coresidence with parents, rather than gender per se, provide the explanation. Although we have not reached a situation of fully equivalent relations between parents and their sons versus their daughters, as shown by the persistence of a preference for coresidence with married sons, on balance we are struck by the many realms in which gender does not appear to affect how parents relate to their grown children.

A major implication of the current pattern of intergenerational relations is that while parents may hold a variety of sentimental and traditional reasons for wanting to have at least one son, in Baoding and presumably other major Chinese cities it is no longer essential that they do so. Grown daughters can and do provide the emotional support, help in daily life, and financial assistance that parents feel they need in order to avoid a desolate old age. In terms of the basics of a secure old age, individuals who have one or more daughters but no sons are no longer to be pitied. In fact, anecdotally it is common to hear urban parents now claim that they prefer the care of daughters. As noted at the outset of this chapter, this shift toward reliance on both daughters and sons has a number of important implications, including helping to make the state's extremely strict family planning policy (essentially a "one child" rule since 1979) somewhat palatable in Baoding and other large cities.

One major puzzle about the emergence of a dual pattern of reliance on grown daughters as well as sons remains. As we noted at the beginning of this chapter, evidence from the Chinese countryside in the 1990s and from contemporary Taiwan indicates that in those settings predominant reliance on sons is still the rule. Why has this primary dependence upon sons disappeared in Baoding? Unfortunately, this is not a question we can answer definitively with data from only one city at one point in time. However, we suspect that the shift is explained by the distinctive features of social institutions developed in urban China during the Mao era, rather than by more recent developments.

Although theories of modernization tell us that economic development may weaken patrilineal biases,³⁸ evidence exists that the shift toward reliance on daughters as well as sons predates China's recent economic reforms. Less systematic data from urban China in the 1970s indicate that already at that time daughters as well as sons were providing support to aging parents.³⁹ Obviously, the fact that a more economically developed Chinese society, Taiwan, does not show the same breakdown of primary reliance on sons suggests that it is not how rich or developed a society is, per se, that produces sharing of the support burden by daughters.

We suspect that the breakdown of primary reliance on sons can be traced to the fact that cities in the PRC (both in the Mao era and to a considerable extent today) have certain institutional features that set them apart from contemporary rural areas in the PRC, and from rural and urban areas in both contemporary Taiwan and in mainland China before the revolution. In these other Chinese settings, corporate family property that is

passed down patrilineally and family-based firms provide a central basis of family security and old-age support.⁴⁰ Even in contemporary Taiwan, family-based enterprises are the predominant form of business organization. In this sort of setting, parents manage property and enterprises for the benefit of the entire family and pass this management and control on to their sons, while daughters have no share and tend to marry out into the families of strangers.⁴¹ Sons, in return for their share in the family-based property and enterprises, provide support and care to their parents in their old age. (See chapter 9 for a more extended discussion of the contrasting histories and institutions of Taiwan and China.)

This family property- and enterprise-based nexus of intergenerational relations was eliminated by the socialist transformation of the economy of urban China during the 1950s. Family-run enterprises disappeared from urban China for thirty years, and they are only now beginning to gradually reemerge as a result of China's reforms.⁴² Similarly, property inheritance within families became insignificant as a source of the well-being and opportunities for the younger generation, as success in life came to depend overwhelmingly on pleasing authorities within bureaucratic schools and work units (aided, to be sure, by the family's efforts to develop personal ties with bureaucratic gatekeepers).⁴³ Families in urban China came to depend not on property management and family-based enterprises, but simply on pooling of the earnings and pensions of individual members and balancing these against the consumption needs of all. For most urban Chinese families in the mid-1990s, this was still the general case.

Given this situation, parents in urban China faced a fundamentally altered calculus in their quest for old-age security. With transmission of property and family businesses eliminated as a basis for family continuity and security, a variety of other kinds of parental support and assistance to children have to provide the basis for filial bonds of grown children with aging parents (see the discussion in chapter 8). However, these other forms of assistance (providing financial help, assistance with child-care and domestic chores, and so forth) can as readily be provided to daughters as to sons. And the evidence presented in this chapter indicates that daughters are as able as sons to reciprocate for this assistance by providing care and support to their own aging parents.

Socialist institutions in the Chinese countryside did not so thoroughly eliminate the corporate property and enterprise basis of rural families as was the case with urban families. Although rural families relied to a considerable extent on earnings from collectivized labor to meet their needs, a residual

family corporate enterprise remained in the form of the family's private plot, household sidelines, and family-reared animals, as well as in their housing. In many locales the family's cash incomes depended primarily upon these family-based economic activities, rather than on their labor in the collective fields. Even earnings from collective labor were turned over to family heads, rather than paid to each individual earner.⁴⁴ Villages also continued to be organized in terms of traditional patrilineages, structures upon which the socialist organizational forms of communes, brigades, and teams were superimposed. In this setting there was no strong impetus to break down the tendency for parents to work to bind their sons to them, and to let their daughters leave and be replaced by daughters-in-law. Patrilocally organized families with corporate property thus remained dominant in the Chinese countryside, unlike the situation in the cities. They provided a structural basis for the rapid reemergence of family-based entrepreneurial activity in the altered conditions of the reform era.⁴⁵

Thus it seems likely that it was the socialist transformations of urban institutions carried out in the 1950s that provided the basis for the erosion of predominant reliance of parents on grown sons. The result, as we have seen, is a pattern in which both daughters and sons are relied on for support in old age, and in which in some respects daughters provide more support than do sons. Daughters are also involved in helping to support their in-laws, so in urban China today we see a pattern that is common in many other societies, in which grown women bear a disproportionate share of the burden of caring for and helping to support aging relatives.

What is not clear is whether this pattern of sharing of the support burden between sons and daughters will be an enduring pattern. Could the reform-induced loosening of the restrictions on private property and family-based firms eventually produce a revival of patrilineally based corporate families, thus encouraging a swing back to predominant reliance on sons for old age support? Such a scenario seems quite unlikely. After more than a decade of urban reforms, our survey in Baoding found no evidence of any return to traditional patterns. Furthermore, since the small birth cohorts of the "one child policy" era are just beginning to enter adulthood and marry, it seems rather more likely that the ability to rely on a daughter, if a son is not available, will be reinforced in the future, rather than weakened. Shared reliance on daughters as well as sons, while a product of socialist conditions, seems likely to endure in the altered world of reform era China.

NOTES

¹ The best general account of these tensions is still Margery Wolf, *Woman and the Family in Rural Taiwan* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1972).

² However, the elite in rural areas placed less emphasis on the exclusive claims of patrilineal kinship than did ordinary villagers, with ties through wives often used to bolster the family's status. See the discussion in Rubie Watson, "Class Differences and Affinal Relations in South China," *Man* 16 (1981): 593–615.

³ However, research in Taiwan early in the 20th century indicates that there were some localities in which enough males married into their wives' homes to overcome the stigma involved. See the discussion in Burton Pasternak, *Guests in the Dragon* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983). Where such "uxorilocal" marriages were not common, the most likely context for them to occur was generally a third or fourth son of a family of limited means marrying into a more prosperous family with daughters but no sons.

⁴ See the discussion in Martin King Whyte, "Revolutionary Change and Patrilocal Residence in China," *Ethnology* 18 (1979): 211–27.

⁵ See the evidence presented in Hongqiu Yang, "The Distributive Norm of Monetary Support to Older Parents: A Look at a Township in China," *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 58 (1996): 404–15. See also William Parish, Shen Chongling, and Chang Chi-hsiang, "Family Support Networks in the Chinese Countryside," Hong Kong Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies working paper, 1996.

⁶ Quotation from Yean-ju Lee, William L. Parish, and Robert J. Willis, "Sons, Daughters, and Intergenerational Support in Taiwan," *American Journal of Sociology* 99 (1994): 1037. See also Te-Hsiung Sun and Yin-Hsing Liu, "Changes in Intergenerational Relations in the Chinese Family: Taiwan's Experience," in *Tradition and Change in the Asian Family*, ed. Lee-Jay Cho and Moto Yada (Honolulu: East-West Center, 1994).

⁷ In much of rural China in recent times a de facto two-child limit has been enforced. Simple probabilities indicate that roughly one-quarter of all parents will end up with two daughters, and thus facing the possibility of not having any grown son to support them in old age unless they can get around the official limits. At the same time, most rural families no longer believe that the more sons the better. Indeed, some research evidence suggests that many rural families do not want more than one son. However, they also cannot contemplate survival with no sons. See the discussion in Susan Greenhalgh, Zhu Chuzhu, and Li Nan, "Restraining Population Growth in Three Chinese Villages, 1988–1993," *Population and Development Review* 20 (1994): 365–95.

⁸ See the evidence presented in chapter 5 of the present volume. For earlier evidence see Martin King Whyte and William L. Parish, *Urban Life in Contemporary China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), chapter 7.

⁹ We switch in midstream between data provided by children and by parents because the child questionnaire contains fuller data on multiple forms of child contacts with parents, while data on money received from each grown child is available only from the parent questionnaire.

¹⁰ In fact, visual inspection of a large number of tables with and without this exclusion of single gender sets revealed very similar patterns.

¹¹ The ethnographic literature on Chinese families in earlier times does not portray unmarried daughters as providing less support to their parents than unmarried sons. Indeed, if anything there may be a tendency for unmarried daughters to do more than their brothers to support parents, perhaps because brothers are seen as having decades to repay their obligation to parents, while daughters will only do so up until their marriages. See Janet W. Salaff, *Working Daughters of Hong Kong* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

¹² The full distribution on this item was as follows: for married sons 3.6% strongly agreed, 30.2% agreed, 59.4% disagreed, and 6.8% strongly disagreed; for married daughters only 1.2% strongly agreed, 11.9% agreed, 73.8% disagreed, and 13.1% strongly disagreed.

¹³ The figures presented here are the sum of the first two categories of a six category measure: daily or almost daily, several times a week, several times a month, several times a year or less, once a year or less, and no contact.

¹⁴ Keep in mind that this comparison involves only those sons and daughters who were married and had at least one opposite-sexed sibling.

¹⁵ In most respects the pattern of our findings in regard to visits with parents and parents-in-law is much the same as that revealed in another survey conducted in two of China's largest cities, Shanghai and Tianjin. However, in that survey there was a slight but nonetheless statistically significant tendency for non-coresident sons more often than daughters to see their parents daily or almost daily. See Fuqin Bian, John R. Logan, and Yanjie Bian, "Intergenerational Relations in Urban China: Proximity, Contact, and Help to Parents," *Demography* 35 (1994): 1037.

¹⁶ Of course, our traditional image is based upon patterns in Chinese villages prior to the revolution, and as noted earlier, village exogamy remained the general rule at that time. As a result, brides often lived at some distance from their natal families, and distance alone would have prevented frequent contacts. In contemporary Baoding, in contrast, most grown children live close at hand, as noted in earlier chapters. Thus, keeping in regular touch with parents or in-laws who live separately is much easier than was the case in Chinese villages of an earlier era.

¹⁷ We are uncertain how much importance to give to these disparities. The analysis presented in chapter 6 hinted that answers to these two questions could reflect anxieties about whether filial obligations are being met more than actual reductions in support to parents after marriage.

¹⁸ These are the same items analyzed in chapter 5. However, because our sample in the present chapter is restricted to married children with opposite-sexed siblings, the specific results differ somewhat.

¹⁹ For the subset of cases of grown children we are examining here (N=523), the mean monthly income of sons is 458 yuan and the mean monthly income of daughters is 337 yuan.

²⁰ These two items are included and expected to have similar effects. Those with more siblings might be less likely to provide support to their parents, or to provide less. Those with more children might be less willing and able to help support aging parents.

²¹ A natural logarithm transformation was used in these two measures to correct for the skewness of the distribution of incomes. In computing these two measures, the figure of 1 yuan was added to the reported income before taking the log, in order to avoid the problem caused by the fact that the natural log of zero is indeterminate.

²² The parent health problem scale was constructed from a complex series of questions we asked each parent. We asked first whether they were currently suffering from any ailments, and for those who said yes, we asked them to specify up to eight such current ailments. For each enumerated current ailment, we then asked them to report whether it was producing no inconvenience, some inconvenience, or major inconvenience for them. The resulting scale is a 4-point scale in which 0=no current ailments reported, 1=one or more ailments reported, but none of them causing any inconvenience; 2=one or more ailments reported, and suffering some inconvenience as a result, but no major inconvenience; and 3=one or more ailments, and major inconvenience being suffered. (See the general results for the parent sample on this index, as reported in chapter 2.) We also ran the same analyses using an alternative health measure, an index of physical limitations (also used in chapter 2). In general the results were much the same, but the parental health problems index showed a higher level of association with the parental support measures used in the current chapter, so we use this measure of parental need for physical assistance in the present analysis.

²³ These last three measures all refer to past assistance provided by the parent(s) to the respondent during adulthood. They are included in the model as a result of Jieming Chen's analysis in chapter 8, which shows that these measures of past parental assistance are significant predictors of current levels of support from the child to the parents.

²⁴ It is curious, however, that past parental provision of monetary support is not very predictive of current child provision of monetary support to parents, while past parental provision of childcare assistance is.

²⁵ As with our income measures, a logarithmic transformation is applied to compensate for the skewness of these measures. Once again the value of 1 yuan was added before transformation in order to keep in the analysis cases in which zero was supplied.

²⁶ To be sure, this conclusion is produced by the fact that two predictors, high child income and coresidence with parents, which are more typical of sons than of daughters, are controlled for in the models utilized in Tables 7.5 and 7.6. Both of these predictors are associated with higher levels of financial support for parents. What the multivariate analysis tells us is that it is high personal income and coresidence with parents that is predictive of high levels of financial support provided, not the gender of the child.

²⁷ These percentages differ somewhat from the calculations presented in chapter 2 because they are based upon separate questions dealing with each child, rather than general questions about financial support given and received. However, the general picture they provide, of parental independence and reliance on children predominating, is the same.

The mean total cash received from all children per month per parent is 95.90 yuan; the mean cash given to all children per month per parent is 27.04 yuan; and the net amount of cash received per month per parent after deducting cash given to children is 69.74 yuan. If we examine the exchanges for each individual parent-child dyad (N=3219), rather than for each parent with all children as a group, then 57.3% of children neither give to, nor receive money regularly from, their parents, 5.4% only receive money, 34.8% only give money, .5% receive more than they give, and 1.8% give more than they receive. Of course, these calculations are based only on questions concerning cash exchanges, rather than gifts in kind. If the latter were factored into the picture no doubt there would be fewer parents operating independently.

²⁸ In fact the results presented in Table 7.5 suggest a curious pattern in which those with large numbers of siblings are *more* likely than others to send parents cash contributions.

²⁹ Our thanks to Jieming Chen for constructing the data commands in order to form the full parent-child dyad and the random parent-grown child data sets that are used in the analyses which follow.

³⁰ In this and subsequent averages, we consider all children on whom we have data, and not only those who sent (or received) money. In other words, these averages include values of "0" for those cases in which no cash was given (or received).

³¹ These two contrasts were not strong enough to surpass the $p=0.05$ level of statistical significance.

³² A logarithmic transformation of these outcome measures is carried out to compensate for the skewed distribution of values on both measures. For the cash given to parents we added 1 yuan before the transformation to avoid taking the log of zero; for the net transfer we added 4001 yuan before the transformation to obtain a positive distribution—a procedure required because the minimum value of the net cash measure was -4000 yuan (in other words, one parent claimed to regularly give 4000 yuan to the randomly selected child). The effect of this manipulation was to produce a much wider span of values in the net cash than in the child to parent cash measure, so three decimal places are shown in that column of Table 7.7.

³³ Note that we include in Table 7.7 a measure of whether the parent was of rural origin, rather than the child. We also include a measure of whether the parent is a party member and a simple measure of parental education (with 1=upper middle school and above, and otherwise=0).

³⁴ Note that this finding appears to contradict the conclusion in chapter 6 that coresidence does not make a significant net difference for the provision of financial support from grown children to parents. From Table 7.5 as well as the analysis in chapter 6 we know that whether a child lives with the parent does not have a net impact on whether the child will contribute money to the parent or parents. However, for married children with opposite sexed siblings, at least, the amount of money given per month is nonetheless higher for coresident children.

³⁵ The figures in the first six rows of the table represent the number of instances in which the child said they depended entirely (*wanchuan kao*) on the parents in that particular realm.

The results are much the same whether we use the responses to these questions provided by parents or by the children we interviewed. As in earlier analyses, we restrict our attention here to cases of children who are married and have siblings of the opposite sex.

³⁶ The practice of taking early retirement in exchange for the work unit providing a job for one's child, already noted in chapters 3–4, was referred to as the *dingti* system. In such cases, traditional concern about female virtue and the hazards posed by distant rural assignments may have counterbalanced preference for promoting the economic success of sons. See the discussion in Martin K. Whyte and William L. Parish, *Urban Life in Contemporary China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 222. However, one study of rates of return from rural exile did not find a significant gender difference. See Xueguang Zhou and Liren Hou, "Children of the Cultural Revolution: The State and the Life Course in the People's Republic of China," *American Sociological Review* 64 (1999): 12–36. On the general movement to send urban educated youths to the countryside in the decade after 1968, see Thomas Bernstein, *Up to the Mountains, Down to the Villages* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977).

³⁷ Traditionally the major expenses for the groom's family involved the equipping of a bride price payment to the bride's family and the staging of an elaborate wedding feast. The bride's family was not expected to pay for an elaborate wedding feast, and their primary expense was the equipping of a dowry for their daughter. Expenditures on dowries were large among the upper classes but often minimal among the poor.

³⁸ See William J. Goode, *World Revolution and Family Patterns* (New York: The Free Press, 1963).

³⁹ See Whyte and Parish, *Urban Life in Contemporary China*, 222. See also Deborah Davis-Friedmann, *Long Lives: Chinese Elderly and the Communist Revolution* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983).

⁴⁰ See the discussion in Myron Cohen, *House United, House Divided* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976).

⁴¹ See the discussion in Susan Greenhalgh, "Sexual Stratification: The Other Side of 'Growth with Equity' in East Asia," *Population and Development Review* 11 (1985): 265–314.

⁴² In our Baoding sample such firms are virtually invisible. As noted in chapter 4, only 3.4% of the grown children we interviewed were either self-employed or working in private firms of any kind.

⁴³ The most important form of property that some families possessed during the prereform era was the privately owned housing that a minority of urban families was able to hold onto. However, the restrictions of bureaucratic socialism prevented families from employing their housing as a money-earning asset. Other forms of family property, such as bank accounts and consumer durables, similarly could not be put to entrepreneurial use and could be readily divided among children (including daughters) via inheritance.

⁴⁴ Housing was also in almost all areas privately owned and inherited, unlike the situation in China's cities, where housing rented from work units and city housing offices was the general rule.

⁴⁵ See the discussion in Martin Whyte, "The Social Basis of China's Economic Development," *The China Quarterly* 144 (1995): 37–57.

8

THE EFFECT OF PARENTAL INVESTMENT ON OLD-AGE SUPPORT IN URBAN CHINA

Jieming Chen

In the traditional Chinese family system, the prominent position of family elders, especially male elders, is proverbial. A rigid and strictly defined age and generation hierarchy, indisputable authority of the patriarch within the family, the practice of arranged marriage, children's devotion to the welfare of parents, sons' strong emotional attachment to their mothers, the preference for extended family living—all these are familiar themes that have been used to describe the age-old Chinese family system of the past, and all in one way or another illustrate the centrality of elders within the family.¹

The power and authority that elders maintained in the traditional Chinese family relied heavily on their control of family property and the fact that most Chinese families in the past were units of production as well as consumption. However, without rigorous teaching of the value of filial piety and the full support for parental authority from the state, it is inconceivable that the household-based economy alone could have given rise to or sustained the sway of parents over their grown children. Further, informal control of lineages and rural communities, whose leaders more often than not belonged to the gentry class and were indoctrinated with Confucian family ethics, provided yet another instrument to protect parental authority. For those who may have been tempted to deviate from established patterns, in China of the past there were scarcely any competing ideas that they could employ to challenge the legitimacy of the “rule of elders” (*zhānglǎo tóngzhì*).² As C. K. Yang once remarked: “Under the traditional social order it took exceptional courage and *imagination* to be an unfilial son.”³

The twentieth-century Chinese revolutions fundamentally changed this basic fact of family life. The centuries-old imperial system was gone, and so was the domination of Confucianism as a state ideology. The socialist transformation of 1955–1957 further deprived family elders of property and enterprises, and therefore removed the material base upon which parents exercised their power.⁴ Hence, the structural conditions that once nurtured and supported the old order of family life have been radically altered, if not totally eliminated. Consequently, parental power and authority have been severely weakened.⁵

However, the apparent decline of parental authority within the family has not been accompanied by a dramatic decline of old age support from children, as we have seen in previous chapters.⁶ Much ethnographic research on contemporary Chinese families, carried out by both Western and Chinese scholars, indicates that parents and their grown children continue to maintain frequent contact, regardless of whether they coreside or live in separate households.⁷ As revealed by the analysis in chapter 4, there is little disagreement across generations about care of the old being one of the most important family obligations. Previous large-scale survey research also shows that although most older parents have their own independent incomes, over half of them still receive support of various kinds from their children.⁸ In other words, even though most elderly persons now can maintain their financial independence, grown children continue to be an important source of old age support. Thus it appears that the decline of parental authority within the family has had little effect on the general pattern of old-age support.

The fact that many older parents continue to receive support from their grown children in spite of the decline of parental control over the children's destinies raises an interesting question about the mechanisms through which the institution of familial old-age support is preserved. As Chinese parents now have far less economic power, moral authority, and political backing from the state than their forbears used to have, how do most of them still manage to extract resources from their children? I seek in this chapter to develop and test an explanation of the process by which parents in contemporary urban China maintain and shape the relations with their children so that old-age support from these children is ensured.

Family Strategies for Old-age Support

Favorable structural conditions

Although China's political and social restructuring in the 20th century, its industrial growth, and the government's effort to create a new citizenry loyal ultimately to the nation (and to the party and Chairman Mao personally in the Mao era) have disrupted the old ways of family life, it has been suggested from previous research and in other chapters of this volume that certain new social conditions and historical experiences actually have the effect of strengthening Chinese families. Repeated massive political and social campaigns created a very precarious political environment in which many people retreated further into their own families to seek security and trust.⁹ Facing a highly intrusive urban bureaucracy, Chinese learned to rely on their family members and kinship ties to deal with difficulties in life as small as buying a few pounds of pork, and as large as getting their "sent-down" children returned to the city. Therefore, the family continues to be a resourceful and solidary group around which members can combine their strengths and means to get ahead or simply to get by.¹⁰ Also, improved public health, strict restriction on migration, and widespread housing shortages in cities have created favorable demographic and material conditions for the continued existence of multigenerational, extended families in urban China.¹¹ The result, as Davis and Harrell put it, is that paradoxically "the often repressive egalitarianism of communism facilitated the realization of ideals of traditional Chinese familism that many in the past had failed to accomplish."¹²

However, a structuralist explanation of intergenerational old age support is incomplete. Although it explains quite convincingly the continuing tendency of Chinese parents to rely on their children for old age security, it does not provide a direct answer to the question of *how* parents are able to do so and *why* most children are willing to provide such support, with or without immediate compensation.

Three strategies

Intergenerational support entails transfer of resources from children, the providers, to their parents, the beneficiaries.¹³ Without legal or any other coercive means to help extract surplus resources from their grown children, parents are forced to interact with their children on a more equal basis. By what means can they secure old age support from their children?

From the perspective of parents, three strategies can be employed: parents can elicit support from children (1) by luring children to their side with prospective benefits, particularly family inheritance, (2) by exchanging services with their children, or (3) by appealing to the commonality of interests between generations.¹⁴ Thus, it can be theorized that old-age support by children may occur because in the long run it may be economically rewarding to children, because it is part of a *quid pro quo* exchange beneficial to both parents and children, or because children give, not for the purpose of any immediate or long-term benefits, but for the sake of meeting family obligations.

All three explanations are plausible. What is at issue here is which approach Chinese parents are most likely to stress, given the historical and social circumstances. It is conceivable that grown children tend to be more attentive to the needs of their aging parents if there is a possibility of receiving a large inheritance. However, this explanation has little relevance in our case, as most Chinese parents do not have a large amount of assets to use as a bargaining chip.¹⁵

On the second strategy of providing assistance of other types to children in exchange for economic support, there is evidence that mutual support does occur between older parents and their grown children. For instance, as a survey on Chinese elderly in Tianjin, Hangzhou, and Wuxi conducted by the China Research Center on Aging during 1991–92 indicates, over 50% of elderly people interviewed had spent some time caring for their grandchildren in the previous month.¹⁶ We have seen evidence in previous chapters of the present volume that many different kinds of exchanges in both directions envelop parents and their grown children. In such cases it may be reasonable to consider whether these exchanges take the form of *quid pro quo* transactions—for example, with grandparents caring for grandchildren in exchange for financial assistance from their children.

However, it is debatable whether the evidence presented represents a *quid pro quo* exchange. Mutual assistance can be interpreted under a different light: it may simply reflect the fact that in any short period of time the flow of resources can go both ways, from children to parents and vice versa. As such, mutual assistance can be interpreted as two processes occurring at the same time, that is, children providing help to parents, and parents continuing to provide support to children as a way to maintain the parent-child bond. In other words, the seemingly *quid pro quo* exchange may not actually follow the principle of market exchange of equal values.

Second, short-term exchange implies that both parties have something to offer in return for the benefits received. For older parents, however, the irony is that support from children will be most needed when they have lost all their capacity to give in return. If the principle of *quid pro quo* were strictly followed, parents in advanced age or frail health could hardly enlist any assistance from their children. The prospect of continuing to provide assistance to children in exchange for old-age support may be acceptable to some parents, but the prospect must look rather unreliable to many others.

Hence, the key question for a secure old age is how to ensure that the old can continue to elicit support from a provider when they have no ability or resources with which to return the favor. When it comes to familial old-age support, assuming there is an implicit contract between parents and their children about old age support, the question then becomes how the “contract” can be enforced over time.¹⁷ The third strategy thus has parents appealing to the commonality of interests between generations. How would parents be able to do so in order to enforce the intergenerational “contract” across time?

Investment, solidarity, and generalized reciprocity

Insights from viewing a family as a social group may shed light on this question. The very existence of a voluntary group rests on the premise that there are jointly produced goods within the group that satisfy the needs of group members. Corporate obligations are created as a way to share the cost of production of joint goods, and access to consumption of the goods requires that these obligations be honored. According to Hechter, the solidarity of such groups is measured by the extent to which members fulfill their obligations in the absence of compensation.¹⁸ In other words, a group is solidary when group obligations are extensive yet monitoring costs are low. If we can assume each member is capable of making rational choices, the fact that members are willing to fulfill their obligations without being compensated indicates that the value of the shared goods exceeds the cost of meeting collective obligations. In other words, to make members honor their obligations in the absence of compensation—that is, to make the group solidary—the value of joint goods needs to be increased to the point that the net benefit for staying within the group is always in the positive domain.¹⁹

The family is not a voluntary group in a strict sense, since children are born into it. Nonetheless, it is voluntary in that all adult members are capable of relinquishing their membership by leaving or neglecting family obligations.

This is especially so in regard to the relationship between aged parents and their grown children. Once the message of old-age support being one of the most important family obligations is delivered to children, mainly through years of socialization, the issue of children providing support to their aged parents without any reward in return becomes whether they will honor this obligation. To this end, it is important that the family be a place where many of its members' basic wants can be satisfied so that children will strongly identify with their parental family. It then follows that, at the time when parents still play the role of caregiver and provider, the formation or preservation of family solidarity requires devotion of parents to the welfare of the whole family, and especially to the welfare of their children. The devotion of parents is expressed primarily through investments in their children. In other words, many years of dedication and support from parents to the family and their children are expected to result in strong feelings of obligation among the children that motivate them to provide the support their parents need in their old age. The same logic can be derived from social exchange theory, where, in the terms used by Marshall Sahlins, parents should stress "generalized reciprocity" rather than "balanced reciprocity" (with the latter referring to direct or *quid pro quo* exchanges).²⁰

Given the historical precedent that the old always relied on familial support and that current structural conditions drive family members to rally around their families to gain strength, many parents in contemporary urban China still consider old-age support (or partial support) the responsibility of family members, and of grown children in particular. For such support to be reliable, parents have little choice but to put a great deal of effort into forging strong and enduring bonds with their children. The basic strategy that parents take to accomplish this task is through devoted service to their children while they are young and even when they are adults.

