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THE IMPACT OF RURAL-URBAN MIGRAITON ON FAMILIAL ELDER CARE IN RURAL CHINA

by

BAOZHEN LUO

Under the Direction of Heying Jenny Zhan

ABSTRACT

Mass rural-urban migration and population aging are occurring simultaneously at a rapid speed in contemporary China. Tens of millions of rural young laborers have been migrating to urban areas to meet the demand for cheap labor, whereas large numbers of elderly parents (the Chinese baby boomers) are left behind in the impoverished villages. Consequently, adult children are becoming more and more unavailable to fulfill their elder care responsibilities. This study took a systematic look at how the increasing rural-urban migration shaped the elder care practices in rural Chinese families and how rural elders respond and adapt to this social transformation. Using data from a rural household survey conducted by Renming University in 2004 in three in-land migrant-exporting provinces, this study explored three aspects of elder-care dynamics in China: 1. The patterns of financial care for rural elders whose adult children had migrated to urban areas. 2. Rural elders' perceptions of filial piety at this time of social change.

3. Rural elders' self-evaluation of life satisfaction at this historical period of time. The theoretical model of Political Economy of Aging (PEA) and criticism of classic modernization theory were used to guide the generation of hypotheses and analyses of statistical data.

Findings from this study revealed that financial care by migrated children was mainly based on an exchange-based model; rural elders who took care of grandchildren received more financial support. With the continued provision of financial care and emotional care, rural elders continued to hold relatively positive evaluation of their migrated children's filial piety, even though physical care was absent. Thus, the author argued that within the context of rural-urban migration, filial piety was not undergoing decline or erosion; rather, its meanings and significance have been broadened by their elderly parents to adapt to dramatic social changes currently underway in China. Finally this study found that the exchange-based pattern of financial care and the continuation of filial piety had a positive impact on rural elders' life satisfaction. This study contributes to the knowledge body of elder care in China and provides insightful policy suggestions for the Chinese government.

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INDEX WORDS: Rural-Urban Migration, Population Aging, PEA, Modernization Theory, Public Pension, the Exchange Model, Filial Piety, Life Satisfaction, Structural Constraint, Adaptation

THE IMPACT OF RURAL-URBAN MIGRAITON ON FAMILIAL ELDER CARE IN RURAL CHINA

by

BAOZHEN LUO

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

In the College of Arts and Sciences

Georgia State University

2009

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2009

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IN RURAL CHINA

by

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May 2009

To my parents, Qinghua Xiao and Xianjie Luo,

who taught me kindness, love, courage, tolerance, wisdom for life, and much more.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS v

LIST OF TABLES xv

LIST OF FIGURES xvii

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION 1

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW 5

The Theoretical Model of The Political Economy Of Aging (PEA) 5

The Implication of PEA on Elder Care In Rural China 6

Cultural Tradition of Filial Piety 7

History of Filial Piety 7

The Chinese Communist State and the Practice of Xiao in Rural China 9

Xiao as a Personal Trait 12

Economic Reforms and Elder Care in Rural China 13

Before the Economic Reform: Collectivization 13

Rural Economic Reforms 15

Reorganization of Rural Health Care 17

Modernization Theory Revisited: Changing Position of Rural Elders 18

Changing Positions of Rural Women 20

Urban-Rural Migration 22

Regional and Rural-Urban Inequalities 22

Migrant Laborers 23

Changing Family Size and Living Arrangement 25

Family Care after Migration 26

Financial Care 27

Physical Care 28

Women's Roles: From Caregivers to Migrant laborers 29

Changing Expectations of Filial Piety 30

Declining *Xiao*? 30

Broadened Concept of *Xiao* 31

Elders' Life Satisfaction In Relation To Children's Migration 33

Financial Adequacy 34

Social Support in Rural Communities 34

Filial Piety and Wellbeing 35

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY 38

Research Aim A—Examining the Impact Of Structural Changes on Rural Elder Care Patterns 38

Proposition A and Hypotheses 41

Variables For Proposition A 43

Dependent Variable 44

Independent Variables 44

Research Aim B—To Examine Elders' Perception of Their Children's Filial Piety in Relation to Cultural Changes Associated with Rural-Urban Migration 46

Proposition B and Hypotheses 47

Variables for Proposition B 49

Dependent Variable 49

Independent Variables 50

Research Aim C—Exploring the Relationship Between Life Satisfaction and Children's Migration 51

Proposition C and Hypotheses 52

Variables for Proposition C 54

Dependent Variable 54

Independent Variables 54

Sample and Demographic Variables 56

CHAPTER FOUR: FINANCIAL CARE PATTERNS 58

Methodology 58

Results 59

Data 59

General Demographics 60

Comparisons across Genders 61

OLS Regressions 62

The Need-Based Model 63

The Exchange Model 63

The Bargaining Power Model 64

Migrated Children's Demographics 64

Chapter Summary 66

CHAPTER FIVE: RURAL ELDERLY PARENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF MIGRATED CHILDREN'S FILIAL PIETY 73

Methodology 73

Data 73

Descriptive Statistics 74

Zero-order Correlation 76

The Model 78

Results 78

Coefficients 78

Probabilities 80

Demographic Backgrounds 81

Financial Care 82

Emotional Care 82

Parental Authority 83

Chapter Summary 83

CHAPTER SIX: RURAL ELDERS' LIFE SATISFACTION 92

Methodology 92

Data 92

Descriptive Statistics 93

Comparison across Gender 94

The Model 95

Results 95

Coefficients 95

Probabilities 99

Financial Adequacy 99

Emotional Care 99

Community Support 100

Health Condition 100

Number of Children, Living Alone, and Taking Care of Grandchildren 101

Chapter Summary 102

CHAPTER SEVEN: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION 111

Migrated Children's Provision Of Financial Care For Elderly Parents 111

Exchange-Based Financial Care 112

Implication for the Cultural Values of Filial Piety—Is Filial Piety Undergoing Erosion? 114

Poverty among Rural Elders and Consequences of Dependency on Children 116

Feminization of Poverty and "Interlocking System of Oppression" 118

Patrilineal Tradition—Continuation and Changes of Gendered Provision of Care 120

A Summary: Rural-Urban Migration and Familial Elder Care 122

Elderly Parents' Perception Of Migrated Children's Filial Piety 124

Migrated But Not Necessary Less Filial 125

Relating Financial Care to Filial Piety 126

Exchange-Based Care and Filial Piety 127

Emotional Care and Filial Piety 130

Parental Authority and Filial Piety 132

Feminization of Poverty and Filial Piety 134

Continuation and Changes of Gendered Expectations of Filial Piety 135

A Summary: Changing Faces of Filial Piety in Rural Families with Migrated Children 136

Life Satisfaction among Chinese Rural Elders 137

Financial Adequacy—How Much is Enough for an Elder to Survive in Rural China? 138

Intergenerational Exchange in Relation to Life Satisfaction 140

Cultural Adaption to Structural Constraints 142

Support from Extended Family Relatives and Neighbors 145

A Summary: Understanding Rural Economic and Social Context and Rural Elders' Adaption to the Context 147

CHAPTER EIGHT: CONCLUSION 150

A Synthesis—Modernization Theory Revisited 150

Continuing Provision of Financial and Emotional Care by Migrated Children 152

Exchange-Based Care Pattern—Intergenerational Dependence 153

Continuation and Changes of Patrilineal Tradition 154

Family Survival, Integration, and Development as a Whole 155

A New Modernization Theory 156

Significance of the Study 156

Limitation of the Study 157

Policy Implications 158

Developing Social Welfare for Rural Elders 159

Managing Rural Health Care Market 160

Facilitating Familial Elder Care and Child Care 161

Protecting Migrant Laborers' Rights 162

Promoting Social Care 163

Future Research 164

Conclusion 165

REFERENCES 167

LIST OF TABLES

Table 4-1.	Means, Standard Deviations, and Descriptions for Dependent and Independent Variables	68
Table 4-2.	Means, Standard Deviations, and Descriptions for Dependent and Independent Variables (Continued)	69
Table 4-3.	T-test of Mean Comparisons across Genders	70
Table 4-4.	Unstandardized Ordinary Least Squares Regression of Actual Amount of Financial Support Received from Each Migrated Child	71
Table 4-5.	Summary of Hypotheses	72
Table 5-1.	Descriptive Statistics of Evaluation of Migrated Child's Filial Piety by Elderly Parents	85
Table 5-2.	Descriptive Results of Dependent Variables and Key Independent Variables	86
Table 5-3.	Zero-Order Correlation Matrix of Dependent Variable and Key Independent Variables	87
Table 5-4.	Brant Test Results for Ordered Logit Model of Evaluation of Migrated Child's Filial Piety by Elderly Parents	88
Table 5-5.	Coefficients of Partial Generalized Ordered Logit Regression for Evaluation of Migrated Child's Filial Piety by Elderly Parents (*xiao*	89
Table 5-6.	Absolute Changes in Probabilities of Evaluation of Migrated Child's Filial Piety by Elderly Parents (*xiao*) for Partially Generalized Ordered Logit Regression Coefficients	90
Table 5-7.	Summary of Hypotheses	91
Table 6-1.	Descriptive Statistics of Rural Elder's Life Satisfaction after Children's Migration	104
Table 6-2.	Descriptive Results of Dependent Variables and Key Independent Variables	105
Table 6-3.	T-test of Mean Comparisons across Genders	106
Table 6-4.	Brant Test Results for Ordered Logit Model of Rural Elderly Parents' Life Satisfaction after Children's Migration	107
Table 6-5.	Coefficients of Partial Generalized Ordered Logit Regression for Rural Elderly Parents' Life Satisfaction after Children's Migration	108

Table 6-6. Absolute Changes in Probabilities of Rural Elderly Parents' Life Satisfaction after Children's Migration for Partially Generalized Ordered Logit Regression Coefficients 109

Table 6-7. Summary of Hypotheses 110

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 3-1. Aim A: Adult Children's Migration and Elder Care Outcome 40

Figure 3-2. Aim B: Children's Migration and Elder's Perception of Filial Piety 47

Figure 3-3. Aim C: Children's Migration and Elders' Life Satisfaction 52

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

China's ongoing urbanization is unprecedented in human history. During the 25 years from the beginning of economic reforms in 1979 to the year of 2004, China's urban population increased from 170 million to 540 million and the percentage of its population living in cities rose from 17.9% to 41.8% (World Bank, 2006). Tens of millions of rural laborers are working and residing in urban areas and the number keeps increasing every year. The massive migration streaming from rural to urban areas constitutes the largest flow of labor out of agriculture in world history (Taylor, 2001, p. 5; Zhang, 1998). Experts predict that China will complete in just a few decades the urbanization process which took Western developed countries three to four hundred years (World Bank, 2006). In addition to the unprecedented speed and scale, China is contending simultaneously, with another remarkable social development, population aging, that Western societies did not experience until after urbanization. Most Western developed countries are experiencing population aging right now, which is more than a hundred years after the completion of the urbanization process (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, 1994). However, China is now dealing with both dramatic demographic changes at the same time—massive rural-urban migration and population aging.

Population in China is aging at a much more rapid pace than all other industrialized societies. While it took Belgium and France 100 and 140 years respectively to double their elderly population from 8 to 16%, such a process will take only 27 years in China (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, 1994). In 2000, the population of those aged 65 and above accounted for 7% of the total Chinese population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000); this percentage is projected to reach 14% by the year 2027. By 2030, the 60-plus age group will

reach 350 million (United Nation, 2000). That is the total projected population of the United States at the time. China's life expectancy at birth has improved from 55.9 years in 1964 to 70.7 years in 2005 for males and from 57.4 years in 1964 to 74.1 years in 2005 for females (U.S. Census Bureau, 2004 and 2006). China is facing a critical challenge: how will the nation take care of such a huge number of its elders?

The combination of these two demographic changes has brought major social changes. Foremost among them is the urgent need for elder care, as a by-product of both urbanization and population aging. Elder care has become a widespread challenge for families, communities, and state. Such a challenge is particularly acute in rural areas of China. Among the 100 million elders, about 58% are living in rural areas, most of whom live in poverty (Feng & Xiao, 2007). Rural and urban elders present significant gaps in various aspects in terms of health and activity limitations. According to a national survey in 2000, Activity of Daily Living[1] (ADL) limitations were reported more common among rural elders than in urban elders—10.7% of urban men and 17.8% of urban women in comparison to 16.3% of rural men and 24% of rural women (He et al, 2007, p.18). As far as health status is concerned, rural elders were more likely to be in poor health condition than urban elders—24.4% of rural men and 33.1% of rural women in comparison to 17.4% of urban men and 27.8% of urban women (He et al, 2007, p.11).

Despite the large gaps between urban and rural elders, Chinese government has not fully addressed the difficulties that rural elders and rural families are facing. Unlike most of the Western countries, China has not developed comprehensive social welfare systems such as Social Security and Medicare for older adults. The lack of pensions and health insurance is endangering the livelihood and well-being of elders in rural China. While more than half of

[1] ADL includes basic personal care activity of daily living, such as eating, bathing, toileting, transferring in and out of bed, and dressing.

elders in urban China are eligible for different levels of pension and health care benefits, only 4.67% of the rural elders live on pensions (Feng & Xiao, 2007; Giles & Mu, 2007). Among rural elders, many continue to work into their seventies. Support for the rural elderly remains the sole responsibility of adult children. The Confucian norms of filial piety, which requires children to provide physical, emotional, and financial care for their elderly parents, put immense social and moral pressure on adult children to fulfill their parental care responsibilities (Lee & Xiao, 1998; Johnson, 1983; Joseph & Phillips, 1999; Zhan, 2003; Zimmer & Kwong, 2003).

With the massive rural-urban shift, migrant adult children are becoming increasingly unavailable for familial care, particularly for physical care of their elderly parents left behind in the home villages. Rural elders are more like to live alone than their urban counterparts (7.8% compared with 6.9%) (He et al, 2007, p.25). Previous studies conducted in Western societies suggest that urbanization negatively impacts rural elders in different ways. Classic modernization theory, which can be traced to the writings of Emile Durkheim and Max Weber, contends that traditional extended family structure deteriorates and individualism rises with the increasing pace of modernization (Cowgill & Holmes, 1972; Goode 1963; Goode, 1972). Early German sociologist Ferdinand Tönnies (2001) also stressed that the group collectivism in rural setting would be gradually replaced by urban individualism when human societies transfer from Gemeinshaft (rural) to Gesellshaft (urban).

According to the classical theory of modernization, rural-urban migration of adult children undermines the economic and social position of the rural elderly. It also weakens the family as a social security institution (Benjamin et al., 2000). Numerous studies consistently find that large-scale rural-urban labor migration reduced the chances for elderly parents to reside with their adult children, which might further weaken intergenerational familial care (Zhang &

Li, 2004; Benjamin et al., 2000). China's dual challenges of rural-urban migration and population aging give rise to a few key questions: Will the 58% of Chinese elders in rural areas become victims of China's rapid economic development? Who are to be the providers of physical, financial, and emotional care for rural elders whose adult children migrate to urban areas? What are rural elders' perceptions of and expectations for filial piety at this time of social change? And are these rural elders ultimately happy when their children are far away seeking for better life opportunities? This project attempts to explore these questions through quantitative data analysis on a rural household survey conducted in three inland migrant-exporting provinces of China—Hebei, Henan, and Anhui. Through examining regional influences in these three provinces, this project may shed some light on the impact of rural-urban migration on a national level.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter provides an overview of the economic, political, and historical contexts of elder care in rural China. The political economy perspective was applied to analyze the broad implications of structural changes, such as rural-urban migration, that contributed to the restructuring of familial care as well as welfare policy in rural China. First, a brief historical overview of Chinese cultural norms and familial care patterns is provided. Then, an overview of economic reform and rural-urban migration is also presented to understand contemporary economic and political contexts of rural China. Lastly, the focus of this chapter is discussing how rural-urban migration may have shifted the patterns of familial care which may in turn impact life satisfaction among rural elders. By using the political economy perspective of aging, this chapter attempts to establish connections between the structural changes of family economic conditions, family structure, and cultural values in relation to the elder care outcomes and elders' satisfaction within the context of rural-urban migration.

The Theoretical Model of the Political Economy of Aging (PEA)

The theoretical model of the political economy of aging (PEA) is a systematic view of old age based on the assumption that aging and elder care can be understood only in the context of political and economic conditions and issues of the larger social order (Estes et al., 1984; Estes, 2001). PEA is an analytical framework that comprises three levels of aging—the macrolevel (the societal dimension), the mesolevel (the organizational and institutional dimension), and the microlevel (the individual dimension) (Estes, 2001). The role of ideology is also reinforced as a key element determining the direction of social policies when addressing aging and elder care.

PEA first examines the unique role of each component as discussed. Furthermore, it delves into the complex and sometimes conflicting interrelationships among the structural social forces such as the state, social class, the sex/gender system, race and ethnicity and its impact on the microlevel—an individual life. For instance, the "interlocking systems of oppression," an important concept of the political economy approach, emphasizes how gender, class, and racial/ethnic status intertwine with each other across the life course and deeply affect individual lives of older adults (Estes, 2001, p13). The concept of "interlocking systems of oppression" is particularly useful when analyzing inequality across race, class, and gender lines. PEA has proven to be a useful tool for scholars to grasp a dynamic, contextual, and comprehensive understanding of aging and elder care.

The Implication of PEA on Studying Elder Care in Rural China

This study will adopt PEA to examine aging and elder care in rural China within the social context of mass rural-urban migration. By combining micro, meso, and macro levels of analysis, the application of this structural approach is intended to illuminate the following issues: the role of rural-urban migration in shaping the patterns and outcomes of elder care, the changing cultural contexts of elder care in rural China in relation to rural-urban migration, the relations between rural elders' levels of wellbeing and life satisfaction and elder care patterns and cultural values.

Using insights engendered from PEA, this study will address the unique role of a particular social force, namely rural-urban migration, and will establish linkages between that social force and individual lives, particularly through in-depth analysis of the changing patterns and outcomes of elder care. At a macrolevel, this study examines the roles and interrelations of demographic transition, economic reform, the cultural tradition of filial piety, and rural-urban

migration. At a mesolevel, this study discusses the complex and conflicting intersections among social class, gender, family structure, the development of institutional support, and community environment. The ultimate goal for this study is to explore the microlevel of elder care outcomes with regard to financial, physical, and emotional care as well as life satisfaction among the elders in the large social context of various social forces in China.

Cultural Tradition of Filial Piety

History of Filial Piety

Before the establishment of the People's Republic of China by the Communist Party in 1949, family had long been considered as the basis of social structure throughout centuries of Chinese history. Confucianism promotes a strong interdependent relationship between the family and the state. Based on the Confucian code of conduct, the ideal family structure is "a family based on principles of gender and generational hierarchy expressed formally in a doctrine of filial piety supported by the full weight of social custom and legal authority" (Johnson, 1983, p.248). As a matter of fact, the family prevailed as the core institution of social control in traditional Chinese society. Prior to 1949, an idealized Confucian image of a large, patriarchal, extended family was identified as the dominant model of the traditional Chinese family, especially in rural areas. This image of the Chinese family began to be challenged by scholars during the1940s. Hsu (1943) and Fei (1946) pointed out that the large extended family was largely a myth compared to the real size of the Chinese family. Among peasants, a small family with 4 to 6 people, composed of parents and children, was the basic social unit of the rural Chinese family. Fei (1946) pointed out that most of the large extended families were found only in the gentry—the rich and powerful. Likewise, Ikel (1993) would later find a positive

relationship between large family size and family wealth. Despite these controversies, there was little doubt about the important role of family ties and kinship in traditional Chinese society.

Xiao, or filial piety, has been identified as the central value of Chinese family relationships. *Xiao*, referred to love, respect, and care for parents and ancestors, was considered the most important virtue to be cultivated in the family. The practice of *xiao* was instilled among children to foster obedience and respect toward their parents; and it was expected to sustain intergenerationally so that sufficient financial, physical, and emotional support to elderly parents from their offspring (Johnson, 1983). The concept of *xiao* went beyond simply taking care of elderly parents; it clearly defined children's attitudes and behaviors within a family. Children were expected to be submissive by following parents' every decision. Filial piety began with service and obedience to parents, continued with total devotion to their welfare, and extended with loyalty to rulers and authorities in the society. *Xiao* was considered the basis of family and social order (Fairbank, 1978; Liu, 1959; Elvin, 1984; Zhan, 1996). In one of the original classics of Confucianism, *Classics of Filial Piety*, Confucius taught his students that "Filiality is the root of virtue and the wellspring of instruction" (Bary &Bloom, 1999, p.325). In imperial China, children's filial piety to their parents was enforced by law. Infractions of filial piety were punished by the extended family and the dynastic laws (Liu, 1959; Zhan, 1996).

The practice of *xiao* strictly followed the rules of a patrilineal and patrilocal family arrangement, which favored men over women to an extreme extent. Women were placed at the lowest level of the hierarchy of the family and society. Having male children to continue the family line and provide for elder care was one of the main focuses of *xiao*. To have no sons was perceived as the ultimate "unfilial" behavior. Throughout their whole lives, women were required to conduct their behaviors based on life-long oppressive principles, such as "Three

Obediences and Four Virtues" (*San Cong Si De*). According to this principle, women were to obey their father while at home, obey their husband after marriage, and obey their sons if their husbands died (Bary and Bloom, 1999; Johnson, 1983; Zhan, 1996).

Elder care has been traditionally defined as women's work. Given the patrilocal tradition, families deemed daughters to be "the water poured out," because they grew up and married into another family; they could not be depended on for support and care after marriage. Meantime, daughters-in-law were meant to be the major care providers for parents-in-law. A daughter-in-law's service to her parents-in-law was enforced by law in all dynasties (Fairbank, 1978; Liu, 1959; Elvin, 1984; Zhan, 1996).

Prior to the establishment of P.R China (PRC) in 1949, *xiao*, has undergone little change for centuries after being established as the principle doctrine for a family-based and gendered elder care arrangement. Interestingly, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), which introduced much social change in China, chose to reinforce and reinvent the traditional practice of filial piety in term of familial elder care.

The Chinese Communist State and the Practice of Xiao in Rural China

After the establishment of the People's Republic of China, most of the Confucian codes of conduct were abandoned by the CCP. But the obligations of children toward parents and the rights of the elderly were explicitly enforced in the fundamental legislations of the nation. In 1950, the CCP enacted a new marriage law which emphasized the obligations of adult children to provide care for elderly parents. The constitution of 1954 stated that "parents have the duty to rear and educate their minor children, and the adult children have the duty to support and assist their parents." In 1980, the penal code of 1980 decreed that children can be imprisoned to a maximum of 5 years for neglecting their parents. In 1996, CCP passed *Law For the Protection*

of Elders' Right (Laonianren Quanyi Baozhang Fa) (Chinalawedu.com, 2006), which officially and legally spelled out adult children's obligations to respect and take care of their aging parents physically, financially, and emotionally. The law formally regulated adult children's provision for aging parents in terms of housing, medical care, property protection and so on. These laws regulated not only sons' but also daughters' filial obligations toward elderly parents, especially noteworthy for the areas of China affected by the one-child policy.

Women's position in rural China was enhanced by certain legislation enacted by the CCP. Prior to 1949, arranged marriage (*fumu baoban*) by the parents was the dominant form of courtship. Marriage was primarily a fulfillment of family obligation, a continuation of the family line, and observance of filial piety (Honig and Hershatter, 1998). In 1950, the CCP enacted a new democratic marriage law, wherein the "Marriage Contract" section clearly elaborated, "Marriage is based upon the complete willingness of the two parties. Neither party shall use compulsion and no third party is allowed to interfere" (Johnson, 1983, p.235). Such a law clearly defined equal rights for sexes and legal protection for women's lawful rights. As a consequence, it indirectly challenged parents' authority over children's decision-making and thus, ultimately challenged the practice of *xiao*.

The most significant changes in the practice of filial piety occurred when the CCP started to compel women's participation in the labor force outside the family in the late 1950s. The CCP was eager to promote the Marxist value of gender equality in order to achieve socialism. One of the major goals to achieve egalitarian gender relations was to put all women in the labor force. In rural China, according to one study, approximately 70% of women of working age were participating in agricultural work in 1956; that figure had increased to 90% in 1958; and some areas even reported 100% (Johnson, 1983, p160-161). Despite the dramatic increase of

women's participation in the labor force, Chinese women were still expected to be entirely responsible for housework and caregiving. In Communist China today, even though the overwhelming majority of women participates in the labor force, Chinese women continue to practice "traditional" familial care while performing the usual double duties of working inside and outside the home (Zhan & Montgomery, 2003). Although Chinese women gained more access to the public sphere through their participation in the public labor force, they continued to be subjugated to the private patriarchy at home. The contemporary Chinese society continues to be patriarchal, patrilineal, and patrilocal (Stacey, 1983; Wolf, 1985).

Women have increasingly gained equal access to education in urban China (Honig &Hershatter 1998; Tsui & Rich 2002). Meanwhile, in rural areas, there has been some level of acceptance for female leadership. In the realm of family life, women have gained more influence and respect along with their financial contribution to the family. However, a division of labor by gender in public and private spheres has remained central to the contemporary Chinese society (Stacey, 1983). Some scholars (Honig and Hershatter, 1998; Johnson, 1983; Stacey, 1983; Wolf, 1985; Yan, 2003) have argued that the Chinese Communist Party did not liberate women, but rather, created new forms of "public" patriarchy. For instance, the land distribution in rural China is male-centered. Women still face huge pressures to focus on marriage and family. The one-child policy allows rural couples to have a second child if the first one is female. These state policies tend to maintain men's dominance over women and further exert control over women's lives in the private sphere.

The continuing influence of the patrilineal and patrilocal family system, seems to sustain a gender-based pattern of elderly support in rural China. A daughter's moral obligations for elder care may continue after marriage but her formal obligations to her parents end at the time

of marriage. Intergenerational support between parents and sons (and daughters-in-law) is greater than between parents and daughters (Greenhalgh, 1985; Yang, 1996). Some studies have consistently found a new pattern of care in rural China: sons are expected to provide fundamental support for their older parents, whereas daughters tend to provide supplementary support for their parents through emotional care in daily life, etc (Jacka, 2006; Jin et al., 2006)). Again, daughters-in-law continue to serve as the main caregivers for parents-in-law (Jacka, 2006).

Xiao as a Personal Trait

In both traditional and contemporary Chinese society, as reviewed in the literature, *xiao* or filial piety refers to at least two sociological meanings—structural and individual. At the structural level, *xiao* connotes the traditional cultural expectations and legal codification of children's obedience, respect, and care for parents. At the individual level, *xiao* is often used as an adjective to describe a personal trait or merit. An individual, who is viewed to have successfully met the cultural expectations of *xiao*, is revered and described as *xiao* or filial. However, a person who is not sufficiently *xiao* is often condemned as "unfilial" and is considered to be gravely lacking in virtue. The unfilial person may be sactioned by family, community, and the state. For this study, *xiao* will be used both as a noun and an adjective. Therefore, the following two definitions are used:

Xiao (as a noun): a core value of Chinese family and society, which emphasizes children's obedience and extreme respect toward parents and guarantees sufficient financial, physical, and emotional supports to elderly parents from their offspring (Johnson, 1983).

Xiao (as an adjective.): a characteristic essential to a virtuous Chinese person, which indicates a general observance of filial piety, including both attitudes and behaviors. A person may be described as *xiao* (being filial) or not *xiao* (being unfilial).

Economic Reforms and Elder Care in Rural China

Started in 1978, the CCP led by Deng Xiaoping campaigned for economic reforms to modernize the nation. The economic reforms have been characterized by many Western scholars as a return to capitalism due to its decentralizing and privatizing approach. However, the CCP insists that the Economic Reform is a process to establish "Socialism with Chinese Characteristics." In the realm of agriculture, the economic reforms consist of the implementation of Household Responsibility System and the establishment of Township and Village Enterprises. Before delving into the details of economic reforms in rural China, it is important to provide a general overview of rural economic system in China before late 1970s.

Before the Economic Reform: Collectivization

Before the establishment of PRC, private land ownership and one-family farm were the basis of Chinese rural economy for more than two thousand years. Private land ownership ensured the continuation of patriarchy by passing down the family asset—land and house—from father to son. Shortly after the establishment of People's Republic of China in 1949, the CCP, led by Mao Zedong, started a gradual process of agricultural collectivization to eliminate private landownership. Within the system of collectivization, peasants were organized under the leadership of production team (*shengchan dui*). Peasants in one production team worked on the same schedules and were not compensated via wages. Rather, the gains from the production were equally distributed among the peasants within the production team at the end of the year. Along with the process of collectivization, each village was organized as a "people's commune,"

an organization combining economic, political, and administrative powers all together. Some Chinese scholar contended that "people's communes" to a large extend replaced the traditional extended families. Collectivization was pushed so hard and so soon after 1955 that most scholars believed, it caused inefficiency in agricultural production, dissatisfaction among the peasant due to the deprivation of land, and concentration of power in the hand of commune leaders (Potter & Potter, 1990; Unger, 2002; Yan, 2003; Yang, 1996). Most importantly, the peasants lost their motivations and incentives to work hard because of the equal distribution system and their lack of control over the land.

As "one of the largest efforts in human history to reorganize people's lives and livelihoods" (Unger, 2002, p.7), China's agricultural collectivization had brought tremendous influence in rural Chinese society. Not only did collectivization entail a new type of land ownership by communes, it also reshaped the power structures within rural households and "brought the rural households firmly under the sway of the state" (Unger, 2002, p.7; Yan, 2003).

Prior to collectivization, Chinese rural households were arranged according to the principle that "the heart of the family compact was the exchange of the care of aged parents by male offspring and the eventual transfer of land" (Selden, 1993: 148). Therefore, the elderly did not need to simply rely on their children' support and goodwill for their later years. Parents could change or remove their rights for inheritance if the children appeared to be negligent or unfilial (Whyte, 1995; Yan, 1997). Most Western scholars agree that collectivization negatively influenced the position of rural elderly in the family (Davis-Friedmann, 1991; Goode, 1963; Selden, 1993; Whyte, 1995; Yan, 1997). The key was that the elderly lost their land ownerships to the communes (Whyte, 1995). According to the model of bargaining power for elder care, elders' control over important resources such as land would increase their chance of being taken

care of by their adult children. Therefore, with the lost of land, the elders' bargaining power is weakened. Rural elders' economic position was worsened inside and outside of the households.

Despite elders' decline in family position, commune provided supplemental but important support for the needy elderly. The commune took some of the responsibility of for the care of needy elderly and provided strong community support for older adults. As Davis-Friedman (1993) contended, all in all, the elderly probably came out ahead under collectivization, despite their weakened power within their families.

Rural Economic Reforms

In 1982, China's agricultural collectivization and the people's communes collapsed after Deng Xiaoping launched the Economic Reform in 1979. Family farms again became the basis of Chinese agriculture. In other words, the responsibility of production was turned back over to individual households instead of the communes. Although the household did not possess the private ownership of the land, they were able to lease farmland from the state. Under the agricultural reform, parents were also allowed to pass the tenantship of the land to their children. Farmers could also sell their surplus crops in the open market or lease the land to other people in exchange for monthly or yearly rent (Kelliher, 1992).

Rural economic reforms have brought rapid growth in agricultural productivity. By 1984, peasant family per capita income in China had risen 62% over that of 1980 (Kelliher, 1992). The family responsibility system stimulated peasants' motivation and gave them the incentives to work hard and make profit by producing more surplus crops (Unger, 2002).

Although rural economic reform has increased productivity in general, many rural families, especially those in hinterlands with limited natural resources, still struggle to meet the basic needs, not to mention producing surplus crops. By late 1980s, the state policy in rural

China heavily weighted toward rural industry or township enterprises rather than agriculture. Now, many rural peasants find themselves squeezed between two pressures: on the one hand, rural households have been set free to sink or swim in the market competition; on the other hand, before late 1990s, farmers were still forced to fulfill grain "contracts" to the government (Putterman, 1993; Unger & Xiong, 1990). Such "contracts" were quite similar to the state-enforced crop quotas from the Maoist era. Although the government has abolished grain tax/contract nation-wide in 2006, farmers are still obligated to sell their grain at a rather low price to the government. After they fulfilled the government quota, they are free to sell their surplus crops in the market with a price protected by the government (Grain Purchasing Regulation, 1998). However, the crops they grow were often just enough to feed the family and turn in the grain quotas to the government. Little is left to be exchange in the market for some self-earning or cash income. Furthermore, peasants are also experiencing tremendous difficulty to obtain loans to develop agriculture (Unger & Xiong, 1990).

Some researchers suggested that the traditional family structure might restore itself because of the regained control over land and increasing commercialization, (Davis-Friedmann, 1991; Whyte, 1995; Yan, 1997). Under the rural economic reforms, the elderly were able to accumulate resources which may bring back their bargaining power. However, it was also noticed that the state-funded support provided in the communes for the elderly started to disappear (Davis-Friedmann, 1991). How is elder care performed in rural China among these social changes? This study will contribute to the literature in its understanding of familial elder care patterns in rural China in the context of major social changes.

Reorganization of Rural Health Care

During the Maoist era, rural health care was organized as cooperative medical programs under the regime of collectivization. Every commune or village was able to receive basic health care such as free vaccinations, antibiotics, and instruction on sanitation, delivered by hastily trained health practitioners known as the "barefoot doctors" (Li & Tracy, 1999; Sidel, 1993). However, since the end of the 1970s, the economic reform has slowly brought a collapse to the health care system in rural China due to the commercialization of medical services (Shi, 1993). During the 1980s, participation in the cooperative medial program declined from 90% of rural villages in the early 1970s to just 10%. Such a change exerted profound impacts on elders' access to health care in rural China where more than the 58% of Chinese elders live. Under-funded hospitals now refuse to provide health care to the poor. Well-trained medical professionals also leave impoverished rural areas to seek for better opportunities in urban cities (Zimmer & Kwong, 2004).

There exists a major difference between rural and urban China in health care, pension policies, and state provisions (Shi, 1993). Urban citizens, in general, are advantaged with higher income and better health care. Employees who work for the government or state-owned enterprises are able to receive full or partial benefit for inpatient or outpatient health care. In addition, almost all hospitals with well-trained medical practitioners are located in urban settings. It is not uncommon to see rural elders spend their entire life savings to go to a hospital in cities 30 miles away or even further. Less than a third of China's health spending goes to the countryside, where 70% of the population lives (Li & Xiao, 1998). While China's economic reform may have increased agricultural productivity and improved the general standard of living

of rural residents, access to health care among rural population was decreased due to an increasing market-oriented medical care framework (Li & Tracy, 1999).