In sum, among the three approaches that parents can take to secure old age support from their grown children, the third approach—namely, appealing to the commonality of interests between generations through long-term investments in the family—is likely to be the most effective. The power/bargaining approach is impractical because most older parents simply do not possess enough wealth or other assets to elicit support from their grown children. The short-term exchange approach is unattractive because the *quid pro quo* nature of the exchange means that the upward flow of resources from children is contingent on the parents' ability to reciprocate, which tends to diminish as they age. The third approach, which is built upon a

common perception of the permanence of the parent-child bond, and hence of the mutual obligations attached, is within the reach of ordinary people of limited resources and offers better assurance of old-age security. Once such an approach is taken, parental investment reflects not merely the sense of responsibility on the part of parents to their children, but also becomes a causal factor in producing future old age support from children.

Data and Measures

Can we provide evidence that in practice this third approach of long-term investments in children is the most effective way to ensure future support from children? We attempt to do that here by using our Baoding survey data to examine the relative role of such investments in influencing the support provided by children. In other words, we want to know whether parents who invested the most in their children in the past are receiving the most support from their children currently. The data used for our analyses come from the child sample of the 1994 Survey of Aging and Intergenerational Relations in Baoding. The survey has been described in detail in chapter 1. In the analyses presented in this chapter, only the 731 child respondents whose parents were also interviewed are used.

During the interview, a set of questions was asked grown-child respondents about various kinds of assistance they have provided or continue to provide to their parents (see Figure 5.1 in chapter 5). These include assistance in personal care, household chores, cash, and gifts. For personal care and household chores, which includes shopping, cooking, taking buses, and household financial management, respondents were asked whether they were providing such support to their parents. The respondents were also asked whether they were giving money to their parents and whether they had provided in-kind support in the previous year. For the last two kinds of support, respondents were probed to give an estimate of the average monthly amount in cash and the total worth of the gifts they had provided to their parents in the previous year. All such questions were asked with a qualifying clause of “regardless of whether they (parents) are in need of such support.” Therefore, the possible confounding of old-age support in general with assistance given purely as a response to parental needs presumably is removed. Answers to these questions constitute the dependent variables in this chapter. Descriptive statistics of these variables by the age of the parent interviewed are provided in Table 8.1.

Table 8.1 Old-Age Support Provided by Children (means and percentages)

	Age of parent interviewed			Total sample
	50-59	60-70	70 +	
Assistance given to parents				
Personal care (%)	18.5	29.4	42.6	25.9
Household chores (%)	57.6	55.0	72.2	58.6
Financial support (%)	37.8	43.7	53.1	42.1
Monthly amount of money given (yuan)	109.92 (91.89)	67.67 (68.70)	56.20 (47.11)	84.83 (80.55)
In-kind support given in previous year (%)	54.2	71.8	73.3	63.3
Money value of in-kind support (yuan)	337.44 (327.45)	399.18 (428.99)	391.72 (492.82)	372.74 (402.22)
Number of observations	358	269	104	731

Source: 1994 Baoding child sample.

Note: The numbers in parentheses are standard deviations.

Parental investment consists of various kinds of assistance that parents have given to their children. The explanatory variables designed to measure parents' assistance to their children can be divided into three sets: (1) early family support; (2) more recent assistance; and (3) assistance currently being given by parents (see Table 8.2). The first set includes an index of early reliance on family support, parental contributions to the child's wedding expenses, child education level, and residence after marriage. Respondents were asked whether they had relied on their parents for school homework and school enrollment help as children and for initial job search, later job changes, and housing as adults. The variable is a simple count of strong reliance in each realm. To reduce skewness, three or more such counts were coded as 3. Therefore, the range of the variable is from 0 to 3, and it is treated here as a continuous scale. Parental contributions to the child's wedding expenses were recorded as the actual amount of money given.

Child education has been used by others as a proxy for parental investment.²¹ In Chinese cities, education after junior high school is not mandatory, but the expenses of schooling, even through university, have been low. Nevertheless, it is conceivable that parents in urban China still have to provide financial support to their children during their school years and forego child earnings, and that, therefore, advanced child education

represents a type of investment. Coresidence refers to whether the respondent lived with his or her parents right after marriage. Given the prevalent housing shortage, the fact that a child and his or her spouse lived with parents after marriage represents a form of assistance from parents, rather than the other way around. (See chapter 2 for figures on the predominance of parentally provided housing in such instances.)

The most common types of parental assistance to grown children are assistance in care for grandchildren, household chores, and cash or gift giving. During the interview, the respondent was asked, separately, whether he or she had ever received and continued to receive such support. For instance, in regard to care for grandchildren, the respondent was first asked: "Did your parents ever in the past provide assistance to you with child care?" Then the next question was: "Are there any people who currently provide assistance to you with child care?" The respondent was then asked to specify the helper or helpers. Questions about assistance in household chores and economic support were asked in a similar fashion. Answers to questions about support received in the past and currently given by parents constitute the three variables of "more recent assistance" and the three variables of "currently give support" listed in Table 8.2. All these variables were dummy-coded, with 1 denoting support given, and 0 otherwise.

Several other measures were also included in our analyses as control variables. Much theorizing and research have suggested that the needs of the elderly, or their lack of material resources or ability to maintain a normal life, are major determinants of old-age support.²² By including variables measuring the physical and financial status of the parents, we will be able to test whether the effect of parental investment on old-age support persists, even after variables representing parental needs are controlled. The age of the parent interviewed was included. A scale measuring the functional status of parent interviewed was also used to measure the physical frailty of parents directly. That measure was derived from eight questions in the parent questionnaire that describe daily activities that require a moderate amount of physical strength. The coding scheme is as follows: 0—if the parent-interviewed had no difficulty in doing any of these eight physical activities; 1—if the parent did some of these activities with a little or some difficulty; 2—if the parent reported it was "very difficult" or "can't do it" for one or two such activities; and 3—if the respondent reported "very difficult" or "can't do it" for three or more such activities.²³ (See the age distribution of our parent sample on this scale in Table 2.4 in chapter 2.) Thus, the higher the value, the frailer the parent.

Table 8.2 Means and Percentage Distributions of Explanatory Variables

	Age of parent interviewed			Total sample
	50-59	60-70	70 +	
Early family support				
Index of reliance on family	1.19 (0.87)	1.13 (1.04)	1.04 (1.00)	1.15 (0.95)
Wedding contributions by parents (yuan)	3860.7 (5864.6)	2458.8 (3811.0)	2114.8 (9146.5)	3096.5 (5876.1)
Education level:				
Primary or junior high school (%)	23.7	43.1	42.3	33.5
Senior high school or equivalent (%)	57.2	38.6	42.3	48.3
College and higher (%)	19.0	18.2	15.4	18.2
Residence after marriage:				
Lived with parents (%)	31.6	43.5	59.6	39.9
Did not live with parents (%)	68.4	56.5	40.4	60.1
More recent assistance from parents				
Cared for grandchildren (%)	42.2	70.6	83.7	58.5
Helped with household chores (%)	68.7	61.7	63.1	65.3
Provided economic assistance (%)	73.2	64.7	61.5	68.1
Assistance currently given by parents				
Caring for grandchildren (%)	25.7	26.0	17.3	24.6
Helping with household chores (%)	22.3	12.6	11.5	17.2
Providing Economic assistance (%)	19.0	8.9	9.6	14.0
Others				
Functional status of parent-interviewed	0.54	0.99	1.38	0.82
Parents' monthly household income (yuan)	896.8 (402.45)	762.5 (534.0)	678.5 (504.2)	818.0 (475.6)
Child's monthly personal income (yuan)	296.8 (223.9)	342.3 (233.7)	497.0 (719.8)	341.9 (349.6)
Coresidence:				
Living with parents (%)	52.5	36.1	35.6	44.0
Not living with parents (%)	47.5	63.9	64.4	56.0
Number of older siblings	0.94 (0.93)	1.55 (1.28)	1.46 (1.32)	1.24 (1.16)
Number of younger siblings	0.84 (0.90)	1.07 (1.22)	1.02 (1.21)	0.95 (1.08)
Gender				
Female (%)	43.3	47.2	41.3	44.5
Male (%)	56.7	52.8	58.7	55.5
Number of observations	358	269	104	731

Source: 1994 Baoding child sample.

Note: The numbers in parentheses are standard deviations.

The other control variables include the monthly household income of the parent interviewed, the monthly personal income of the child respondent, and whether the respondent currently coresides with his or her parents.²⁴ Household income is an index of the material needs of the parents. The personal income of the respondent depicts the ability of the child to give to his or her parents. The effect of coresidence on old age support is rather complex and can be best understood in specific contexts. (See the discussion of coresidence in chapter 6.) In addition, the numbers of both older and younger siblings were included to control for the effect of birth order. The gender of the child was also included as a control variable.

Results

For the whole sample, the results echo those already presented in chapter 5, with over half of the respondents providing support of various kinds to their parents (see Table 8.1). In general the pattern is that the older the parents, the more likely that children provide assistance. Gift-giving is the most common form of old-age support, and the average value of gifts increases with the parent's age. On average, the total worth of in-kind support to older parents in a year is a little over a working child's total monthly income. In terms of the amount of money sent to parents by children, the pattern is that older parents receive less than younger ones. One possible explanation of this divergence in the age patterning of financial support is that shopping becomes difficult for the very old, and they thus prefer in-kind support to assistance in cash.

In terms of flow of resources downward from parents, children have also received extensive support from their parents (see Table 8.2). In addition to the usual assistance that is embodied in early reliance on family support, education, wedding contributions, and coresidence after marriage, it appears this downward flow of resources continues even after children have grown. For instance, more than half of the respondents in the total sample have received assistance from parents in child care (58%), household chores (65%), and money and goods (68%). For those with parents aged seventy or older, 17% were still receiving support in care for grandchildren at the time of the interview, and 11 and 9% of them were still receiving assistance from parents in household chores and money, respectively. Considering the fact that more than 80% of those whose parents were seventy years or older had received assistance in child care in the past, care for grandchildren appears to

be the most common form of assistance that parents in urban China give to their married children.

Thus, the figures in Table 8.1 and 8.2 suggest that (1) exchange of material resources and assistance between parents and their grown children has been extensive; (2) the exchange continues even when parents become "old old," i.e., seventy years or older; and (3) as parents become older the upward flow of resources increases and the downward flow of resources gradually slows down, as noted in chapters 2 and 5.

How are these two kinds of assistance related? Results of bivariate analysis of parental investment and intergenerational support are presented in Table 8.3. For example, in terms of personal care to parents, 30% of those who ever lived with parents after marriage (our fourth investment predictor) provided support to their parents, whereas about 23% of those who had not lived with parents provided such support. The difference is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). Thus, those who have postmarital coresidence experience are more likely than those who have no such experience to provide support in personal care to their parents. Likewise, those who received assistance from parents in child care, housework, and finance are more likely than those who did not to provide such support to their older parents.

The bivariate relationships of old-age support in household chores, cash, and gifts with all variables measuring parental assistance can be interpreted in the same fashion. In terms of predictors of old-age support in household chores, early reliance on the family has a marginally significant association ($p < 0.10$), while postmarital residence, past parental assistance in household chores, past parental economic assistance, and current economic assistance all show statistically significant coefficients ($p < 0.05$).

As for predictors of financial and in-kind old age support, the important factors are postmarital residence, past parental assistance in child care, in household chores, and in finances, and current financial assistance. All of these variables show significant associations individually (as well as current child-care assistance, in the case of predicting cash support from children). Across all four kinds of old age support, past parental assistance in household chores and past parental economic assistance appear to be the two factors with the strongest and most general impact.

It is interesting to note that while parents' current economic assistance (last row) is inconsequential for the likelihood of support in personal care and increases the chance that children provide support in household chores, it *decreases* the likelihood that children give financial and in-kind support to

Table 8.3 Percentage of Intergenerational Support Provided

Variables of parental investment	Old age support by children											
	Personal care			Household chores			Money			Gifts		
	%	F ratio	Prob.	%	F ratio	Prob.	%	F ratio	Prob.	%	F ratio	Prob.
Index of reliance on family												
0	25.98			51.23			40.91			68.47		
1	24.66			61.51			43.25			59.66		
2	27.33			61.07			39.86			62.67		
3	27.16	0.15	0.927	62.50	2.15	0.092	44.74	0.26	0.852	65.00	1.37	0.249
Parents' contributions to wedding												
0 - 1000 yuan ^a	28.25			59.70			44.73			62.63		
1001 +	22.94	2.65	0.104	57.36	0.40	0.526	38.82	2.53	0.112	64.22	0.20	0.658
Education												
Primary or Junior high school	23.77			54.73			44.77			64.61		
Senior high school	25.36			59.20			42.86			63.25		
College and above	31.06	1.23	0.293	64.39	1.69	0.186	34.88	1.77	0.171	61.24	0.21	0.813
Lived with parents after marriage												
Yes	30.34			63.67			47.52			70.93		
No	22.88	5.08	0.025	55.30	5.03	0.025	38.46	5.76	0.017	58.29	12.10	0.001
Care for grandchildren in the past												
Yes	29.65			59.76			45.17			70.19		
No	20.53	7.71	0.006	57.05	0.53	0.466	37.71	3.96	0.047	53.54	21.47	0.000
Help with household chores in the past												
Yes	30.87			66.10			47.72			68.79		
No	16.73	17.40	0.000	44.76	31.83	0.000	31.58	17.57	0.000	53.41	16.96	0.000
Economic assistance given in the past												
Yes	30.18			65.73			44.49			68.76		
No	16.52	15.59	0.000	43.17	34.11	0.000	36.96	3.63	0.057	51.74	20.06	0.000
Care for grandchildren												
Yes	21.67			56.11			48.00			66.67		
No	27.24	2.19	0.139	59.48	0.63	0.427	40.11	3.38	0.067	62.25	1.14	0.287
Help with household chores												
Yes	28.00			63.71			44.63			65.32		
No	25.42	0.36	0.549	57.60	1.58	0.209	41.53	0.40	0.529	62.94	0.25	0.616
Economic assistance												
Yes	26.47			69.61			31.63			54.46		
No	25.76	0.02	0.879	56.84	5.92	0.015	43.72	5.09	0.024	64.79	4.01	0.046

^a 1000 yuan is the median of parental contribution to the child wedding expenses.

their parents. This finding suggests, from the standpoint of parents, that assistance in money and goods to children may invoke immediate return of support of other kinds. However, such an effect seems to be moderate at best.

In sum, inspection of the distributions of intergenerational support and parental investment (in Tables 8.1 and 8.2) and of the relationship between these two sets of variables (in Table 8.3) suggests that the exchange of resources and assistance between parents and grown children is broad and long-lasting, and in general parental investment and intergenerational support are positively associated. Next, we use multivariate analysis to further investigate the issue.

Instrumental old-age support

Table 8.4 contains results of logistic regressions of instrumental old-age support (personal care and help with chores) on variables of parental investment. In the initial model (model 1), the binary coded variables of old-age support in personal care and in housework were regressed on the investment variables only. In the full model (model 2), the age (dummy coded) and functional status of the parents, current living arrangement (living with parents versus not), number of older and younger siblings, and the gender of the child were added as control variables. The purpose of having two models was to see whether and to what extent the significant effects of investment variables revealed in the initial model would be explained away by control variables.

According to the results in model 1 of personal care for parents, three factors increase the chances of support: if parents have (1) provided help in child care, (2) performed household chores, or (3) given economic assistance in the past, children are more likely to provide parents with personal care assistance currently. The effect of current parental help in child care is just the opposite (-0.779). Probably parents who are able to provide child care for grandchildren are in good health and therefore have no need for personal care assistance.

The effects of parent's previous help in housework and economic assistance in the initial model persist and even slightly increase in the full model, where control variables are added into the equation. The negative effect of parents' current assistance in child care also remains. However, the effect of past parental help in child care is greatly reduced and becomes nonsignificant. A plausible explanation of this weakened association is that whether parents have given help in child care in the past is strongly associated with their age. As can be seen from Table 8.3, the older the parent,

Table 8.4 Effects of Parental Investment on Instrumental Old-Age Support

	Personal Care		Household Chores	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2
Early family support				
Index of reliance on family	0.036	0.044	0.094	0.035
Log of parents' wedding contribs	-0.009	-0.007	0.007	0.046 *
Education:				
(Primary or junior high)				
Senior high school	0.108	0.184	0.172	0.175
College and above	0.339	0.348	0.329	0.316
Lived with parents after marriage:				
(No)				
Yes	0.196	0.275	0.246	0.118
More recent assistance from parents				
Care for grandchildren				
(No)				
Yes	0.769 **	0.260	0.206	0.093
Help with household chores:				
(No)				
Yes	0.580 *	0.642 **	0.599 **	0.506 *
Economic assistance:				
(No)				
Yes	0.585 **	0.724 **	0.615 **	0.688 **
Assistance currently given by parents				
Care for grandchildren				
(No)				
Yes	-0.779 **	-0.514 *	-0.443 *	-0.295
Help with household chores				
(No)				
Yes	-0.018	0.058	-0.152	-0.246
Economic assistance:				
(No)				
Yes	-0.055	-0.069	0.346	0.297
Others				
Age of parent-interviewed				
(50-59)				
60-69		0.645 **		-0.021
70 +		1.167 **		0.823 **
Functional limitation of parent				
		0.102		0.065
Coresiding with parents				
(No)				
Yes		-0.162		0.776 **
Number of older siblings				
		-0.085		-0.013
Number of younger siblings				
		-0.143		-0.040
Gender				
(Female)				
Male		-0.663 ***		-0.748 ***
Intercept	-2.357 **	-2.256 **	-0.853 **	-0.847 *
Log likelihood	-391	-383	-460	-442

+ $p < .10$; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

Source: 1994 Baoding child sample.

Note: Results are generated by logistic regression. The parenthesized categories are reference-omitted categories.

the more likely she or he has given such help in the past. Thus, when the variable of the parent's age is introduced into the model, the effect of past help with childcare largely disappears.

Additionally, the results in the full model suggest that parents' age is the strongest predictor of the likelihood of old age support in personal care. Parents in the age range of sixty to sixty-nine are about twice as likely as those in their fifties to receive such support from their children ($e^{0.645} = 1.91$). Similarly, the odds ratio of those parents of seventy years of age or older receiving support, as compared with those in their fifties, is further increased to more than 3 to 1 ($e^{1.167} = 3.21$). The effect of child gender is also statistically significant. The negative regression coefficient of being male (-0.663) suggests that daughters are more likely than sons to provide support in personal care to their parents. (See also the discussion in chapter 7.)

The strongest parental investment factors are parental assistance with household chores and funds in the past. Children who previously received help from parents with household chores are about twice as likely ($e^{0.642} = 1.90$) to support parents in personal care as those children who did not receive such help. Parents who previously provided economic assistance are also about twice as likely as those who did not to currently receive personal care support from the grown child ($e^{0.724} = 2.06$).

In the models of household chore assistance, we see basically the same pattern. That is, children who received help from their parents with household chores and money or goods in the past are more likely to give help to their parents in household chores currently. In addition, parents' financial contribution to the child's wedding is also statistically significant, suggesting that the more parents contributed to a child's wedding, the more likely they will receive help in household chores from this child at present. As for the control variables, parents in their seventies and older elicit more chore support from children than parents of younger ages. Coresiding with parents has a strong effect in promoting assistance to parents in housework (0.776), as noted in chapter 6. Other things being equal, daughters are more likely than sons to help their parents with household chores (-0.748), as noted in chapter 7.

It is interesting to note that once we control for other factors, current assistance given by parents has little effect on old-age support in terms of personal care and household chores. Indeed, current parental assistance in child care, which is also indicative of whether parents are capable of taking care of themselves, lowers the parents' chances of receiving support. As for

variables of early family support, only parents' support for wedding expenses increases the chances of support to parents (in terms of household chores). The effect of education is not statistically significant. This finding may result largely from the fact that educational attainment, even at the college level, does not require a substantial financial contribution from Chinese parents. Further, for parents in their sixties and seventies, their children spent most of their youth during the Cultural Revolution. Suspension of high school and college education during that turbulent period makes the association between education and the efforts of parents even more problematic.²⁵ Even for children within the same cohort, educational attainment may be more an indication of personal endowment and parental family's cultural capital combined, rather than of parental support.

Thus, the kinds of parental investment most likely to induce grown children to provide support are not very early family support, nor the current assistance that some parents are still able to give to their children, but rather assistance that parents had given in the not-so-distant past. This is so even when the needs of parents are taken into account. Based on this pattern, we may infer that (1) parents who manage to elicit support from children are the ones who have maintained strong relations with their grown children by giving needed assistance of various kinds, and that (2) children who provide personal care and chores support are not looking for an immediate return from their parents.

Economic old-age support

Cash and gifts to parents show the direction of intergenerational flow of material resources. Results of logistic regressions of economic support, in terms of money-giving and in-kind support, on parental investments are presented in Table 8.5. Again, in the initial model for both cash-giving and in-kind support, only variables of parental investment were included. In the full model, the age of parents interviewed, parents' household income, the respondent's personal income, coresidence, number of older siblings, number of younger siblings, and gender of the child respondent were added into the equation.

The pattern of old-age support in cash-giving can be easily summarized. According to the results in the initial model, children who received parental help with household chores in the past are *more* likely than those who did not to give money support to their parents; children who are currently receiving economic assistance from parents are *less* likely to give money

support to their parents; and college education lowers the likelihood of providing cash support to parents. In the full model, the effects of parents' past assistance in household chores and current economic assistance persist even when control variables are introduced into the equation. The negative (although not significant) effect of parents' current economic assistance simply means that children who are receiving economic assistance from parents tend not to return the favor currently. Again, this pattern suggests that children do not provide support to their parents as part of a quid pro quo exchange. Rather, it appears that children who give are repaying their parents for earlier support provided.

Furthermore, the results in the full model suggest that the age of parents no longer plays an important role in eliciting cash gifts from children. Also, as expected, parents with higher incomes have less chance to receive money, and the child's own personal income is positively associated with cash giving. In addition, and somewhat unexpectedly, those with many siblings are more likely than those with few to send money to their parents. Coresiding with parents increases the chance that children give money to their parents, while the gender of the child has no significant effect. (See also the treatment of these effects in chapters 6 and 7.)

The pattern of old-age support in the form of gifts is slightly different from that for cash support. According to the results in the full model, in addition to the strong positive effects of past parental help with housework and economic assistance (coefficients of 0.628 and 1.083), and the negative one of current parental economic assistance (-0.648), past parental assistance in the form of postmarital coresidence becomes a significant predictor (0.518). In addition, the effect of parents' age becomes stronger than it is the case for money support, suggesting that sending gifts may be differentiated according to parental age. While the effect of children's personal income is statistically significant, the effect of parents' income becomes nonsignificant. Furthermore, those who live with their parents actually are less likely than those who do not to give gifts to their parents. Here, once again, daughters are more likely than sons to send gifts to their parents, net of other predictors.²⁶

Table 8.5 Effects of Parental Investment on Economic Old-Age Support

	Cash giving		In-kind gifts	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2
Early family support				
Index of reliance on family	-0.080	-0.070	-0.105	-0.059
Log of parents' wedding contributions	0.001	0.051	0.054 **	0.020
Education:				
(Primary or junior high school)				
Senior high school	-0.090	0.152	-0.066	0.084
College and above	-0.594 *	-0.277	-0.249	-0.116
Lived with parents after marriage:				
(No)				
Yes	0.141	-0.046	0.188	0.518 *
More recent assistance from parents				
Care for grandchildren:				
(No)				
Yes	0.051	-0.184	0.420 +	-0.063
Help with household chores:				
(No)				
Yes	0.739 ***	0.807 ***	0.534 *	0.628 **
Economic assistance:				
(No)				
Yes	0.271	0.330	0.953 ***	1.083 ***
Assistance currently given by parents				
Care for grandchildren:				
(No)				
Yes	0.220	0.285	-0.315	-0.058
Help with household chores:				
(No)				
Yes	-0.122	-0.103	0.089	0.243
Economic assistance:				
(No)				
Yes	-0.635 *	-0.454	-0.716 **	-0.648 +
Others				
Age of parent-interviewed				
(50-59)				
60-69		-0.011		0.620 **
70 +		0.369		0.664 +
Log of parent's household income		-0.453 **		-0.112
Log of child personal income		0.357 ***		0.138 **
Coresiding with parents				
(No)				
Yes		0.560 *		-0.503 +
Number of older siblings		0.205 *		0.044
Number of younger siblings		0.449 ***		0.052
Gender				
(Female)				
Male		-0.020		-0.719 ***
Intercept	-0.803 **	-0.914	-0.575 *	0.431
Log likelihood	-434	-401	-406	-381

+ = $p < .10$; * = $p < .05$; ** = $p < .01$; *** = $p < .001$

Source: 1994 Baoding child sample.

Note: Results are generated by logistic regression. The parenthesized categories are reference omitted categories.

Conclusions

In regard to the general pattern of old-age support and intergenerational relations in contemporary China, there is ample evidence that the social contacts and connections between older parents and their grown children remain strong and support for the elderly by and large remains a family responsibility.²⁷ The task of this chapter has been to explore the relationship between parental investment and old-age support in urban China. Using instrumental assistance (personal care and housework) and economic assistance (money and gifts) that children give to their parents as primary indicators of intergenerational support, I have sought to test the hypothesis that past parental investment and current support of parents are causally connected.

The main findings of this chapter can be summarized as follows:

1. Exchanges of instrumental and material assistance between parents and their grown children in urban China are extensive. Whether coresiding or not, most parents continue to give assistance (with child care in particular) to their adult children, and many children also provide support of various kinds to their aging parents.

2. The most important type of parental investment that promotes old-age support is parental assistance given in the recent past. Early parental support to children (e.g., with homework, school admission, getting a first job) is largely inconsequential, in terms of explaining current support provided by children. Parents' current assistance (instrumental or economic) to their children does not have any *positive* effect on old-age support. Moreover, this pattern is quite similar across all four types of old-age support. Hence, the results suggest that continuing parental assistance to and association with children induce more future support from children, and that the support that children provide parents is not premised on current assistance from parents. Furthermore, these features suggest that what is important in promoting support from children is not the assistance that parents give *per se*, but rather the enduring intergenerational relations that are embodied in and strengthened by the continued assistance that parents have given to their grown children in the past.

3. For instrumental support, parents' current assistance in child care to their children in fact reduces the likelihood of such old-age support. Likewise, when parents currently provide economic assistance to their children, they are less likely to receive support in cash and gifts than parents who are not giving such assistance. These patterns suggest that in relative terms parents capable

of giving children one kind of assistance have no pressing need for assistance of a similar kind from the children.

4. In general, all these results still hold when other variables relevant to the pattern of old-age support, such as parent's age, functional status, income, children's income, coresidence, number of siblings, and gender, are taken into consideration. Thus, net of the effect of all these controls, parental investments have an independent effect on old-age support.

5. On the other hand, the effects of many control variables are also statistically significant, net of measures of parental investment. Thus, we have clear statistical evidence that other factors also have a noticeable influence on the pattern of old-age support, in addition to parental investment. Therefore, it appears that multiple forces are at work in shaping the patterns of old-age support. The proposed causal link of "parental investment to old age support" is only one of several social processes that generate the pattern of old-age support in contemporary urban China. (Many of these other predictors were explored in greater detail in chapters 5–7.)

Our results are supportive of the image of "networked families" discussed in chapter 6, in that there exists "multifaceted interdependency between the households of parents and married children," even when they do not coreside.²⁸ Continued assistance from parents, when they are able to do so, may oblige their children to provide old-age support later in return. Both downward and upward flows of resources should not be characterized as *quid pro quo* transactions, for no immediate exchange takes place between parents and children, let alone an exchange of equal values. Therefore, assistance given both ways represents a social process in which family obligations are fulfilled, and in which exchange is governed by the principle of generalized reciprocity.²⁹

Further, we may speculate that, since old-age support from children is still an important source of old-age security, there is an economic rationale for Chinese parents to continue to maintain strong bonds with, and provide various kinds of assistance to, their children so that the implicit intergenerational "contract" will be honored. Therefore, there is an irony that a calculating element is injected into the otherwise affection-dominated intergenerational relations that we see in all societies. Provision of instrumental and material resources to children is not driven only by a sense of duty, or out of a purely emotional attachment, but also has a practical purpose. However, since old age support by children may be needed over a long period of time, even when parents may no longer have much to give in

return, realization of such support requires that the calculating spirit be disguised or de-emphasized. Thus Chinese parents are willing to invest extra efforts in order to solidify the relations with their grown children by making their families solidary and by providing various kinds of assistance to their grown children with only open-ended obligations.

To recap, many parents in urban China still rely at least in part on various kinds of support by children for their old age security. Old-age support by children is also paralleled by extensive assistance that many parents continue to give to their grown children. There is empirical evidence that parental investment increases the likelihood of future old-age support from children. Unless comprehensive social welfare programs are created to greatly reduce parents' reliance on familial support in old age, it is unlikely that this support pattern will be drastically altered in the near future.

NOTES

¹ See, for example, John K. Fairbank, *The Great Chinese Revolution 1800–1895* (New York: Harper & Row, 1986); Martin C. Yang, *A Chinese Village* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1945); C. K. Yang, *Chinese Communist Society: The Family and the Village* (Cambridge: The M.I.T. Press, 1959); Hsiao-tung (Xiaotong) Fei, *Peasant Life in China* (London: Routledge, 1939); Hsiao-tung (Xiaotong) Fei, *From the Soil: The Foundations of Chinese Society*, trans. Gary G. Hamilton and Wang Zheng (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992); originally published as *Xianqtu Zhongguo* (Shanghai: Guancha Publishing House, 1947); see also the discussion in chapter 1 of this book.

² Fei, *From the Soil*.

³ C. K. Yang, *Chinese Communist*, 89 (emphasis added).

⁴ Martin K. Whyte and William L. Parish, *Urban Life in Contemporary China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984).

⁵ For a more detailed overview of the changes of the Chinese family in the past century, see chapter 1 in this volume.

⁶ To be sure, since we do not have any quantitative data about the old-age support pattern in China's urban areas in the past, it is difficult to determine the extent to which the current patterns in urban China represent continuations of traditions or a significant change. However, we can probably assume that the current old-age support pattern in rural China closely resembles what would have been found in the past, which appears to be reasonable because of the return of family farming and the fundamental fact that the rural elderly by and large have only their children to count on for old age security (see Anita Chan, Richard Madsen, and Jonathan Unger, *Chen Village: The Recent History of a Peasant Community in Mao's China* [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984]). If this is true, then the minimal difference between rural and urban areas in terms of children's willingness to provide support to their parents suggests the change in this aspect in urban China has been small (see Deborah Davis-Friedmann, *Long Lives*, exp. ed. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991).

⁷ Jonathan Unger, "Urban Families in the Eighties: An Analysis of Chinese Surveys," in *Chinese Families in the Post-Mao Era*, ed. Deborah Davis and Stevan Harrell (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 25–49.

⁸ China Research Center on Aging (CRCA), *A Data Compilation of the Survey on China's Support Systems for the Elderly* (Beijing: Hua Ling Press, 1994).

⁹ Anita Chan et al., *Chen Village*.

¹⁰ Whyte and Parish, *Urban Life*; Martin K. Whyte, "The Social Roots of China's Economic Development," *China Quarterly* 144 (1995): 999–1019.

¹¹ Deborah Davis-Friedmann, *Long Lives*.

¹² Deborah Davis and Stevan Harrell, "Introduction," in *Chinese Families*, 2.

¹³ Ronald Lee, "A Cross-cultural Perspective on Intergenerational Transfers and the Economic Life Cycle," in *Sharing the Wealth: Demographic Change and Economic Transfers*

between Generations, ed. Andrew Mason and Georges Tapmos (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

¹⁴ See Yean-Ju Lee, William L. Parish, Robert J. Willis, "Sons, Daughters, and Intergenerational Support in Taiwan," *American Journal of Sociology* 99 (1994): 1010–41.

¹⁵ At least up until recently, the only forms of family property in urban China were housing and cash savings. According to Whyte and Parish (*Urban Life*, 83–85), while the majority of housing in small towns remained in private hands for most of the post-1949 period, most housing in large cities became publicly owned. The data from the Baoding sample suggest that this pattern persisted into the 1990s. As noted in chapter 4, 94% of Baoding parents lived in public housing, owned either by the city housing bureau or their work units. Figures on family savings are not available from the 1994 Baoding sample. However, given China's long-standing "low wage, high security" policy, and rapidly rising inflation rate in recent years, it is safe to infer that the savings the urban elderly have amassed over the years are not sufficiently large to be used as a bargaining chip in intergenerational negotiations.

¹⁶ China Research Center on Aging (CRCA), *An Analytical Report of the Survey of Elderly Daily Life in Tianjin, Hangzhou, and Wuxi*. (*zhonggou tianjin, hangzhou, wuxi laonianren richang shenghuo diaodiao yanjiu fengxi baogao.*) (Beijing: CRCA, 1992), 90–91.

¹⁷ Yean-Ju Lee et al., "Sons, Daughters."

¹⁸ Michael Hechter, *Principles of Group Solidarity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987).

¹⁹ Hechter, *Principles*.

²⁰ Marshall Sahlins, *Stone Age Economics* (Chicago: Aldine-Atherton, 1972); see also Alvin W. Gouldner, "The Norm of Reciprocity," *American Sociological Review* 25 (1960): 161–78; Peter M. Blau, *Exchange & Power in Social Life* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1986).

²¹ Yean-Ju Lee et al., "Sons, Daughters."

²² See Albert I. Hermalin, "Aging in Asia: Setting the Research Foundation," *Asia-Pacific Population Research Reports*, East-West Center, No. 4, 1995; John R. Logan, Fuqin Bian, Yanjie Bian, "Tradition and Change in the Urban Chinese Family: The Case of Living Arrangements," unpublished paper, 1995; Yean-Ju Lee et al., "Sons, Daughters."

²³ The eight activities are: (1) shopping for personal items; (2) climbing 2 to 3 flights of stairs; (3) walking a 200 to 300 meter distance; (4) lifting or carrying something as heavy as 10 kilos; (5) using hands to open a tightly closed jar; (6) being on foot for about 2 hours; (7) bicycling more than 5 kilometers; and (8) getting on a bus. The pre-listed choices were (1) no difficulty; (2) some difficulty; (3) very difficult; and (4) can't do it.

²⁴ In earlier analyses not shown here, a measure of whether child respondents had children of their own was also included in our statistical models. However, since it was found that this variable did not have a strong relationship with any of the outcome measures used here, it is omitted from the final tables presented in this chapter.

²⁵ During the first three years of the Cultural Revolution (1966–1968), school education at all levels was suspended. Primary and middle school education was resumed after 1969. Enrollment for college remained suspended until 1970, when colleges began to recruit new students, but on a much more limited scale than before the Cultural Revolution. College education in full scale was restored nationwide only after 1978, the year when Deng's economic reforms were launched. In the 1990s new educational reforms began to allow added university enrollments with paid tuitions, and subsequently tuition payments for all, so that the costs of college education will be more of a factor for Chinese families to consider in the future.

²⁶ We also conducted a multivariate analysis of the predictors of the cash value of the funds and gifts in kind given to parents by children, using Tobit model regression due to the censored nature of the cash measures involved. The results, not shown here, are broadly in agreement with our analysis of the predictors of whether cash and gifts in kind were given or not. Specifically, net of all other factors included in our full models, past assistance with household chores and past economic assistance from parents had positive effects on the amounts of current child financial support (although the coefficient for parental economic assistance was not statistically significant) while current financial assistance from parents had a negative effect. Also, having lived with parents after marriage had a net positive effect on in-kind gifts currently provided to parents.

²⁷ See, for example, Davis-Friedmann, *Long Lives*; Unger, "Urban Families."

²⁸ Unger, "Urban Families," 40.

²⁹ Sahlins, *Stone Age*.

PART IV INTERGENERATIONAL
RELATIONS IN CHINA AND TAIWAN

9

INTERGENERATIONAL RELATIONS IN TWO CHINESE SOCIETIES

Martin King Whyte, Albert I. Hermalin, and Mary Beth Ofstedal

This chapter and the two that follow are explicitly comparative in focus. We capitalize on the close relationship in structure and content between the Baoding survey and studies in Taiwan, and on the common Confucian heritage but sharply divergent recent histories of these two locales, to explore similarities and differences in key patterns of intergenerational support and related attitudes.

The topic of intergenerational relations is highly appropriate for comparative analysis. Due to physical limitations, humans are dependent on others to some extent at both ends of the human life span. Though the nature and duration of that dependence will vary with individuals and across societies, there remain periods after birth and at older ages when individuals are not able to produce what they need for survival and require some degree of support, thus necessitating transfers of time, money, and care from others.

The support arrangements for the elderly, as with many other life transitions, are socially and culturally defined. In periods of relative stability, many societies have a well-developed value structure regarding support in old age that helps define the timing of support transitions, their content, and the appropriate participants in such transactions. In terms of resource allocation one finds, on the current world scene, a wide spectrum of arrangements, ranging from strong reliance on familial support to major roles for the public sector and markets through such mechanisms as social security schemes, health plans, deferred savings, and pensions.¹ Rapid change of a demographic, social, or economic nature is likely to generate strains on these long-standing structures and may create difficulty or uncertainty for the

elderly in securing adequate physical and material support. These strains are evident in both developed and developing economies of the world. In the more economically advanced countries, current and projected low birth rates and population aging have given rise to concerns about the viability of pay-as-you-go social security plans and have led to consideration of alternative arrangements like provident funds and other savings plans.² Among many developing countries, rapid demographic and socioeconomic change is leading to smaller numbers of children, higher levels of migration as children move to industrial and professional jobs in new locations, and changing attitudes toward privacy and self-sufficiency. In anticipation of the potential disruptive effects of these changes for ongoing familial-oriented systems of support for the elderly, many of these countries are trying to develop new social welfare programs that are appropriate to their traditions and that also reflect the limited economic resources at their disposal.

Comparing and contrasting the People's Republic of China (hereafter China) with the Republic of China (hereafter Taiwan) on the patterns of support received by the elderly in each country provides a valuable opportunity to study the persistence of cultural patterns in the face of different social, political, economic, and demographic transitions. Both societies share the Confucian family tradition that has several distinctive features, including arranged marriage, a patriarchal/patrilineal kinship system that values large extended households of parents with married sons and their families, and strong emphasis on family obligations and filial piety. (See the discussion of this tradition in chapter 1.) Under this system older Chinese could expect to coreside with their children and to derive physical, financial, and emotional support from them to the extent required. At the same time both China and Taiwan have changed dramatically over the last forty to fifty years in many dimensions and in ways that place elements of the family tradition under stress. The intriguing questions for our comparative chapters thus center on assessing which elements have changed, the degree of change, and whether these changes have differential implications for actual support arrangements and for the norms and values regarding the appropriate mechanisms for the support of the elderly.

Contrasting Histories of China and Taiwan

In order to treat Baoding and urban Taiwan as comparable cases, we need to consider the extent to which the past histories of mainland China

and Taiwan have been similar or different. The major differences stem from the distinctive political economies and social institutions constructed in the People's Republic of China and the Republic of China after 1949. The primary analytical frame of reference for the remaining chapters in this volume is therefore a consideration of whether the nature of Chinese families and intergenerational relations today is shaped more by the common cultural heritage shared by these two places or by their very different recent political and social orders.

Before detailing the ways in which Taiwan and the PRC developed along quite different trajectories after 1949, we need to acknowledge that in the period prior to 1949, Taiwan underwent unusual experiences not shared by Chinese living on the mainland. Two major historical differences were involved, frontier settlement and Japanese occupation. Prior to 1500 Taiwan was peopled by aboriginal cultures that shared a number of traits with similar groups in Oceania and the Philippines. Taiwan was only annexed by China in 1682. Major waves of Chinese settlement from the 17th through the 19th centuries brought two main Chinese dialect groups to the island: the dominant Hokkien speakers who migrated in from neighboring Fujian province and tended to settle in the coastal and valley regions, and the Hakka speakers who predominantly came somewhat later from Guangdong province down the coast and who as latecomers tended to cluster in upland and hilly areas. (Customarily these two groups are together referred to as "Taiwanese." By the nineteenth century the aborigines had been decimated, with surviving communities driven into remote mountainous areas.) For the most part the Chinese settlers tried to recreate on the island the social and cultural forms of their home communities on the mainland, and they considered themselves part of China. By the end of the nineteenth century the Chinese population of Taiwan numbered over 2.5 million, and in 1885 the island was elevated to provincial status within China, with Taipei as its capital.³

With China's loss in the Sino-Japanese War of 1894–95, the second distinctive phase began. Taiwan was ceded to Japan, which ruled it as a colony from 1895 to 1945. Japan introduced a number of kinds of modernization to the island during its period of occupation, including expanded transportation and communications, increased education, and broadened public health efforts. The Japanese colonial rulers also introduced some changes that directly fostered family change. In particular, foot-binding of females was forbidden and largely eliminated for young girls by the 1920s. In addition, the modern school system promoted by the Japanese enrolled

girls as well as boys before this became common on the mainland. In 1905 less than 5% of the Taiwanese school-age population were enrolled in elementary school. This increased to 25% in 1920 (40% of males and 9% of females) and to 78% in 1944 (81% of males and 61% of females).⁴ However, in general the Japanese stressed ruling through indigenous cultural forms and did not attempt to alter most aspects of Chinese family life. (The Meiji Restoration that swept Japan after 1868 was characterized, in fact, by a heightened stress on the Confucian family values which Japanese elites had learned from China centuries earlier.)

Some existing studies argue that Taiwan differed somewhat from mainland China in having higher rates of divorce and of the remarriage of widows than other Chinese communities.⁵ Perhaps also in Taiwan alternative forms of marriage (the groom moving into the bride's home or infant daughters adopted out and raised alongside of their future husbands) were more common in comparison with "major marriage" (where the bride marries into the groom's home as a young adult) as practiced in most places on the mainland.⁶ Additionally, frontier circumstances produced shallower lineages and a higher proportion of multisurname villages than in many parts of the mainland. But in most respects Taiwan's family patterns in the post-1945 period seem well within the range found in mainland communities.⁷ Certainly in terms of beliefs about filial obligations and the nature of intergenerational relations, we are in agreement with the statement that, "Taiwan entered...the postwar era with most of the older values of the Chinese family system unaltered."⁸ For the analyses presented in the chapters that follow, it does not seem much of an oversimplification to conclude that urban Taiwan and Baoding share a common cultural heritage and comparable family traditions, particularly in regard to intergenerational relations.

As is well known, the period of Chinese territorial unity after World War II was very brief—only from 1945 to 1949. In the latter year the victory of Mao Zedong and his followers in the Chinese Civil War drove the remnant Nationalist forces into exile in Taiwan, where they formed the Republic of China, a rival regime that continues to exist. Mao and his new government presided over a revolutionary attempt to construct a Soviet-style society on the mainland, with the resulting political economy differing in fundamental ways from the one that emerged in Taiwan. Even though the reforms launched by Deng Xiaoping and others after Mao's death in 1976 lessened the differences between these two contending Chinese social orders, to this day the imprint of the socialist institutions of Mao's China is marked.

For this reason most of the discussion here concerns the diverging institutional forms that characterized mainland China and Taiwan in the period 1949–1978, with post-1978 changes discussed only subsequently, and in briefer compass.

Taiwan's Capitalism and China's Socialism

The first important distinctive feature of post-World War II Taiwan to consider is the demographic impact of the loss by the Nationalists of the Civil War. In the wake of this loss something like one million supporters of the Nationalist cause fled the mainland for Taiwan. This introduced a third Chinese language group to Taiwan, the predominantly Mandarin-speaking Mainlanders, who today comprise almost 15% of the population on the island (but over 20% of those over age sixty in 1990). A large share of the Mainlanders were males (predominantly soldiers and government officials), many of them coming without their families and kinship networks. Even though once settled in Taiwan the Mainlanders tried to marry and in other ways construct (or reconstruct) family relationships, their numbers and demographic features often made it difficult to do so. Since our analyses in the remaining chapters are confined to urban Taiwan, where Mainlanders were particularly concentrated,⁹ some of the resulting features of older Mainlanders—for example, excess males, higher proportions who never married, smaller numbers of married children—may affect some comparisons between urban Taiwan and Baoding.

After the 1950s Taiwan became one of the most rapidly growing economies in the world, with annual growth rates of 8–10% common. During the same period economic development in mainland China was much more uneven, with growth spurts followed by periods of famine and economic stagnation prior to 1978. As a result of this contrasting record, and despite China's more recent spectacularly rapid growth, Taiwan remained in the 1990s a significantly more developed economy, with a much higher standard of living, more young people receiving advanced education, a larger middle class, and so forth.¹⁰ Insofar as the level of economic development by itself is a primary influence on the patterning of family relations, we should by this contrast expect to see substantially greater changes away from traditional family patterns in urban Taiwan than in Baoding.

The contrasts between the economic development of these two Chinese societies concern much more than rates of growth and current levels. Both

the development strategies and the institutions adopted to pursue development during the period prior to 1978 were fundamentally different as well. Taiwan pursued economic development in a market-based capitalist framework throughout. After an initial period of favoring import substitution, Taiwan's policy switched toward export-promotion and extensive involvement in international markets. While the government maintained control of some key firms and industrial sectors, most of the economy of the island was thrown open to market competition, with both domestic entrepreneurship and foreign investment thriving. Within this competitive environment, Taiwan differed even from some of the other "Asian tiger" economies in the predominant role of family firms, with estimates in the 1980s that anywhere from 80–95%+ of the firms on the island were family-run.¹¹

Taiwan also developed a very vigorous labor market, with individuals and families moving freely around the island and changing jobs in pursuit of opportunities to advance the interests of their families. A notable feature of Taiwan's development was the ability of farm families to earn income from nonfarm sources due to a strong trend toward rural industrialization. Children of farm families could work in nearby plants, since relatively few people were needed for the small agricultural holdings common after the land-reform program of the early 1950s. By 1964, 35% of farm income was earned off-farm, and this increased to over 70% in the 1980s.¹² Another common pattern was for an individual to go to work in a large and modern firm, often in an urban area, until certain goals had been met (skills learned, contacts established, a dowry equipped, etc.), and then leave to join or establish a family-run enterprise, sometimes back in a home village.

Given the predominance of family-run firms and the government's policy of keeping costs low to remain internationally competitive, Taiwan was slow to develop pensions and other fringe benefits for the work force. Prior to 1985 occupational pensions were basically limited to civil servants and to workers employed in factories owned by the provincial government. Legislation enacted in 1984 extended retirement benefits to many workers in the private sector. Generally, pensions are provided in lump sum payments determined according to years of service and wage levels, rather than continuing monthly pension payments, as is the case in China.¹³

Another distinctive feature of Taiwan's development was the relative weakness of the banking system as a source of investment capital. Given all of these circumstances, the family retained great importance for most of Taiwan's population as a source of security and investment funds.¹⁴ Taiwan

also, of course, developed a robust property market, with families competing with one another to accumulate enterprises, housing, stocks, and other forms of wealth.¹⁵ Given the importance of both family-run firms and private investment, inheritance and succession within work settings controlled by one's family retained a greater importance in Taiwan than in other economies at the same level of economic development.¹⁶

Another institutional feature of Taiwan's development is the rising but still quite low level of labor force participation by married women (in comparison with the situation in mainland China). According to data from a 1986 island-wide survey, the percentage of married women working outside the home prior to the birth of their first child rose from 8% for those married during the late 1950s to 46% for those who married in the early 1980s; between the birth of the first and second child the comparable percentages rose from 6% to 26%, with women with more than two children presumably even less likely to be employed.¹⁷ Employment in family-run enterprises has occupied approximately another 10% or so of married women in these life cycle stages in recent years, but this still means that more than 60% of married women with one or more children are not employed. (Overall, 1996 labor-force surveys in Taiwan report that 46% of married women were in the labor force in that year.¹⁸) As other observers have remarked, Taiwan's economic miracle has depended to a considerable extent on the labor of unmarried women; in contrast, married women have played a distinctly secondary role, both as laborers and even more so as managers and decision-makers.¹⁹ There also was no high priority effort by the state in Taiwan to break down traditional Confucian beliefs about the proper role divisions between males and females in order to foster gender egalitarianism. However, it is important to note that in higher education women in Taiwan have achieved parity with men. Since the early 1980s the proportion of women aged eighteen to twenty-one enrolled in college has equaled or exceeded the proportion of men in the same ages, whereas in China university enrollment is still about two-thirds male.²⁰

Another important feature of Taiwan's development involved its demographic transition. Fertility rates remained high (around six births per woman) into the 1950s but then began a steep decline, aided by the voluntary but intensive, island-wide family planning campaign launched in 1964. By the mid-1980s, as a joint consequence of economic development and the acceptance of family planning goals, fertility rates in Taiwan had

fallen below replacement level, with fewer than 2 births expected per woman in her lifetime.²¹

In the realm of culture and values the policies followed in the Republic of China produced greater exposure to both traditional Chinese and Western cultures than was the case in the People's Republic of China. Taiwan's leaders portrayed themselves as the guardians of traditional Chinese culture that they saw as threatened on the mainland. Traditional Confucian values were stressed in the schools and elsewhere, while an exuberant variety of indigenous religious activities was tolerated. At the same time, Taiwan's openness to the outside world had predictable consequences. Through the mass media, travel and study abroad, missionary activity, active translation of foreign publications, and other means, the population became quite familiar with Western and other foreign cultures and ideas. Obviously these two cultural streams have contrasting potential implications for traditional Chinese family patterns and values, with revived Confucianism supportive of those traditions, while the Western cultural influx is corrosive.

In all of these respects and many others, the path to development taken by the People's Republic of China between 1949 and 1978 and the institutional forms adopted there were quite different from Taiwan. During the mid-1950s the socialist transformation of the rural and urban economies was carried out, so that by 1957 private property and employment had been virtually eliminated in favor of state-owned or state-controlled work organizations and productive property. In urban areas China carried socialist transformation even further than did the former Soviet Union, attempting to limit markets and competition in all spheres in favor of direct bureaucratic allocation. So, for example, in large cities the great majority of urban housing by the 1960s was publicly owned and allocated by bureaucratic procedures, individuals were assigned to jobs by the state and had very little ability to seek employment or change jobs on their own, and access to medical care, education, and other vital resources was subject to bureaucratic, rather than market, allocation.²²

A key place in this system of socialist direct allocation was assumed by work organizations, termed "work units" (*gongzuo danwei*) in Chinese. Work organizations not only monitored production but most aspects of the lives of their employees and members of their families. Large state-owned work organizations provided housing for many of their employees and ran nursery schools, medical clinics, dining halls, recreational facilities, and much else. Work units also directly allocated some consumer goods to employees and

controlled the distribution of ration coupons needed for purchases of many other commodities. Those employed in state enterprises (about 80% of the urban labor force prior to the reforms) were entitled to retirement pensions, paid maternity leave, medical insurance, disability pay, and a range of other fringe benefits that is unusual for a developing society (and contrasts with the situation in Taiwan even today). For the purposes of this volume it is particularly important to note that most Baoding retirees were entitled to monthly pension payments of 70–80% of their final pay, with some indexing to correct for inflation, as noted in chapter 2. Once again these benefits were distributed and funded by work units, rather than by any general governmental welfare benefits program.²³ The combination of virtual lifetime employment with a range of directly distributed resources and fringe benefits was referred to as the “iron rice bowl” of state employees.²⁴

As a result of the kinds of institutional arrangements just described, Chinese families in Baoding and elsewhere on the mainland during the pre-reform era faced a very different situation from their counterparts in Taiwan. Family-run enterprises did not exist, with individuals all employed in the bureaucratic work units of Chinese socialism. Families also owned little in the way of property outside of clothing, personal possessions, and household durables (items like bicycles and television sets represented the pinnacles of consumer aspirations).²⁵ Outside of the few families who retained ownership of housing they owned before 1949 (only 5% of the parents in the Baoding survey fell into this category), everyone else had to depend upon work units and bureaucratic housing offices for their apartments. The absence of labor and other markets plus state restrictions kept most urbanites from moving around much except involuntarily, as in the state’s periodic mobilization of urban residents to relocate to the countryside.

While in most respects the highly bureaucratic nature of the institutions of urban China, in comparison with Taiwan, reduced the importance of the family and family ties in the patterning of people’s lives and daily activities, in specific realms the opposite was the case. In particular, as discussed in chapters 2 and 4, the immobility of urban residents and the state allocation system ensured that most grown children were allocated to jobs and housing in the same locale as that of their parents, and not infrequently in the same work unit, with very little opportunity or possibility for them to relocate elsewhere.²⁶ Thus family-owned enterprises and property did not keep grown children tied to their parents, but to some extent the bureaucratic rules of the game had this same effect.

Despite this “proximity effect,” the general institutional arrangements of the PRC produced a marked de-emphasis on the family as a corporate economic unit, compared to the situation in Taiwan. As a result of this contrast, grown children in Baoding are substantially less dependent upon family property and resources, and parents are less dependent upon the resources controlled by grown children, than is the case for their counterparts in urban Taiwan. The greater role of work units and public sector support in providing housing, pensions, and other things for the elderly seems likely to make Baoding parents less dependent upon the assistance of their grown children than is the case in Taiwan.

Another major contrast between urban areas in China and Taiwan after 1949 concerns the employment of married women. In Baoding and other mainland cities, more than 90% of married women between the ages of twenty and fifty were employed full-time outside of the home.²⁷ Parents depended upon a combination of work-unit run creches and nursery schools and relatives to watch preschool-age children so that both parents could remain continuously at work.²⁸ After age fifty the rate of employment of women dropped sharply, as China followed the practice of the USSR of having an earlier retirement age for women than for men (in China’s case, at fifty for manual workers and fifty-five for mental workers, compared to sixty for men—see chapter 3 for a discussion of retirements at even younger ages than these). Although as in the rest of the world women were disadvantaged compared to men in terms of representation in high status occupations, leadership positions, and membership in the Communist Party, in terms of things like access to paid jobs and ownership of property, women in Baoding and elsewhere in the PRC were not noticeably worse off than men.²⁹ Insofar as family-owned property is important in the maintenance of parental and patrilineal authority, the institutional arrangements in the PRC would be expected to weaken such authority.³⁰ In China any such influence was reinforced by recurring official propaganda in favor of gender equality, propaganda that denounced as “feudal” traditional Confucian concepts of the proper division of male and female roles.

Another important contrast between urban institutions in China and Taiwan concerns the regulation of migration from rural areas. Whereas individuals in Taiwan remained free to migrate between countryside and city throughout, after the 1950s very rigid restrictions on migration were adopted in the PRC. As a result of this change, until the 1980s cities in China grew

almost exclusively by internal population replacement, rather than by migration from rural areas.³¹

Fertility rates have dropped rapidly in China as they have in Taiwan, although the forces producing this change have been somewhat different. The conditions of urban life in Baoding and other cities already had led to declines in fertility prior to the launching of a highly coercive official family planning effort in 1970. (The total fertility rate in that year in urban areas of China has been estimated at 3.3, although in rural areas in that same year it remained quite high, at 5.8) The launching of mandatory family planning targets in 1970 and then the even tighter “one child policy” in 1979 produced further reductions. Urban fertility levels in China were already below replacement level by 1975, and according to official figures the same goal had been achieved nationally by the early 1990s.³²

In terms of culture and values, China was distinctive during the pre-reform era in terms of the state’s effort to totally control information and communications and exclude or suppress alternative cultural influences. As noted in chapter 1, most aspects of traditional Confucian values and Confucius himself were denounced during the Mao era, as were most forms of traditional religious activity (ancestor worship, rituals at temples, traditional festivals, etc.). A set of socialist values and ideas was made the new orthodoxy, with individuals in all walks of life required to be indoctrinated in and voice support for those values. Initially during the 1950s the U.S.S.R. served as a source for socialist culture, with Soviet films, textbooks, and many other materials translated and used. However, after the break with the Soviet Union in 1960, China became almost fully closed off from the outside world culturally, except for occasional films or other products from approved locales such as Albania and North Korea. During the final years of Mao’s rule the Cultural Revolution led to a strident effort to promote a “proletarian culture,” with Confucian, Western, and Soviet cultural products all declared beyond the pale.