Modernization Theory Revisited: Changing Position of Rural Elders

While the model of Political Economy of Aging (PEA) provides a general framework to view the relationships between larger social economic changes and individuals lives, modernization theory brings another twist to examine how urbanization affects power relations within family and how these changing power relations influence the patterns of elder care. Modernization theory postulates that as a society becomes modernized with urbanization and industrialization, traditional family value declines. Modernization theory can be traced back to the writings of Emile Durkheim, who argued that the traditional moral authority of the family would decline as a result of modernization. Family cohesion and intergenerational integration would inevitably deconstruct as modernity thrives. As a result, society and family would suffer from normlessness, or anomie (Durkheim, 1951). Durkheim did not articulate the position of elders in relation to modernity probably because population aging did not occur as a social issue until the late 20th century in the West.

As Western societies are experiencing population aging and the demand for elder care increased dramatically, Western scholars adapted Durkheim's theory of anomie to explain the relationship between modernization and elder's social and familial position. They contended that as a society became modernized, family structure shifted from patrilineal extended family structure to neolocal residence with smaller nuclear family, intergenerational support is likely to be weakened, elders' social status in the family and society is likely to be lowered (Benjamin et al., 2000; Cowgill and Holmes, 1972; Goode, 1963). Inkeles (1972) also found that geographic distances created a decrease in traditional face-to-face family interrelationships. As a result,

traditional authoritative others such as the elders of the extended family had less power because they had fewer resources than their adult children. Urbanization, in particular, rural-urban migration would challenge the economic and social positions of the rural elderly, and further weakened the family as a social security institution (Benjamin et al., 2000).

However, modernization theory has been harshly criticized since the 1960s. Litwak (1960) argued that geographic distances caused by migration did not destruct extended family cohesion, even although mobility reduced extended family face-to-face contact. The development of modern communication systems has minimized the destructive effect of geographic distance on family cohesion. He contended that the economic interdependence within extended families actually provided important aid to nuclear families and individual occupational development (Litwak, 1960).

Modernization theory was also often questioned by scholars and gerontologists when studying elder care in non-western countries, especially some of the eastern Asian countries such as China, Japan, and Korea (Gu & Liang, 2000; Kojima, 2000; Sung, 2000). The most distinctive critique is how previous modernization research has treated culture in a problematic way, failing to recognize the cultural differences between western societies and Asian countries (So, 1990; Zhang & Thomas, 1994). They did not recognize the important role of culture in shaping power and family cohesion in many Asian countries where filial piety has served as the basis of the social and familial power structure for hundreds of years.

By the late 1970s, a new modernization theory was established based on the criticism of classical modernization theory (So, 1990). This new theory avoided treating tradition and modernity as mutually exclusive; rather, they can coexist and tradition can play a beneficial role (So, 1990). Take China as an example, the tradition of filial piety may be not conflicted with

industrial development and rural-urban migration. Rather, it continues to serve as an effective fashion of elder care and benefits China's modernization process. In Korea, Sung (2000) found that migrated children continued to practice filial piety toward their elderly parents. The migrated adult children had a strong tendency to maintain frequent contact and obligatory relationship with their parents, although distance lowered the level of physical support to some extent (Sung, 2000).

The model of bargaining power reinforced the idea of declining elders' position posited by the classical modernization theory. Besides land, elderly parents also possessed valuable human capital, such as wisdom and experience, which could be a strong source for bargaining power. As Goode (1963) noted, rural elders could receive a high return due to the accumulated farming experience. Nevertheless, neither of these advantages of age is present now. According to Whyte (1995, p.1012), "the elimination for a generation of meaningful family property, combined with the rising education of the young and other trends, significantly softened the power of the senior generation in Chinese families." Compounding the loss of bargaining power, the inability to accumulate land reduced the ability of the elderly to save, and their relative decline in human capital may have reduced their earning power. Ultimately, their position in the family may be challenged. Children's obligation for parent care may be reduced. To what extent this argument of classical theory maybe true in the Chinese context? Using the insights from the new modernization theory, this study hopes to shed some light on this issue.

Changing Positions of Rural Women

The new wealth brought by the economic reforms is reshaping the gender relations in rural China. The family responsibility system demands the input of more agricultural labors on the land to produce surplus crops. In addition to domestic work, many women continue working

harder than ever in agricultural production. As a matter of fact, women comprise half of the work force in rural China now. In the regions where village enterprises thrive, many rural women are freed from the agricultural labor and become manufacturing laborers for local burgeoning industries, adding substantial income to the family. Sometimes, they may earn much more than their husbands in the village.

Despite the fact that rural Chinese women are greatly empowered economically, gender discrimination prevails as a consequence or by-product of economic reform. Daughter's domestic and agricultural labors are valued over their education, especially with the great demand of labor under the reform. As a result, the rate of illiteracy is much higher among women than men (Beaver et al., 1995). The attitudes that degrade the intellectual, social and political potentials of women continue to perpetuate in rural China even during the economic reforms (Beaver et al.., 1995). Demands for commitments to the family and to work in the expanding market economy of China has doubled women's work load. Not only are women expected to provide care for the young and the old, they are also expected to bring income to the family (Summerfield, 1994; Zhong, 1985).

The form of "public" patriarchy continues to favor men over women in terms of land distribution, and gendered occupational configuration in the working place, etc (Johnson, 1983). Even though women are financially empowered to a great extent, they continue to play the supporting roles for men inside and outside of home. According to Wolf (1985), even though the laws clearly indicated gender equality as general guidelines, the Chinese government continued to set the liberation of Chinese women aside as "secondary" compared to the economic needs of land reform and industrial production.

Urban-Rural Migration

Before the economic reforms, governmental restrictions on migration and urban housing shortages kept families together in rural areas (Chan & Zhang, 1999). Since the economic reforms, labor migration from rural to urban areas has become a major feature of China's demographic change since the mid-1980s. The implementation of the household responsibility system in the rural areas, as one significant part of rural economic reform, produced a large number of surplus rural labor. Meanwhile, urban-biased and pro-coastal development policies stimulated the booming industries in large cities and coastal provinces such as Guangdong and Jiangsu. Rapid economic development produced an urgent demand for cheap labor and attracted rural surplus laborers to migrate into cities to meet this need. To meet these needs, the Chinese government relaxed restrictions on labor mobility to nonagricultural activities in rural areas and to employment in cities (Zhao, 1999).

Regional and Rural-Urban Inequalities

With the rapid growth of economy in China, researchers have expressed deep concerns about growing inequalities—regional and rural-urban inequalities in particular (Kanbur & Zhang, 1999; Ravallion & Jalan, 1999; Yang, 1999). China's economic reforms favor coastal regions over inner provinces and industry over agriculture.

In the 1980s, the Chinese government formulated economic policies by dividing China into three zones—east coastal provinces, middle inland provinces, and western provinces. The coastal provinces were given various favored economic policies to encourage foreign investment and regional growth. Studies have consistently demonstrated growing divergence between interiors and coastal provinces since the 1980s (Kanbur & Zhang, 1999; Ravallion & Jalan, 1999; Yang, 1999). The rural poverty rate in the inland mountainous province of Guizhou in

1990, for instance, was 7 to10 times higher than the coastal province of Guangdong, just a few hundred kilometers away (Kanbur & Zhang, 1999).

Besides regional inequality, rural-urban inequality is another diverging force in contemporary Chinese society. A large rural-urban income gap has long existed before economic reforms due to various government policies restricting rural economic growth. Chinese government's greater emphasis on industrial development than on agricultural reform has stimulated rapid industrial growth in urban China since the mid-1980 (Xue, 1997). Between 1986 and 1992, the Chinese government devoted to roughly 52% to 62% of the total budget to urban development; whereas the government investments in agriculture accounted for less than 10% of the budget despite rural population constituting over 70% of the national population (Yang, 1999). As a result, rural-urban disparity has increased substantially since late 1980s.

Migrant Laborers

As discussed earlier, the family responsibility system, increased productivity and produced a large surplus labor force in rural China. In the meantime, rapid urban development in coastal areas created a large demand for free labor. The CCP government enacted several policies to encourage rural labor migration to urban cities or coastal provinces. Many provincial governments provided job seeking services for rural laborers to be employed in cities or coastal provinces. Some regional governments even established official partnerships between impoverished counties with surplus laborers and enterprises in well-developed coastal areas in great need of cheap laborers. Surplus laborers from the impoverished areas were able to seek for employment opportunities in their hometown through job agencies. Numbers of rural laborers also sought for opportunities through their family members or friends who had migrated earlier (Zhao, 1999).

Most of these rural-urban migrants, referred to as “floating population” (in Chinese, *liudong renkou*) live in cities with no permanent legal status because of the household registration (*hukou*) system (Chan & Zhan, 1999). The household registration system, similar to the permanent resident status in the United States, defines a person’s right to enjoy certain welfare benefits. An urban registration (*hukou)* is considered much more desirable than a rural registration because urban residents receive welfare benefits such as housing allocation, health insurance, pensions, and public education for children. These benefits are largely unavailable to rural residents and immigrants. According to the national family planning committee, China’s floating population increases from 70 million in 1990 to 140 million in 2003. These rural migrants accounted for more than 10% of the national population and 30% of all rural laborers in 2003 (www.chinanews.cn/news/2004/2005-01-06/772.shtml., 2005).

Many Chinese scholars expressed deep concerns about changing attitudes among migrant laborers in their practices of filial piety (Li, 2001; Yao & Yu, 2005). While some migrants remit funds to their parents, others do not, or cannot. Many migrant children are removed from their filial duties and social sanctions. The rates of non-support may in fact be higher than reported because few parents would admit the shame of non-support in reporting delinquent children. Meanwhile, the shrinking family size due to the one-child policy places an even big challenge for elder care in rural China. Little has been done in the research of adult children’s parent support at the time of this major social change in urbanization. This study will contribute to the literature by examining the relationship between adult children’s parental support and elderly parents’ attitudes toward filial piety.

Changing Family Size and Living Arrangement

Right after the launch of economic reform, Chinese government implemented one-child policy in 1979. The one-child policy implementation effectively shrank the birth rate of China. The birth rate decreased dramatically from 37.0 per 1000 in 1970 to 17.6 per thousand in 1980 (Croll et al., 1985). Although the Chinese government allowed rural couples to have a second-child when the first one is female, the one-child policy significantly shrank rural family size. Consequently, rural family structure and living arrangement are changing. Traditional practices of family elder care are facing unprecedented challenge.

Prior to the establishment of communist China in 1949, the traditional rural Chinese family was mostly a multigenerational, patriarchal, and patrilocal family. Elder care was exclusively a family issue. Today, the perception of parent care as purely a "family" issue is challenged by the nuclear families under the one-child policy (Croll et al., 1985). This challenge will be manifested as both economic and demographic changes. It is important to notice that a large percentage of migrant laborers were born after the implementation of the one-child policy. In other words, current rural-urban migrants are quite likely to be the only child; rural elders are likely to be left behind in the villages living alone or with grandchildren.

In industrial countries, the decision to live alone was often viewed as "a reflection of an economic demand for privacy or autonomy," and was found to be positively correlated with income level, that is, an increase in income level was followed by an increased tendency to live alone (Becker, 1981; Michael et al.,1980). Some Chinese scholars pointed out that the family responsibility system and the diversification of the rural economy since the economic reforms has allowed some elderly parents to increase their earnings (Du, 2001; Lin et al., 1999; Lin, 2001). As a result, it becomes more and more feasible for the elders to live independently.

Studies have consistently shown that urban elderly parents with stable income and pensions were four times more likely to live apart from their children (Lin, 2001; Xiao & Lee, 1998).

However, for many rural elders in impoverished areas, living alone may not be a choice but a reality that they have to accept because of the out-migration of their adult children. Therefore, when examining Chinese rural elders who are living alone, we have to take into account the cultural and socioeconomic context. For rural Chinese elders, "living separately" does not necessarily equal to "living self-sufficiently." Living alone also cannot be directly translated to an absence of physical, financial, and emotional support from adult children.

Family Care after Migration

Three theoretical models have been commonly used to explain the outcomes of family care—the model of bargaining power, the exchange model, and the need-based model. Each model explains the outcomes of familial care from a different perspective. The model of bargaining power proposes that older people receive support as long as they are still in control of important resources such as money, land, and knowledge (Goode, 1963; McElroy & Horney, 1981). The exchange model emphasizes the reciprocal relationships between the adult children and their elderly parents. It argues that the elderly parents receive support by providing child care services to their grandchildren (Cox 1987; Morgan & Hiroshima, 1983). For instance, the elderly parents may baby-sit their grandchildren or take care of housework. In exchange, the adult children, in turn, would provide housing, food, medical care for the parents. Such a reciprocal relationship can also be deferred as long-term exchange. As the parents grow older and become frail, the adult children return the parents' favor of investing human and economic capital on them and provide the elderly parents physical and financial support (Davis-Friedmann, 1991; Ikels, 1993; Whyte, 1993). The time elapsed from care received and care-giving could

range 10 to 30 years. Different from the models of bargaining power and the exchange model, which emphasizes family as an economic institution, the need-based model emphasizes individual motivations as an explanation for care transfers. The need-based model contends that children are more likely to provide care when the elderly parents become frail or ill or are in need of financial assistance (Becker, 1991; Becker & Tomes, 1979; Cox, 1987; Cox & Rank, 1992).

Financial care

The modernization theory, according to Goode (1970) posits a negative relationship between modernization and family ties. As a society becomes more urbanized and industrialized, the economic ties among family members breaks down. Some Chinese scholars, who were informed by modernization theory, expressed concerns about migrated children's deviation from the traditional values of filial piety.

Different from most industrialized countries where financial transfer usually goes from top to down (from aging parents to adult children or grandchildren), the direction of financial transfer reverses in most developing countries where financial transfers often flow from adult children to older parents. Studies have consistently shown that out-migration of adult children improved financial support for the elderly. In China, remittances sent by migrated adult children are reported to be much higher and more stable than in other countries (Li, 2001; Du, 1997). According to statistics from China's Ministry of Labor and Security, every year, the migrant laborers transfer at least 200-300 million Yuan back to their impoverished hometown. Such a number is even higher than some provinces' annual revenue. In many rural areas, financial transfer from children has become the main resource of family income. Migrants' remittances to their elderly parents have dramatically increased their average income (China's Ministry of

Labor and Security, 2007). The migrants' income to a large extent determined the economic status of rural families. Many Chinese scholars argued that the increasing rate of rural-urban labor migration successfully reduced the poverty rate among rural elders (Li, 2001; Du, 1997). This study hopes to examine how adult children's migration may affect elderly parents' financial conditions in rural China.

Physical care

With the massive rural-urban migration, adult children are becoming increasingly unavailable for familial care, particularly physical care for their elderly parents who are usually left behind in the home villages. Even if children are working nearby, such as women who enter the labor force locally, they are often less available to provide day-to-day, social and emotional assistance to their elderly relatives. As reviewed earlier, numerous studies have consistently found that large-scale rural-urban labor migration reduced the chance of elderly parents residing with their adult children, which might further weaken intergenerational familial care (Zhang & Li, 2004; Benjamin et al., 2000). Based on the survey data from rural elders, researchers found that older parents in rural areas usually live alone or with grandchildren, and the absence of adult children dramatically reduced provision of daily care, decreased emotional well-being of the elderly, and increased an added burden of rearing grandchildren (Du et al., 2004; Zhang and Li, 2004).

However, in a study of the connection between parent health and children's migration decisions, Giles and Mu (2007) found that once elders become frail, adult children were likely to find a way to provide some type of care. They pointed out that at least one adult child would either return to the village or decide not to migrate to cities for jobs. Another study also revealed that adult children often felt the pressure to return to the village to fulfill filial obligations to

parents who were too ill to care for themselves (Pang et al., 2004). Some children even worked out a rotation system by taking turns to come back home and take care of their elderly parents. This study is interested in learning how physical care is provided by adult children when all or some adult children migrate. Do all or only some children provide physical care?

Women's Roles: From Caregivers to Migrant laborers

The great demand for female labor in urban areas, especially in service and manufacturing industries, attracts millions of rural women to work in large cities instead of staying at home where they are subject to the traditional gender-based labor division and the patrilineal family system. The proportion of female migrant laborers is over 60 percent of all migrant laborers in the Pearl Delta of southern China (Tan, 2000). The migrant women's acquisition of economic independence and social participation induces a dramatic shift from traditional norms observed in villages back home. Studies of married migrants living in cities in various countries have found that women's social status and their power in family decision making have improved as a result of their participation in the labor force and other activities in the "public" sphere (Willis and Yeoh, 2000). This improvement may change the traditional pattern of old-age support in the Chinese patrilineal rural societies. Although it has been pointed out that migrant daughters generally maintained connections with their parents and send them remittances (Jacka, 2006), most research on intergenerational transfer from rural-urban migrants has not focused on gender differences.

Studies have also shown that children's gender had significant influence on their likelihood of increasing the amount of financial assistance to their parents-in-law after migration, but no significant influence on those to natal parents (Du, 1997; Li et al., 2004). In other words, both male and female migrants provided consistent financial support to their natal parents after

migration, but female migrants were likely to give their parents-in-law more financial support. It suggested that the traditional patrilineal pattern of old-age support was still dominant in rural China, but out-migration of rural females tended to shrink the gender difference in terms of old-age support. This study is interested in learning the different roles of daughters, sons, and daughters-in-law in taking care of rural elderly parents. This study will shed light on how shifting gender roles in familial care may reshape the traditional familial elder care practices.

Changing Expectations of Filial Piety

Declining Xiao?

The Chinese proverb, "Having children (especially sons) makes one's old age secure," well describes the traditional expectations of Chinese elders toward their adult children. However, the ongoing social and economic changes in China now seem to be unfavorable toward the maintenance of filial practice. The rapid development of industrialization, urbanization, and westernization may play an important role in undermining the social foundations of filial piety. The traditional kinship and family network are weakened by a nuclear family structure with a small family size. The spread of public education and new technology among the young people have enabled them to achieve more autonomy and power over their older parents (Ng, 1998). Studies in Hong Kong and Taiwan found that young college students tended to report low levels of adherence to filial values and commitments to take care of their elderly parents; whereas older people continued to hold the traditional filial expectations toward their adult children (Harwood et al., 1994; Harwood et al, 1996). As a result, elderly parents tended to hold negative evaluations toward younger people's filial behaviors (Harwood et al., 1994; Harwood et al, 1996; Ho, 1996).

Ho (1996) suggested that filial attitudes were more likely to be held by those who were older, male, and less educated. It was also commonly believed that rural areas were more likely to hold on to traditional values than urban areas in China. Rural elders tended to have higher expectations of filial piety than their urban counterparts (Ho, 1994; Ho, 1996). In rural China now, adult children's migration result in an increased geographic separation between children and elderly parents. Consequently, adult children may have become more and more unavailable to fulfill filial obligations. As mentioned earlier, some Chinese scholars also held serious doubts about migrated children's willingness to take care of their older parents (Li, 2001; Yao & Yu, 2005). The key question is whether elderly parents still hold their expectations of filial responsibilities when their children are far away; indeed, whether rural elders adjust their expectations of filial piety in accordance with social and familial changes is of great importance for policy makers as well as families. Up till now, however, little has been reported on how elders in China, especially rural elders, reshape their expectations on children's filial obligations. This study hopes to add to this body of knowledge by learning elders' current evaluations regarding their migrated children's filial practices.

Broadened Concept of Xiao

A few studies have examined how filial piety has been redefined and reshaped by elders in urban China. Urban elders seem to be understanding of adult children's unavailability for physical care because of reduced family sizes and the dual demands of work and family obligations. According to a qualitative study conducted in Nanjing city, Zhan, Luo, and Feng (2007) found that not only did the urban elders not view placing elders in institutional care as unfilial, but they felt privileged because their children were able to place them in expensive institutions for professional care. In other words, even though elders were not provided with

direct care by adult child, which was the key element of traditional values of filial piety, they still perceived their children as filial. The authors thus argued that the traditional concept of *xiao* has been broadened. The values of filial piety have not declined or diminished, rather, through market forces, the practice of filial piety has been transformed and reconstructed (Zhan et al., 2007). The emergence of home care workers (*baomu*) and increasing acceptance of institutional care in urban China may point to an emerging acceptance to a broadened concept of *xiao*.

Studies on Chinese American elders in the United States also shed light on how filial piety could be transformed and redefined within a certain social context. Lan (2002) developed the concept of "a transfer chain of filial care" to describe how the filial duty of elder care was achieved through the mediation of market forces in the context of Chinese American communities in California. She suggested that because more and more women, especially the primary caregivers—daughters-in-law had entered the labor force, they became less available to provide direct care to aging parents. Adult children therefore, transferred filial piety from kin caregivers to non-family home care workers. By hiring home care workers to help them achieve their filial piety, the middle-class or upper-middle class adult children were able to maintain the cultural ideal of filial piety. The concept of *xiao*, as demonstrated in the modified pattern of homecare of aging parents, was experiencing a process of commodification among Chinese American families.

Will the broadened concept of *xiao* also emerge in rural China in this current period of massive rural-urban migration? Similar to the urban elders in China and Chinese American elders in the United States, rural elders face similar situations—adult children are becoming unavailable for direct care while their capability for financial care are increasing. Will rural elders still view their children as filial with decreasing physical care and increasing financial

care? Will they be willing to move to elder care institutions for professional care and still consider their children fulfilling filial obligations? Hopefully, this study will provide some valuable insights these issues.

Elders' Life Satisfaction in Relation to Children's Migration

Chinese elders are living longer than ever. In 2005, the average life expectancy of Chinese citizens was 73 years old (US Census, 2005). However, living longer does not guarantee living happier. Chinese elders' life satisfaction within the contexts of social transformation is emerging to be an crucial social issue as large numbers of Chinese baby boomers are entering older age. Life satisfaction can be defined as a sense of wellbeing, or more specifically, whether people have a good or satisfactory condition of living or not. It is the perception of life condition, whether satisfied or dissatisfied (Girzadas et al, 1993; James et al, 1986; Liang, 1984). Numerous studies have examined life satisfaction among urban elders in China (Zhang et al., 1998). However, few studies have focused on how rural elders adjust to the changing socioeconomic environment, in particular, the rural-urban migration of their adult children.

Previous studies have presented numerous determinants of life satisfaction among elders (Usui et al., 1985; Zhang et al., 1998). Studies have revealed significant relationships between life satisfaction and a number of factors including age, education, marital status, self-rated health, severe illness, functional status, self-rated financial condition, living arrangement, social support, adherence to traditional values, and social network (Girzadas et al., 1993; James et al., 1986; Liang et al., 1980; Mossey & Shapiro, 1982; O'Conner, 1995; Usui et al., 1985; Xu et al., 1984; Zhang et al., 1998). Among all of these determinants, for this study, I am particularly interested in examining the roles of financial adequacy, social network, and adherence to traditional values of filial piety in shaping rural elders' perception of life quality.

Financial Adequacy

Financial conditions have been frequently found to be associated with life satisfaction (Usui et al., 1985). Better financial conditions were often linked with higher levels of life satisfaction. Better financial conditions may be translated into better health care and living conditions which may further contribute to better health, which was another important predictor of high levels of life satisfaction. However, other studies suggested that self-rated financial adequacy is a better predictor than objective measures of financial condition (Kehn, 2005; Lee & Chi, 1990). Financial adequacy provided a better understanding of elders' perception of financial wellbeing. An elder may have a decent income but still do not feel financially adequate due to more expenses or a higher expectation of income. In this study, I would like to examine the association between financial assistance from their migrated children and financial adequacy as reported by elderly parents.

Social Support in Rural Communities

Previous studies have consistently shown that older adults with high levels of social supports or high levels of social network involvement report higher levels of psychological wellbeing and life satisfaction (Antonucci et al., 1997; Chen & Silverstein, 2000; Krause et al., 1994; Oxam et al., 1992). In the social context of China, extended family members and neighbors play important roles in rural elders' daily living. Although nuclear family is gradually becoming the primary family structure in rural China, kinship and family relatives are still highly valued as an important supportive network. The role of neighbors cannot be ignored either. The old saying, "A distant relative is not as good as a near neighbor" well describes how much Chinese people value the mutual support between neighbors. A recent guideline from the Chinese government also recognized the important role of social support in rural elder care. It

stated that the support for the elderly should be shared among the state, the community, and the family (National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2005).

The amount and frequency of interaction with friends and neighbors have been found to be positively associated with life satisfaction among elderly people (O'Conner, 1995). Furthermore, perceived quality of social relationships has also been found to be a strong predictor of psychological wellbeing and life satisfaction (Chou & Chi, 1999).

With the absence of adult children as a consequence of labor migration, will support for rural elders from extended family members and neighbors increase? What role does community support play in shaping rural elders' life and their life satisfaction? These are some of the questions that this research will attempt to address.

Filial Piety and Wellbeing

In a study of 1502 Chinese elders in mainland China, Mjelde-Mossey, Chi and Lou (2005) found that Chinese elders' adherence to tradition, particularly filial piety, had a positive relationship with the likelihood of having depression. In other words, the more an elderly person adhered to the traditional values of filial piety, the more likely he would fall into depression. The authors argued that the loss of cultural traditions in the society might have a detrimental effect on elders' psychological wellbeing. The perceptions of declining filial piety among their children or within the society might create distress and depression among Chinese elders (Mjelde-Mossey et al., 2006). According to the modernization theory, younger generations are less likely to adhere to traditional values than the older generation. Young generations in some traditional countries tend to be more individual-oriented and less inclined towards traditional filial values (Goode, 1963). As a result, such a generational gap in attitudes might cause low life satisfaction and decreased psychological wellbeing among the elders who cling to traditional values.

Recent studies, however, presented some surprising counter arguments. Two studies conducted in mainland China consistently showed that young people still demonstrated strong willingness to fulfill filial responsibility, maybe even higher than their parents' expectations from them (Yue & Ng, 1999; Zhan, 2004). In a study of 90 university students and 77 older adults in Beijing, Yue and Ng (1999) found that older adults continued to hold high expectation of filial responsibilities from young people, and young people also strongly endorsed filial obligations toward older adults. Zhan (2004), based on a sample of 777 youth and 110 adult caregivers in urban China, found that the willingness expressed by the one-child generation respondents to provide parental care was far higher than their parents' expectations to receive care. Do these studies suggest that elders are actually not passive victims of the changing social context? Do elders actually actively adapt to the changing environment by lowering their expectations of traditional values of filial piety?

Placing these questions within the context of massive migration and urbanization in rural China, three questions arise: 1) Do the rural elderly parents continue to hold on to the traditional filial expectations? 2) Is there indeed a gap between what the children do and what the elderly parents expect? 3) If such a generation gap exists, how does it influence the rural elderly parents' life satisfaction and psychological wellbeing?

Modernization theory suggested that children's migration might diminish adult children's belief and practice in filial piety. Children's migration might create a gap between what the elders expect and what the migrated children do. As result, rural elders might experience a lower level of life satisfaction. However, according to the earlier studies in China, Chinese rural elders might lower their expectations on their migrated children's filial behaviors. They might be able

to adapt to changing environment due to children's migration and therefore achieve a certain level of life satisfaction.

Guided with the theoretical model of the political economy of aging, the above sections have provided an overview of the economic, political, and historical contexts of elder care in contemporary rural China. Four parts of the literature were reviewed: the cultural tradition of filial piety, the economic reform, rural-urban migration, and life satisfaction among Chinese elders. As shown in this section, some knowledge gaps exist when connecting these macro- and meso- levels of social forces with the micro-level of outcomes regarding elder care patterns, elders' perceptions of migrated children's filial piety, and rural elders' life satisfaction within the social context of massive rural-urban migration. Therefore, this study attempts to bridge these knowledge gaps in hopes of increasing our understanding of the complex relationships between larger social forces and individual elders' lives.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

The current elder care patterns in rural China are inextricably intertwined with the process of modernization and urbanization, particularly rural-urban migration. Without a state welfare system that provides pension and medical care, rural families continue to rely on children as the main source of social security in vast areas of China. In the process of rural-urban migration, a great number of adult children in rural China have moved to find job opportunities in urban areas, and thus have become less available for parental care. How do these major structural changes, such as economic reforms and the adult children's migration to cities, influence caregiving patterns in rural China?

The goal of this study was to take a systematic look at how rural-urban migration shaped elder care practices in rural Chinese families and how rural elders responded and adapted to this social change. Particular attention was given to how the cultural values of filial piety may be re-interpreted by rural elders. I proposed three research aims: A) To investigate the patterns of financial elder care in rural China at the time of major social changes in migration; B) To explore rural elders' perceptions of the migrated children's practice of filial piety; C) To examine rural elders' life satisfaction when children migrate. Below, I will explain, with the assistance of diagrams, how each research aim was conceptually constructed and how I achieved each aim through statistical analysis.

Research Aim A—Examining the Impact of Structural Changes on Rural Elder Care Patterns

The theoretical model of political economy of aging (PEA) suggests that macrolevels and mesolevels of structural changes such as state policies and demographic transitions shape individual lives at a microlevel (Estes et al., 1984; Estes, 2001). In this study, the structural

changes included changes on both familial and social levels. Research Aim A was designed to examine the impact of these structural changes on rural elder care patterns.

Rural-urban migration appears to have restructured rural economy which may be reflected on rural elders' health care conditions and income, as presented in Figure A. First, recent studies have expressed serious concerns regarding the deprivation of rural elders' health care due to economic reform as well as the migration of medical professionals from rural to urban areas (Zimmer & Kwong, 2004).

Second, rural-urban migration is like a double-edged sword, affecting rural elders' income in two ways. On the one hand, rural-urban migration reinforced an urban-biased and pro-coastal development policy, which caused the sluggish development of rural agriculture (Xue, 1997). Rural elders' earnings from agricultural work might suffer from rural-urban migration. On the other hand, rural-urban migration has allowed a large amount of financial transfer from urban to rural areas mainly through remittance by adult children (Li, 2001; Du, 1997). According to the model of bargaining power, rural elders may possess less bargaining power and receive less care because of an enlarged gap between migrated children's increased earnings and elders' decreased earning potentials. On the other hand, according to the need-based model, the deprived agriculture and health care system may actually encourage financial transfer from migrated children to the rural elders who are in need of financial and health support.

Children's migration has also brought major changes in rural elders' family structure, as shown in Figure A. Previous studies suggested that rural-urban migration, or urbanization, dispersed extended families and created nuclear families with the emigration of adult children (Croll et al., 1985). Family size, or the number of adult children, has become an important predictor of elder care provisions. Having more children may translate to more financial care or

physical care, even within the context of massive rural-urban labor migration. Having more children may also ensure greater availability because the family may be able to work out a rotation system to avoid the absence of all children when care is needed. Adult children's migration, however, increases the possibility of elders living alone or living with grandchildren. According to the short-term exchange model, such a change in living arrangement may alter the intergenerational power relationships and exchange dynamic, which may further reshapes the elder care patterns in rural China.

Modernization theory suggests that the culture of filial piety may decline as a traditional society such as China modernizes; whereas critics of such theory and the new modernization theory contend that the tradition of filial piety and the modernization process can coexist and even benefit each other. No matter which standpoint a scholar takes, modernization may reshape, not necessarily weaken, the cultural context of filial piety with the mass social transformation of rural-urban migration. This study is particularly interested in how the patrilineal tradition may have changed due to the increasing number of female migrant workers.

Proposition A and Hypotheses

As discussed earlier, adult children's migration is changing rural society at both social and familial levels. Indeed, these changes may be translated into changes in the lives of individuals and families. At the societal level, rural-urban migration may have impacted elders' income and health status. Rural-urban migration might improve rural elders' socioeconomic conditions on the one hand, and deprive their rural agricultural development and health care system on the other hand (Xue, 1997; *Zimmer & Kwong, 2004)*. At the familial level, rural-urban migration may influence rural elders' family structure, living arrangement, and the availability of certain family caregivers in the practices of elder care (Croll et al., 1985). These social and familial changes may, in turn, shape specific aspects of elder care patterns in rural China, such as elders' bargaining power for elder care, need for care, resources to exchange for care, etc. Therefore, proposition A was constructed as follow:

Proposition A: Children's migration is related to familial elder care patterns.

Previous research demonstrates three theoretical models to explain the outcome of family care in general—the model of bargaining power, exchange model, and need-based model. Each model explains the outcome of familial care from a different perspective.

The need-based model focuses on elderly individual's need for care and children's individual motivation to provide care for needy parents (Becker, 1991; Becker & Tomes, 1979; Cox, 1987; Cox & Rank, 1992). The need-based model assumes that children are more likely to provide care when the elderly parents become frail and ill or financially in need. Guide by the need-based model, four hypotheses are proposed to test:

Hypothesis A_1: Elderly parents with worse health conditions are likely to receive more care from migrated child those with better health conditions.

Hypothesis A_2: Elderly parents with severe illness are likely to receive more care from migrated child those with no severe illness.

Hypothesis A_3: Elderly parents who are living alone are likely to receive more care from migrated child.

Hypothesis A_4: Elderly parents with less self-earnings are likely to receive more care from migrated child than those with more self-earnings.

Previous studies have consistently suggested that women are more likely to have worse health conditions, live alone, and earn less income than men (Johnson, 1983; Stacey, 1983; Wolf, 1985). For the purpose of this study, I would like to explore the effect of elderly parents' gender in influencing children's financial care patterns. Thus, based on the need-based model, I propose:

Hypothesis A_5: Females elders are more likely to receive more financial care from migrated children than male elders.

Exchange model emphasizes the reciprocal relationship between adult children and elderly parents. It argues that the elderly parents receive support by providing short-term child care services to their grandchildren. In exchange, the adult children provide housing, food, medical care, etc (Cox 1987; Morgan & Hiroshima, 1983). Such a reciprocal relationship can also be long-term exchange. As the parents grow older and become frail, the adult children return the support they have received from their parents by providing physical and financial support. As mentioned earlier, children's migration may increase the likelihood of elderly parents' co-residence with grandchildren (Morgan & Hiroshima, 1983). For this particular study, I examined how short-term exchange may affect the provision of financial care. The exchange model suggests the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis A_6: Elders who take care of the migrated child's children (elders' grandchildren) receive more financial support than those who do not.

The model of bargaining power indicates that an older generation receives support as long as they are still in control of important resources and in greater power positions. Based on this theoretical model, Hypothesis A_7 was generated:

Hypothesis A_7: Elders' earnings are positively related to adult children's provision of care. In other words, the more self-earning an elder makes, the more care he/she receives from a migrated child (Hypothesis predicts opposite outcome than Hypothesis A_4).

It is important to note that rural females, especially young women, are becoming a significant part of the migrant laborer forces for manufacture and service industries in the urban areas. With their increased income and autonomy, women's familial status may have been boosted due to their participation in the labor force. However, Because of the patrilineal family system, only sons have the formal responsibility to provide old age support to their parents. Therefore, I hypothesized that the actually amount of financial help given by migrated sons would be significant more than those given by migrated daughters.

Hypothesis A_8: Elders received more financial help from migrated sons than those from migrated daughters.

Variables for Proposition A

The following section provides a detailed description of the dependent and independent variables utilized in the statistical analysis in Chapter 4 and some independent variables in Chapter 5 and 6. A simplified version of these descriptions can be also found in Table 4-1.