If we examine the range of institutional contrasts between Baoding and urban Taiwan described in the foregoing pages, on balance and with a few exceptions (such as the exclusion of Western cultural influences and the immobility of labor), they indicate a social structure and cultural setting that is less supportive of traditional family patterns and filial obligations in Baoding than in urban Taiwan. If this is the case, then in considering the extent to which “modernization” alters traditional family patterns, we have a case here in which the implications of economic development levels and of

the specific institutional arrangements are at odds. If level of development *per se* is what is important, then family patterns in cities in Taiwan should appear more changed from traditional patterns. On the other hand, if it is not so much level of development as the specific institutional arrangements that are important, then it is the families in Baoding which should be less “traditional.”

Another way of stating the situation is to note that the China-Taiwan comparison raises fundamental questions about what we mean by development and modernization. By most conventional indicators, as noted earlier, Taiwan is substantially richer, more modern, and more developed than China. However, in most theoretical treatments modernization or development is centrally seen as entailing the decline of the family as an economic production unit, and the increasing reliance of individuals on nonfamilial, bureaucratic, or public organizations and resources. If we adopt that sort of notion as our central definition, then the contrast between Taiwan's distinctive family-based path to development and the bureaucratic socialism of urban China leads to the opposite conclusion: it is urban China rather than urban Taiwan that appears more “developed” or “modern.” It remains to be seen whether it is the level or the specific institutional forms of development that is more important in influencing the contemporary state of parent-child relations in these two Chinese societies.

China's Reforms and Baoding-Urban Taiwan Comparisons

Mao Zedong died in 1976, and a scant two years later a bold program of reforms was launched in mainland China under the leadership of Deng Xiaoping. Those reforms helped to speed up the pace of economic growth in the PRC, and they have produced significant modifications of that land's state socialist economic institutions in favor of a more market-oriented approach and increased openness to the outside world.³³ A primary impetus for these reforms was a recognition by Deng and other leaders that the PRC was falling behind Taiwan and other dynamic parts of the Asian economy, and that, if China was not to fall farther behind, it was necessary to copy and adapt the strategies that had made these other economies so successful. Since mainland China has now for more than two decades been following a market- and export-promotion oriented economic development strategy inspired by Taiwan, it is logical to ask how substantially the institutional contrasts described above have been modified and weakened. In other words, has the social structure of urban society in the PRC now changed

sufficiently so that residents of both Taiwan and of the PRC are being influenced by a fundamentally similar institutional environment?

The simple answer to this question is no. In certain respects the changes in the social order of the PRC are remarkable, and in the Chinese countryside the increased ability of individuals and families to change their lives has been notable. However, in urban China individuals and families confront weakened but still surviving institutions dating from the Mao period. To be specific, even though advertising, private enterprise, foreign investment, and other fruits of the reforms are readily visible in urban China, most employed urbanites (70%+) are still employed by the state and collective enterprises that dominated the Mao era. The reformers have targeted the “iron rice bowl” of lifetime job security and fringe benefits of such enterprises for elimination, but as of the mid-1990s most individuals remained dependent upon their work units for pay, pensions, and other benefits, rather than “going into the sea” by quitting and starting their own businesses.

Specifically in regard to pensions, reform proposals are intended to eventually replace work unit-supplied pensions with city-wide pension funds; even now, some work units in financial difficulty are having trouble paying the pensions for which they remain obligated. However, the great majority of urban, employed persons in the PRC retain rights to pensions, despite reform efforts, rather than having to rely entirely on their own savings or family support.

Private employment still remains the exception in urban China (generally involving 5% or less of the labor force in the mid-1990s), and even those private businesses that do exist do not appear especially likely to take the form of the family-run businesses that are so dominant in Taiwan. Similarly, housing and other resource markets were only beginning to be reformed, with few families yet owning their own apartments, and fewer still investing in the housing or businesses of others.³⁴ Therefore few urban families have acquired businesses or capital that they must manage with the aid of other family members. For the most part, urban Chinese families in the PRC remain consumption units based upon employment of family members in outside, bureaucratic organizations, rather than the family-based production units found so widely in contemporary Taiwan. Similarly, virtually universal employment by urban women between the ages of twenty and fifty remains the rule in the PRC, with few women in this age range being housewives or unpaid laborers in family firms.

However, even if the institutional structure has only changed at the margins, the cultural life of urbanites has been more thoroughly transformed by reform-era changes. The rigid proletarian culture of the late-Mao era has been rejected in favor of much greater toleration of a variety of cultural influences, including those stemming from China's traditional culture and from the West.³⁵ Direct cultural influence from Taiwan also became possible in the 1980s after decades of forced separation, with popular songs and singers, poets, and artists from the island increasingly seen as inspirations by their counterparts on the mainland. These changes have coincided with other shifts, and in particular with decreased official confidence in Marxist ideas and socialist values as well as weakened efforts by work units and other authorities to monitor the private lives and cultural pursuits of their citizens. The result is that Chinese urbanites operate in an increasingly pluralistic and cosmopolitan cultural environment even while the basic institutional structures regulating employment, housing, and other necessities have changed much less.³⁶

China's leaders launched further efforts in the late 1990s to speed the pace of transition to a market-based urban system, further undermining the "iron rice bowl." Perhaps eventually these reforms will further erode the institutional structures put in place in the 1950s, and will result in greater migration in search of job opportunities, more family-run businesses, larger shares of privately owned housing, and other phenomena found in contemporary Taiwan. However, at the time of our Baoding survey, China's reforms had only changed the bureaucratic social order that was the legacy of the Mao era around the edges, and as a result the degree of "convergence" with the institutional structure found in Taiwan was rather slight.³⁷ Given this conclusion, the analytical exercise sketched earlier—considering whether recent (i.e., early to mid-1990s) patterns of family behavior and attitudes in urban Taiwan and in Baoding are shaped more by a shared Confucian culture or by contrasting contemporary institutions—remains valid.

The Baoding-Urban Taiwan Comparison: Dimensions and Data

The following two chapters address only a special subset of the broad agenda implied in a comparison of family dynamics in Taiwan and China. Chapter 10 contrasts the nature and degree of support of several kinds that older Chinese and Taiwanese receive from children and others. As such it speaks to the persistence of family obligations and filial piety—prime components of the Confucian system—in contemporary China and Taiwan.

Chapter 11 then focuses the comparison on a set of values and attitudes related to the importance of coresidence of the elderly with children, maintenance of property by the elderly, and widow remarriage. In both Taiwan and China responses to these aspects of the Confucian family system were obtained from both the elderly and their adult children, as specified below. Together these chapters allow us to compare both selected attitudes and behavior related to intergenerational relations in our contrasting Chinese settings. We do not debate here which comes first in the social change process, altered attitudes or transformed behavior. We will simply be looking for whether the combination of both types of data helps us to answer the question of which Chinese setting displays the most departure from those patterns of family life that existed in earlier times.

The data used for these two comparative chapters come from two highly comparable surveys that were conducted in Baoding and in Taiwan. For Taiwan, we use two waves of data from the Survey of Health and Living Status of the Elderly in Taiwan, an island-wide representative survey of men and women who were age sixty years or over when the survey began in 1989. Out of a total sample of 4,412, baseline interviews were conducted with 4,049 individuals, yielding a response rate of 92%.³⁸ In 1993, follow-up interviews were conducted with 3,155 of the original respondents. Of the remaining 894 respondents, 65% had died between 1989 and 1993, and 35% could not be located or refused to participate in the 1993 wave. Both the 1989 and 1993 interviews were conducted in person.

In addition to reinterviews on the elderly sample, the 1993 wave conducted interviews with all surviving children for a random subsample (one-quarter) of the elderly respondents. Children who were coresiding with the elderly sample person were interviewed in person, and non-coresident children were interviewed by telephone. Because the Baoding child sample contains only one child per family, for purposes of comparing adult children in the two settings, we restrict the Taiwan child sample to one randomly selected child from each family. This selection results in a total sample size of 662 children for Taiwan, of whom 199 were coresident and 463 were non-coresident. Characteristics of both the elderly and the child samples will be examined later in this chapter. Chapter 10, which examines patterns of intergenerational support, focuses exclusively on the 1989 interviews with the sixty-years-and-older sample. The chapter following on attitudes (chapter 11) utilizes information from both parents and children collected in the 1993 wave.

The data for Baoding come from the 1994 Survey on Aging and Intergenerational Relationships, which has been described in detail in previous chapters. Many of the questions included in the Baoding survey, particularly those pertaining to attitudes and support transfers, were taken directly from the 1989 Taiwan survey, thus providing rich potential for comparative analysis. The specific measures that are used in each of the remaining chapters are identified and compared as they arise in the discussion.

Several differences in the Baoding and Taiwan surveys that are relevant to our comparative analyses relate to their respective samples. First, the Baoding survey is restricted to residents of the city of Baoding, whereas the Taiwan survey includes persons in both rural and urban areas throughout Taiwan. Secondly, the Taiwan sample is comprised of persons age sixty years and over, whereas the Baoding sample includes persons age fifty years and over. In order to make the samples comparable, the Taiwan sample is restricted to those living in one of the five metropolitan areas in Taiwan (Taipei, Kaohsiung, Taichung, Keelung, and Tainan) and the Baoding sample is restricted to respondents who are sixty years of age or over. Some exceptions to these restrictions are made (and noted) in chapter 11.

The samples of children also contain some differences. First, the Baoding child sample is geographically restricted to include only children who were residing in the vicinity of Baoding city at the time of the survey, whereas the Taiwan sample includes all children living anywhere in Taiwan.³⁹ As a result, all of the children in the Baoding sample are urban, and they live in close proximity to their sampled parent. In contrast, the Taiwan child sample contains a mix of urban and rural residents, and includes children who may be living in a part of Taiwan different from where from their sampled parent lives. In addition, in order to maximize the sample size for Baoding, the child sample includes children of all sampled parents age fifty years or over, whereas the sampled parents for the Taiwan children were age sixty-four years or over at the time of the 1993 survey. As a result, the child sample for Baoding is somewhat younger than that for Taiwan (as will be shown in Table 9.3), and this has implications for other characteristics of the children, as well.

Background Characteristics of the Elderly in Baoding and Urban Taiwan

The differing demographic, social, and political histories of China and Taiwan that have been discussed previously are reflected, to some extent, in the different profiles of the elderly populations in Baoding and urban Taiwan. Tables 9.1 and 9.2 present the basic demographic, socioeconomic, and family characteristics of the Baoding and Taiwan samples that provide the basis for analysis in subsequent chapters. As mentioned previously, the Mainlanders who fled to Taiwan in the aftermath of the Chinese Civil War differ from the Taiwanese “natives” in a number of respects. In order to highlight some of these differences, characteristics are shown separately for the two ethnic groups, referred to here and in subsequent chapters as Mainlanders and Taiwanese.

As shown in Table 9.1, the Baoding elderly are somewhat younger than either the Taiwanese or Mainlander elderly, and they are more likely to be currently married. The gender distributions for Baoding and the total urban sample for Taiwan are very similar; however, this masks substantial variation in the gender distribution of Taiwanese and Mainlander elderly. As noted earlier, the Mainlanders are predominantly male (78%), whereas the Taiwanese are comprised of a slight majority of females (53%). The Baoding sample also contains somewhat more males than females, a disparity discussed in chapter 1 of this volume.

The educational profiles of the three groups are also quite distinctive. Mainlanders are the most highly educated of the three groups, with 53% having completed secondary or higher levels of education, but the Baoding elderly are much more educated than their Taiwanese counterparts.⁴⁰ The groups also differ substantially with respect to their access to pensions, with approximately three-quarters of Baoding elderly (77%) receiving income from pensions, compared to one-half of the Mainlander elderly (52%) and just over one-tenth of the Taiwanese elderly. The differential within Taiwan reflects the higher percentage of Mainlanders in government or the military, where pensions are common compared to the occupations most often pursued by the Taiwanese. Despite the younger average age of the Baoding elderly, the pension system in China facilitates earlier retirement, and so the percentage of persons who are retired is essentially identical for the Baoding and Taiwanese elderly. The higher percentage of persons who are currently working among the Mainlander elderly is largely a function of the skewed gender distribution

Table 9.1 Percentage Distributions for Sociodemographic Characteristics of Persons Age 60 and Older in Baoding, China and in Urban Taiwan

Characteristic	Baoding, PRC	Urban Taiwan		Total
		Taiwanese	Mainlanders	
Age				
60-64	41.7	35.8	36.7	36.1
65-69	31.2	27.3	32.8	29.2
70-74	17.3	17.6	14.9	16.6
75+	9.8	19.3	15.6	18.0
Sex				
Male	56.4	46.6	77.8	57.7
Female	43.6	53.4	22.2	42.3
Marital Status				
Currently married	80.5	58.4	66.5	61.3
Not married	19.5	41.6	33.5	38.7
Education				
No formal schooling	26.7	43.6	14.8	33.3
Primary school	30.5	39.3	32.2	36.8
Secondary or higher	42.6	17.1	53.0	29.9
Work Status				
Currently working	19.8	20.8	32.8	25.1
Retired/not working	80.1	79.2	67.2	74.9
Pension Income				
Does not receive	22.7	87.5	48.4	73.5
Does receive	77.3	12.5	51.6	26.5
Health rating*				
Very good	47.3	37.9	56.0	44.4
Good	32.9	40.8	27.7	36.1
Poor	19.7	21.3	16.3	19.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	509	740	409	1149

* In Baoding, self-rated health was measured as a five-point scale from very good to very poor. In Taiwan, the five-point scale ran from excellent to poor. The distributions shown include the top two categories as "very good," and the bottom two categories as "poor."

of this group and the fact that, in this age group, men are more likely than women to be working. In addition, the tendency to return to work after official retirement is high among Mainlanders. With respect to health, the majority of respondents in all three groups rated their health favorably (good or better). Mainlanders tend to give the most favorable ratings (56% as "very good"), and Taiwanese had the least favorable ratings (21% as "poor").

Table 9.2 presents means and frequency distributions for several measures of family and household composition. Here again we note a

number of distinctions across the three groups. With respect to family size, Taiwanese elderly have significantly more children on average than either Mainlander or Baoding elderly. In terms of the mean number of living children, Baoding and Mainlander elderly are quite similar; however, the proportion of respondents who have no children or only one child is substantially higher among Mainlander than among Baoding elderly (18% of Mainlanders have one or fewer children versus 8% of Baoding elderly and 6% of Taiwanese).⁴¹ Although Baoding elderly have fewer living children than Taiwanese elderly, their children tend to be in close proximity, so that the average number of children living nearby is quite similar for the two groups. For the Mainlanders, the kin network is not only smaller, but more spread out; 15% have no children living nearby and an additional 25% have only one child nearby.

With respect to household composition, Taiwanese elderly are considerably more likely to live with married children and less likely to live alone or with a spouse only than either Baoding or Mainlander elderly. This probably reflects, in part, the older age and less favorable socioeconomic status of Taiwanese elderly, but may also reflect differing preferences and attitudes toward filial piety and old-age support across the groups. Of particular interest in this regard is the very high percentage of Baoding elderly who live alone or with a spouse only. Although trend data for Taiwan, Japan, and several other Asian countries suggest that the percentage of older persons who live apart from their children has steadily increased in recent years,⁴² the very high level of “independent” living among the elderly in Baoding (47%) is quite distinctive, as noted in chapter 2. The widespread availability of pensions and of state-provided housing in Baoding and in other urban centers in China likely plays a strong role in facilitating independent households there. With regard to coresidence with unmarried children, Mainlander elderly are more likely than Baoding or Taiwanese elderly to be in such households; however, this is most likely a function of availability in that the children of Mainlanders are younger, on average, and a larger proportion of them have not yet married.

In summary, all three groups are quite distinctive with respect to sociodemographic characteristics. The Taiwanese appear to be much more “traditional” than either the Mainlander or Baoding elderly, as characterized by their larger average family size, higher level of coresidence with married children, and lower levels of education and pension support. Indeed, where

Table 9.2 Means and Percentage Distributions for Family and Household Composition of Persons Age 60 and Older in Baoding, China and in Urban Taiwan

Characteristic	Baoding, PRC	Urban Taiwan		Total
		Taiwanese	Mainlanders	
Number of living sons				
0	8.3	7.4	15.2	10.0
1	34.6	20.8	33.5	25.1
2	33.2	25.8	30.6	27.5
3+	23.9	46.0	20.7	37.4
(mean)	(1.8)	(2.4)	(1.7)	(2.2)
Number of living daughters				
0	12.2	9.7	22.3	13.9
1	31.2	22.8	35.5	27.2
2	29.9	25.0	21.8	23.9
3+	26.7	42.5	20.4	35.0
(mean)	(1.8)	(2.4)	(1.5)	(2.1)
Number of living children				
0	0.4	1.2	4.9	2.4
1	7.3	5.2	13.2	7.9
2-3	39.3	20.6	42.7	28.3
4-6	49.9	51.3	34.8	45.5
7+	3.1	21.7	4.4	15.9
(mean)	(3.7)	(4.8)	(3.2)	(4.3)
Number of children nearby				
0	1.0	3.3	14.7	6.9
1	16.7	14.2	24.9	17.7
2-3	46.0	38.6	41.1	39.3
4+	36.3	43.9	19.5	36.1
(mean)	(3.1)	(3.4)	(2.1)	(3.0)
Household Composition				
Alone or				
spouse only	46.8	12.7	30.1	18.9
With married				
child	38.1	62.9	27.6	50.3
With unmarried				
child	12.8	18.0	32.8	23.3
Other				
composition	2.4	6.4	9.5	7.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	509	740	409	1149

similarities do exist, they tend to be between the Baoding and Mainlander elderly, both of whom have relatively high socioeconomic status and small families. The dynamics that gave rise to these sociodemographic similarities were quite different, however, and it will be interesting to see how the differing experiences of the Mainlander and Baoding elderly have helped to shape their attitudes and patterns of intergenerational support.

The final table in this chapter (Table 9.3) turns the focus to the children of the older respondents, showing percentage distributions for selected sociodemographic characteristics of these children. As noted earlier, the children in the Baoding sample are somewhat younger than those in the Taiwan sample, because their parents are younger (age fifty and over for Baoding, as opposed to age sixty-four and over in Taiwan). Both samples are comprised of a slight majority of males (56% in Baoding and 53% in Taiwan), and a large majority of the children in both samples are married (77% and 78% in Baoding and Taiwan, respectively).⁴³ Education levels for the two samples are quite distinct, with children in the Baoding sample having much higher levels of completed education, on average, than those in Taiwan. This may be largely explained by two factors: 1) as a result of their younger age, the children in the Baoding sample received their educational training at a time when opportunities were much more available than was the case for the Taiwan children; and 2) a large percentage of children in the Taiwan sample reside in nonurban areas (71%) or have parents of rural origin, and their opportunities for educational training have thus been more restricted than for their city-based counterparts in both Taiwan and Baoding. As the data presented previously indicate (see footnote 10), for Taiwan and China as a whole, school enrollment at secondary and tertiary levels is much higher in Taiwan than China.

Finally, the percentage of children from each sample who were living with their parents at the time of the survey was somewhat higher in Baoding than in Taiwan (44% versus 30%). This may appear contradictory to the higher level of parent-child coresidence from the parents' perspective in Taiwan, as shown in Table 9.2, but is again largely a function of how the samples were defined. In Table 9.2, the samples were restricted to persons age sixty years and over; in Table 9.3, the Baoding sample is comprised of persons age fifty and over, and coresidence with children (predominantly unmarried children) is much higher for persons age fifty to fifty-nine years of age than among those whose age is greater than sixty. Also, because the Baoding child sample selected a child who was living in the vicinity of

Baoding, the probability of getting a coresident child was higher than for Taiwan, where the children could be living anywhere.⁴⁴

Table 9.3 Sociodemographic Characteristics of Children of Sampled Parents in Baoding and in Taiwan*

Characteristic	Baoding	Taiwan
Age		
18-25	24	5
26-35	50	26
36+	26	69
Sex		
Male	56	53
Female	44	47
Ethnicity		
Taiwanese	--	83
Mainlander	--	17
Marital Status		
Currently married	77	78
Not married	23	22
Education		
No schooling	0	5
Primary school	4	50
Secondary school	78	35
College	18	11
(mean years of education)	(11.8)	(9.5)
Residence Type		
Large city	100	29
Not a large city	0	71
Living Arrangement		
Live with own parent	44	30
Not live with own parent	56	70
Total	100.0	100.0
N	731	662

* For children in the Baoding sample, their sampled parent is age 50 or over; for children in the Taiwan sample, their sampled parent is age 64 or over.

Conclusions

The current chapter illustrates some of the complexities of comparative sociological research. Understanding the sources of variations in behavior and attitudes within any one society is difficult enough, but it is even more challenging to try to compare those sources across two or more societies. Despite this complexity the comparative method retains its appeal, since it is

only by stepping outside of the cultural conditions and assumptions of any one society that one can examine the impact of important forces that do not vary within a society but differ across societies. Comparisons between China and Taiwan have long had a special appeal because they come closer to an ideal “controlled comparison” scientific design than, say, comparisons of England and the United States, or of Argentina and Brazil. In particular, the common cultural roots of these two Chinese societies and their radically different development paths after 1949 may help us untangle the relative influence of cultural and social institutional forces in shaping current patterns of parent-child relations.

However, this extended essay serves as testimony to our conviction that even a limited comparison of selected behavioral and attitudinal measures of intergenerational relations in these two Chinese societies requires great care and attention to detail. Our approach indicates that we do not think it is sufficient to label our societies as “capitalist” and “socialist,” or as “developed” and “underdeveloped” and then proceed to see what is similar and different about the cases observed. Instead we contend that it is necessary to consider in some detail what might be called the “micro-institutional” context within which individuals and families operate, how that context differs in the cases compared, and what the potential implications of those differences are for the outcomes being considered. The first part of this chapter constituted an attempt at a comparative analysis of the micro-institutional context in urban China and urban Taiwan. That analysis revealed that in important respects we are likely to find more support for traditional filial obligations in urban Taiwan than in Baoding, although Taiwan is by most conventional indicators a more “modern” society.

The other important element in making rigorous comparisons involves being sure that the samples and measures used are as comparable as possible, so that any contrasts found are not simply the product of peculiarities and biases in the data being compared. The second part of this chapter has largely been concerned with a consideration of the issue of comparability. As in most such efforts, we have not been able to achieve exact comparability. The two sets of surveys in Baoding and Taiwan had common sources of inspiration, and some of the same researchers were involved in both. Nonetheless, they were not conducted as exact replications, and inevitably there are some differences in samples and questions that might affect our comparative effort in the two chapters that follow. We have described here the procedures used to make the two sets of data as comparable as possible,

and we have presented selected background data on the samples used in the comparisons in order to enable readers to judge how similar or different those samples are. It is clear that some important differences in the characteristics of the surveyed populations in Baoding and urban Taiwan remain even after our best efforts to achieve comparability. However, by discussing those remaining differences here we are in a position in the next two chapters to consider whether such differences may affect comparisons of behavior and attitudes in these two Chinese societies, thus confounding any attempt to ground explanations of intergenerational relations in terms of cultural or institutional influences. Having completed this lengthy introduction to our comparative exercise, we are now in a position to proceed to chapter 10, which compares patterns of intergenerational exchanges and support behavior in Baoding and urban Taiwan, and then to chapter 11, which compares selected family attitudes in these same locales.

NOTES

¹ Ronald Lee, "The Formal Demography of Population Aging, Transfers, and the Economic Life Cycle," in *Demography of Aging*, ed. Linda G. Martin and Samuel H. Preston (Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press, 1994).

² World Bank, *Averting the Old Age Crisis: Policies to Protect the Old and Promote Growth* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994).

³ See the discussion in T. Fricke, J. S. Chang, and L. S. Yang, "Historical and Ethnographic Perspectives on the Chinese Family," in *Social Change and the Family in Taiwan*, ed. Arland Thornton and Hui-sheng Lin (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994).

⁴ See Albert I. Hermalin, P. K. C. Liu, and D. Freedman, "The Social and Economic Transformation of Taiwan," in *Social Change and the Family in Taiwan*, ed. Thornton and Lin; E. Patricia Tsurumi, *Japanese Colonial Education in Taiwan, 1895–1945* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1977). However, Taiwanese were effectively barred from postprimary education during the Japanese colonial period—see Hermalin et al., "Social and Economic Transformation," 60; Tsurumi, *Japanese Colonial Education*, 148.

⁵ See the evidence presented in George W. Barclay, *Colonial Development and Population in Taiwan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1954).

⁶ See Arthur Wolf and Chieh-shan Huang, *Marriage and Adoption in China, 1895–1945* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1980). The term major marriage was coined by Wolf to distinguish the supposedly obligatory form from the uxorilocal and minor marriage forms he found so common in his research site. See also Burton Pasternak, *Guests in the Dragon: Social Demography of a Chinese District, 1895–1945* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983).

⁷ As noted above, foot-binding was stamped out by the Japanese, and parental control over the marriages of their children also began to weaken (see the discussion in Wolf and Huang, *Marriage and Adoption in China*). However, foot-binding was on its way to elimination and arranged marriage was also weakening on the mainland in the first half of the twentieth century. See the discussion in Olga Lang, *Chinese Family and Society* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1946). In general the Hokkien and Hakka language groups shared a common set of traditional family values and patterns with other Chinese, although the Hakka were notable for not traditionally binding their daughters' feet and for having women more actively involved in agricultural and other labor.

⁸ Fricke et al., 1994, 48.

⁹ In the 1989 Taiwan survey, 45.9% of the Mainlanders lived in large cities, compared to 23.9% of Taiwanese. See Albert Hermalin, Mary Beth Ofstedal, and Mei-Lin Lee, "Characteristics of Children and Intergenerational Transfers," University of Michigan Population Studies Center research report, June 1992, Table 1.

¹⁰ The following table presents some indicators of these contrasts:

	China		Taiwan	
	1986	1995	1986	1995
GNP per capita (U.S. dollars)	277	620	3993	12,396
School Enrollment as % of Age Group				
Secondary	45*	55*	71	87
Tertiary	1	4	11	26

* Represents average of male and female enrollment rates

Sources:

China: World Bank, *World Development Report* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1997): GNP per capita, 1995: Selected World Development Indicators, Table 1; School enrollment: Table 7.

United Nations Statistical Yearbook, 1994, 41st Issue. (New York: United Nations, 1996): GDP per capita, 1986: Table 20.

Taiwan: Republic of China, Council for Economic Planning and Development, *Taiwan Statistical Data Book, 1997*: GNP per capita: Table 3–4.

Republic of China, Directorate-General of Budgets, Accounting and Statistics, *Statistical Yearbook of the Republic of China, 1995*: School Enrollment: Table 47.

¹¹ See Susan Greenhalgh, "Families and Networks in Taiwan's Economic Development," in *Contending Approaches to the Political Economy of Taiwan*, ed. E. Winckler and S. Greenhalgh (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1988).

¹² See Albert I. Hermalin, et al., "The Social and Economic Transformation of Taiwan," Table 3.4 and p. 67.

¹³ See the discussion in Shiauping R. Shih, "Private Lives within Public Constraints: Retirement Processes in Contemporary Taiwan" (Ph. D. diss., University of Michigan, 1997). In recent years some financially strapped firms in China have switched from monthly pensions to lump-sum severance payments to retirees, a move that has generated considerable discontent and protest.

¹⁴ These features of Taiwan's pattern of development are sometimes attributed in part to the language group cleavages on the island. The Mainlanders dominated the political and military institutions for many years, while the Taiwanese dominated the economy, particularly among the small-scale, family-run firms. Distrust between these groups may have heightened suspicion of banks and government sources of funding among the Taiwanese and reduced the likelihood of the Mainlander-dominated government making state funds readily available to small firms. Since the 1980s, however, the official policy of "Taiwanization" pursued by the government has considerably softened this line of cleavage, as symbolized by the election of a Taiwanese, Lee Teng-hui, as President as well as leader of the long-dominant Nationalist Party, and then the election in 2000 of Taiwanese Chen Shui-bian of the opposition DPP party as President.