Dependent Variable

Actual amount of financial support from migrated child In the survey, elderly respondents were asked to provide the actual amount of financial support they received from each migrated child in 2003. This dependent variable measures each migrated child's financial contribution to his/her elderly parent. This variable is a continuous variable measured in Chinese Currency (RMB).

Independent Variables

Respondents' demographic backgrounds, such as rural elders' age, gender, marital status, number of children, and number of migrated children, were included as independent variables. Age is a linear variable. Gender was coded as 1 (female) or 0 (male). Marital status was coded as 1 (married) or 0 (unmarried). Number of children was coded: 1=1; 2=2; 3=3; 4=4; 5=5 or more. Percentage of children migrated was coded by dividing the number of the children migrated by number of children in total. It was a continuous variable ranging from .10 (10%) to 1.00 (100%).

In the following section, more independent variables suggested by the hypotheses are illustrated in details.

Elders' own earning This independent variable is used to test the bargaining power model and need-based model of elder care. The survey asked the elders' annual income in 2003, including earnings from working, government financial aid, son's remittance, daughter's remittance, and other income sources. I created a variable called elders' own earnings by adding three items—earnings from work, government financial aid, and other income sources. In other words, this item measured all the income except remittance from the children. Due to the commonality of poverty in rural China, the mass majority of rural elders did not have any self-earnings. Also due to the lack of social welfare, the majority of the rural elders did not have any

financial support from the government either. In this sample, about 54% of rural elders did not have any self-earnings. Thus, to make more theoretical sense of this concept, this variable was coded as 1 (has no self-earnings) and 0 (has self-earnings).

Taking care of grandchildren Short-term help was used to test the effectiveness of the short-term exchange model. One independent variable, taking care of grandchildren was used. One question asked whether the elders were helping raise the migrated child's children who are left behind in the village. Positive responses were coded 1, and negative responses were coded 0.

Four independent variables—self-rated health, severe illness, living alone, and elders' own earnings were used to measure elders' need for care. Therefore, they will be used to test the need-based model.

Self-rated health The survey asked the elders' to give self-evaluation of their health. It was measured on a 5 point scale, where 1=very bad, 5=excellent.

Living alone The survey asked the elderly respondents whether they lived alone at the time of the study. Positive responses were coded 1, and negative responses were coded 0.

Migrated child's demographic characteristics Migrated child's gender, age, marital status, education, number of offspring, years since first migration, times back home per year, and financial conditions were also considered as independent variables in this study. Gender was a dummy variable coded as 1 (female) or 0 (male). Marital status was coded as 1 (married) or 0 (unmarried). Education level was coded as 1 (elementary school and lower), 2 (junior high school), 3 (senior high school), or 4 (some college and above). Number of offspring was a linear variable. "Years since first migration" was an ordinal variable coded as 0 (less than a year), 1 (1-3 years), 2 (3 to 5 years), 3 (5 to 7 years), or 4 (more than 7 years). Times back home per year

was coded as 0 (never back), 1 (once per year), or 2 (more than twice a year). For elders' evaluations of migrated children's financial condition, an ordinal variable was created—1 (very difficult), 2 (somewhat difficult), 3 (sufficient), or 4 (affluent).

Research Aim B—To Examine Elders' Perception of Their Children's Filial Piety in Relation to Cultural Changes Associated with Rural-Urban Migration

Modernization theory suggested that rural-urban migration weakened traditional family arrangements and fostered a decline in traditional family values (Cowgill and Holmes 1972; Goode, 1963; Goode, 1970). As a traditional society such as China becomes more modernized, individualism may emerge and the traditional value of filial piety may decline. According to this theory, younger generation would value filial piety much less than older generation. Therefore, the elders tend to condemn children's unwillingness to fulfill filial obligation. The criticism of classical modernization theory contended that traditional values of filial piety and modernity were not mutually exclusive. Studies in Korea and Japan have demonstrated that filial piety did not decline; rather it remained a central value despite some changes (Kojima, 2000; Lan, 2002; Sung, 2000).

Research Aim B is designed to test the modernization theory within the context of China's rural-urban migration. This study attempts to examine elders' perception of migrated children's observance of traditional values of filial piety. The traditional doctrine of filial piety emphasizes a family-based elder care arrangement. Adult children were expected to provide elder care at home. They were strongly discouraged from traveling far from elderly parents.

Adult children's migration violates many fundamental principles of filial piety. Confucius said, "Thou shall not travel afar while your parents are still alive." This old axiom well explains the traditional cultural expectation of filial piety toward children's migration—

adult children are expected co-reside or live near their elderly parents; therefore, migration should be avoided. However, the social reality is that more and more adult children, both males and females, are migrating to meet the huge economic demand for manufacturing labor. The questions rise: 1) Do elderly parents view their migrated children as less filial since their migration? 2) What are the factors affecting elders' evaluation of their migrated children's filial practices? These are the two questions in Aim B that this study attempted to answer.

Proposition B and Hypotheses

The modernization theory assumes that traditional culture, such as filial piety, declines with the increasing pace of urbanization, especially among the younger generation (Goode, 1963; Goode, 1970). According to this theory, children's migration will lead to their declined willingness to provide care for their elderly parents. Adult children tend to hold lower levels of filial obligations than their elderly parents' filial expectations. As a result, older generation may have low evaluations toward the younger generation in terms of their filial responsibilities.

Nevertheless, previous and current studies have revealed different results from this debatable theory. Some studies confirm elderly parents' poor evaluation of children filial piety; whereas others hold a more optimistic picture of the continuation of filial values in Chinese society. Therefore, Proposition B is generated to examine the relationship between children's migration and elders' perceptions of migrated children's filial attitudes and behaviors.

Proposition B: Elderly parents' evaluations of children's filial piety are related to adult children's migration and elder care behaviors.

According to the traditional expectations of filial piety, adult children, especially sons, should not travel far from their elderly parents. Therefore, I proposed the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis B_1: The elders tend to evaluate children's filial piety lower after their migration than before their migration.

Hypothesis B_2: Migrated sons' filial piety tends to be evaluated lower than migrated daughters' filial piety.

This study attempted to provide a systematic look at how migrated children's elder care behaviors may influence elders' perceptions of their filial piety. Based on the traditional expectations of filial piety, the provisions of financial assistance should have direct positive connections with elderly parents' evaluations of children's filial practices.

Hypothesis B_3: Elderly parents' evaluations of migrated children's filial piety are positively related to migrated children's financial care.

The classical modernization theory suggested that as geographic distances increased, family cohesion and intergenerational interdependence declined. However, others argued that with the assistance of modern communication systems (e.g. phones), the disruptive effects of geographic distance on extended family cohesion has been minimized to a large extent (Litwak,

1960). According to this counter-argument, frequency of contact and elders' emotional closeness with their children after their migration may play an important role in shaping elder's perception of children's filial piety. Therefore, two hypotheses were constructed for testing:

Hypothesis B_4: Elderly parents' evaluations of migrated children's filial piety are positively related to children's frequency of contact with them.

Hypothesis B_5: Elderly parents' evaluations of migrated children's filial piety are positively related to the levels of emotional closeness with their children.

The concept of filial piety is often understood in the West to be primarily children's financial and physical obligations for their parents. Besides providing care, the concept of filial piety also includes respecting and obeying elders. To grasp a comprehensive understanding of the elders' perceptions of filial piety, this study examined the impact of migrated children's respect of elders' authority on the elders' evaluations of children's filial piety. Respect of elders' authority was usually presented in the form of discussion important family events such as wedding, buying homes, grandchildren's education, etc.

Hypothesis B_6: Elderly parents' evaluations of migrated children's filial piety are positively related to children's respect of elders' authority after migration.

Variables for Proposition B

Dependent Variables

Dependent variable—*Evaluation of Migrated Child's Filial Piety*—was utilized to test how elderly parents' perceptions of filial piety relate to children's migration. In the survey, the elders were asked "compared to before migration, how has your child's filial piety (each child individually) changed after migration?" "Negative change, less filial" was coded as -1. "As filial or unfilial as before" was coded as 0. "More filial" was coded as 1.

Independent Variables

Most of the independent variables used to explore Aim A, especially those describing the elders' demographic characteristics and the migrated child's demographic characteristics, were also used to explore Aim B. For rural elders' demographic characteristics, I used Elder's Gender, Elder's Age, Elder's Marital Status, Percentage of Children Migrated, All Children Migrated, Elder's Self-rated Health, Severe Illness, and Live Alone. The only new variable from Aim A was All Children Migrated, which was used to explore the difference between the elders with no child and those with at least one child left in the village. The independent variables that describe the migrated child's filial piety include Migrated Child's Age, Migrated Child's Gender, Time Visiting Home in 2003, Distance from Elderly Parents, and Length of Migration. The only new variable from Aim A is Distance from Elderly Parents, which was used to explore how geographic distance impact rural elder's evaluation of the migrated child's filial piety.

Actual amount of financial care received from each migrated child The survey asked the elders how much remittance money (RMB) they received from each migrated child. This variable is a continuous variable.

Changes in discussion of important life events with elderly parent In the survey, the elders were asked two questions: 1. How often did this migrated child discuss important life events (such as wedding, buying homes, grandchildren's education, etc.) with you before his/her migration? 2. How often did the migrated child discuss important life events with you after his/her migration? "Never discuss" was coded 1; "discuss sometimes" was coded 2; "discuss often" was coded 3. Using a simple crosstabulation, the answers of these two questions were merged and recoded into 4-point scale where "large decline" was coded -2; "small decline" was coded -1; "no change" was coded 0; "increase" was coded1.

Emotional closeness: The survey asked the elders how his/her emotional relationships with the migrated children have changed since he/she has migrated. More distant was coded as 1; no difference was coded as 2. Closer was coded as 3.

Frequency of contact with elderly parent The survey asked the elderly respondents how often the migrated child contacted them after their migration. “no contact” was coded 1; “some contact” was coded 2; “frequent contact” was coded 3.

Research Aim C—Exploring the Relationship between Life Satisfaction and Children’s Migration

Ultimately, elders’ happiness and dissatisfaction when facing these structural and cultural changes brought by adult children’ rural-urban migration is the focal concerns of social scientists and gerontologists. Previous studies have shown how financial adequacy, adherence to the traditional value of filial piety, and community support could affect urban elders’ sense of wellbeing (Antonucci et al., 1997; Chen & Silverstein, 2000; Kehn, 2005; Krause et al., 1994; Lee & Chi, 1990; Mjelde-Mossey et al., 2006; Oxam et al., 1992). This study attempted to examine the impact of these factors within the social context of massive rural-urban migration in China. As indicated in Figure C, for this particular study, I combined the previous two outcomes of elder care—elder care patterns and elders’ perceptions of filial piety to understand the direct and indirect effect of rural-urban migration on elders’ life satisfaction. Community support, as an important aspect of rural social and cultural context, was also examined to gain a comprehensive understanding of rural elders’ lives. Support from extended family relatives, neighbors, and village leaders may make a positive impact on elders’ life when their adult children are not available as a result of rural-urban migration.

Proposition C and Hypotheses

As indicated in the previous two propositions, children's migration may change rural elders' lives with regard to received care and their perceptions of children's filial piety. Indeed, as a social scientist and gerontologist, I, like any other scholars in the field, am concerned with the elders' life satisfaction when these changes happen in their lives. Therefore, I proposed to examine the relationship between rural elders' life satisfaction and their children's migration.

Proposition C: Rural elders' life satisfaction is related to children's migration.

The traditional culture of filial piety stresses that "Having children makes one's old age secure." More so, living with children or having children nearby can further secure one's old age. Therefore, based on this cultural belief of *xiao*, this study proposed the following hypothesis for testing:

Hypothesis C_1: Rural elders' life satisfaction is negatively related to the proportion of children who migrated.

Mjelde-Mossey, Chi and Lou (2005) found that the levels of adherence to traditional values of filial piety had a negative impact on elders' life satisfaction. In other words, elders who have lower evaluations on their children's filial piety may experience more difficulty to enjoy life due to a potential gap between what the elders expect and what the migrated children do. With this assumption, this study tested the relationship between elders' life satisfaction and their evaluations of children's filial piety.

Hypothesis C_2: Rural elders' life satisfaction is positively related to their evaluations of migrated children's filial piety.

Besides examining adherence to traditional culture of filial piety, this study investigates three other important factors which may impact on rural elders' sense of wellbeing. These three factors—financial adequacy, migrated children's emotional support, and community support—may directly and indirectly related to adult children's migration. First, adult children's migration may improve elders' financial conditions. However, previous studies indicated that a sense of financial adequacy might be a better predictor for life satisfaction. Second, emotional support appeared to be an important indicator of life satisfaction among elders in the west. When financial support is provided, what is the role of emotional support for rural elders? Finally, older adults with high levels of community support were found to have higher levels of psychological wellbeing and life satisfaction (Antonucci et al., 1997; Krause & Borawski-Clark, 1994; Oxam et al., 1992). With the absence of children as a result of migration, community support from extended family relatives, neighbors, and village leaders may play a positive role in enriching rural elders' social wellbeing and providing support when needed. Therefore, this study proposed the following six hypotheses.

Hypothesis C_3: Rural elders who received financial support from children have higher levels of life satisfaction than those did not receive financial support.

Hypothesis C_4: Rural elders' life satisfaction is positively related to their self-rated financial adequacy.

Hypothesis C_5: Elderly parents' life satisfaction is positively related to the levels of emotional closeness with their children.

Hypothesis C_6: Elderly parents' levels of life satisfaction are positively related to children's frequency of contact with them.

Hypothesis C_7: Rural elders' life satisfaction is positively related to their levels of emotional closeness to extended family relatives.

Hypothesis C_8: Rural elders' life satisfaction is positively related to the levels of support they receive from the neighbors.

Variables for Proposition C

Dependent Variable

Life satisfaction In the survey the elders were asked to provide self-ratings to their current life. Responses are coded at a four point scale with 1=very unsatisfied; 2=somewhat unsatisfied; 3=somewhat satisfied; and 4=very satisfied.

Independent Variables

Most of the independent variables used to explore Aim A and B, especially those describing the elders' demographic characteristics, are also used to explore Aim C. For rural elders' demographic characteristics, I use Elder's Gender, Elder's Age, Elder's Educational Level, Elder's Marital Status, Percentage of Children Migrated, All Children Migrated, Elder's Self-rated Health, Severe Illness, and Live Alone. The variables that measures emotional support

received by the rural elders—Emotional Closeness and Frequency of Contact—were used in the statistical analysis to understand Aim C.

Whether migrated children give money This variable is a dummy variable based on the question elders were asked in the survey: Did you receive financial support from your migrate children? Positive answer was coded 1, negative answer was coded 0.

Financial adequacy This variable was coded as an ordinal variable based on the question elders were asked in the survey: Do you feel you have enough money to spend after your children's migration. Reponses were coded at a 4-point scale where 1=very difficult, 2=somewhat difficult, 3=somewhat adequate, and 4= adequate with extra.

Evaluation of migrated child's filial piety was utilized as an independent variable in proposition C. In the survey, the elders were asked "compared to before migration, how has your children's filial piety changed after migration?" "Negative change, less filial" was coded as -1. "As filial or unfilial as before" was coded as 0. "More filial" was coded as 1.

The following two variables were used to test the role of community support on rural elders' life satisfaction after children's migration:

Closeness to relatives nearby In the survey, the elderly respondents were asked "How has your relationship with your relatives nearby changed since your children's migration?" "more distant" was coded as -1, "same as before" was coded as 0, "closer" was coded as 1.

Support from neighbors The survey asked the elderly respondent "how often do you receive help from your neighbors?" "No help" was code as 1, "some help" was code as 2, "frequent help" was coded as 3.

Sample and Demographic Variables

This study utilized a dataset collected by the Institute of Gerontology and Centre for Population and Development Studies at Renming University in Beijing, China[2]. Surveys were conducted in 2004 in three inland migrant-exporting provinces—Heibei, Heinan, and Anhui. Study subjects included a total of 1443 elders, among them, 498 are from Heibei, 496 from Heinan, and 449 from Anhui province. These three provinces are good examples of exporting/emigrating provinces because of their interior locations, limited foreign investments, and relatively low economic growth. Heibei and Heinan are two typical provinces that export labors to Beijing, Tianjin, and other affluent cities in northern China. Anhui is one of the biggest migrant-exporting provinces for Shanghai and cities in Jiangsu province in east part of China. The sample consisted of 757 males and 672 females aged 54 to 91. Each elderly respondent had at least one adult child migrated to the cities or more affluent provinces.

The survey was conducted based on face-to-face interviews by a group of researchers. All researchers were selected and trained according to a guideline provided by Dr. Peng Du. The survey was consisted of four sections—elders' demographic and family background (33 questions), elders' financial conditions (15 questions), elders' health and functional conditions (34 questions), and elders' psychological wellbeing and life satisfaction (16 questions). So far, no scholarly articles have been published based on this dataset.

The data were cleaned, organized, and transformed based on the research design and theoretical frameworks of each research aim. In the survey, the elders were asked to provide information about each of their children who had migrated to urban areas. The original data treated each elder as a single observation for a total of 1443 elders. However, because I am interested in how each migrated child provides care to their elderly parents and how parents

[2] The dataset was obtained through Dr. Heying Jenny Zhan, the advisor of the author.

evaluate each individual child, I pulled out each migrated child's information (provided by the elderly parent) and combined them with the elderly parents' information so that the new unit of analysis was the migrated child and not the elder parent. This means that parents with multiple children will appear the data set multiple times (i.e., once for each child). In the recoded dataset, each parent has an identification number (which is shared with other migrated children in the same family) and a case identification number.[3] All cases under the same identification number share the same answers for variables with regard to their elderly parent (age, health, self-earning, living arrangement, etc) but have different answers to the variables specific to each migrated child (age, gender, amount of money provided to the elderly parent, parent's evaluation of his/her filial piety, etc). Since each finding chapter (chapter 4, 5, and 6) used different dependent and independent variables, the number of cases might vary from chapter to chapter due to missing data as a result of unanswered questions (variables) by respondents.

[3] The purpose of providing an identification number for each parent is so that when data analysis is run in subsequent chapters, observations can be clustered around the identification number of the parent. This provides more accurate results of the standard errors as we might suspect the behavior of one child is having an impact on the behavior of a sibling from the same parent.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINANCIAL CARE PATTERNS

This chapter explored the patterns of financial care that migrated children provided to their elderly parents. Findings from this chapter explored the effectiveness of the need-based model, the exchange model, and the bargaining power model in financial provisions for aging parents from migrated children. Special attention was given to explore the gender effect, namely, how much care female elders received compared to their male counterparts and how much care was provided by migrated daughters compared to that by migrated sons.

Methodology

Financial support was measured by the actual amount of RMB provided by adult children who were migrated to urban areas. This dependent variable—Actual amount of financial support—was continuous, therefore, an OLS (Ordinary Least Squares) regression analysis was employed to conduct the analysis. OLS modeling allowed for direct interpretation of regression coefficients and for identifying statistically significant variables.

Four conceptually different groups of variables were selected to understand major influences in migrated children's financial provision. They were: 1) elders' demographic information, 2) elders' health and living arrangements, 3) short-term help, and finally, 4) adult children's own demographic information. Four models of statistical analyses were developed to understand the different impact of these groups of variables on financial provision. The independent variables in the first model of elder's demographic backgrounds included elders' gender, age, marital status, number of children, and percentage of children migrated. In the second model, self-rated health, severe illness, living alone, and elders' own earnings were added as control variables to test the explanatory power of need-based model and the bargaining power

model. And then, in the third model, variables indicate short-term help—taking care of grandchildren was added into the equation to test the exchange model. In the fourth model, migrated children's demographic background variables were added into the equation. They included the migrated child's age, gender, education, marital status, number of offspring, whether migrate with spouse, years since first migration, number of times back home per year, and their financial condition perceived by the elderly parents.

Results

Data

Because some cases have missing responses for independent variables, the operational sample included 1,010 elders who had 2,060 migrated children. This provides for 2,060 separate instances in which to gauge the pattern of financial elder care provided by each migrated child. This dataset is large enough to make generalizations about the patterns of the financial care provided by children who have migrated to their parents.

Because each elder was assigned an identification number (see Chapter 3), this allows me to organize siblings by their parents. By organizing migrated children around each elder, this allows me to utilize a statistical technique, clustering, that will eliminate the potential of one elder with many migrated children from biasing the results over those parents with only one migrated child. It also adjusts the standard errors for the potential relationship that may exist between children (observations). For example, we might expect that the financial contributions of one child may impact the decision of how much another child might contribute financially.[4]

[4] This same information with regard to clustering applies to the data in chapters 5 and 6. This information will be footnoted in these chapters rather than presented in the text of the chapter.

General Demographics

A description of dependent variable, sample characteristics, and independent variables is displayed in Table 4-1 and 4-2. The average age of the elderly sample was 67.53. About 48.9% of the respondents were female. The large majority (67.5%) were married. The Chinese elderly parents in the sample had an average number of 4.47 surviving children. The average percentage of children migrated was 60.3%.

[Insert Table 4-1]

About 54% of rural elders in the sample reported that they did not have any self earnings besides remittance from their children in 2003, 46% of the respondents reported that they had some self-earnings. In terms of health, the average score of self-rated health were 2.97 out of a possible 5, pointing to "perfectly healthy". About 13.4% of elders lived alone in 2003. The rest lived with spouse, children, relatives, grandchildren, or other family or extended family members. In terms of short-term help they provided to the migrated children, about 16.1% of the elders reported they took care of the migrated children's children.

[Insert Table 4-2]

Eighteen percent of the migrated children were female while 82% of them were sons. The average age of the migrated children was 36.04. In terms of the migrated children's education, 10.4% had the highest education of elementary school education and lower, 15.8% had the highest education of junior high school, 27.7% had the highest education of senior high school, only 20.3% of the migrated children obtained some college education or above. About 88% of them were married at the time of the survey. On average the migrated children had 1.58 children. Since the first year of migration, the migrated children had an average of 6.8 years of migration. They came back home to visit about 1.26 times per year. In the survey, the elders were asked to

evaluation their migrated children's financial condition, the average score was 2.81 out of a 4 point scale where 4 refers to affluent and 1 refers to very difficult.

In 2003, the elderly respondent received an average of 586.39 RMB from each migrated child. Based on the exchange rate, such an amount equals to about 84 US Dollars.

Comparisons across Genders

[Insert Table 4-3]

Among the female elderly respondents, 47% of them were widowed, 18% were living alone, and 18% living with grandchildren only, 58% of them had no self-earning at all. Among the male respondents, at the time of the survey, 19.0% of them were widowed, 10% of them were living alone. 14% of them lived with grandchildren only, 41% of them had no self-earning at all. As far as health is concerned, based on a 5 point scale where 5 refers to excellent health and 1 refers to very poor health, women reported an average of 2.76, which is lower than men's rating of 3.16. Thirty-five percent of the female elders reported they had severe illness in 2003; whereas only 25% of male elders reported severe illness in 2003. In summary, based on the above descriptive statistics of respondents' social and economic backgrounds (all comparisons are significant based on the t-test), women appeared to be in a more vulnerable situation and in greater need for care than men. Female elders were more likely to be widowed, live alone, in bad health conditions, take all the responsibility of raising grandchildren, and have no self-earning. As a result, they were much more likely to be completely dependent on their children. Despite women's disadvantaged socioeconomic and health conditions,, however, female elders on average received 213.04 RMB less than male elders in 2003 (Female: 478.4RMB; male: 691.44RMB; $p<.001$). These descriptive data may suggest that although women were in greater

need for care from their children, in actuality, they received less financial support from their migrated children.

OLS Regressions

[Insert Table 4-4 Here]

Standardized regression coefficients for the hierarchical multiple regression models predicting the actual amount of financial support from migrated children are shown in Table 4-4. Across all models, women received significant less financial support from their migrated children. For instance, in Model 1, female elders received 142.18RMB less than male parents ($p<.001$). In Model 5, when taking into consideration of all control variables, female elders received on average 353.42RMB less than their male respondents.

Elder's age had a negative relationship with the amount of support provided by migrated children ($b=-23.59$, $p<.001$). The older the parent was, the less care he/she received from migrated children in 2003. Across all four models, the number of children was also negatively related to the amount of monetary support an elderly parent received from a migrated child ($b=-94.77$, $p<.001$). Elders who had more migrated children received less monetary support. In two out of the four models, the percentage of migrated children was also negatively related to the amount of financial support an elderly parent received from one specific migrated child (Model 1: $b=-205.53$, $p<.001$; Model 4: $b=-693.86$, $p<.01$) . In other words, the more siblings a migrated child had, the less financial remittance was sent by him or her to the elderly parent. The more migrated siblings, the less financial remittance to the elderly parent. This result may indicate that the burden of financial elder care might be heavier for migrated children who had fewer siblings, or fewer migrated siblings.

The Need-Based Model

The need-based model suggested that children were more likely to provide care when the elderly parents became frail and ill or financially in need. In other words, elderly parents who were in more need for care in actuality received more financial support. However, table 4-4 shows that elderly parent' health condition, living arrangement, and self-earnings did not have a significant effect on the amount of remittance they received from their migrated children, regardless the elder's gender, age, marital status, and number of children. Whether the elderly parents had severe illness also did not present a significant impact on the amount of remittance they received from the migrated children. Based on the results from Model 2, Hypotheses A_1, A_2, A_3, and A_4 were rejected. Thus, the need-based model was not supported.

The Exchange Model

In model 3, to understand short-term exchange between rural elders and their migrated children, elders' cares for grandchildren was added into the equation. The result suggested that taking care of grandchildren for migrated children was a significant predictor of the financial support provided by migrated children. Elderly parents who took care of the migrated children's children (the elders' grandchildren) tended to receive much more financial support than those who did not. In Model 3, elders who took care of the grandchildren received 607.71 RMB more than those who did not ($p<.001$). In model 4, migrated children's socio-demographic factors were entered into the equation. Results showed that elders who took care of grandchildren for migrated child still received 507.21 RMB after taking into account major socioeconomic factors of the migrant children. Thus, Hypothesis A_6 was supported. Elders were likely to receive more financial support from migrated children if they provided childcare in exchange. It was also important to note when added the control for taking care of grandchildren, R^2 increased from

.087 to .119, which increased the explained variance by 3.2% compared to Model 2. Such an increase in R^2 suggested the relatively stronger explanatory power of Model 3, specifically, the exchange model, compared to other models.

The Bargaining Power Model

To examine the explanatory power of the bargaining power model, the effect of elders self-earning on migrated children's financial care was tested in Model 2, 3 and 4. Statistical evidence from all models suggested that the bargaining power model could not explain the variation of migrated children's financial support. Elders who had no earnings did not receive more financial assistance from migrated children. In other words, whether the elder had self-earnings or not did not make a significant difference in terms of how much remittance the migrated child sent back home. Thus, hypothesis A_7 was rejected.

One of the most important findings worth noting was the gender effect. Across all models, elderly women received significantly less financial support from their migrated children (Model 1: b=-142.18, p<.001; Model 2: b=-156.38; p<.001; Model 3: b=-250.63, p<.001; Model 4: b=-353.41, p<.001). Traditionally, an elderly father was considered the patriarch of the household who possessed the most power and authority. Elderly women, on the other hand, were given much less power and status in the household. They were supposed to obey their husband and obey their sons if their husband died. Table 4-4 demonstrated that elderly women appeared to be continually in a culturally, socially, economically, and physically powerless position. They received much less remittance from their migrated children.

Migrated Children's Demographics

In Model 4 migrated child's demographic information were added into the equation. These variables included: gender, age, education, marital status, number of offspring—and their

socioeconomic conditions related to migration—whether migrated with spouse, years since first migration, times back home, and their financial condition after migration. Gender appeared to be one of the most striking findings in this model. Migrated daughters on average gave 429.12RMB less to their elderly parents than migrated sons ($p<.001$), regardless of the elderly parent's socioeconomic and health conditions. Such a finding confirmed the patrilineal tradition of elder care—sons continued to take formal elder care responsibility. Thus, Hypothesis A_8 is supported. It is also important to note that although the amount of financial assistance they provided was significantly less, daughters actually did provide some levels of financial care, which was not traditionally expected.

The results also suggested that older children provided less financial support than younger children ($b=-20.86$, $p<.05$). Children with higher education provided more financial care than those with lower education ($b=156.64$, $p<.05$). Adult children who migrated with spouse tended to give much more financial support to their elderly parents ($b=318.37$; $p<.01$). Migrated children's financial condition was positively related to how much monetary support received by the elderly respondents ($b= 219.82$, $p<.01$). In other words, migrated children's financial support was based on their own financial conditions. Those with better their financial conditions provided more financial assistance for the elderly parents back in the villages than those with worse financial conditions.

When adding control for children's background variables, the R^2 increased from .119 in Model 3 to .226 in Model 4. This result indicated that Model 4 explained about 10.7% more of the variations among the financial support received by rural elders than Model 3. All in all, Model 4 was the best model used to predict the provision of financial care by migrated children (Model 1: $R^2=.065$; Model 2: $R^2=.087$; Model 3: $R^2=.119$; Model 4: $R^2=.226$).

Chapter Summary

This chapter examined the explanatory power of three theoretical models for elder care—the need-based model, the exchange model, and the bargaining power model—in predicting the amount of financial assistance Chinese rural elders received from their migrated children. The statistical analyses suggested that the exchange model gives the best explanation in terms of the pattern of financial care by the migrated children. The impact of migrated children's gender, age, and socioeconomic conditions were also examined on their provision of financial support to their elderly parents. Six of the proposed hypotheses were rejected; whereas two of them were supported.

[Insert Table 4-5 Here]

The descriptive data and OLS regression analyses from this chapter have brought some interesting yet complicated findings. Migrated children provided financial support to their elderly parents based on exchange service in the family rather than the parents' needs or bargaining power. Elderly women seemed to receive less financial assistance from their migrated children, even though they were in greater need for care compared to men. Poverty in rural China appears to be feminized with the migration of children. Did migrated children provide care because of filial piety? Or did they provide care only when they themselves were in need of exchange from their elderly parents (such as taking care of grandchildren) and when they were in decent financial conditions? It also seems that the patriarchal and patrilineal tradition continues to be practiced by migrated children. Sons continued to bear the major burden of financial care for the elders. How did rural elders respond to such an exchange-based model of elder care by their migrated children? In the next chapter, I will shift my attention to their perception of filial tradition among the receivers of financial care—rural elders. Specifically, the

next chapter attempts to answer the question: has elderly parents' evaluation of migrated children's filial piety changed when financial care is provided in long distance and is based on exchange for support of grandchildren?

Table 4-1: Means, Standard Deviations, and Descriptions for Dependent and Independent Variables

Variable name	Description	Metric	Mean	S.D.
Dependent Variable				
Financial Support	Actual amount of financial support received from each migrated child	A continuous variable measured in RMB	586.39	956.89
Independent Variable				
Age	The respondent's age at the time of survey.	A continuous variable	67.53	6.04
Gender (female)		1=female; 0=male	0.489	0.500
Marital Status	The respondent's marital status in 2003	1=married; 0=not married	0.675	0.468
Number of Children	The number of surviving children in 2003	1=1; 2=2; 3=3; 4=4; 5=5 or more	4.472	1.527
Percentage of children migrated	The percentage of migrated children out of all children	A continuous variable with 1=100%, all children migrated; and 0=no children migrated	.603	.274
Control Variables				
Self-rated health	Elders' self-evaluation of their own health on a 5 point scale	1=very bad ; 5=excellent	2.967	1.103
Living alone	Whether the elderly respondent was living alone at the time of survey	1=yes ; 0=no	0.134	0.341
Elders' own earnings (bargaining power model)	Whether the elders had some self earnings or not in 2003	1=have no self earnings 0= have self earnings	.54	.50
Taking care of grandchildren	Whether the elders were helping raising the child of the migrant child	1=yes; 0=no	0.161	0.367

Table 4-2: Means, Standard Deviations, and Descriptions for Dependent and Independent Variables (Continued)

Variable name	Description	Metric	Mean	S.D.
Migrated child's sociodemographic				
Gender		1=female; 0=male	0.18	0.39
Age			36.04	7.37
Education	The highest education received by the migrated child	1=elementary school and lower; 2=junior high school; 3=senior high school; 4=some college and above	1.64	0.70
Marital status	Whether the child was married in 2003	1=married; 0=not married	0.87	0.34
Number of offspring		A continuous variable	1.58	0.73
Years since first migration		0=less than a year; 1=1-3years; 2=3-5years; 3=5 to 7years; 4=more than 7 years	2.27 (about 6.9 years)	1.48
Times back home per year	Frequencies of visiting home	0=never back; 1=once per year; 2=more than twice per year	1.43	0.66
Financial condition	Elders' evaluation of migrated child's financial condition	1=very difficult; 2=somewhat difficult; 3=sufficient; 4=affluent	2.77	0.67

Table 4-3: T-test of Mean Comparisons across Genders

Variable	Women		Men		
	M	SD	M	SD	T
Widow	.47	.39	.19	.47	-13.8***
Living alone	.18	.38	.09	.29	-5.36***
Taking care of grandchildren	.18	.39	.14	.35	-2.51*
Having no self-earning	.58	.50	.41	.49	-4.51***
Self-rated health	2.76	1.06	3.16	1.1	8.35***
Severe illness	.35	.48	.25	.43	-4.83***
Actual amount of financial support from migrated child	478.40	766.16	691.44	1117.27	4.33***

NOTE: Men=0; Women=1
*p<.01. **p<.05. ***p<.001

Table 4-4: Unstandardized Ordinary Least Squares Regression of Actual Amount of Financial Support Received from Each Migrated Child

	Actual Amount of Financial Care			
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Elders' Socio-demographics				
Gender (female)	-142.18***	-156.38***	-250.63**	-353.41**
Age	-23.59***	-26.97**	-22.78**	-13.61
Marital status	-67.26	-36.03	-57.4	-42.35
Number of children	-94.77***	-130.14***	-129.88***	-121.04**
Percentage of children migrated	-205.53***	-259.50	-298.53	-693.86**
Need-based model				
Self-rated health		42.30	43.90	-45.91
Severe Illness		41.08	68.78	162.80
Living alone		-105.69	-37.29	-33.08
Having self-earning or not (Bargaining Power Model)		-112.29	-150.54	-134.96
Exchange model				
Taking care of grandchildren			607.71***	507.205**
Migrated child's socio-demographics				
Gender				-429.12***
Age				-20.86*
Education				156.64*
Marital status				67.28
Number of offspring				-8.20
Migrate with spouse				318.37**
Years since first migration				-1.70
Times back home per year				0.837
Financial condition				219.82**
Adjusted R^2	.065	.087	.119	.226

Table 4-5. Summary of Hypotheses

Model	Hypothesis	Results
Need-based Model		
	Hypothesis A1: Elderly parents with worse health conditions are likely to receive more care from migrated child those with better health conditions.	Rejected
	Hypothesis A2: Elderly parents with severe illness are likely to receive more care from migrated child those with no severe illness.	Rejected
	Hypothesis A3: Elderly parents who are living alone are likely to receive more care from migrated child.	Rejected
	Hypothesis A4: Elderly parents with less self-earnings are likely to receive more care from migrated child than those with more self-earnings.	Rejected
	Hypothesis A5: Females elders are more likely to receive more financial care from migrated children than male elders.	Rejected
Exchange Model		
	Hypothesis A6: Elders who take care of the migrated child's children (elders' grandchildren) receive more financial support than those who do not.	Supported
Bargaining Power Model		
	Hypothesis A7: Elders' earnings are positively related to adult children's provision of care. In other words, the more self-earning an elder makes, the more care he/she receives from migrated children (Hypothesis A7 predicts opposite outcome than Hypothesis A4).	Rejected
Patrilineal Tradition		
	Hypothesis A8: Elders received more financial help from migrated sons than those from migrated daughters.	Supported

CHAPTER FIVE

RURAL ELDERLY PARENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF MIGRATED CHILDREN'S FILIAL PIETY

This chapter explored rural elderly parents' perceptions of migrated children's filial piety. Specifically, this chapter looked at the elder's evaluation of the children's change in filial piety before and after their migration. As discussed in Chapter 2, filial piety is an important characteristic essential to a virtuous Chinese person. A child may be evaluated as filial or unfilial. Traditionally, to meet of expectation of filial piety, adult children, in particular, sons, were obligated to provide financial, physical and emotional care for their elderly parents. Migration, on the one hand, might increase children's capability of providing financial support for the elderly parents; but on the other hand, it also creates fewer opportunities for physical care and emotional support. Thus, the key questions I asked in this chapter were: 1, Did rural elders perceive their children as less filial, as filial as before, or more filial after their migration? 2, What were the factors affecting their evaluation of migrated children's filial piety?