¹⁵ The land reform program of the early 1950s placed legal limits on the ability of families to purchase and accumulate land, while providing some compensation to expropriated landlords. As a result, landholding was the one form of investment that was discouraged, making investment elsewhere more attractive.

¹⁶ See the insightful discussion in Susan Greenhalgh, "Land Reform and Family Entrepreneurship in East Asia," in *Rural Development and Population: Institutions and Policy*, eds. G. McNicholl and M. Cain (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990). In the influential theory presented by William Goode in his seminal work, *World Revolution and Family Patterns* (New York: Free Press, 1963), economic development is expected to erode patriarchal family patterns and foster convergence toward the "conjugal" patterns typical of advanced Western societies. However, to the extent that families rather than bureaucratic agencies retain control over many resources and opportunities, despite modernization, and use that control to influence the lives of their members and especially of their children, the erosion of traditional family patterns should be delayed. Goode argued that this pattern could be observed particularly in Meiji-era Japan, and the same logic ought to apply to contemporary Taiwan.

¹⁷ Figures presented in Thornton and Lin, *Social Change and the Family in Taiwan*, Tables 5.2, 5.3. Presumably the figures would be somewhat higher if we examined only urban women in Taiwan, but still the picture would show only moderate levels of labor force participation by married women.

¹⁸ Council of Labor Affairs, *Yearbook of Labor Statistics, Taiwan Area, Republic of China* (Taipei, Taiwan: Executive Yuan).

¹⁹ See the discussion in Susan Greenhalgh, "Sexual Stratification: The Other Side of 'Growth with Equity,'" *Population and Development Review* 11 (1985): 265–314.

²⁰ For Taiwan see Albert Hermalin, et al., "The Social and Economic Transformation of Taiwan"; for China in 1992 only 33.7% of university students were women, although this represented an improvement from prior years. See *Beijing Review*, 4–10 September 1995, 9.

²¹ See the discussion in A. Thornton and H. Lin, *Social Change and the Family in Taiwan*, op. cit., especially chapter 3.

²² For a general account of how this bureaucratic system worked, see Martin Whyte and William Parish, *Urban Life in Contemporary China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984).

²³ The remainder of the labor force was employed in collective enterprises, which although controlled by the state were less generously funded. They received a reduced level and range of benefits, or in some cases very little besides their wages.

²⁴ For a general account of the extreme dependency of employees on their work units in this system, see Andrew Walder, *Communist Neo-traditionalism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986). If family members were employed by different work units this might give them some degree of choice in regard to things like access to housing. However, the fact remains that no markets existed for the allocation of labor, housing, medical services, and many of the other vitals of life.

²⁵ In the absence of other forms of wealth, frugal Chinese accumulated substantial savings deposits in Chinese banks. However, unlike real property, such savings did not require family participation and management and could be easily divided among heirs. As such these funds did not have the same impact on family cohesion and control as family businesses and real estate might have.

²⁶ The exceptions to this statement concern, once again, involuntary migration. In particular, in the decade after 1968 something like 17 million urban secondary school graduates were "sent down" to live in rural communes or state farms. However, this program was very unpopular, and after Mao's death it was discontinued. After the late 1970s the vast majority of these youths managed to return to their urban places of origin.

²⁷ Specifically, for the Baoding child sample, between the ages of twenty and fifty overall 93.4% of females were employed outside the home, a figure not significantly lower than the 94.9% for males in the sample.

²⁸ Originally in the 1950s mothers employed in state enterprises were entitled to eight weeks paid maternity leave. By the 1970s this was often lengthened to include an unpaid leave period of six months or more for a first or second child (later only for a first), as part of the incentives connected to the state's program of family planning.

²⁹ For a general review of indicators of gender inequality in China and elsewhere, see Martin Whyte, "Sexual Inequality under Socialism: The Chinese Case in Perspective," in *Class and Social Stratification in Post-Revolution China*, ed. James L. Watson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984). Generally, in terms of urban wages Chinese women earned about 75–85% as much as men, a figure that compares quite favorably with even advanced industrial societies. For Taiwan, the ratio of female to male monthly wages for paid employees was reported as 68% in 1995. See Council of Labor Affairs, *Yearbook of Labor Statistics, Taiwan Area, Republic of China, 1995* (Taipei: Executive Yuan, 1996), Table 4–9.

³⁰ For a good account of the role of property in Chinese family dynamics in Taiwan, see Myron Cohen, "Development Process in the Chinese Domestic Group," in *Family and Kinship in Chinese Society*, ed. Maurice Freedman (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1970).

³¹ See the discussion in Kam Wing Chan, *Cities with Invisible Walls* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994).

³² See M. K. Whyte and S. Z. Gu, "Popular Response to China's Fertility Transition," *Population and Development Review* 13 (1987): 471–93, especially Table 1; Griffith Feeney and Yuan Jianhua, "Below Replacement Fertility in China? A Close Look at Recent Evidence," *Population Studies* 48 (1994): 381–94.

³³ The literature on China's reforms is large and growing. See, in particular, Harry Harding, *China's Second Revolution* (Washington: Brookings, 1986); Barry Naughton, *Growing out of the Plan: China's Economic Reform, 1978–1993* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); *China's Transitional Economy*, ed. Andrew Walder (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996).

³⁴ Fledgling stock markets have arisen in China, but until recently the firms offering shares mostly are required to sell to their own employees or local governments and banks, and not to the general public. Generally, privatization of urban housing has progressed at a more rapid rate in China since about 1997, even though it had not made much progress by the time of our survey three years earlier.

³⁵ See the discussion in Martin K. Whyte, "Evolutionary Changes in Chinese Culture," in *Asia-Pacific Report, 1989*, ed. R. Dernberger and C. Morrison (Honolulu: East-West Center, 1989).

³⁶ For evidence comparing the impact of institutional structure and cultural influences in Taiwan and in a mainland city in one specific family realm (the process of mate choice), see Martin K. Whyte, "From Arranged Marriages to Love Matches in Urban China," in *Family Formation and Dissolution: Perspectives from East and West*, ed. Chin-Chun Yi (Taipei: Academia Sinica, 1995).

³⁷ The term "convergence" refers to a debated claim within modernization theory that as societies become more economically developed, they will inevitably "converge" toward one another by developing institutions that are more and more similar.

³⁸ Detailed information on the sampling plan, field operations, and the questionnaire employed in the baseline wave is provided in Taiwan Provincial Institute of Family Planning, Population Studies Center, and Institute of Gerontology [the latter two located at the University of Michigan], *1989 Survey of Health and Living Status of the Elderly in Taiwan: Questionnaire and Survey Design*, Research Report No. 1, Comparative Study of the Elderly in Four Asian Countries, December 1989.

³⁹ This difference stems from the contrasting levels of availability of telephones in these two societies, another indicator of level of development. Whereas telephones are nearly universally available in homes in Taiwan, even in large cities in China only a minority of families had home telephones as of the mid-1990s. Thus telephone interviews of children of Baoding parents residing elsewhere were not feasible.

⁴⁰ The latter contrast may reflect in part the PRC migration restrictions mentioned earlier. After the 1950s less well-educated residents from rural areas could continue to flow into cities in Taiwan, but not in the PRC.

⁴¹ As noted in chapter 1, the launching of the one-child policy in China in 1979 and its vigorous enforcement in large cities since that date will eventually mean much larger proportions of urban residents in that country who have only one grown child to rely on.

⁴² See the discussion in Albert I. Hermalin, "Aging in Asia: Setting the Research Foundation" in *Asia-Pacific Population Research Reports*, No. 4 (East-West Center: Honolulu, 1995).

⁴³ It seems likely that the younger average age of marriage in urban China offsets the younger average age of our Baoding child sample, producing a rate of marriage very similar to that found in the Taiwan child sample. On trends in marriage age in China, see Judith Banister, *China's Changing Population* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987).

⁴⁴ One additional influence on this comparison is the larger number of children of the urban parent sample in Taiwan, compared with Baoding, as shown in Table 9.2. Other things being equal, this disparity means that any randomly chosen child in the Taiwan sample will be less likely to coreside with a parent (assuming that most parents who coreside with a married child do so with only one in a stem family arrangement).

10

PATTERNS OF INTERGENERATIONAL SUPPORT IN URBAN CHINA AND URBAN TAIWAN

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Introduction

This chapter builds on the analyses of intergenerational support presented in chapter 5 by providing a comparative perspective on patterns of support provided to the elderly in urban China and urban Taiwan. As described in the previous chapter, China and Taiwan share a strong cultural tradition based on the Confucian family system, which emphasizes the importance of multigenerational coresidence, familial support of the elderly, and other aspects of filial piety. During the latter half of the twentieth century, however, the two societies underwent rapid and divergent political, economic, and social changes that are likely to have had a profound impact on family relations. The availability of comparable survey data on levels and sources of support in China and Taiwan provides us with an opportunity to examine how these different institutional arrangements have affected patterns of intergenerational support in the two places.

In both the 1989 Taiwan and 1994 Baoding surveys, detailed information was collected on the characteristics of all those residing in the same household as the elderly respondent. The data collected included characteristics, location, and frequency of contact with close relatives not in the household, and the exchanges that took place between the respondent and others on several dimensions. More specifically, the respondent was asked separately whether he or she received assistance with activities of daily living (bathing, dressing, going to the toilet); assistance with certain instrumental activities (household chores, shopping, meal preparation, transportation, or

managing finances); financial assistance; and material assistance in the form of food, clothing, or other goods. (For the structure and wording of the support questions, see Figure 5.1 in chapter 5.) In each case the respondent was asked to identify all persons who provided any support as well as the most important provider. (In Baoding, the respondent could name up to four providers; in Taiwan, there was no limit on the number of providers that could be reported.) Those receiving a given type of support were asked to characterize the adequacy of that support, and those not receiving it were asked if they needed that type of assistance. In this way, the survey provided the basis for assessing overall needs. Although the questions as presented did lead respondents to think of individual providers, they were free to name specific service providers or organizations. In addition, a follow-up question asked specifically if any of the sources of support of the type discussed were provided by "government, religious, or other private services" (Taiwan survey wording). Positive responses were recorded along with other providers under the appropriate form of assistance. Finally, although not the subject of this analysis, it should be noted that a detailed inventory of what the elderly do for family members and others was also obtained and provides the basis for analyzing the extent of reciprocity within families.

As noted in chapter 9, we have made two specific adjustments to the Taiwan and Baoding samples to bring them into closer alignment. First, the data for Baoding are restricted to those age sixty years and over to match the age range for Taiwan; secondly, the Taiwan sample was restricted to those residing in the five major cities of Taiwan (Taipei, Keelung, Taichung, Tainan, Kaohsiung) to create an urban subset. Of course, the two samples may still differ considerably on many other characteristics, and as appropriate these differences will be controlled by cross-tabulation or multivariate analysis. Our interest is in comparing contemporary urban China and Taiwan, while we realize that many factors will contribute to observed differences. Finally, as noted in chapter 9, the urban elderly in Taiwan are subdivided into "Taiwanese" and "Mainlanders" in all of the analyses presented here. Having spent part of their life in each country, and being subject to special constraints, the Mainlanders provide an opportunity to test further the question of the persistence of cultural traits in the face of special types of demographic and socioeconomic change.

The results presented in this chapter focus on a detailed analysis of (1) the degree to which the elderly in Baoding and in urban Taiwan receive support of various types, (2) the sources of support for the elderly, (3) the

nature of the support network in terms of its size and breadth, and (4) how the likelihood of receiving certain types of support varies with the characteristics of the elderly. In addressing these topics, we first present a series of cross-tabulations that show, for each country separately, the level of support received for each of the four types by key sociodemographic characteristics and the distribution of support across providers. We then employ logistic regression analysis to examine the factors that are associated with the likelihood of receiving support of a given type in a multivariate context.

As a preliminary stage in the multivariate analysis, we estimated separate models for urban China and urban Taiwan in order to examine how the patterns of association for individual sociodemographic factors differ across the two countries. Because a key interest in this analysis is on cross-country differences in the likelihood of receiving support, we then pooled the two samples and estimated the same set of logistic regression models, adding indicators for country of residence and several interactions that emerged as important variations in the country-specific models. Furthermore, in order to allow for differential probabilities of support for Mainlanders and Taiwanese, as revealed in previous studies,¹ we included two dummy variables to represent the country/ethnicity effects. The first variable represents Mainlanders (coded 1 if Mainlander, 0 otherwise), and the second represents Taiwanese (coded 1 if non-Mainlander residing in Taiwan, 0 otherwise), with Baoding residents serving as the contrast group for each. For purposes of brevity, we present only the pooled regression results in this chapter. Finally, in order to facilitate interpretation of the regression results (especially for models containing interaction terms), we provide a set of predicted probabilities for specific subgroups of respondents in the final table.

Types of Support Received by the Elderly in China and Taiwan

Table 10.1 provides a detailed description of the levels and patterns of support received by the elderly in urban China and urban Taiwan. The percentage receiving each type of support is presented separately for Baoding, Taiwanese, and Mainlander elderly, and is further broken down by key socio-demographic characteristics. The bottom row presents the overall percentages.

Table 10.1 Percentage of Elderly with Selected Sociodemographic Characteristics Receiving Four Types of Assistance in Baoding and Urban Taiwan

Characteristic	Physical Care (ADL)			Household Help (IADL)			Financial Assistance			Material Assistance		
	Urban Taiwan			Urban Taiwan			Urban Taiwan			Urban Taiwan		
	Bao-ding	Taiwan-ese	Main-lander	Bao-ding	Taiwan-ese	Main-lander	Bao-ding	Taiwan-ese	Main-lander	Bao-ding	Taiwan-ese	Main-lander
Age												
60-69	5.1	3.5	1.4	33.2	65.0	56.0	30.7	73.2	43.7	41.6	35.3	16.9
70+	10.9	9.5	6.5	51.8	75.4	60.5	35.5	82.8	57.3	50.4	49.6	25.6
Sex												
Male	5.9	5.2	3.2	35.7	81.1	62.6	23.7	68.1	39.3	38.1	37.0	15.7
Female	7.7	5.6	2.2	41.4	58.1	38.9	42.8	84.3	77.8	53.8	43.7	33.0
Marital status												
Currently married	6.6	5.1	3.7	35.5	71.0	72.4	28.9	74.5	50.7	43.0	34.2	21.7
Not married	7.0	5.8	1.5	48.5	67.1	27.2	44.4	79.9	41.9	52.5	49.5	15.3
Health status												
Very good	3.3	0.7	0.0	31.0	72.5	52.9	28.8	66.3	43.3	42.9	36.6	17.4
Good	4.8	2.1	0.9	40.7	65.9	60.4	31.7	80.8	53.6	45.5	40.0	18.9
Poor	18.0	9.9	10.9	50.0	63.8	61.5	42.0	86.2	53.8	48.0	44.7	24.6
Household composition												
Alone or spouse only	6.3	4.3	3.3	33.2	44.7	40.7	34.0	64.9	25.2	45.8	36.6	11.4
With married child	9.3	6.3	2.7	49.2	77.3	67.0	29.9	81.7	77.0	48.7	44.8	36.3
With unmarried child	0.0	2.3	2.2	24.6	58.6	70.1	23.1	70.7	44.8	26.2	28.6	12.7
With relatives/others	*	8.5	5.3	*	66.0	38.5	*	72.3	44.7	*	42.6	20.5
Children nearby												
None	*	2.6	4.5	*	41.0	50.0	*	76.9	27.3	*	33.3	9.1
1-2	7.6	6.0	3.5	35.7	68.3	67.1	24.6	78.3	55.9	38.0	43.3	22.8
3-5	6.5	4.6	0.8	38.8	70.9	63.6	34.9	77.2	60.2	48.2	40.2	27.1
6 or more	3.8	7.0	*	38.5	75.4	*	50.0	76.3	*	53.8	38.6	*
Total	6.7	5.4	2.9	38.1	68.8	57.4	32.0	76.8	47.8	44.7	40.6	19.6
(N cases)	(34)	(40)	(12)	(194)	(508)	(234)	(163)	(568)	(195)	(228)	(299)	(80)

*Base n < 15

Overall only a small percentage of the elderly in each country are receiving physical care, a reflection no doubt of their generally young age and good health as indicated in the previous chapter. The figure for Baoding, 6.7%, exceeds Taiwan somewhat (4.5% for Taiwanese and Mainlanders combined), and this differential holds up in most categories. In both urban Taiwan and Baoding the percentage receiving physical care increases with age and poor health. Beyond these two characteristics, few of the patterns hold across all three of the groups that are compared. Women are more likely to receive physical care than men in Baoding, but this pattern does not hold for either the Taiwanese (for whom the proportions are roughly equal for men and women) or the Mainlanders in Taiwan (for whom the percent is slightly higher among men). The pattern for Mainlanders may be explained in part by the fact that Mainlander men tend to be much older, on average, than Mainlander women. Those living with a married child or with other relatives are generally more likely to receive this form of assistance (except among Mainlanders residing with a married child), reflecting in part the need for coresidence among many who require physical care.

Much sharper differences between the Taiwan and Baoding elderly appear with regard to the percent receiving household assistance. Approximately two-thirds of the Taiwanese elderly and three-fifths of Mainlander elderly report assistance with these tasks compared with less than two-fifths in Baoding. It should be recognized that, as asked, this question does not necessarily match the usual approach to ascertaining needs for the Instrumental Activities of Daily Living (IADL), which often inquires whether assistance is required for shopping, transportation, etc., *because of a health problem*. In the form asked here, respondents may reply that they are receiving help because it is customary for someone else (e.g., the daughter-in-law) to do the cooking or shopping, and this arrangement may have been in operation for a long time.² In this connection it is worth noting that in Taiwan the percent receiving assistance is highest among males (81% for Taiwanese and 63% for Mainlanders) and among those who are living with children (particularly married children for the Taiwanese) or who have children living nearby. In Baoding, coresidence with married children is also important (although the percent is lower than for urban Taiwan), but the patterns by age, gender, marital status, and health are quite different from Taiwan and suggest a pattern more indicative of need.

The elderly in Baoding and urban Taiwan also differ considerably in the proportion receiving financial assistance, ranging from three-quarters for the

Taiwanese and nearly one-half among Mainlanders to one-third for the elderly of Baoding. This broad difference may reflect the relative well-being of the elderly vis-a-vis their children in each location. In Baoding, the provision of pensions, highly subsidized housing, and other support to the elderly from their work units may reduce the need and opportunity for cash transfers. At the same time, more of the children in Taiwan are able to provide both basic funds and extra income to their parents, given the longer period of strong economic growth there, in contrast to the more recent emphasis on a market economy and private enterprise in China. The pattern of differentials in Baoding by gender, marital status, and health does suggest that this form of assistance responds strongly to needs and not simply to customary obligations. Although all three groups are similar in that younger persons, men, and those reporting very good health are less likely to receive financial assistance than their counterparts, the gradients across categories are generally steeper in Baoding than among the other two groups of elderly. The patterns for other characteristics are more variable; for example, coresidence with a married child is associated with greater likelihood of support in Taiwan than in Baoding, while having children nearby seems to be more of a factor in Baoding and among the Mainlanders than among the Taiwanese.

The contrast between urban Taiwan and Baoding on household and financial assistance should not be interpreted as a generalized lower level of family obligation in China, and this point is reinforced by the differential observed for material assistance. Overall, 45% of the elderly in Baoding compared to 41% of Taiwanese and 20% of Mainlanders report receiving this type of assistance. In both Baoding and urban Taiwan the differentials within categories suggest that this assistance tends to be oriented toward those in need.

The levels and patterns of support displayed in Table 10.1 must be interpreted with caution pending multivariate analyses, but they do suggest that a number of factors are at play. These include broad institutional arrangements of the type discussed in chapter 9, in addition to the needs of the elderly, the ability of children and others to meet these needs, and the feasibility of doing so in terms of living arrangements and location of kin.

Sources of Support for the Elderly in China and Taiwan

As described previously, the Confucian family tradition places great emphasis on family obligations and filial piety. To what degree does the family remain the major locus of assistance in contemporary China and

Taiwan, given the major changes in political, social, and economic structures characterizing both countries?

As noted previously, in addition to identifying the providers, respondents were also asked to specify the main provider. Although respondents could name nonrelatives and nongovernmental and governmental services, as the data below make clear, they overwhelmingly named close family members as their main sources of support.

Tables 10.2A and 10.2B present the distributions of main providers reported by those receiving each type of support. Table 10.2A focuses on the provision of physical care and household assistance, types of support generally requiring close proximity of the provider (i.e., either coresident or nearby). Among the small number receiving physical care in Baoding, the spouse is the most frequently named main provider (41%), followed by a daughter (24%). Among the urban Taiwanese, daughters-in-law and daughters are named somewhat more frequently than spouses (22% versus 16%). (Only twelve Mainlanders reported receiving physical care, and two-thirds named their spouse as the main provider.)

The differential between the Baoding elderly and the urban Taiwanese in the importance accorded to the daughter-in-law emerges even more clearly in the provision of household assistance. Almost half of the urban Taiwanese name the daughter-in-law as the main provider compared to only 11% of the Baoding elderly. In contrast, almost half the Baoding elderly name a son or daughter, nearly one-quarter each, while only 11% of the elderly Taiwanese do so. Spouses are named with almost equal frequency by these two groups. These contrasts may reflect actual differences in the patterns of assistance, with Taiwanese much more likely than Baoding elders to have a coresident daughter-in-law who is not in the labor force. On the other hand, they also might reflect customary differences in ways that filial obligations are acknowledged, with sons receiving “credit” in Baoding for services that they provide directly as well as indirectly through their wives. Additional research will be required to sort out these competing explanations.

The Mainlanders in Taiwan have a distinct pattern of household assistance, relying to a very great extent on spouses to the exclusion of other providers, reflecting perhaps the “thinner” family and support network of this group compared with the others. As noted in chapter 9, Mainlanders are less likely to coreside with a married child than their Taiwanese and Baoding counterparts; they also have fewer children overall and fewer children living nearby. In addition, because the Mainlanders tended to marry and have children

Table 10.2A Percent Distribution of Main Provider for Physical Care and Household Assistance in Baoding and Urban Taiwan

	Physical Care				Household Assistance			
	Baoding	Urban Taiwan			Baoding	Urban Taiwan		
		Taiwanese	Mainlander	Total		Taiwanese	Mainlander	Total
% Receiving Support*	6.7	5.0	2.9	4.2	35.8	66.9	54.0	62.3
Distribution of Main Provider								
Spouse	41.2	16.2	66.7	28.6	35.7	30.1	71.0	42.7
Son	17.6	13.5	0.0	10.2	23.1	4.4	2.3	3.8
Daughter	23.5	21.6	0.0	16.3	23.1	6.5	1.8	5.0
Daughter-in-law	11.8	21.6	0.0	16.3	11.5	48.7	14.9	38.2
Other relative	2.9	5.4	0.0	4.1	6.6	2.6	1.8	2.3
Combination**	0.0	10.8	0.0	8.2	0.0	5.3	2.3	4.5
Non-relative	2.9	2.7	8.3	4.1	0.0	0.0	2.8	0.8
Formal/government	0.0	8.1	25.0	12.2	0.0	2.2	3.2	2.4
N*	34	37	12	49	182	495	221	716

*Represents number receiving support and identifying main provider. Hence percent receiving will differ slightly from Table 10.1.

**Represents combination of two or more relatives of different type (e.g., daughter and son-in-law). Those responding “sons” or “daughters” without specifying a specific child were included with the category named.

at relatively late ages, their children are younger on average. Hence, even though a sizeable proportion of Mainlanders coreside with unmarried children (33%, as shown in Table 9.2 in chapter 9), these children may be too young to make any significant contribution in terms of household assistance.

In Table 10.2B, the focus is on the main providers of financial and material assistance, types of support that can be more easily carried out at a distance. Compared with patterns of physical care and household assistance, the patterns here are more similar among the three population groups. Spouses tend to be infrequently named, probably because pooling of resources for couples is expected and not considered “assistance” per se. For financial support, sons are singled out by all three groups as the predominant provider, but it is worth noting that daughters are named more frequently in Baoding than in urban Taiwan. For material assistance, sons and daughters are named with almost equal frequency by each group of elderly. In Baoding, few other main providers are indicated; in Taiwan, sons and daughters account for about two-thirds of main providers, with the remaining third being dispersed across other relatives or combinations of individuals.

The first section in Table 10.3 provides one way of summarizing the detail in Table 10.1, i.e., by measuring the number of supports received by the elderly in each location. Reflecting the considerable degree of assistance provided, 67% of the elderly in Baoding and 87% of those in urban Taiwan are receiving one or more of the four types of support considered here. The distribution of the Mainlanders in Taiwan closely resembles the pattern for Baoding. Close to two-fifths of the elderly in Baoding and of the urban Mainlanders are receiving two or more types of support, while among the urban Taiwanese elderly nearly two-thirds are receiving two or more forms of assistance. Thus, the general magnitude of assistance appears high in both China and Taiwan.

The second section of Table 10.3 speaks to the breadth of the support network for those who are receiving each type of support, and here we see a clear patterning across the three groups compared. In each instance, those in Baoding are more likely to have multiple providers than those in Taiwan, and the Mainlanders are the most likely to rely on a single provider for any given type of support. For the Mainlanders this no doubt reflects the relatively small size of their kin network, given that the Mainlanders are comprised of a disproportionate number of unmarried males and couples with few adult children. The urban Taiwanese and those in Baoding are fairly close in their distributions of total number of providers (for all supports combined);

Table 10.2B Percent Distribution of Main Provider for Financial Support and Material Support in Baoding and Urban Taiwan

	Financial Support				Material Support			
	Baoding	Urban Taiwan			Baoding	Urban Taiwan		
		Taiwanese	Mainlander	Total		Taiwanese	Mainlander	Total
% Receiving Support*	26.7	75.5	44.2	64.3	39.7	40.0	18.1	32.0
Distribution of Main Provider								
Spouse	0.7	4.7	10.5	6.3	0.5	5.7	17.6	8.3
Son	61.8	70.4	57.4	67.3	49.5	33.5	25.7	31.9
Daughter	29.4	12.4	14.9	13.0	40.1	32.4	33.8	32.4
Daughter-in-law	0.7	1.6	0.6	1.3	5.0	8.4	10.8	8.9
Other relative	5.1	3.4	1.7	2.8	5.0	4.3	1.4	3.8
Combination**	0.8	7.2	13.8	8.7	0.0	14.8	6.7	13.1
Non-relative	0.0	0.4	1.1	0.5	0.0	0.6	4.0	1.4
Formal/government	1.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
N*	136	559	181	740	202	296	74	370

*Represents number receiving support and identifying main provider. Hence percent receiving will differ slightly from Table 10.1.

**Represents combination of two or more relatives of different type (e.g., daughter and son-in-law). Those responding "sons" or "daughters" without specifying a specific child were included with the category named.

however, this overall equivalence is confounded by the fact that Taiwanese elderly receive a larger number of different types of support than the Baoding elderly. As noted above, the patterns from Table 10.1 suggest that support in Baoding is more closely tied to need, and in such cases there may be more explicit sharing across potential providers.

The last section of Table 10.3 addresses the question of diffusion of support across main providers. Is the same person called on to carry major responsibility when an older person requires multiple types of care, or is there a specialization or selection among providers such that different individuals assume primary responsibility for different types of assistance? The figures shown in this panel represent the percent who have the specified number of providers among persons who are receiving at least two types of support (and are, therefore, at risk of having more than one main provider). Diffusion of support is greatest among the urban Taiwanese, for whom nearly three-quarters have two or more main providers, with at least 16% having three or more main providers. The elderly in Baoding show the lowest level of diffusion, with two-fifths reporting a single provider who carries the bulk of the responsibility for all types of support that are received (ranging from two to four types). Hence, although the elderly in Baoding appear to have broader networks in terms of the overall numbers of persons from whom they receive support (as shown in the middle panel of Table 10.3), the primary responsibility for support appears to be more concentrated in Baoding. Whether this reflects a more well-defined division of labor within families in Taiwan or mere differences in perceptions or valuations on the part of older parents as to who is viewed as the most important provider is an intriguing question, but one that we are unable to answer with the data at hand.