Methodology

Data

Excluding cases with missing values on independent variables, the operational sample consisted of 1015 elders with 2025 migrated children. This provides for 2,025 separate instances in which to gauge the pattern of each migrated child's filial piety evaluated by their elderly parent. This dataset is large enough to make generalizations about the patterns of filial piety of migrated child provided by their elderly parent[5].

[5] Because each elder was assigned an identification number (see Chapter 3), this allows me to organize siblings by their parents. By organizing migrated children around each elder, this allows me to utilize a statistical technique, clustering, that will eliminate the potential of one elder with many migrated children from biasing the results over those parents with only one migrated child. It also adjusts the standard errors for the potential

Descriptive Statistics

[Insert Table 5-1 and Table 5-2 Here]

Table 5-1 and Table 5-2 presented descriptive statistics for the dependent variable Elders' Evaluation of Migrated Children's Filial Piety and all independent variables. About 2.1% of the migrated children were perceived as less filial than before their migration. The vast majority of the migrated children continued to be considered equally filial as before their migration by their elderly parents. Eighty eight percent of the children were perceived as equally filial or unfilial as before after their migration. About 10.2% of children were perceived as more filial than before migration. The mean score of evaluation of migrated child's filial piety (measured as -1=negative change, 0=no change, 1=positive change) was .081, which is positive. Thus, based on this descriptive analysis, I conclude that Hypothesis B1 is rejected. Rural elders did not evaluate their children's filial piety lower after their migration than before their migration. Rather, most of the elders (88%), reported that migration had no evident effect on their children's filial behavior. A small percentage (about 10%) even perceived an improvement in their children's filial piety after their migration. Only a small fraction (2.1%) of them indicated any decline in their children's filial piety after their migration.

In addition to the variables used in the earlier chapter, five new variables were added in this chapter to understand elders' perceptions of children filial piety. They included: all children migrated, actual amount of financial care received from the migrated child, distance from elderly parents, emotional closeness, frequency of contact, and changes in discussion of important life events. All children migrated was added to examine whether elders who had no child nearby had more negative perception of their migrated children's filial piety than those who had at least one

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relationship that may exist between children (observations). For example, we might expect that the elder's evaluation of one child's filial piety may impact his/her evaluation of another child's filial piety.

child left. About 23.6% of the elders had all of the children migrated; 76.4% of the elders had at least one child left in the village. Actual amount of financial support from the migrated child was examined as a dependent variable in the previous chapter. In this chapter, it was added it as an independent variable to examine the role of financial care in shaping rural elder's evaluation of migrated children's filial piety.

The Confucian axiom—"Thou shall not travel afar while your parents are still alive"—explains the traditional cultural expectations of filial piety toward children's migration—adult children are expected co-reside or live near their elderly parents. Based on this axiom, distance from elderly parents may be a significant indicator of how rural elders evaluate the migrated children's filial piety. Children who migrated far (for instance, outside of the province) might be considered much less filial than other children who migrated within accessible distance. Among all migrated children, 14.2% migrated within the county; 22.82% migrated within the province. 62% of the rural adult children migrated outside of the province where their elderly parents resided.

Emotional closeness and frequency of contact were added as independent variables to examine the role of emotional care in shaping rural elder's evaluation of migrated children's filial piety. About 5.46% of the migrated children were perceived by their elderly parents as more emotional distant after their migration. The majority of the migrated children (70.81%) were evaluated as having no change in terms of emotional closeness with their elderly parents. About 23.73% of the migrated children were surprisingly reported by their rural elders as emotionally closer after their migration. The mean of the independent variable emotional closeness was 2.183 on a 3 point scale. Frequency of contact measured how often the migrated children contacted their elderly parents. This measure was also viewed as emotional care

provided by the migrated children. The rural elders perceived that 10.37% of the migrated children had no contact at all. Roughly 30% % of the children were reported to contact their elderly parents sometimes. About 60% of the migrated children contacted their elderly parents often, based on the rural elders' report.

The independent variable—changes in discussion of important life events with elderly parents—measured whether rural elders' authority and respect were maintained after their children's migration. Respecting parents' authority was an extremely important aspect of the traditional expectations of filial piety. However, this expectation was reported to be declining in urban China (Whyte, 1990). This study inquired whether rural elders experienced similar decline in their authority. In this study, about 5.05% of the migrated children were reported to discuss important life events much less often than before migration. According to Table 5-2, about 15.01% of the migrated children were reported to discuss important life events less often than before migration. The majority (about 78.32%) of the migrated children continued to discuss life events with their parents at the same level of frequency as before migration. Only 1.62% of the migrated children were perceived as discussing life events more frequently than before migration.

Zero-Order Correlation

[Insert Table 5-3 Here]

The zero-order correlation matrix of the dependent variable and key independent variables is shown in Table 5-3. As shown, there was a positive correlation between evaluation of migrated child's filial piety and actual amount of financial support provided by migrated child (.081). Migrated daughters were evaluated higher than migrated sons (.041). Levels of emotional closeness with migrated child had a positive correlation with the evaluation of

migrated child's filial piety (.34). Frequency of contact also had a positively correlation with evaluation of migrated child's filial piety. The correlation results suggested that both financial support and emotional support were positively correlated to the evaluation of migrated child's filial piety.

According to Table 5-3, "all children migrated" and "the percentage of children migrated" had a correlation at .696 ($p<.001$). Such a magnitude of correlation between these two variables, though expected, is relatively high. However, these two variables indicate different theoretically meanings in terms of filial piety. The "percentage of children migrated" suggests the impact of having some children nearby; whereas "all children migrated" suggests the impact of having no child left in the village. To fully understand the differing impact of having some children nearby and having no children nearby on rural elders' perceptions of filial piety, I decided to run separate regression analyses alternating these two variables in the regression model.

When putting "all children migrated" in the regression, it appeared to have no significant relationship with the elder's evaluation of migrated child's filial piety. Such a result suggested that having no child nearby did not have a significant impact on rural elder's evaluation of children migrated. On the other hand, "the percentage of children migrated" appeared to have a strong significant relationship with the dependent variable. The result suggests that "percentage of children migrated" is a better predictor of the dependent variable. Thus, for the purpose of this research, only the regression with variable "percentage of children migrated" would be shown later in regression analysis.

The Model

When the dependent variable—Evaluation of Migrated Children's Filial Piety—is categorical, it is appropriate to use an ordered logit model. However, Brant test results presented in Table 5-4 demonstrated that four independent variables violated the parallel regression assumption. Violations were found for Elder's Education, Migrated Child's Age, Frequency of Contact, and Changes in Discussions of Important Life Events with Elderly Parents. In order to allow for the relaxation of the parallel regression assumption with regard to these four variables, I used a partial generalized ordered logit model (Liao, 1994). This model allowed me to show the unequal impact of the independent variable on and across all categories of the dependent variable.

Results

Coefficients

[Insert Table 5-5 Here]

The results of the coefficients from the partial generalized order logit regression on Evaluation of Migrated Child's Filial Piety are presented in Table 5-5. As shown in the table, Elder's Gender had a significant relationship with the dependent variable; such a result is also consistent across all categories of the dependent variable (b=-.641). It showed that female elderly parents tended to view migrated child as less filial than male elders. Percentage of Children Migrated was negatively related to elder's evaluation of migrated child's filial piety. Such a result is significant and consistent across all categories of the dependent variable (b=-1.412, p<.01). The more children were migrated, the more likely the elderly parent gave negative evaluations of filial piety to his/her migrated children. Older elders also seemed to be more likely than younger elders to hold a negative view of their migrated children's filial piety.

The older an elder became, the more likely he/she would perceive his/her migrated children as becoming less filial. This result is significant and consistent across all categories of the dependent variable (b=-.057, p<.05).

Another important independent variable—Actual Amount of Financial Care Received from the Migrated Child—was found to have positive relationship with elder's evaluation of the migrated child. Such a result is significant and consistent across all categories of the dependent variable as well (b=.0003, p<.01). The reason that the coefficient seemed to be quite small was due to the measurements of the independent variable—amount of the financial care in RMB. Thus, Hypothesis B_3 was supported—Elderly parents' evaluations of migrated children's filial piety are positively related to migrated children's financial care.

Migrated Child's Gender had a positive relationship with the elderly parent's evaluation of filial piety. Such a result was significant and consistent across all categories of the dependent variables (b=.633, p<.01). The result showed that migrated daughters on average received .633 point higher on their filial piety score; migrated sons were perceived as less filial after migration. Based on this result, Hypothesis B_2 was supported—migrated sons tended to be evaluated lower than migrated daughters.

Emotional closeness appeared to have a positive relationship with the elder's evaluation of the migrated child's filial piety. Such a result is significant and consistent across all categories of the dependent variable (b=1.825, p<.000). Apparently, emotional support presented a positive effect on the elders' evaluation of filial piety for the migrated child. Thus, Hypothesis B_4 was supported.

Frequency of contact seemed to be significant only when predicting whether elders had negative evaluation or evaluation of no change in terms of their migrated children's filial piety.

According to Table 5-5, migrated children who contacted their parents more are more likely to be perceived as equally filial as before migration. Migrated children who contacted their parents less often were more likely to be evaluated as less filial than before migration (b=.726, p<.05). Thus, Hypothesis B_5 was partially supported.

The Change in Discussing Important Life Events with Elderly Parents was also significant only when predicting whether elders perceived children as less filial or as filial/unfilial as before. According to Table 5-5, migrated children who discuss life events as often as before or more often were more likely to receive an evaluation of no change in terms of their filial piety; whereas migrated children who discuss life events less often than before were more likely to receive an evaluation of less filial than before (b=.658, p<.05). Thus, Hypothesis B6 was partially supported.

Lastly, elder's education also appeared to be significant only when predicting whether elders have negative evaluations or evaluation of no change in terms of their migrated children's filial piety. In this case, elders who had no formal education were more likely to perceive their migrated children as filial as before their migration. Elders who had some formal education tend to perceive their migrated children less filial than before migration. (b=-1.213, p<.05).

Probabilities

Along with the coefficients, odds ratios were also presented in Table 5-5. However, it is more intuitive to interpret partial generalized ordered logit results in terms of predicted probabilities. Predicted probabilities give more nuances to the above results from the partially generalized order regression model. Therefore, discussion of regression results was further presented in these terms.

[Insert Table 5-6 Here]

Demographic Backgrounds

Results from Table 5-6 showed that Elder's Age, Gender, and Percentage of Children Migrated had a strong impact across both categories and all had statistical significance. Holding all other variables constant at their means, the probability of female elders giving a negative evaluation of her migrated children's filial piety was 88.7% more than that of male elders; the probability of female elders giving an evaluation of no change was 4.3% more than that of male elders; and the probability of female elders giving a positive evaluation was 44.8% less than that of male elders.

For every 6 year (1 standard deviation) increase in the elder's age, the probability of him/her giving a negative evaluation to the migrated child increased by 50%, the probability of giving an evaluation of no change increased by 27.7%, and the probability of giving a positive evaluation decreased 8.7%.

A 27.4% increase in the percentage of children migrated leaded to an increase of 46.7% in probability of giving negative evaluation, a 5.2% increase in probability of giving no change evaluation, and a 28.5% decrease in probability of giving a positive evaluation that children became more filial after migration.

Education was found to be significant only when predicting a negative evaluation and a no change evaluation. The probability of elders with some formal education giving a negative evaluation was 220% less than that of elders with no formal education. The probability of elders with some formal education giving a no change evaluation was 1.5% more than that of elders with no formal education.

Financial Care

Results from Table 5-5 showed that Actual Amount of Financial Care Received had a strong impact across both categories and had a statistical significance at a .01 level. Results from Table 5-6 demonstrated that for one standard deviation (965.89 RMB, roughly 138.0 US Dollars) increase in the amount of financial care received, the probability of an elder giving a negative evaluation of the migrated child decreases 49.4%, the probability of an elder giving a no change evaluation decrease 1.8%, and most evidently, the probability of an elder giving a positive evaluation increased 29.0%.

Emotional Care

Holding all other variables constant at their means, for every .50 (one standard deviation of variable emotional closeness) increase in the level emotional closeness, the probability of an elder giving a negative evaluation decreased 52.9%, the probability of an elder giving a no change evaluation increased 21.6%, and the probability of him/her giving a positive evaluation of more filial increased 161.5%. Such a result was statistically significant across all categories at a .001 level.

For every .68 increase (one standard deviation) in the frequency of contact, the probability of an elder giving a negative evaluation decreased 82.9% and the probability of giving a no change evaluation increased 8.4%. Such a result was only statistically significant across the categories of no change and negative change evaluations. Increases in the frequency of contact did not have statistically significant impact on elders' evaluation of positive change. In other words, more contact did not necessarily translate to elders' positive evaluation of children's filial piety.

Parental Authority

For every .65 increases in the score of "Discussing Life Events," the probability of an elder giving a negative evaluation of less filial decreased by 16.7% and the probability of giving a no change evaluation decreased 4.3%. Such a result was only statistically significant across the categories of no change and negative evaluations. Increases in discussing life events did not necessarily lead to a positive parental evaluation of children's higher levels of filial piety.

Chapter Summary

This chapter explored rural elders' cultural expectation towards migrated children's filial piety. The key questions tackled in this chapter were: 1. How has migration changed rural elder's perception of children's filial piety? 2. What are the factors shaping their perceptions, financial support, emotional support, or both? The results from the statistical analyses are rather straightforward. Three of the proposed hypotheses are supported. Two of them are partially supported. Only one hypothesis is rejected. Table 5-7 provides a summary of the results for the hypothesis tests.

[Insert Table 5-7 Here]

The descriptive statistics showed that majority of the rural elders continued to hold the same evaluation of their children's filial piety before and after they migrated. Migration seemed to have little influence on elderly parents' perceptions of the children's filial behavior. Most of the elders continued to view their children as filial. Emotional support and financial support stood out to be two important factors for elders to give a no change or a positive evaluation toward their migrated children. More care, emotional or financial, led to better evaluations. Taking into consideration rural elders' poverty and the fact that most rural elders did not have

any self-earning at all, I expected to see the positive relationship between remittance and evaluation of filial piety.

Results regarding emotional support were striking and interesting. They deserve more attention from scholars. Previous research has focused mostly on the financial needs of Chinese rural elders and ignored their emotional needs. This finding pointed to greater attention to the importance of emotional support for rural elders.

I am also drawn by two kinds of gender difference: 1. Female elders tended to give more negative evaluation toward migrated children; 2. Daughters tended to receive more positive evaluations. How were these two findings related to the findings from Chapter Four—female elderly were in more disadvantaged position; migrated daughters, unexpectedly, were sending remittance to elderly parents? In the discussion chapter, I provided more detailed interpretations for the links between these findings across the two chapters.

With a relatively unchanged or even improved perception of children's filial piety after their migration, more questions arise. When expectations are met, people tend to be satisfied. Was it the case for the rural elders? In the next chapter, I explored rural elders' wellbeing, in particular, their life satisfaction when their children were migrated.