Though our discussion has focused primarily on differences in patterns of support across the three groups of elderly, from a broader perspective these distributions appear to be variations on a single theme, which is all the more remarkable given the distinct histories each has experienced. In particular, although there are some differences in the identification of the main provider for each type of support (especially for physical care and household assistance), in the implied care-giving burden, and in the breadth of support networks, there is considerable consistency across the three groups in terms of the high degree of reliance on family. This concentrated reliance, coupled with the substantial proportions receiving assistance, indicates that the family is still a primary provider of assistance, and that family obligations are still accepted and acted on to a high degree in both urban Taiwan and China.

Table 10.3 Percent Distribution for Number of Supports Received and Number of Support Providers in Baoding and Urban Taiwan

	Baoding	Urban Taiwan		Total
		Taiwanese	Mainlander	
Number of Supports Recvd				
0	33.2	6.8	24.9	13.2
1	28.0	26.6	36.7	30.2
2	25.0	38.0	25.1	33.3
3	11.2	25.2	12.3	20.6
4	2.6	3.4	1.0	2.5
Number of Providers*				
Physical Care				
1	38.2	54.1	75.0	59.2
2	38.2	27.0	16.7	24.5
3 or more	23.5	18.9	8.3	16.3
Household Assistance				
1	53.1	68.5	86.0	73.9
2	33.3	21.6	10.4	18.2
3 or more	13.5	9.8	3.6	7.9
Financial Support				
1	17.3	25.0	40.2	28.7
2	27.2	22.0	28.3	23.5
3 or more	55.6	53.0	31.5	47.8
Material Support				
1	19.3	37.2	52.7	40.3
2	26.8	20.3	20.3	20.3
3 or more	53.9	42.5	27.0	39.4
All Supports Combined				
1	17.4	23.1	47.1	30.3
2	23.6	18.0	23.2	19.5
3 or more	59.0	58.9	29.7	50.2
Number of Main Providers**				
1	40.4	27.1	33.1	28.4
2	52.1	37.7	39.0	37.9
3 or more	7.4	16.2	11.0	15.2
Multiple, number unknown	--	19.0	16.9	18.5

* Restricted to persons receiving the specified type of support.

** Restricted to persons receiving at least two types of support.

Factors Associated with Receipt of Household, Financial and Material Assistance

The final set of analyses presented in this chapter follow up on the patterns displayed in Table 10.1 by examining the factors associated with the likelihood of receiving support in a multivariate context. A logistic regression model is employed to estimate the log-odds of receiving a given type of support as a function of a set of independent variables. In keeping with the conceptual model that was described in some detail in chapter 9 and utilized in chapter 5, the independent variables included in the models represent the respondents' need for support (e.g., age, marital status, health, and socioeconomic status) and their potential for receiving support, in terms of the availability and location of their kin.

Table 10.4 presents the estimated regression coefficients and associated significance levels for three separate regression models, each pertaining to a different type of support. Physical care was excluded from the multivariate analysis due to the very small number of recipients. With the exception of age, which is represented as a continuous variable in the model, all of the independent variables are categorical and are represented by dummy variables (with the omitted group indicated by the dashed lines). The coefficients represent the amount of increase (if positive) or decrease (if negative) in the log-odds of receiving support for persons who fall in the specified category relative to the omitted one. As noted previously, in order to evaluate the extent to which there are differences across countries that are not accounted for by other factors included in the model, the Baoding and Taiwan samples were pooled, and dummy indicators were included in the model to capture differences between Baoding residents and both Taiwanese and Mainlanders residing in urban Taiwan. On the basis of results of preliminary analyses, a number of interactions were tested for each model; those that were significant in the multivariate models were retained, and they are shown toward the bottom of the table. To facilitate interpretation of the interaction effects, we computed a set of predicted probabilities for each type of support, and these are presented in Table 10.5. The results from Tables 10.4 and 10.5 will be discussed in tandem here.

The results shown in Table 10.4 suggest that assistance is more likely to go to those who are older, less educated, and in poorer health (although not every contrast is statistically significant), reflecting most plausibly greater need among such individuals. Those with more children nearby generally

receive more assistance, reflecting the importance of the size of the potential provider pool, as discussed at the outset. Household composition, because of its special character, also has different effects across types of support. Those coresiding with a married child are more likely to receive household assistance, as might be expected given the time-intensive nature of this support (thus reinforcing one of the conclusions from chapter 6). Those coresiding with an unmarried child (or children) are less likely to receive material assistance. All of these associations hold for Baoding, Taiwanese, and Mainlander elders, as well as for subgroups defined by gender and marital status. Although the effects of country and ethnicity were found to be conditional on other characteristics (as is described in detail below), the general pattern is one of higher levels of household help and financial assistance in Taiwan and of material assistance in Baoding, confirming the patterns detected earlier in Table 10.1. Among older persons in Taiwan, the Taiwanese have a slightly higher likelihood of receiving support of each type than the Mainlanders, although these differences between the groups were not tested explicitly in the models.

Several of the characteristics considered in these models vary across subgroups in their effects on receipt of support. For example, among the elderly in Baoding, there are essentially no differences in the likelihood of receiving household assistance by gender or marital status (see Table 10.5). Very different pictures emerge for Taiwanese and Mainlander elderly, however. Among the Taiwanese, men are significantly more likely to report receiving household assistance than women, and this is particularly true for married men. For Mainlanders, the effect of gender is only evident among those who are married, and unmarried, Mainlander males have the *lowest* likelihood of receiving support of all subgroups examined in Table 10.5. An additional finding of interest is that, other things being equal, women in the three groups have equivalent probabilities of receiving assistance with household tasks. Taken together, the results show that married Taiwanese and Mainlander men report the highest levels of household assistance received, followed by unmarried Taiwanese men. In contrast, unmarried Mainlander men report the lowest level of such assistance. Unmarried Mainlander males are comprised of a disproportionate number of never-married persons (44%), and their lack of a family network may pose special vulnerabilities for this group as they grow older and begin to require support of various types.

Table 10.4 Effects of Demographic, Socioeconomic, and Health Factors on Receiving Specified Types of Support: Coefficients from Logistic Regressions Using Pooled Data

Characteristic	Household Assistance	Financial Assistance	Material Assistance
Age	.05***	.03*	.03**
Sex			
Male	--	--	--
Female	.12	.29+	.39**
Marital Status			
Married	--	--	--
Not married	.22	-.59*	.08
Education			
No formal education	--	--	--
Primary education	-.29+	-.31+	-.09
Junior high	-.07	-.39+	.02
Senior high or higher	-.08	-.87***	-.28
Work status			
Retired/not working	--	--	--
Currently working	.25	.06	-.19
Health rating			
Poor	.39*	.43*	.10
Good	.21	.29*	.04
Very good	--	--	--
Household composition			
Alone or with spouse only	--	--	--
With married child	.96***	-.31	.14
With unmarried child	.16	-.33	-.56**
Number of children nearby	.08*	.11**	.12***
Country & ethnicity			
Mainlander residing in urban Taiwan	2.16***	1.14***	-.79***
Taiwanese residing in urban Taiwan	2.24***	1.48***	-.35*
Baoding resident	--	--	--
Interactions			
Female*Taiwan resident	-2.09***		
Unmarried*Male*Mainlander	-2.59***		
Unmarried*Male*Taiwanese	-1.17**		
Female*unmarried		.84**	
Currently work*Taiwan resident		-1.35***	
Live with married child*Taiwan		1.21***	
Live with unmarried child*Taiwan		.83*	
Constant	-4.68***	-2.70**	-2.75***

+ p < 0.10; * p < 0.05; ** p < 0.01; *** p < 0.001

Notes: 1. Respondents living exclusively with persons other than spouse and children are excluded from the analysis due to small number of cases in this category. 2. Dependent variable is coded '1' if elderly respondent received specific type of support, '0' otherwise. 3. Taiwan resident refers to Mainlanders and Taiwanese collectively.

Moving to financial assistance, we observe cross-country differentials in the effects of work status and living arrangements. As shown in Table 10.5, among elderly Taiwan residents, work status is negatively associated with receipt of financial support (the probability of receiving financial support is nearly double for persons who are retired or not working compared to those who are currently working). In contrast, for Baoding elderly, there is no association between work status and receiving financial support, other things being equal, and this finding again highlights the extensiveness of the pension system in Baoding relative to Taiwan. Looking across country and ethnic groups, we see the likelihood of receiving financial support is equivalent among those who are currently working. However, among those not working (a large majority of these elderly), the likelihood of receiving financial support is much higher in Taiwan than in Baoding, and slightly higher among Taiwanese compared to Mainlanders.

Differentials between Baoding and urban Taiwan were also observed with respect to the association between living arrangements and receipt of financial support. In Baoding, living arrangements show only a modest association with financial support, with those living alone having a slightly higher likelihood of receiving support than those living with married or unmarried children. In Taiwan, the opposite is true—elders living alone or with a spouse only are least likely to receive financial support (although the probability is still quite high, and much higher than for their counterparts in Baoding), and those living with children (especially married children) have the highest likelihood of receiving this type of support. This pattern is somewhat surprising, but it may suggest that coresidence in Baoding is either more responsive to constraints on the availability of housing than to financial needs per se, or that it is driven more by the financial needs of coresident children than of their parents. A final variation of interest relates to the differential effect of marital status for males and females. Specifically, among men, those who are married are more likely to receive financial support than those who are not married; for women, in contrast, the unmarried have a slight advantage. This pattern was observed across all country and ethnic groups.

Taken together, the levels and patterns of support for the elderly revealed in these tables point to several conclusions. First, aside from assistance with physical care, which does not appear to be widely required, a substantial proportion of the elderly population in Baoding and urban Taiwan are receiving household, financial, and/or material assistance. In general, the share receiving assistance is proportionately highest among urban

Table 10.5 Predicted Probabilities of Receiving Household, Financial, and Material Assistance for Selected Subgroups*

Characteristic	Household Help (IADL)			Financial Assistance			Material Assistance		
	Bao-ding	Urban Taiwan		Bao-ding	Urban Taiwan		Bao-ding	Urban Taiwan	
		Taiwan-ese	Main-lander		Taiwan-ese	Main-lander		Taiwan-ese	Main-lander
Age									
60	.19	.68	.66	.30	.65	.58	.36	.28	.20
70	.28	.78	.77	.36	.71	.64	.43	.35	.26
80	.39	.86	.85	.42	.76	.69	.51	.42	.32
Sex and marital status									
Unmarried male	.27	.52	.19	.21	.54	.46	.42	.33	.24
Unmarried female	.29	.33	.31	.46	.79	.72	.51	.43	.32
Married male	.23	.73	.72	.33	.68	.61	.40	.32	.23
Married female	.25	.28	.26	.40	.74	.67	.49	.41	.31
Household composition									
Alone or spouse only	.23	.73	.72	.33	.68	.61	.40	.32	.23
With married child	.44	.88	.87	.27	.84	.79	.43	.35	.26
With unmarried child	.26	.76	.75	.26	.78	.72	.27	.21	.15
Work status									
Currently working	.27	.78	.77	.34	.37	.30	.35	.28	.20
Retired/not working	.23	.73	.72	.33	.68	.61	.40	.32	.23

* When characteristics are not varied in the calculation of predicted probabilities, they are fixed as follows: age = 65; sex = male; marital status = married; education = primary; work status = retired/not working; health rating = good; household composition = living alone or with spouse only; number of children nearby = 3.

Taiwanese and lowest among those residing in Baoding, with the Mainlanders in urban Taiwan occupying an intermediate position. However, as noted in the above discussion, the relative standing of each group varies with the specific type of assistance, and also across subgroups as defined by gender and marital status, household composition, and work status. Finally, the level of support varies with characteristics of the elderly in ways that suggest it is responsive to needs, as well as to the size of the provider network, and perhaps to the location of kin and their financial capabilities. Nevertheless, substantial numbers of the elderly in every socioeconomic and demographic category were receiving assistance, indicating a broad societal consensus on family obligations at work in both China and Taiwan.

Summary

What can we conclude about the strength of familial obligations in China and Taiwan as manifest in the levels of assistance to the elderly? In the absence of careful over-time data it is difficult to draw strong conclusions, but certain patterns emerge quite clearly. First, in both China and Taiwan, a high percentage of the older respondents are receiving at least one type of support of the four types covered in this chapter, and this support comes overwhelmingly from family members. The relative absence of credit to work units, employers, local leaders, or service organizations in both countries speaks both to the lack of formal assistance, and to a mind-set that views pensions or other formal provisions as outside the realm of "assistance." To most respondents, discussion of "assistance" conjured up family transfers, despite the opportunity and invitation to name other sources. In addition, the fact that a sizable proportion of the elderly in all socioeconomic categories was receiving some form of assistance reflects the presence of broadly held societal values. Where consistent variations did emerge (e.g., by age and health status), the results suggest that assistance is also oriented to those most in need.

The elderly in Taiwan are generally more likely to receive assistance than those in China, but this is not true for every form of support, which suggests that levels of income of parents and children, living arrangements, and local conditions affect the type of assistance that is provided. Within urban Taiwan, the Taiwanese are more likely to receive assistance than the Mainlanders, reflecting to some degree differentials in need, but also the greater breadth of the Taiwanese provider network. Finally, although not

shown here, our previous research on the sufficiency of assistance that is received does not suggest that significant portions of the elderly are being neglected in terms of household, financial, or material support. (See chapter 5 for discussion of sufficiency of support in Baoding.)³

This review does not speak to the importance of the transfers the elderly receive, nor does it indicate the content and magnitude of the support. Other data obtained in the Taiwan survey asked respondents to indicate the major or most important source of income, and 51% reported children as against earnings from work, pensions, savings, etc., indicating that the financial assistance received is far from incidental. In Baoding, in contrast, the data analyzed in the present volume (see particularly chapter 2) suggest that financial assistance from grown children is more often supplemental, rather than primary. Indeed, only a little over 13% of Baoding parents over age sixty reported that their children collectively provided more than half of their income in the year prior to our survey.

It is also important to keep in mind that considerable assistance flows from older parents to their children and grandchildren. Earlier analysis revealed that 34% of the elderly in Taiwan were giving one of the forms of assistance reviewed here to their children or others.⁴ An analysis of the 1996 Taiwan aging survey (which included the surviving members of the 1989 survey cohort plus a new sample of persons age fifty to sixty-six) showed that 30% of persons fifty years or over who have at least one grandchild were providing childcare for one or more grandchildren, and 58% were providing indirect care by undertaking household duties in households with young grandchildren.⁵ The Baoding survey results similarly indicate a high level of assistance provided from parents to grown children (see particularly chapters 2 and 8 in the present volume).

These findings and our focus-group studies in Taiwan and elsewhere in Asia point to emerging areas of accommodation between elderly and children regarding the exchange of assistance. Older respondents in the focus-group discussions often recognize, for example, that working daughters-in-law cannot take time to make their favorite dishes and carry out other traditional functions, yet they recognize and appreciate the help they do receive, just as the younger participants recognize the assistance the elderly are providing to alleviate their busy schedules. It would appear, therefore, that the types of support to the elderly reviewed in this chapter are not just relics of some earlier arrangements that are slowly vanishing, but rather part of a vibrant family system that is adjusting and accommodating to

changing needs and conditions while still playing a vital role for its members. Future studies might well focus not so much on the presence or absence of assistance, but on its content, and on the reciprocities across generations that provide needed benefits to all family members.

Finally, the present analysis provides evidence related to one of the primary research questions of the Baoding survey project: Have China's multiple revolutions produced distinctive alterations in family patterns, changes quite different from those experienced by Chinese living in Taiwan? At one level the contemporary patterns of familial assistance to aging parents look quite similar in Baoding and urban Taiwan, as we have stressed in the preceding pages. Neither revolutions and socialism (in the PRC) nor capitalist development and global culture (in Taiwan) have substantially eroded the strong filial orientations that stem from the Chinese tradition. With regard to Baoding, in particular, much of the analysis in preceding chapters has stressed the theme of the survival and even reinforcement after 1949 of traditional filial obligations.

However, beneath these broad similarities we see clear differences in the way familial support is provided to aging parents in these two Chinese locales. Furthermore, there is a patterning to these differences, with parents in urban Taiwan (particularly the Taiwanese, more than the Mainlanders) relying more heavily on support from grown children than in Baoding. Taiwanese parents also receive more support from sons and daughters-in-laws in comparison with daughters than is the case in Baoding. Although these differences are subtle rather than stark, they suggest that family relations in urban Taiwan are in some ways more "traditional" than in Baoding. "Having sons to guard against old age" remains more important today in urban Taiwan than in Baoding. The distinctive institutional legacy of Chinese socialism—including work unit-provided pensions, virtually universal employment of women, and the absence until recently of family-owned enterprises and other property—has produced somewhat more evolution away from "traditional" Chinese family patterns than has resulted from the higher level of economic development in Taiwan. So the answer is yes, China's revolutions have made a difference and have produced distinctive features of family life. Chapter 11 will consider whether similar conclusions can be derived from some of the attitudinal data collected in the surveys in Baoding and in urban Taiwan.

NOTES

¹ A. I. Hermalin, M. B. Ofstedal, and M. C. Chang, "Types of Support for the Aged and Their Providers in Taiwan," in *Aging and Generational Relations over the Life Course*, ed. T. K. Hareven (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1996); A. I. Hermalin, M. B. Ofstedal, and M. C. Chang, "A Comparison of Alternative Approaches to Measuring Needs and Levels of Support Received among the Elderly in Taiwan," in *Readings in Population Research: Policy, Methodology and Perspectives*, eds. P. Krishnan et al. (Delhi, India: B. R. Publishing Corp., 1992).

² In the health section of the Taiwan questionnaire, respondents were asked if because of a health or physical problem they had any difficulty shopping for personal items, managing money, using the telephone and several other items related to household activities. An analysis of these items vis-a-vis those asking respondents if they received any household assistance revealed that many respondents who did not report any difficulty in executing these tasks nevertheless reported receiving assistance (Hermalin, Ofstedal and Chang, "A Comparison"). This finding lends support to the hypothesis that to some degree, reports of household assistance are reflective of long-standing arrangements rather than help provided because of physical limitations.

³ See Hermalin et al., "Types of Support," for Taiwan findings. A possible exception involves the provision of physical care in Taiwan. Given the small number of cases that receive physical care assistance it is difficult to draw firm conclusions, and more research is needed.

⁴ A. I. Hermalin, M. B. Ofstedal, and M. L. Lee, "Characteristics of Children and Intergenerational Transfers." *Elderly in Asia Research Report No. 92-21*. Population Studies Center, University of Michigan (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1992).

⁵ A. I. Hermalin, C. Roan, and A. Perez, "The Emerging Role of Grandparents in Asia" (paper presented at the annual meeting of the Population Association of America, Chicago, April 1998).

11

ATTITUDES TOWARD INTERGENERATIONAL RELATIONS IN URBAN CHINA AND TAIWAN

Jennifer C. Cornman, Jieming Chen, and Albert I. Hermalin

Introduction

This chapter examines attitudes and values related to familial support in China and Taiwan from the standpoint of two generations. We are in the fortunate position in that similar (but not always identical) questions were asked of elderly respondents and their children in both settings.

Three types of attitudes are examined: attitudes centering on the coresidence of older people with their children, the appropriateness of older widows remarrying, and the importance of older people retaining property to insure respect from children. There are "traditional" aspects of Chinese family structure associated with each of these attitudes, although it could be debated how ancient or Confucian the roots of each family norm are.¹ In any case, it is clear that strong expectations existed earlier that aging parents would coreside with one or more married son, that widows would not remarry, and that family property was at the core of the intergenerational bargain between aging parents and their grown children.

The availability of responses to similar questions from two generations in two countries permits a large number of analyses. In this chapter, two parallel analyses are performed, focusing first on parents' attitudes and then on children's attitudes. Each analysis is structured similarly: first, there is a comparison of the responses between Baoding and Taiwan; then the determinants of the attitudes (or level of agreement) are explored via a series of logistic regressions for each attitude in each country, in order to estimate the net associations between the independent variables and the outcomes of interest; finally, for questions common to both surveys, the data are pooled

and logistic regressions are carried out that include a dummy variable for the country of residence to see if there is a net country effect beyond the other independent variables.

As mentioned in chapter 9, data for the present chapter come from two sources. Those on elderly parents and adult children in Taiwan come from the 1993 Survey of Health and Living Status of the Elderly in Taiwan. As in chapter 10, for analyses on elderly parents, we restrict the sample to those elderly respondents living in large cities, resulting in a sample of 809 elderly respondents. While sample characteristics for the 1989 elderly sample are described in Chapter 9, the primary difference between the 1989 and 1993 samples is that the 1993 sample of elderly is somewhat older (mean age in 1989 is sixty-nine while the mean age in 1993 is seventy-two).

Data for analyses on adult children in Taiwan also come from the same 1993 survey. However, several additional notes need to be made. First, unlike the Baoding sample of adult children, the adult children in Taiwan are the children of both urban and rural elderly and therefore they can reside in rural as well as urban areas (see Table 9.3). Due to the sampling procedure used to select the adult child sample in Taiwan, sample sizes would become too small if we restricted the analyses to only children living in large cities. To adjust for this difference in the adult child samples, we control for residence type (rural versus urban) in the analyses described below.

Second, because several of the attitudinal questions are asked only of coresident children in Taiwan, we utilized all cases in which coresident children were interviewed, randomly selecting one if there were two or more in a household. This allows us to maximize our sample size, which is 441 compared to 199 if we had used only the coresident children selected at random from all the children interviewed. The characteristics of this second sample of Taiwan children are somewhat different from those described in Table 9.3. The adult children in this sample are slightly younger, with a mean age of 38.3 compared to 40.0 for the 1989 Taiwan sample. In addition, more children are male (85 percent compared to 53 percent), and a slightly larger percent live in rural areas (79 percent compared to 71 percent).

The data for Baoding come from the 1994 Survey of Aging and Intergenerational Relations. As noted in chapter 9, we restrict the elderly Baoding sample to those respondents age 60 and over to better match the age profile of the elderly Taiwan sample. The two Baoding samples we use for analysis consist of 509 parents age 60 and over and 731 adult children.

Research Findings

Attitudes of the elderly: Agreement and structure

In this section we first examine the level of agreement between the Taiwan and Baoding elderly in three attitudinal realms, as shown in Table 11.1. Unfortunately, the questions on living arrangements were not identical in both countries. Appendix Table A shows the exact questions and response categories and how we combined them to achieve comparability. These summary categories have been brought forward to Table 11.1 and are shown with the percent distributions of the responses. In every case the traditional or conservative response category is given first to facilitate comparison. The responses to the two questions on living arrangements show that the Baoding elderly make a sharp distinction according to the specific situation. To the more general attitude on living arrangements, 70% agree that parents should live independently of children as long as their health permits. At the same time, when the question is asked in terms of widowed elderly, almost three-quarters agree that widowed elderly should not live alone.

The elderly in Taiwan, on the other hand, display a high level of support for both coresidence in general and for coresidence for the more vulnerable. Over 60% of the Taiwanese elderly feel that the elderly should live with a married child and, as in Baoding, the large majority (67%) supports the widowed elderly living with children. It seems, then, that the attitudes of Taiwanese elderly are more in line with traditional family norms than are those of Baoding parents. This traditional orientation is confirmed by the fact that the Taiwan elderly show significantly less support for coresidence if the choice is to live with a married daughter. Only 32% support coresidence in this case.²

In discussing attitudes toward remarriage as well as attitudes toward the role of property in ensuring respect for the elderly, we can make stronger comparisons between Baoding and Taiwan, because the questions used are identical or virtually so. As we found with attitudes toward coresidence, the Taiwanese elderly express more traditional attitudes toward these family norms, with the contrast in views about widow remarriage particularly striking.

Table 11.1 shows that over 60% of the elderly in Taiwan believe that it is inappropriate for older widows to remarry, while only 8% of Baoding elderly feel this way. The Taiwanese elderly also seem to hold more traditional opinions about the relationship between inheritance and respect. While 78% of Taiwan elderly believe that maintaining property is important for ensuring respect, only 42% of Baoding elderly feel this way.

Table 11.1 Comparison of Attitudes of Taiwanese Elderly Parents and Baoding Elderly Parents

Attitude	Taiwanese Parents	Baoding Parents
	Question	
Living Arrangements	Do you think an elderly couple is better off living with a married son or daughter or living alone? Or do you think there is another better arrangement? <i>Married Child = 62.5 %</i> <i>On own/other = 37.5 %</i> <i>(N = 809)</i>	As long as health permits, an older person should live independently, and not depend on (his/her) children. <i>Disagree = 30.0 %</i> <i>Agree = 70.0 %</i> <i>(N = 509)</i>
	If an older person is widowed, do you think he/she is better off to live with a married child, live alone, or other arrangement? <i>Married Child = 67.0 %</i> <i>On own/Other = 33.0 %</i> <i>(N = 801)</i>	An older person who is widowed should not live alone. <i>Agree = 72.7 %</i> <i>Disagree = 27.3 %</i> <i>(N = 487)</i>
	If a couple has no sons, do you think they are best off to go live with a married daughter, live on their own, or move to a senior citizen's home? How is it best arranged? <i>Married Daughter = 31.8 %</i> <i>On own/other = 68.2 %</i> <i>(N = 803)</i>	N/A
Widow Remarriage	If an older woman has been widowed for some time, do you think that it is appropriate for her to remarry? <i>No = 61.2 %</i> <i>Yes/depends = 38.9 %</i> <i>(N = 803)</i>	If an older woman has been widowed for a period of time, it is all right for her to remarry. <i>Disagree = 7.6 %</i> <i>Agree = 92.4 %</i> <i>(N = 503)</i>
Inheritance and Respect	Do you think it is important for old people to keep property to make sure that their family treats them with respect? <i>Yes = 77.9 %</i> <i>No/depends = 22.2 %</i> <i>(N = 790)</i>	Do you think it is important for old people to keep property to make sure their family members treat them with respect? <i>Yes, important = 41.4 %</i> <i>No, unimportant = 58.6 %</i> <i>(N = 490)</i>

These sharp differences in attitudes regarding widow remarriage and inheritance could be due, in part, to the nature of property ownership in the two countries. The ownership of private property is much more common in Taiwan than in Baoding. Compared to nearly 80% of the elderly in the

Taiwan sample, only 6% of Baoding elderly live in homes owned by themselves or by their children. In addition, the Taiwan elderly are much more likely to be or have been self-employed, or to own their own business, while Baoding elderly are much more likely to work or have worked for state-owned enterprises and agencies.

Property ownership could also be an underlying factor explaining some of the differences in attitudes toward widow remarriage. Remarriage can significantly impact kinship relations, affecting not only children's (particularly sons') access to family property, but also their access to the patriline. Because the patrilineal kinship system appears to be stronger in urban Taiwan than in Baoding, the possible effects of widow remarriage on lineage and inheritance concerns are potentially greater in Taiwan.

The overall impression from the distributions of the four attitudes in Baoding and Taiwan is that the Baoding elderly reveal a less traditional stance on all but the question of living arrangements for widows, where the attitudes in the two settings are very similar. With this comparison in mind, we investigate which characteristics of the elderly are associated with these expressed attitudes, and whether the determinants are the same in each country. To this end, Table 11.2 presents a series of logistic regressions that display the effects of a number of basic social, demographic, and health variables on these attitudes.

In general, we find that the Taiwan elderly's attitudes are more structured by individual characteristics, particularly for attitudes about living arrangements. For attitudes about general living arrangements in Taiwan, the elderly's attitudes vary significantly by age, sex, coresidence status, education, health, number of sons, and ethnicity. Those who are older, male, Taiwanese, in poor health, who coreside with children, and have lower education levels are more likely to feel that the elderly should live with married children. Curiously, those elderly with more sons are likely to feel that the elderly should live on their own. One interpretation of this result is that the elderly who have many sons may have more sons living nearby from whom they can receive support. Coresiding with a married child, therefore, may not be as important. In Baoding, on the other hand, attitudes about general living arrangements vary significantly only by coresidence, with the number of sons having only a marginal effect. Those elderly in Baoding who coreside with children are more likely to feel that the elderly should not live on their own, even when they are healthy.

Table 11.2 Effects of Elderly Characteristics on Elderly Attitudes: Coefficients of Logistic Regressions (standard errors)

Variables	Attitude							
	General Living Arrangements		Widow's Living Arrangements		Widow Remarriage		Property and Respect	
	Taiwan	Baoding	Taiwan	Baoding	Taiwan	Baoding	Taiwan	Baoding
	Who should elderly live with? 1 = married child 0 = on own/other	If healthy, elderly should live on own 1 = disagree 0 = agree	Elderly widows' living arrangement 1 = not on own 0 = on own	Elderly widows' living arrangement 1 = not on own 0 = on own	Okay for older widowed woman to remarry 1 = no 0 = yes	Okay for older widowed woman to remarry 1 = no 0 = yes	Older people keep property to ensure respect 1 = yes 0 = no	Older people keep property to ensure respect? 1 = yes 0 = no
Constant	-1.985	-1.604	-2.162 +	0.365	-0.849	-5.250 *	2.211 +	-0.339
Age	0.032 *	0.024	0.039 *	0.001	0.019	0.049	-0.001	-0.005
	(0.016)	(0.019)	(0.02)	(0.020)	(0.014)	(0.031)	(0.017)	(0.018)
Male (female omitted)	0.518 **	-0.103	0.000	0.665**	-0.695 ***	-1.053 *	0.401 *	0.488 *
	(0.198)	(0.236)	(0.195)	(0.246)	(0.177)	(0.433)	(0.204)	(0.222)
Married (not married omitted)	-0.231	-0.103	-0.228	0.742**	0.027	0.061	-0.095	0.104
	(0.194)	(0.271)	(0.197)	(0.268)	(0.177)	(0.439)	(0.206)	(0.266)
Coresides w/child (not coresiding omitted)	1.657 ***	0.435 *	1.321 ***	0.065	0.222	0.040	-0.523 *	-0.298
	(0.194)	(0.205)	(0.187)	(0.214)	(0.176)	(0.357)	(0.218)	(0.189)
Education (years of education)	-0.077***	-0.029	-0.033 +	0.013	-0.015	-0.050	-0.047 *	0.007
	(0.019)	(0.022)	(0.018)	(0.023)	(0.017)	(0.040)	(0.020)	(0.020)
Good health (poor health omitted)	0.527 *	-0.376	-0.673 **	-0.277	-0.045	0.105	-0.138	-0.438 +
	(0.239)	(0.250)	(0.252)	(0.280)	(0.206)	(0.451)	(0.240)	(0.243)
Number of sons:								
One son	-0.349	-0.107	-0.519	0.286	0.071	0.042	-0.285	0.406
	(0.324)	(0.384)	(0.321)	(0.433)	(0.291)	(0.695)	(0.383)	(0.403)
Two sons	-0.925 **	-0.379	-0.435	-0.249	0.160	0.104	-0.280	0.500
	(0.331)	(0.391)	(0.326)	(0.426)	(0.295)	(0.693)	(0.386)	(0.406)
Three or more sons	-0.683 *	-0.770 +	-0.177	-0.018	0.437	-0.111	-0.272	0.394
	(0.323)	(0.412)	(0.322)	(0.442)	(0.290)	(0.734)	(0.379)	(0.416)
(zero sons omitted)								

Table 11.2 continued

Variables	Attitude							
	General Living Arrangements		Widow's Living Arrangements		Widow Remarriage		Property and Respect	
	Taiwan	Baoding	Taiwan	Baoding	Taiwan	Baoding	Taiwan	Baoding
	Who should elderly live with? 1 = married child 0 = on own/other	If healthy, elderly should live on own 1 = disagree 0 = agree	Elderly widows' living arrangement 1 = not on own 0 = on own	Elderly widows' living arrangement 1 = not on own 0 = on own	Okay for older widowed woman to remarry 1 = no 0 = yes	Okay for older widowed woman to remarry 1 = no 0 = yes	Older people keep property to ensure respect 1 = yes 0 = no	Older people keep property to ensure respect? 1 = yes 0 = no
Taiwanese (Mainlander omitted)	0.666 *** (0.1860)	n/a	0.710 *** (0.183)	n/a	0.151 (0.172)	n/a	-0.025 (0.204)	n/a
N	798	487	796	479	798	493	794	482
-2 Log likelihood	-441.93	-287.59	-437.37	-266.71	-509.68	-120.45	-413.35	-319.53
chi-square	171.73	19.64	133.90	26.66	46.87	16.82	15.87	15.11
Probability > chi-square	0.000	0.020	0.000	0.002	0.000	0.051	0.104	0.088
Pseudo R-square	0.163	0.033	0.133	0.048	0.044	0.065	0.019	0.023

The effect of the number of sons is in the same direction as in Taiwan. We also find that more of the variation in the Taiwan elderly's attitude is explained by the variables included in the model (pseudo R-square = 0.16 for the Taiwan model and only 0.03 for the Baoding model).

Similar results occur for the regressions concerning attitudes toward the living arrangements of widowed elderly. More of the variables in the model are significantly associated with the Taiwan elderly's attitudes and more of the variation is explained (pseudo R-square = 0.13 for the Taiwan model and 0.05 for the Baoding model).³ In Taiwan, older Taiwanese respondents in poor health who currently live with a child are more likely to feel that widowed elderly should not live on their own. In Baoding, attitudes significantly vary only by sex and marital status, with men and married respondents more likely to feel that widowed elderly should not live alone.

Attitudes toward widow remarriage are not highly structured in either country. In both countries only sex is significant, with males being less likely than females to feel that widows should not remarry. It is notable, in other words, that in both countries men are *more* likely than women to express support for gender equality (in regard to remarriage rights). Similarly, attitudes toward the role of property in ensuring respect for the elderly are not highly differentiated by the characteristics examined. Attitudes about property and respect vary significantly by sex, coresidence status, and education in Taiwan and only by sex in Baoding, with a marginal health effect. In addition, as indicated by the low pseudo R-squares for models about widow remarriage and property and respect (all are less than 0.06), we do not gain much predictive power from the independent variables examined in either country.

The results of Table 11.2 indicate that these attitudes, for the most part, are not highly differentiated by the social and demographic characteristics included in the analysis. In addition, with the exception of some differences in significance, the structure of these attitudes appears to be similar in urban Taiwan and Baoding in that the effects of the variables examined are in the same direction. In pooling the data, we are interested in identifying significant differences in the levels of attitudes between the two countries, net of sample composition differences. To capture the country effects we created a three-category variable, which reflects country of residence as well as ethnicity. As we saw in the previous regressions, ethnicity was an important predictor of several of the elderly's attitudes in Taiwan. To capture this effect, we constructed a combined variable. The categories for this variable are

Baoding resident, Mainlander from Taiwan, and Taiwanese from Taiwan. Baoding resident is the reference category.

Turning to the results using the pooled data (Table 11.3), we find that there are significant country differences for attitudes toward a widow's living arrangements, a widow's remarriage, and the relationship between property and respect for the elderly.⁴ For widow's living arrangements we find that, controlling for social and demographic differences, Mainlanders from Taiwan appear to be less traditional than Baoding residents in that they are more likely to feel that widowed elderly should live on their own. There is, however, not a significant difference between the Taiwanese and Baoding residents. Mainlanders, because of their history, have a much "thinner" kin network than the other two comparison groups, with many of them being retired soldiers who never married. Their experiences in Taiwan may well have contributed to their less traditional attitudes about the living arrangements of the elderly.⁵

For attitudes toward widow remarriage and the role of property in respect for the elderly, we also find strong country differences. Compared to Baoding residents, both Mainlanders from Taiwan and Taiwanese are significantly more likely to feel that older widows should not remarry and more likely to feel that it is important for the elderly to keep property in order to maintain respect from one's family.⁶ These results suggest that the contrasts in attitudes between elderly respondents in Baoding and in urban Taiwan are "real" and not simply an artifact of ways in which the background characteristics of the two samples differ.

Adult children's attitudes: Agreement and structure

The attitudes of the adult child generation show some sharp differences from those of their parents, often in unexpected directions, and present a complex combination of traditional and nontraditional views. As Table 11.4 reveals with regard to appropriate living arrangements for the elderly, a clear majority of the adult children in both Taiwan (65%) and Baoding (59%) support coresidence in general, and this proportion rises to almost nine out of ten when the more vulnerable population of widows is specified. What is striking about these results is the close agreement, on the one hand, between the adult children in Baoding and Taiwan, despite the considerable differences in the social and economic environments in which they were raised; and, on the other, the clear reversal from the attitudes expressed by their parents. In both Baoding and Taiwan, the proportions of children in favor of the more

Table 11.3 Effects of Parental Characteristics and Country of Residence on Parental Attitudes: Coefficients of Logistic Regressions using Pooled Data (standard errors)

Variables	Attitude		
	Widows' Living Arrangements	Widow Remarriage	Property and Respect
	Elderly widows' living arrangement 1 = not on own 0 = on own	Okay for older widowed woman to remarry 1 = no 0 = yes	Older people keep property to ensure respect 1 = yes 0 = no
Constant	-0.424	-4.036 ***	0.309
Age	0.024 + (0.012)	0.025 + (0.013)	-0.004 (0.012)
Male (female omitted)	0.283 + (0.148)	-0.750 *** (0.162)	0.456 ** (0.148)
Married (not married omitted)	0.107 (0.156)	0.052 (0.165)	-0.080 (0.159)
Coresides w/child (not coresiding omitted)	0.690 *** (0.136)	0.189 (0.157)	-0.399 ** (0.140)
Education (years of education)	-0.028 * (0.014)	-0.022 (0.016)	-0.020 (0.014)
Good health (poor health omitted)	-0.516 ** (0.183)	-0.010 (0.187)	-0.305 + (0.172)
Number of sons:			
One son	-0.106 (0.247)	0.089 (0.270)	-0.031 (0.259)
Two sons	-0.317 (0.247)	0.183 (0.272)	-0.002 (0.260)
Three or more sons	-0.015 (0.249)	0.378 (0.269)	-0.036 (0.260)
(zero sons omitted)			
Ethnicity and Country of Residence			
Mainlander from Taiwan	-1.127 *** (0.175)	2.847 *** (0.228)	1.645 *** (0.183)
Taiwanese from Taiwan	-0.208 (0.168)	2.981 *** (0.212)	1.697 *** (0.164)
(Baoding Residents omitted)			
N	1275	1291	1276
-2 Log likelihood	-734.67	-632.56	-737.77
chi-square	104.13	478.57	191.57
probability > chi-square	0.000	0.000	0.000
Pseudo R-square	0.066	0.275	0.115

+ p < 0.10; * p < 0.05; ** p < 0.01; *** p < 0.001

traditional living arrangement are higher than those expressed by the parents (shown in Table 11.1) and on some items the differences are substantial. For

example, in Taiwan, while 67% of parents say an older widowed person should live with a married child, 88% of children express this view; in Baoding only 30% of parents disagree with the view that an older person should live independently, while 59% of the children disagree.⁷ (These findings for Baoding echo the discussion of parent and child attitudes toward coresidence in chapter 4.)

On attitudes toward widow remarriage, although the majority of the adult child generation in both Baoding and Taiwan supports the idea that an older woman should be able to remarry, Baoding children do so at a much higher level, 97% compared to 61%. For both samples of children, support for this attitude is nontraditional compared to attitudes about coresidence. In other words, adult children in both Baoding and Taiwan are less supportive of the “traditional” ideal here (i.e., they favor the choice of remarriage), whereas in regard to coresidence they were more traditional (i.e., they favor coresidence for aging parents). Baoding and Taiwanese adult children are more likely to support remarriage for widows than are the corresponding parental generations. In Taiwan, 61% of adult children support remarriage while only 39% of elderly parents favor remarriage. For Baoding, the difference is not as great, but 97% of the adult children support widow remarriage compared to 92% of the elderly parents. In short, on the issue of widow remarriage, children display more “modern” attitudes than their parents.

Children in Baoding show a higher level of disagreement than children in Taiwan with the notion that parents need to keep property to ensure respect (61% of Baoding children compared to 46% of Taiwan children disagree). In comparing the parental and adult child generations, both Baoding and Taiwan children are less supportive than their parents of the idea that the elderly need to keep property to ensure respect (54% of Taiwanese adult children agree compared to 78% of elderly parents; 39% of Baoding adult children agree compared to 42% of elderly parents). It is also clear that the Baoding generations resemble each other more closely than do the Taiwan generations in regard to both widow remarriage and the importance of property for respect.

In sum, the adult children in Baoding and Taiwan resemble each other on several of the attitudes displayed in Table 11.4, but with the children in Baoding showing much higher support for widow remarriage than their counterparts in Taiwan and less support for the need to retain property. In

Table 11.4 Comparison of Attitudes of Taiwanese Adult Children and Baoding Adult Children

Attitude	Taiwanese Adult Children	Baoding Adult Children
Living Arrangements		
	Question	
	Do you think that an elderly couple is better off living with a married son or daughter or living alone? Or do you think that there is another better arrangement?	As long as health permits, an older person should live independently, and not depend on (his/her) children.
	<i>Married Child</i> = 65.3 %	<i>Disagree</i> = 58.8 %
	<i>On own/other</i> = 34.7 %	<i>Agree</i> = 41 %
	(<i>N</i> = 657)	(<i>N</i> = 731)
	How about if one member of the elderly couple passes on. Do you consider that the remaining member is then better off living with a married son or daughter, or living alone? Or do you think that there is another better arrangement?	An older person who is widowed should not live alone.
	<i>Married Child</i> = 87.7 %	<i>Agree</i> = 86.2 %
	<i>On own/Other</i> = 12.3 %	<i>Disagree</i> = 13.8 %
	(<i>N</i> = 438)	(<i>N</i> = 731)
	Thinking about couples with no sons, do you think that they are better off living with a married daughter, or living alone is better, or moving to a home for the care of the elderly? What do you think is the best arrangement?	N/A
	<i>Married Daughter</i> = 38.5 %	
	<i>On own/other</i> = 61.5 %	
	(<i>N</i> = 436)	
Widow Remarriage	If an older woman has been widowed for some time, do you think that it is appropriate for her to remarry?	If an older woman has been widowed for a period of time, it is all right for her to remarry.
	<i>No</i> = 39.1 %	<i>Disagree</i> = 2.6 %
	<i>Yes/depends</i> = 60.9 %	<i>Agree</i> = 97.4 %
	(<i>N</i> = 435)	(<i>N</i> = 731)
Inheritance and Respect	"Today's elderly must preserve some savings or property in order to make sure children and grandchildren respect them." Do you consider this important or unimportant?	Do you think it is important for old people to keep property to make sure their family members treat them with respect?
	<i>Yes</i> = 53.8 %	<i>Yes</i> = 38.8 %
	<i>No/depends</i> = 46.2 %	<i>No</i> = 61.3 %
	(<i>N</i> = 439)	(<i>N</i> = 731)

comparison with their parental generation, the Taiwan children show sharp differences on each broad dimension, expressing a more traditional outlook with regard to coresidence, but less traditional viewpoints on the other attitudes. In Baoding, the only sharp generational difference occurs on the attitudes reflecting coresidence where, as in Taiwan, the children give more “traditional” responses.

Table 11.5 shows the extent to which the attitudes of the adult children are differentiated. It demonstrates this by employing logistic regression to examine the multivariate effects of demographic and social characteristics, as well as key parental characteristics, on the attitudes in question. In general, the attitudes of the adult children are not highly structured by the factors examined in Table 11.5. On coresidence, the results show a strong ethnicity effect in Taiwan, with the Taiwanese children more likely than the Mainlander children to support coresidence with a married child, but the Baoding children's attitudes about coresidence are not related to any of the characteristics examined. For attitudes toward the living arrangements of widows, we find that Baoding male children are more likely than Baoding female children to feel that the widowed elderly should live on their own. In Taiwan, attitudes toward a widow's living arrangements are related only to their parent's attitude. If a Taiwan parent feels that a widowed elderly parent should not live on their own, their adult child is significantly more likely to feel the same way.

Adult children's attitudes toward widow remarriage and the role of property in ensuring respect for the elderly, family norms which are not strictly dictated by norms of filial piety, reflect a strong continuity across generations, as parent's attitudes have strong positive effects in predicting children's attitudes. Net of the effects of children's personal characteristics, if a parent feels that widows should not remarry, the adult child is significantly more likely to feel the same way. Similarly, if a parent feels that keeping property is important for ensuring respect, the child is more likely to report the same opinion. Although there are some differences in magnitudes, the relationship between parent's attitude and child's attitude is consistent across the two countries.

Table 11.5 Effects of Adult Children's Characteristics on Children's Attitudes: Coefficients of Logistic Regressions (standard errors)

Variables	Attitude							
	General Living Arrangements		Widows' Living Arrangements		Widow Remarriage		Property and Respect	
	Taiwan	Baoding	Taiwan	Baoding	Taiwan	Baoding	Taiwan	Baoding
	Who should elderly live with? 1 = married child 0 = on own/other	If healthy, elderly should live on own 1 = disagree 0 = agree	Elderly widows' living arrangement 1 = not on own 0 = on own	Elderly widows' living arrangement 1 = not on own 0 = on own	Okay for older woman to remarry 1 = no 0 = yes	Okay for older widowed woman to remarry 1 = no 0 = yes	Older people keep property to ensure respect 1 = yes 0 = no	Older people keep property to ensure respect 1 = yes 0 = no
Constant	0.244	0.424	0.285	0.835	-0.588	-5.195 *	-1.508	-1.262
Age	-0.002 (0.014)	-0.012 (0.018)	-0.033 (0.024)	0.052 + (0.028)	0.035 + (0.019)	0.008 (0.053)	0.030 + (0.017)	0.020 (0.118)
Male (female omitted)	0.187 (0.190)	0.116 (0.163)	-0.478 (0.473)	-0.549 * (0.245)	-0.252 (0.348)	-0.119 (0.532)	-0.299 (0.312)	0.199 (0.164)
Married (not married omitted)	-0.035 (0.253)	0.084 (0.260)	0.466 (0.365)	-0.036 (0.387)	0.420 (0.277)	0.286 (0.831)	0.293 (0.251)	-0.190 (0.254)
Coresides w/parent (not coresiding omitted)	0.277 (0.247)	0.277 (0.204)	n/a	0.429 (0.311)	n/a	0.455 (0.593)	n/a	0.346 + (0.203)
Education (years of education)	-0.023 (0.025)	0.034 (0.027)	0.037 (0.047)	0.037 (0.042)	-0.139 *** (0.036)	-0.025 (0.087)	0.026 (0.032)	0.003 (0.027)
Taiwanese (Mainlander omitted)	0.776 ** (0.276)	n/a	0.676 (0.481)	n/a	0.325 (0.435)	n/a	0.560 (0.345)	n/a
Number of brothers:								
One brother	-0.178 (0.304)	0.037 (0.193)	-0.601 (0.459)	-0.232 (0.290)	-0.478 (0.325)	-0.492 (0.657)	-0.574 + (0.302)	0.082 (0.193)
Two or more brothers (zero brothers omitted)	-0.290 (0.292)	0.013 (0.216)	-0.251 (0.454)	-0.224 (0.324)	-0.089 (0.307)	-0.116 (0.657)	-0.403 (0.288)	-0.015 (0.220)

Table 11.5 continued

Variables	Attitude							
	General Living Arrangements		Widows' Living Arrangements		Widow Remarriage		Property and Respect	
	Taiwan	Baoding	Taiwan	Baoding	Taiwan	Baoding	Taiwan	Baoding
	Who should elderly live with? 1 = married child 0 = on own/other	If healthy, elderly should live on own 1 = disagree 0 = agree	Elderly widows' living arrangement 1 = not on own 0 = on own	Elderly widows' living arrangement 1 = not on own 0 = on own	Okay for older widowed woman to remarry 1 = no 0 = yes	Okay for older widowed woman to remarry 1 = no 0 = yes	Older people keep property to ensure respect 1 = yes 0 = no	Older people keep property to ensure respect 1 = yes 0 = no
Child lives in large city (not large city omitted)	-0.345 + (0.197)	n/a	-0.194 (0.356)	n/a	-0.211 (0.274)	n/a	0.216 (0.246)	n/a
Parent' age	0.000 (0.019)	-0.007 (0.016)	0.024 (0.035)	-0.014 (0.023)	-0.010 (0.025)	0.019 (0.049)	-0.007 (0.023)	-0.001 (0.016)
Parent's attitude (coded the same as child's attitude)	0.266 (0.198)	0.219 (0.171)	1.049 ** (0.370)	0.323 (0.252)	0.977 *** (0.271)	1.823 *** (0.569)	0.973 *** (0.229)	0.351 * (0.157)
N	601	706	406	688	404	663	407	708
-2 Log likelihood	-374.97	-472.08	-145.04	-262.68	-227.61	-73.69	-262.74	-465.88
chi-square	27.85	11.23	16.82	12.22	80.83	10.74	36.07	12.34
probability > chi-square	0.003	0.260	0.078	0.201	0.000	0.2937	0.000	0.195
Pseudo R-square	0.036	0.012	0.055	0.023	0.151	0.068	0.064	0.013

+ $p < 0.10$; * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$

Of the other characteristics examined, none show consistent or strong effects across these two attitudes or across countries. In Taiwan, children's attitudes about widow remarriage are significantly associated with education and marginally related to age. Adult children with a higher education are less likely to find remarriage inappropriate, and older children are somewhat more likely to feel that widows should not remarry. For Baoding, there are no significant effects of variables other than parent's attitude toward widow remarriage. For attitudes about property and respect, we find that age and number of brothers are marginally associated with children's attitudes in Taiwan, and for Baoding there is a marginal effect of coresidence with parents.

As noted at the beginning of this chapter, Taiwanese children included in these analyses live in both urban and rural areas. We included in the multivariate analyses of Taiwan children's attitudes a control for this factor to determine whether this difference in the two samples might affect our results. As shown in Table 11.5, the urban-rural variable is marginally related to only one of the attitudes. Thus, the urban-rural factor is excluded from subsequent analyses.

The results in Table 11.5 indicate that it is difficult in both Taiwan and Baoding to account for the attitudes of the adult children with the independent variables employed, as was also the case in our earlier analysis of parental attitudes. Although there is substantial variance in the responses to many of the questions within each country, the likelihood of responding in a more or less traditional manner is not captured well by the variables at our disposal. The strong effects of parental attitudes on children's attitudes in both countries on a number of dimensions is the most consistent effect and suggests that personal family history and dynamics may have more to do with shaping these attitudes than the socioeconomic and demographic characteristics of the respondents.

The general similarity in results for both settings makes it appropriate to pool the adult child data in order to see if significant differences exist between the two societies while controlling for the independent variables. Table 11.6 shows these results. We find that the country effect is significant only in the analysis of attitudes toward widow remarriage and property and respect. Mainlanders and Taiwanese are both significantly more likely than Baoding residents to feel that older widows should not remarry. We also find that the parent's attitude about widow remarriage continues to have a large positive effect on the adult child's attitude, indicating that, despite the country differences in this attitude, adult children's beliefs appear to be influenced by their parent's beliefs. For attitudes about property and respect,

only the Taiwanese are significantly different from Baoding residents, and they are significantly more likely to feel that property is important for ensuring respect. Here again, parental attitudes about property and respect also exert an independent and significant effect on children's attitudes.⁸

Table 11.6 Effects of Adult Children's Characteristics and Country of Residence on Children's Attitudes: Coefficients of Logistic Regressions Using Pooled Data (standard errors)

Variables	Attitude		
	Widows' Living Arrangements Elderly widows' living arrangement	Widow Remarriage If an older woman loses her husband, do you think it is appropriate for her to remarry?	Property and Respect Important for old people to keep property to make sure family treats them with respect?
	1 = not on own 0 = on their own	1 = no 0 = yes	1 = yes 0 = no
Constant	0.918	-3.015 *	-1.003
Age	0.003 (0.018)	-0.004 + (0.022)	0.022 + (0.012)
Male (female omitted)	-0.458 * (0.211)	-0.142 (0.284)	-0.002 (0.140)
Married (not married omitted)	0.128 (0.236)	0.337 (0.258)	-0.120 (0.162)
Education (years of education)	0.037 (0.030)	-0.129 *** (0.032)	0.012 (0.020)
Number of brothers:			
One brother	-0.355 (0.241)	-0.526 + (0.285)	-0.168 (0.158)
Two or more brothers	-0.224 (0.256)	-0.162 (0.273)	-0.199 (0.168)
(zero brothers omitted)			
Ethnicity and Country of Residence			
Mainlander from Taiwan	-0.347 (0.398)	1.834 *** (0.503)	-0.029 (0.300)
Taiwanese from Taiwan	0.251 (0.275)	2.240 *** (0.370)	0.515 ** (0.182)
(Baoding residents omitted)			
Parent's age	0.007 (0.018)	-0.004 (0.021)	-0.005 (0.012)
Parent's attitude (coded as child's attitude)	0.539 ** (0.206)	1.116 *** (0.252)	0.547 *** (0.128)
N	1094	1067	1115
-2 Log Likelihood	-413.22	-304.29	-738.20
chi-square	18.13	327.28	54.37
probability > chi-square	0.053	0.000	0.000
Pseudo R-square	0.022	0.350	0.036

+ p < 0.10 * p < 0.05 ** p < 0.01 *** p < 0.001

Conclusions

This chapter has examined a series of attitudes that address long-standing family arrangements in Chinese history to see whether the dramatic but distinctive changes over the last fifty years have produced notable differences in outlook in urban China and Taiwan and between parent and child generations. The elderly in Taiwan display more traditional values than their Baoding counterparts on almost all dimensions. They are more likely to favor coresidence of an elderly couple with a married child, oppose widow remarriage, and approve of maintaining property in order to ensure respect (Table 11.1). Only in the special case of a widowed older person is there a roughly similar level of agreement across the Taiwan Straits on coresidence as the best living arrangement. These country contrasts seem to be in accord with the social and economic realities in each country, with the Baoding elderly likely to have separate housing provided by work units, and with relatively little property to become entangled through remarriages or inheritance.

The multivariate analyses (Tables 11.2 and 11.3) show that individual attitudes of parents on these dimensions are difficult to predict from the sociodemographic characteristics available. Although there is variation within Taiwan and within Baoding in many of these values, these differences are more likely to arise from particular life experiences and circumstances, rather than from broader social statuses.⁹ Multivariate analyses do confirm that the Taiwanese elderly generally are more conservative than their Baoding counterparts (Table 11.3), and that with regard to living arrangements, the Mainlanders in Taiwan are less traditional than the Taiwanese (Tables 11.2 and 11.3), providing further evidence of how particular circumstances can color these attitudes.

With regard to living arrangements, grown children appear more traditional than their parents, and this reversal is particularly sharp in Baoding (Table 11.4). In the other attitudes (widow remarriage and property), however, children are less traditional than their parents. The net result of these contrasts is that adult children in Taiwan and Baoding have profiles more similar than do their parents on the range of attitudes examined here. As in the case of the older generation, the attitudes of the adult children are not highly structured by the sociodemographic characteristics employed in the multivariate analyses (Table 11.5), with parental attitude displaying the most consistent influence on children's attitudes. The pooled regression results (Table 11.6) indicate that on widow remarriage and retention of

property, the Taiwanese children remain somewhat more conservative than those in Baoding, and that some ethnicity differences persist within Taiwan.

This complex pattern of differences and similarities across countries and generations cautions against simple explanations of the relationship between attitudes and societal changes in socioeconomic structure. However, the contrasts in attitudes between urban Taiwan and Baoding for both generations are in accord with the types of changes and cultural influences that have occurred in each country, as described in chapter 9. To put the matter in a different way, and building on the results in the previous chapter, we are now in a position to respond to the question posed in chapter 9: Which is more important in explaining the degree of “traditionalism” of family attitudes and behavior—the level of economic development or the nature of the “microinstitutional structure” in which people live? With regard to the attitudes examined here, at least, the answer is clearly the latter. To put the contrast in an oversimplified form, although Taiwan is a much richer and more economically advanced society than the PRC, it is also a society in which the family remains a more central part of the social structure, in contrast to the more highly bureaucratized nature of the social order in urban China. And where family attitudes (as examined in this chapter) and behavior (as examined in chapter 10) differ between the two societies, it is generally Taiwan that looks more “traditional.” Specific institutional arrangements appear to be more important than level of development per se in producing change in these aspects of intergenerational relations.

At the same time the distinctive patterns of attitudes among the adult children show that unilinear trends away from family traditionalism and toward “modernity” cannot be taken for granted. As with many other facets of life, complex adjustments in family values appear underway, with movement toward less traditional views apparently underway in some realms, and persistence and even strengthening of traditional views and behavior in others.

NOTES

¹ Attitudes concerning coresidence are central to the historical Chinese value of filial piety (see the discussion of this central traditional value in chapter 1), while attitudes about widow remarriage and property are perhaps less so.

² Unfortunately, the Baoding survey did not have a comparable question about living with daughters.

³ This contrast brings to mind earlier research findings on changing family patterns in PRC cities which indicate that in the postrevolutionary period family behavior and attitudes were not closely related to the kinds of demographic and socioeconomic status traits commonly used by social scientists to explain variation. One possible conclusion is that in a society based upon bureaucratic allocation and assignment rather than markets and individual choice (such as the PRC in the Mao era and still to a considerable extent today), things such as bureaucratic position and personal connections are better predictors, and socioeconomic status a worse predictor, of social behavior and attitudes than is generally the case in market-based societies. See the discussion in Martin K. Whyte, "From Arranged Marriages to Love Matches in Urban China," in *Family Formation and Dissolution: Perspectives from East and West*, ed. Chin-Chun Yi (Taipei: Academia Sinica, 1995).

⁴ We omit from this analysis the general questions about coresidence with grown children, since the differences in questionnaire wording (see Appendix A) make it doubtful that the pooling of Taiwan and Baoding data together is warranted. In other words, this pooled analysis is applied only where the question wording was identical or nearly so in the two countries.

⁵ Note also that in the analysis of attitudes toward the general living arrangements of the elderly outlined in Table 11.2, Taiwanese were more likely than the Mainlanders to feel that the elderly should live with children.

⁶ To further investigate structural differences in attitudes for each country, we also ran models that included interaction terms between a country dummy variable (coded 1 for Taiwan and 0 for China) and all of the other variables in the model. This allowed us to assess the degree to which the structure of the attitudes in each country significantly differs. The results of these regressions (not reported here) showed that almost all of the interaction terms were insignificant, indicating that the variables examined have similar effects on attitudes in the two countries. Thus, as indicated in the discussion of individual country results, the structure of attitudes in the two countries appears to be similar.

⁷ A generational difference also appears on the question posed in Taiwan on whether an older couple without sons should live with a married daughter. Almost 40 percent of children advocate living with a married daughter compared to 32 percent of parents. In this case, while the children are more likely to favor coresidence, they can also be viewed as less "traditional" than their parents since coresidence with married daughters is not customary among Chinese families.

⁸ We also conducted an analysis of the degree of agreement in attitudes between parents and children in each country. In general at least half of all parent-child dyads were in

agreement on the various attitudes considered here, but the level of parent-child agreement was not consistently higher in one country than the other (results not shown here).

⁹ It is worth noting that although several potentially influential variables are omitted from Table 11.2, any hypothesized influence would have to be orthogonal to the variables included in order to greatly increase the explanatory power of the equation.

Appendix A: Wording for Attitudinal Questions on Familial Obligations and Norms

1. Who Should The Elderly Live With?**Taiwan Parents**

Do you think an elderly couple is better off living with a married son or daughter or living alone? Or do you think there is another better arrangement?

Original Categories

1. Live with a married son
2. Live with a married child (son or daughter)
3. Live with a married daughter
4. Stay on their own
5. Not sure, depends
6. DK, can't say, haven't thought about it
7. Other

Recoded Categories

0. On own/senior home/other (4, 5, 6, 7)
1. With a married child (1, 2, 3)

Baoding Parents

As long as health permits, an older person should live independently, and not depend on (his/her) children.

Original Categories

1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Disagree
4. Strongly disagree

Recoded Categories

0. Agree (1, 2)
1. Disagree (3, 4)

Taiwan Children

Do you think an elderly couple is better off living with a married son or daughter or living alone? Or do you think there is another better arrangement?

Original Categories

1. Live with a married son
2. Live with a married child (son or daughter)
3. Live with a married daughter
4. Stay on their own
5. Live in a senior home
6. No definite answer, look at the circumstances
7. If good health, on own
8. Elderly couple decides
9. Depends on emotional bond with children
11. Depends on the attitude of the children
77. Other

Recoded Categories

0. On own/other (4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 77)
1. With a married child (1, 2, 3)

Baoding Children

As long as health permits, an older person should live independently, and not depend on (his/her) children.

Original Categories

1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Disagree
4. Strongly disagree

Recoded Categories

0. Agree (1, 2)
1. Disagree (3, 4)

2. Who Should Widowed Elderly Live With?

Taiwan Parents

If an older person is widowed, do you think he/she is better off living with a married child, living alone, or in other arrangement?

Original Categories

1. Live with a married son
2. Live with a married child (son or daughter)
3. Live with a married daughter
4. Live alone
5. Move to a senior citizen's home
6. Not sure, depends
7. Other

Recoded Categories

0. On own/other (4, 5, 6)
1. With a married child (1, 2, 3)

Baoding Parents

An older person who is widowed should not live alone.

Original Categories

1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Disagree
4. Strongly disagree

Recoded Categories

0. Disagree (3, 4)
1. Agree (1, 2)

Taiwan Children

How about if one member of the elderly couple passes on. Do you consider that the remaining member is then better off living with a married son or daughter, or living alone? Or do you think that there is another better arrangement?

Original Categories

1. Live with a married son
2. Live with a married child (son or daughter)
3. Live with a married daughter
4. Stay on their own
5. Live in a senior home
6. No definite answer, must look at circumstances
7. If health is good, live on their own
8. The remaining spouse must decide for themselves
9. Depends on emotional bond with children
10. Depends on the attitude of the children

Recoded Categories

0. On own/other (4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11)
1. With a married child (1, 2, 3)

Baoding Children

An older person who is widowed should not live alone.

Original Categories

1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Disagree
4. Strongly disagree

Recoded Categories

0. Disagree (3, 4)
1. Agree (1, 2)

3. Remarriage For Elderly Widows**Taiwan Parents**

If an older woman has been widowed for some time, do you think that it is appropriate for her to remarry?

Original Categories

1. Yes
2. No
3. Depends, look at the circumstances
4. Other

Recoded Categories

0. Yes, depends (1, 3, 4)
1. No (2)

Baoding Parents

If an older woman has been widowed for a period of time, it is all right for her to remarry.

Original Categories

1. Agree
2. Disagree
3. Not sure, uncertain

Recoded Categories

0. Yes, agree
1. No, disagree
uncertain = missing

Taiwan Children

If an older woman has been widowed for some time, do you think that it is appropriate for her to remarry?

Original Categories

1. Yes
2. No
3. Depends
4. No comment
5. It's hard to comment about others
6. Depends on her health

Recoded Categories

0. Yes, depends (1, 3, 4, 5, 6)
1. No (2)

Baoding Children

If an older woman has been widowed for a period of time, it is all right for her to remarry.

Original Categories

1. Agree
2. Disagree
3. Not sure, uncertain

Recoded Categories

0. Yes, agree
1. No, disagree
uncertain = missing

4. Attitudes Toward Inheritance And Respect For The Elderly

Taiwan Parents

Do you think it is important for old people to keep property to make sure that their family treats them with respect?

Original Categories

1. Yes, important // 0. No, not important
2. Depends on the level of filial piety of children and grandchildren
3. Depends on ability to take care of yourself
4. Depends on if you worry about their attitude toward you or not
5. Depends on the value of the property
6. Doesn't matter
7. Other

Recoded Categories

0. No, depends (0, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7)
1. Yes (1)

Baoding Parents

Do you think it is important for old people to keep property to make sure their family members treat them with respect?

Original Categories

1. Important
2. Unimportant

Recoded Categories

0. Unimportant
1. Important

Taiwan Children

"Today's elderly must preserve some savings or property in order to make sure children and grandchildren respect them." Do you consider this important or unimportant?

Original Categories

1. Important
2. Not important
3. Not necessarily one way or the other
4. Care not measured by material things
5. Depends on the level of filial piety of children and grandchildren
6. Depends on the value of the property
7. Other

Recoded Categories

0. No, depends (2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7)
1. Yes (1)

Baoding Children

Do you think it is important for old people to keep property to make sure their family members treat them with respect?

Original Categories

1. Important
2. Unimportant

Recoded Categories

0. Unimportant
1. Important

12

POSTSCRIPT: FILIAL SUPPORT AND FAMILY CHANGE

Martin King Whyte

In chapter 1 it was noted that the research project whose results have been reported in this volume was motivated by a desire to answer two primary research questions:

1. To what extent have strong family obligations for grown children to support their aging parents survived the tumultuous changes of recent Chinese history?

2. To what extent are family patterns in urban China today distinctive because of the legacy of revolution and socialism?

Although our answers to these questions should by now be fairly clear, our major conclusions deserve to be restated here.

First, as shown by our survey evidence when viewed in multiple ways, filial obligations are alive and well in Baoding, or at least they were alive and well as of the mid-1990s. While Baoding is in no sense representative or typical of Chinese cities generally, at the same time there is no reason to think that our research site is especially peculiar in comparison with other Chinese cities. Therefore, we presume that filial obligations are alive and well in urban China generally, and that, as a consequence, most Chinese urban elderly would report high levels of satisfaction with their lives and with their relations with grown children, as we found in Baoding (see the evidence summarized in chapter 2). There is no general crisis of the elderly visible in urban China.

How can we explain the fact that revolutionary change, rapid economic development, and dramatic cultural shifts did not undermine the status of the Baoding elderly and the support they receive from their grown children? Let us start by discounting one possible explanation. One answer could be that

centuries of immersion in Confucian thinking and filial values made Chinese families so strong that they could withstand the multiple assaults of the twentieth century and emerge unchanged. Our survey results directly contradict this idea, since we have seen that Baoding families today differ in important ways from the patterns that were dominant prior to the revolution. In particular, we have emphasized that a much higher percentage of older urbanites today live separately from all of their grown children, more of them are also financially independent in their old age, and, when support is provided, it comes as much or more from married daughters as from their brothers. Clearly, these are signs of an adaptive family institution, not one that stubbornly clings to "traditional" ways. In the general debate about the extent to which family patterns are shaped by culture and traditions versus the resources and constraints embedded in the social structure faced by families in their daily lives, these results clearly favor the latter, structural explanation.

In pondering the survival of filial obligations in urban China, we also have noted in passing evidence of a growing crisis of the elderly in China's villages. For example, several recent studies describe an increasing number of instances in which grown sons refuse to live with or support their aging parents, parents are mistreated, or the elderly are even driven to suicide. One account from a Heilongjiang village notes, "The notion of filial piety and the traditional ways of old-age security have been caught in a pincer attack over the past five decades...."¹ Of course, we do not have survey data comparable to our Baoding survey for rural China, and it is not clear how typical these accounts of a rural crisis in support of the elderly are. However, assuming that these reports represent a general trend, they create a puzzle. Ordinarily we would expect modern social changes to weaken family traditions in cities before they do so in the countryside.² Why have filial obligations survived more robustly in urban China than in the villages?

The analyses presented in previous chapters point to an answer to this question. The specific institutional structures constructed in urban China after the revolution, structures that differed in key ways from their rural counterparts, produced altered family practices that were conducive to the continuation of filial support from grown children. As we have noted earlier, most Baoding elderly have access to wages or pensions or both, as well as to a range of benefits (particularly medical insurance) and subsidized public housing, making support from grown children supplementary rather than essential. At the same time most parents do not have property or businesses to pass on to their children, who have depended instead upon schooling and

bureaucratic employment as their routes to adult status and economic security. The systems of schooling and job placement have operated in such a way that almost all grown children ended up living and working in the same city, and sometimes in the same enterprise, as their parents. And the majority of the parents we interviewed completed their fertility before the harsh family planning campaigns launched in 1970, so that most had several grown children available who could cooperate in providing filial support, with daughters as well as sons sharing the load. Finally, the arbitrariness and shortages that have characterized urban life, particularly in the socialist era, made it necessary for family members to exchange multiple kinds of assistance in order to cope with the pressures and difficulties of daily life.

Previous chapters have described the effect of the following institutions and practices: Most parents have other sources of old-age support and are not totally dependent upon their children; most grown children have siblings with whom they can share the relatively non-onerous burdens of providing such support; and parents and children remain in close proximity and are regularly reminded of how much they owe to each other. Given this general picture, it no longer seems very surprising that filial obligations are alive and well in Baoding.

Although we have not done comparable research in rural China, the available evidence points to quite a different institutional context operating there. First, no pension system exists in most villages, making the rural aged dependent either on their own earnings and efforts or on the support received from grown sons and daughters-in-law. Housing is almost everywhere financed and built by families and privately owned, in contrast to the subsidized public housing that is the norm in the large cities. Similarly, most rural medical insurance systems collapsed early in the reform era, making medical care available only on a pay-as-you-go basis, with other fringe benefits enjoyed by urban residents unavailable as well.¹ In most locales daughters still marry out into their husbands' villages and families, making only modest contributions to the support of their own parents afterward. After decollectivization in the early 1980s, family property and businesses became increasingly important to rural livelihoods, but the majority of parents (i.e., excepting those who established successful businesses) had little they could offer to help their children succeed in life. Indeed, the higher levels of education of their children and new market opportunities elsewhere made it increasingly likely that children would go off on their own to seek their fortunes. The estimated 80 to 100 million members of China's "floating

population” of migrants are disproportionately young people who have left their villages in search of jobs elsewhere.⁴ Such children do not, in most instances, abandon all concern for their parents back in the village, and most send home a portion of their earnings and may eventually return. However, sheer physical separation and lessened dependence upon parents make assistance from such children more problematic than is the case for those grown children who remain part of the family production unit in the village.⁵

The results of these institutions and practices are that rural parents are more heavily dependent upon their grown children (and on married sons specifically) than their urban counterparts, that they have less to offer those children, and that the children in turn may be less available or willing to provide the support needed. These trends explain why the context of filial support is quite different in China's villages than in the cities, and why the rural elderly are more likely to feel that they face a crisis in relations with their grown children.

In sum, we contend that filial obligations are alive and well in urban China because (paradoxically) the nature of the urban social order constructed during the Mao era supported those obligations in multiple ways while making them fairly non-onerous for grown children. This conclusion points us toward an answer to our second primary question: To what extent are family patterns in urban China today distinctive because of the legacy of revolution and socialism? In answering that question we are aided by the results of the Baoding-urban Taiwan comparisons presented in chapters 9–11.

As we have already indicated, there are broad similarities in the patterns of intergenerational relations in Baoding and in urban Taiwan. For Baoding specifically, this means that the continuities from the past in family patterns outweigh the changes. As a result, urban families in China today have not substantially “converged” toward the conjugal family patterns found in modern Western societies, but remain quite distinctive. For example, a higher proportion of the elderly live with grown children than in the West, more of such parents receive regular financial support from their grown children, most children continue living with their parents until they marry, and individuals at all stages of their lives tend to be enmeshed in an extensive set of intergenerational assistance and exchanges. Although such features are not unknown in Western societies, particularly in poor ethnic communities,⁶ nonetheless it can be argued that extended families remain more central to the lives of contemporary Chinese urban residents than to the average urbanite in Western societies.

However, beneath the broad similarities between family patterns in Baoding and in urban Taiwan, representing common continuities from traditional patterns, there are significant differences as well. Where there are differences, families in Taiwan (particularly the Taiwanese, more than the Mainlanders) look somewhat more “traditional” than families in Baoding. To be more specific, we found (1) that older Baoding residents were much more likely to live independently of any of their married children than were their counterparts in Taiwan; (2) that Baoding parents were much less likely to be financially dependent on their grown children and also somewhat less likely to receive household chore assistance; (3) that Baoding daughters contributed relatively more to the support of their own parents (and sons and daughters-in-law somewhat less); and (4) that Baoding parents and children were less likely to voice support for certain “traditional” family attitudes (e.g., the taboo on widows remarrying). What can we conclude from these differences?

Although traditional cultural influences clearly provide the foundation for contemporary family patterns and help make them different from what can be observed in Western societies, again we find little support for the notion that traditional patterns have been maintained unchanged in the face of numerous and powerful assaults on them. At the same time we see little support here for a simple version of modernization theory, according to which the most economically developed Chinese society (Taiwan) would show the sharpest departures from traditional patterns, and the closest “convergence” toward the conjugal family patterns typical in the contemporary West.⁷

Instead, our findings indicate that a microinstitutional analysis is called for. The social orders of Taiwan and the PRC have developed along different lines for half a century or more.⁸ Despite China’s recent market-oriented reforms, the two societies still differ markedly in many significant ways—for example, in the extent of development of labor and housing markets, the level of employment of married women, the availability of retirement pensions, the nature of the health-care delivery systems, the extent of public versus private employment, the prevalence of family-run businesses, the extensiveness of overseas ties, and in many other realms. (For further discussion, see chapter 9.) These kinds of institutional differences appear to have transformed the nature of the relationships between parents and children in subtly different ways in Taiwan and the PRC, and more extensively so in the latter case.

Although in the comparison with Western societies, Baoding families appear to be both more “traditional” and more central to the lives of their members, if our comparison is instead with Taiwan our conclusion is different.

In that comparison it is Taiwanese families that appear both more “traditional” and more central to the lives of their members, while Baoding families appear more “modern.”

Socialism has made a difference in the PRC, but not in any simple-minded sense of producing family patterns that coincide with the predictions of Marxist theory. Indeed, in Marxist theory socialism is expected to produce family patterns that are even more “conjugal” and less attuned to generational hierarchies than are the patterns found in contemporary Western societies.⁹ In such a (future, for Marx and Engels) socialist society couples would not be bound together by legal, religious, or economic bonds, and any resulting children would be reared publicly, rather than by their own parents. Obviously, urban Chinese families of either the Mao or reform eras bear little resemblance to these theoretical predictions. What mattered to urbanites were not the predictions of abstract Marxist theory, but the constraints and opportunities created by the “microinstitutions” of the urban socialist order that was created in the 1950s.¹⁰

The actual working of China’s socialist institutions had a discernible impact on the nature of urban family relations. To put the matter in other terms, the complex mixture of persisting and changed elements in the current pattern of intergenerational relations in Baoding appears to reflect the ways in which the institutional building blocks of the Mao-era social order selectively reinforced some elements of family traditions while undermining others. Uncovering the logic of those links between institutions and contemporary patterns of attitudes and behavior has been the greatest challenge facing the research project that is the basis for this volume, and Taiwan–Baoding comparisons have helped immeasurably in this task. Our analyses suggest that in subtle but important ways Baoding families have been changed more—have been more substantially “modernized,” if you will—than their counterparts in Taiwan, a much richer society.

The reader may ask at this point how we know that it was the operation of China’s socialist institutions rather than her more recent market reforms that explain the features of urban Chinese families that differ from their counterparts on Taiwan. After all, our Baoding survey data were collected in 1994, sixteen years after the launching of Deng Xiaoping’s reform program in 1978. There are three considerations that lead us to attribute these distinctive features of intergenerational relations to China’s socialist practice from the 1950s through the 1970s. First, preliminary but less rigorous data collected prior to the onset of China’s market reforms already gave clear indications of

some of these distinctive practices, such as parents feeling generally satisfied with support from their grown children and married daughters playing an increasing role in providing such support.¹¹ Second, the institutional bases for the familial support system described in this volume (features such as parental pensions and limited geographic mobility of grown children) were features built into urban China's form of socialism, and for the most part these features persisted well into the 1990s, despite the reforms. (Here the ordinariness and lack of a leading role of Baoding in implementing market reforms is an advantage. The fact that in 1994 the city still in most respects resembled a classic socialist industrial city helps us to understand the social consequences of that particular constellation of institutions for urban family life.) Third, the Taiwan case, which involves development within the sort of market-based system that is becoming increasingly important in China, yielded family patterns that do not display the same set of "modern" features.

Since the collapse of the Soviet empire in 1989 and the Soviet Union itself in 1991 it has often been assumed that existing socialist societies were in every respect inferior to their capitalist counterparts, producing neither economic efficiency nor human happiness. China's enthusiastic embrace of market mechanisms is also seen as reinforcing the negative verdict of history. With respect to China's economic performance this verdict may be valid, with much better results achieved since 1978 than in earlier years. However, in regard to the narrow terrain we are concerned with in this volume—the well-being of elderly citizens of urban China—such a negative conclusion is not justified. In fact, in multiple and largely unintentional ways the specific institutional arrangements of the urban socialist order created under Mao seem to have promoted the well-being and satisfaction of the urban elderly quite systematically. Although this conclusion has been foreshadowed in earlier research and is thus not a total surprise, it nonetheless represents a profound paradox. A social order that in multiple ways seemed to threaten the core filial obligations that had governed Chinese family life for centuries on balance may instead have reinforced and strengthened them.

We have argued that filial obligations are alive and well in urban China. However, the altered but nonetheless effective familial support system of urban China in the 1990s may now be endangered. The reader has seen indications throughout this volume that filial obligations are now being threatened in new ways. Both draconian family planning policies and the dismantling of the centrally planned nature of Chinese socialism in recent years have begun to undermine the microinstitutional supports for the family

patterns described in these pages. China's future urban elderly will have far fewer grown children to rely on, and often only one. The collapse of bureaucratic job assignments and the rise of a labor market in the 1990s mean that in the future it is less likely a grown child will remain close at hand. Already, by the end of the decade, market reforms were undermining the security of work unit-supplied pensions, medical insurance coverage, and subsidized housing for urban Chinese of all ages. Increasingly self-employment, family-run enterprises, and inheritance of family property and businesses will begin to enter into the calculations of parents and their grown children. How will urban families react to these changes? Will filial support obligations, having survived revolutions and other challenges for decades, face a crisis in response to these new assaults?

Perhaps Karl Polanyi is a better guide here than Karl Marx. In his classic 1944 book, *The Great Transformation*,¹² Polanyi argued that the most fundamental transformation in the modern era was not the rise of wage labor and industrial capitalism, or of socialism and centralized state economies, but commercialization and the growing influence of global markets. He contended that market forces foster individualistic tendencies that have a corrosive impact on family and community obligations. In terms of promoting changes in Chinese family life, and in support for elderly family members in particular, will market forces and the global system prove more powerful than revolution and socialist transformation? Market reforms were instituted in Chinese villages earlier than in the cities, and already by the 1990s the earlier and more extensive development of commercial relationships in the countryside seem to have contributed to a crisis in the support of the rural elderly, as described above.¹³ Many analysts predict that the accelerating urban reform process since the 1990s will lead to similar results.

Understanding the impact of these newer changes on urban families in the People's Republic of China is a challenge facing future research. The present volume should provide a firm foundation for such research. Only if we can understand the sources of the distinctive patterns of parent-child relations in urban China in the 1990s, can we hope to analyze how future changes—further market reforms, the one-child family policy, global economic and cultural influences, or whatever—will reinforce or undermine filial support for aging Chinese parents.

Still, it may be premature to sound the death knell for the familial support system in urban China. Although there were powerful reasons to suppose that this support system would be weakened by the multiple assaults

of revolution, socialism, and rapid economic and cultural change over the last fifty years, this did not happen. Given this outcome, may not the familial support system in urban China adapt and survive well into the future despite the new challenges posed by market reforms and dramatic fertility decline?

NOTES

¹ Quotation from Yunxiang Yan, "Elderly Support and the Crisis of Filial Piety," Chapter 7 of *Private Life under Socialism: Individuality and Family Change in a Chinese Village, 1949–1999* (quotation from p. 46), photocopy. For similar accounts for villages in other parts of China, see Haiou Yang and David Chandler, "Intergenerational Relations: Grievances of the Elderly in Rural China," *Journal of Comparative Family Studies* 23 (1992): 432–53, based upon fieldwork in villages in Zhejiang; Guo Yuhua, "The Aged and the Young: A Case Study of Disputes about Supporting the Aged in a Village in North China," based upon fieldwork in Hebei (the same province in which Baoding is located), photocopy; Qin Zhaoxiang, "The Process of Change in the Chinese Rural Family: Government Policy and Confucianism," based upon fieldwork in a village in Hubei, photocopy.

² For example, a comprehensive overview of changes in the family institution in Taiwan over the last several decades systematically shows rural families lagging behind their urban counterparts in experiencing a variety of departures from traditional patterns. See Arland Thornton and Hui-sheng Lin, *Social Change and the Family in Taiwan* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994). The most comprehensive framework for understanding the impact of modernizing changes on family life around the world remains William J. Goode, *World Revolution and Family Patterns* (New York: Free Press, 1963).

³ In the most prosperous rural villages, profits of village enterprises may be used to fund modest local old-age pension schemes or medical insurance programs. However, no national or even regional social welfare systems exist, and most villages are not prosperous enough to provide this kind of old age support.

⁴ See, for example, Dorothy Solinger, *Contesting Citizenship in Urban China: Peasant Migrants, the State, and the Logic of the Market* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999).

⁵ According to ethnographic reports from villages in a variety of locales, even those married sons who remain in the village are gaining heightened autonomy from their parents, as reflected in the increasingly obligatory construction of a new house prior to a son's marriage and earlier family division. So something like the "networked" family arrangement we have observed on the rise in urban China is increasingly characteristic of rural China as well. Elisabeth Croll has referred to this sort of networked family arrangement (several related but independent families who regularly cooperate) as the "aggregate family." See the discussion in her book, *From Heaven to Earth: Images and Experiences of Development in China* (London: Routledge, 1994), ch. 7. However, a key difference is that rural parents who reside separately from their grown children are much less likely to have the financial and other resources to maintain themselves without assistance from their grown children.

⁶ See, for example, Carol Stack, *All Our Kin* (New York: Harper & Row, 1974).

⁷ As noted earlier, the most comprehensive development of a theory explaining how modern social changes affect the family is Goode's *World Revolution and Family Patterns*, op. cit. In that work Goode argues that a "conjugal" family ideal centered on husband-wife relations, and de-emphasizing vertical obligations between generations, is fostered everywhere by modern social change processes (industrialization, urbanization, bureaucratization, etc.).

⁸ Since Taiwan was under Japanese occupation from 1895–1945, and only shared the same central government with mainland China for a very short interval (1945–49), it would be more accurate to say that the two locales have developed along different lines for a century.

⁹ The classic Marxist treatment of the relationship between various stages of societal evolution and the family is Friedrich Engels, *On the Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State* (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr, 1902).

¹⁰ The relatively radical family goals of classical Marxism were repudiated in the Soviet Union already in the 1930s by Stalin and replaced by a more conservative policy that emphasized family obligations and stability. In the early 1950s China was influenced more by this Soviet precedent than by the ideas of Marx and Engels, with no future “withering away” of family commitments contemplated. Even the relatively liberal policy adopted in 1950 toward freedom of divorce was abandoned in China by about 1953 as a result of the family turmoil that it had stimulated, particularly in the Chinese countryside. See the discussion in Kay Ann Johnson, *Women, the Family, and Peasant Revolution in China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983).

¹¹ See, in particular, Deborah Davis-Friedmann, *Long Lives: Chinese Elderly and the Communist Revolution* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983); Martin King Whyte and William L. Parish, *Urban Life in Contemporary China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984).

¹² New York: Rinehart & Co. See also the discussion in Fred Block and Margaret R. Somers, “Beyond the Economic Fallacy: The Holistic Social Science of Karl Polanyi,” in *Vision and Method in Historical Sociology*, ed. Theda Skocpol (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984).

¹³ The Taiwan case might seem to contradict Polanyi’s predictions, since filial obligations appear to be alive and well on that island despite a much more extensive level of market exchanges than in the PRC. However, the centrality of family businesses in Taiwan and other distinctive features (such as the weakness of pensions and public old-age support systems) arguably help to offset the corrosive and individualistic force of markets, thus sustaining the familial support system on the island. In a similar vein, China in the last several centuries prior to the Communist revolution combined a complex commercial culture and market exchanges with strong family obligations. In that instance as well the combination may be attributed to the characteristic form of petty, family-based capitalism, rather than corporate and bureaucratic capitalism and global markets. See the discussion in Hill Gates, *China’s Motor* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996).

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