Table 5-1: Descriptive Statistics of Evaluation of Migrated Child's Filial Piety by Elderly Parents

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev	Min	Max
Evaluation of Migrated Child's Filial Piety	.081	.341	-1	1
Elder's Gender (Female)	.489	.500	0	1
Elder's Age	67.53	6.041	54	91
Elder's Education	.346	.476	0	1
Elder's Marital Status	.675	.468	0	1
Number of Children	4.472	1.527	1	10
Percentage of Children Migrated	.603	.274	.1	1
All Children Migrated	.236	.425	0	1
Elder's Self-rated Health	2.967	1.103	1	5
Severe Illness	.296	.457	0	1
Live Alone	.134	.341	0	1
Actual Amount of Financial Care Received from the Migrated Child	586.386	965.889	0	10000
Migrated Child's Gender (Female)	.182	.386	0	1
Migrated Child's Age	36.044	7.451	13	66
Times visiting home in 2003	1.265	.625	0	2
Distance from Elderly Parents	2.489	.730	1	3
Length of Migration	6.849	6.128	.1	42
Emotional Closeness	2.183	.509	1	3
Frequency of Contact	2.497	.676	1	3
Changes in Discussion Important Life Events with Elderly parents	-.235	.560	-2	1

Table 5-2: Descriptive Results of Dependent Variables and Key Independent Variables

Variables	*Percent*	*N.*
Evaluation of Migrated Child's Filial Piety		
Less filial	2.1%	43
As filial as before	87.7%	1800
More filial	10.2%	209
Emotional Closeness		
More distant	5.5%	112
No difference	70.8%	1453
Closer	23.7%	485
Frequency of Contact		
No contact	10.4%	213
Some contact	29.6%	607
Frequent contact	60.1%	1234
Changes in Discussion Important Life Events with Elderly parents		
Large decline	5.1%	103
Small decline	15%	306
No difference	78.3%	1597
Increase	1.6%	33

Table 5-3: Zero-Order Correlation Matrix of Dependent Variable and Key Independent Variables

	Evaluation of Migrated Child's Filial Piety	Actual Amount of Financial Support	Migrated Child's Gender	Percent of Children Migrated	All Children Migrated	Level of Emotional Closeness	Frequency of Contact	Changes in Discussion of Important Life Events
Evaluation of Migrated Child's Filial Piety	1.000							
Actual Amount of Financial Support	.081**	1.000						
Migrated Child's Gender	.041**	-.083**	1.000					
Percent of Children Migrated	-.058**	-.057*	.236**	1.000				
All Children Migrated	.047	.106**	.173**	**.696****	1.000			
Level of Emotional Closeness	.337**	.056*	.016	.064**	.051*	1.000		
Frequency of Contact	.152**	.152**	.077**	.103**	.081**	.274**	1.000	
Changes in Discussion of Important Life Events	.021	.036	.025	.005	.044*	.089**	.141**	1.000

**. Correlation is significant at the .01 level
*. Correlation is significant at the .05 level

Table 5-4: Brant Test Results for Ordered Logit Model of Evaluation of Migrated Child's Filial Piety by Elderly Parents

Variable	Chi²
Elder's Gender (Female)	0.80
Elder's Age	3.19
Elder's Education	9.59**
Elder's Marital Status	1.24
Number of Children	0.42
Percentage of Children Migrated	0.14
Elder's Self-rated Health	0.39
Severe Illness	2.63
Live Alone	0.49
Actual Amount of Financial Care Received from the Migrated Child	1.92
Migrated Child's Gender (Female)	0.83
Migrated Child's Age	2.76+
Times visiting home in 2003	0.71
Distance from Elderly Parents	0.11
Length of Migration	2.89
Emotional Closeness	2.54
Frequency of Contact	5.34*
Changes in Discussing Important Life Events with Elderly parents	4.03*

+p<.10, *<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001. Significance represents a violation of the parallel regression assumption.

Table 5-5: Coefficients of Partial Generalized Ordered Logit Regression for Evaluation of Migrated Child's Filial Piety by Elderly Parents (*xiao*)

Variable	-1→0	-1→0 Odds Ratio	0→1	0→1 Odds Ratio
Constant	2.934	-	2.267	-
Elder's Gender (Female)	-.641*	.546	-.641*	.546
Elder's Age	-.057*	.941	-.057*	.941
Elder's Education	-1.213*	.306	.096	1.046
Elder's Marital Status	-.290	.751	-.290	.751
Number of Children	-.103	.908	-.103	.908
Percentage of Children Migrated	-1.412**	.194	-1.412**	.194
Elder's Self-rated Health	.070	1.067	.070	1.067
Severe Illness	.078	1.030	.078	1.030
Live Alone	.114	1.183	.114	1.183
Actual Amount of Financial Care Received from the Migrated Child	.0003**	1.000	.0003**	1.000
Migrated Child's Gender (Female)	.633**	1.891	.633**	1.891
Migrated Child's Age	.027	1.029	.008	1.008
Times visiting home in 2003	.155	1.168	.155	1.168
Distance from Elderly Parents	.147	1.152	.147	1.152
Length of Migration	.032	1.035	.032	1.035
Emotional Closeness	1.825***	6.158	1.825***	6.158
Frequency of Contact	.726*	2.065	.173	.843
Changes in Discussion Important Life Events with Elderly parents	.658*	1.944	.214	.801

N=1015 clusters
Pseudo R^2=.169
Chi^2=110.12***
+<.10, *<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001.
-1=negative change, less filial; 0=no change; 1=positive change, more filial

Table 5-6: Absolute Changes in Probabilities of Evaluation of Migrated Child's Filial Piety by Elderly Parents (*xiao*) for Partially Generalized Ordered Logit Regression Coefficients

Independent Variable	-1	0	1
Elder's Gender (Female)	.005 (88.7%)	.038 (4.3%)	-.043 (-44.8%)
Elder's Age	.001 (50%)	.066 (27.7%)	-.066 (-8.7%)
Elder's Education	-.011 (-220%)	.014 (1.5%)	- -
Percentage of Children Migrated	.001 (46.7%)	.044 (5.2%)	-.045 (-28.5%)
Actual Amount of Financial Care Received from the Migrated Child	-.004 (-49.4%)	-.016 (-1.8%)	.018 (29.0%)
Migrated Child's Gender (Female)	-.004 (-46.4%)	-.045 (-5.0%)	.050 (79.7%)
Emotional Closeness	-.154 (-52.9%)	.152 (21.6%)	.002 (161.5%)
Frequency of Contact	-.037 (-82.9%)	.072 (8.4%)	- -
Changes in Discussion Important Life Events with Elderly parents	-.001 (-16.7%)	-.004 (-4.3%)	- -

For continuous and ordinal Variables this represents an increase of 1 standard deviation, for dichotomous variables it represents a one unit change from 0 to 1 with all other variables held equal to their means. Variables that failed to achieve statistical significance in the model are excluded from this table.

-1=negative change, less filial; 0=no change; 1=positive change, more filial

Table 5-7: Summary of Hypotheses

Variables Examined	Hypothesis	Results
Cultural Expectations		
	Hypothesis B1: The elders tend to evaluate children's filial piety lower after their migration than before their migration.	Rejected
	Hypothesis B2: Migrated sons' filial piety tends to be evaluated lower than migrated daughters' filial piety.	Supported
Financial Care		
	Hypothesis B3: Elderly parents' evaluations of migrated children's filial piety are positively related to migrated children's financial care	Supported
Emotional Care		
	Hypothesis B4: Elderly parents' evaluations of migrated children's filial piety are positively related to children's frequency of contact with them.	Partially Supported
	Hypothesis B5: Elderly parents' evaluations of migrated children's filial piety are positively related to the levels of emotional closeness with their children.	Supported
Parental Authority		
	Hypothesis B6: Elderly parents' evaluations of migrated children's filial piety are positively related to children's respect of elders' authority after migration	Partially Supported

CHAPTER SIX

RURAL ELDERS' LIFE SATISFACTION

Having understood the exchange-based pattern of financial elder care in rural families and rural elders' perception of filial piety, I came to gain an in-depth understanding of Chinese rural elders' wellbeing—were they satisfied with their current life when children were migrated? The answer to this question is probably the ultimate goal in social gerontological research. This chapter delved into various aspects of elders' lives and examined the factors that influenced their life satisfaction. Previous studies have shown how financial adequacy, adherence to the traditional value of filial piety, and community support could affect urban elders' sense of wellbeing (Antonucci et al., 1997; Chen & Silverstein, 2000; Kehn, 2005; Krause et al., 1994; Lee & Chi, 1990; Mjelde-Mossey et al., 2006; Oxam et al., 1992). This chapter examined the impact of these factors within the social context of massive rural-urban migration in China. As the last finding chapter of this dissertation, this chapter also served to sum up the "storyline" by combining the results from the previous two chapters—financial provision for the elders and elders' evaluation of migrated children's filial piety—to further explore the direct and indirect impact of rural-urban migration on Chinese rural elders' lives.

Methodology

Data

Because there are missing values for some independent variables, the operational sample included 1,006 elders with 2,027 migrated children. This provides for 2,027 separate instances in which to gauge each parent's life satisfaction with respect to each migrated child. This dataset

is large enough to make generalizations about the patterns of the elder's life satisfaction influenced by each migrated child's behaviors (such as financial care, emotional care, etc.)[6].

Descriptive Statistics

[Insert Table 6-1 and Table 6-2 Here]

Table 6-1 and Table 6-2 presented descriptive statistics for the dependent variable and all independent variables for the regression model of rural elder's life satisfaction. On a 4-point scale, the average score of life satisfaction among the elderly respondents was 3.017. Very few elders (1.8%) perceived their life as "very unsatisfied"; Roughly 11% of elders perceived life as "somewhat unsatisfied"; the vast majority (69%) of the respondents considered their life as "somewhat satisfied"; 16.4% of elders considered their lives as "very satisfied."

The demographic backgrounds of the rural elders were described in details in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5. Here, I mainly focused on the descriptive data analysis on the new variables. Based on rural elders' report, 78.9% their migrated children provided financial support to them, which means 21.1% of rural elderly parents did not receive any financial support from their migrated children. On a 4-point scale, the average score of financial adequacy among the elderly respondents was 2.7. Only a few elders (4.8%) reported their financial condition as "very difficult;" Almost a third (29%) of the elderly respondents reported their financial condition as "somewhat difficult;" Over half (57.1%) of them considered their financial wellbeing as "somewhat adequate;" only 9.1% of them considered their financial condition as "adequate with extra savings."

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[6] Because each elder was assigned an identification number (see Chapter 3), this allows me to organize siblings by their parents. By organizing migrated children around each elder, this allows me to utilize a statistical technique, clustering, that will eliminate the potential of one elder with many migrated children from biasing the results over those parents with only one migrated child. It also adjusts the standard errors for the potential relationship that may exist between children (observations). For example, we might expect the life satisfaction influenced by one child may impact the life satisfaction influenced by another child.

The measurements of emotional support were also provided in Chapter 5. As far as community support is concerned, roughly 1 in 4 (25.8%) elderly respondents reported their relationship with relatives nearby had become more distant since their children's migration; Nearly half (47.4%) of them considered their relationship with relatives had not changed since their children's migration; about 26.7% of them reported their relationships with extend family relatives had improved since their children's migration. Regarding support from neighbors after children's migration, on a 3 point-scale, the average score was 2.244. About 17.6% of the elders reported they did not receive any help from the neighbors; 40.4% received some help from the neighbors; 42% of them received frequent help from the neighbors.

Comparison across Gender

[Insert Table 6-3 Here]

Descriptive results regarding gender differences were shown in Table 6-3. Eighteen percent of female elders were living alone compared to 10% of their male counterparts, and 18% were taking care of grandchildren compared to 14% of men, Over half (58%) of female and 41% of male elders had no self-earning. As far as health is concerned, based on a 5 point scale where 5 refers to excellent health and 1 refers to very poor health, women reported an average of 2.76, which was lower than men's rating of 3.16. Thirty-five percent of the female elders reported they had severe illness in 2003; whereas only 25% of male elders reported severe illness in the same year. Female elders also reported significantly lower levels of financial adequacy than male elders (an average score of 2.6 in comparison to 2.8). Female elders also reported to give lower evaluations to their children's filial piety than male elders, receive less support from neighbors (2.21 compared to 2.27, $p<.05$), and less close to relatives nearby (1.94 compared with 2.07, $p<.001$). Not surprisingly, rural females reported a significantly lower level of life satisfaction

than males (3.00 compared with 3.11, p<.001). These descriptive data echoed the results from Chapter Four regarding feminization of poverty among rural female elders—despite the more vulnerable situations rural female elders faced, they received significant less financial support from migrated children than male elders. As a result, rural females gave lower levels of evaluations to their migrated children and reported lower levels of life satisfaction than rural males.

The Model

[Insert Table 6-4]

Since the dependent variable—Life Satisfaction—is an ordinal variable, it is appropriate to use an ordered logit regression model. However, Brant test results presented in Table 6-4 demonstrate that five independent variables violate the parallel regression assumption. Violations were found for Elder's Gender, Number of Children, Live Alone, Take Care of Grandchildren, and Support from Neighbors.

In order to allow for the relaxation of the parallel regression assumption with regard to these four variables, I used a partial generalized ordered logit model. This model allowed me to show the unequal impact of the independent variables on and across all categories of the dependent variables.

Results

Coefficients

[Insert Table 6-5 Here]

I presented results of the coefficients from the partial generalized ordered logit regression on Rural Elder's Life Satisfaction after Children's Migration in Table 6-5. According to the table, "percentage of children migrated" had no statistically significant relationship with the

dependent variable. Such a result was consistent across all four categories. In other words, whether a high percentage of children migrated did not have a significant impact on rural elders' life satisfaction. Thus, Hypothesis C1 was rejected. Rural elders who had a high percentage of children migrated were not necessarily less satisfied with their lives than those with less percentage of children migrated.

Evaluation of migrated child's filial piety also seemed to have no significant impact on the rural elder's life satisfaction. Thus, Hypothesis C2 was also rejected—Rural elders' life satisfaction was not related to their evaluations of migrated children's filial piety.

Whether the elders received financial support from the migrated children also appeared to have no significant relationship with the dependent variable of rural elder's life satisfaction. Thus, Hypothesis C3 was rejected as well—rural elders who received financial support from migrated children were not necessarily more satisfied than those with no financial support from migrated children.

Financial adequacy was a significant predictor of the dependent variable. Elders who perceived their financial conditions as less difficult or more adequate are more likely to have a higher level of life satisfaction. Such a result is consistent across all categories ($b=1.037$, $p<.001$). Based on this result, Hypothesis C4 was supported—financial adequacy is positively related to rural elders' life satisfaction.

As far as emotional support is concerned, the two indicators presented two different results. According to the statistical analysis, Emotional Closeness was not significantly related to rural elders' life satisfaction. Thus, Hypothesis C5 was rejected. However, frequency of contact was positively related to the dependent variable. Rural elders who had more frequent contact with their migrated children report a higher level of life satisfaction than those who had less

frequent contact. Such a result was statistically significant across all categories (b=.534, p<.001). Based on this result, Hypothesis C6 was supported.

When children were away, community support might play an important role in rural elders' lives, especially when they were in need of immediate care and help. This study examined two important aspects of community support in rural China—extended family relatives and neighbors. According to Table 6-5, emotional closeness to relatives nearby was positively related to rural elders' life satisfaction. Such a result was significant across all categories (b=.258, p<.01). Rural elders with closer emotional connection with relatives after their children's migration were more satisfied in their lives. Based on this result, Hypothesis C7 is supported.

According to Table 6-5, the Independent variable "Support from Neighbors" did not demonstrate statistical significance across all categories of the dependent variable—life satisfaction. Increase of neighbors' support did not necessarily mean that elders would move from "very unsatisfied" to "somewhat unsatisfied" or move from "somewhat unsatisfied" to "somewhat satisfied" with their lives (1→2: b=-.562; 2→3: b=.043; both results were not significant). However, the increase of neighbors' support made a significance difference for an elder to move from being somewhat satisfied to being very satisfied (3→4: b=.434, p<.05). These results indicated that for elders who were very unsatisfied or somewhat unsatisfied with their lives, neighbors' support did not make a significant impact on improving their life satisfaction. However, among elders who were somewhat satisfied or very satisfied with their lives, support from neighbors appeared to have a positive impact on their life satisfaction. Based on these findings, Hypothesis C8 was partially support.

Number of children also appeared to be only significant when predicting whether the rural elderly parents were “very unsatisfied” or “somewhat unsatisfied” ($b=.435$, $p<.05$). The more children an elderly parent had, the more likely he/she would be less unsatisfied. Number of children was not significant when predicting whether the rural elderly parents were satisfied or very satisfied.

Rural elders’ health conditions had a significant effect on their life satisfaction. Elders with better self-rated health reported to be less unsatisfied and more satisfied with their lives. Such a result was consistently significant across all categories of the dependent variable ($b=.427$, $p<.001$). Severe illness also had a significant effect on rural elderly parents’ life satisfaction. Elders with severe illness in 2003 reported lower levels of life satisfaction than those with no severe illness. Such a result was consistently significant across all categories of the dependent variable ($b=-.352$, $p<.10$).

The independent variable—Live Alone—appeared to have a negative relationship with the dependent variable of life satisfaction, which indicated that elders who lived alone had lower levels of life satisfaction. However, such a result was only significant from category 1 (very unsatisfied) to category 2 (somewhat unsatisfied) ($b=-1.578$, $p<.01$). In other words, elders who lived alone were more likely to be very unsatisfied than elders who did not live alone.

Lastly, based on Table 6-5, Taking Care of Grandchildren was not significant when predicting the elders being very unsatisfied, somewhat unsatisfied, or somewhat satisfied. However, taking care of grandchildren had a positive impact on the dependent variable when it moved from category 3 (somewhat satisfied) to category 4 (very satisfied). In other words, among the elders who were somewhat satisfied and very satisfied, elders who take care of grandchildren had a higher level of life satisfied than those do not.

Probabilities

Along with the coefficients, odds ratios were also presented in Table 6-5. However, it was more intuitive to interpret partial generalized ordered logit results in terms of predicted probabilities. Predicted probabilities gave more nuances to the above results from the partially generalized order regression model. It is important to note that only variables that achieved statistical significance in the partial generalized ordered logit regression are reported for their probabilities. Therefore, discussion of regression results was further presented in these terms.

[Insert Table 6-6 Here]

Financial Adequacy

According to Table 6-5, financial adequacy had a positive relationship with rural elderly parents' life satisfaction. Results from Table 6-6 indicated that when holding all other independent variables constant at their means, for 1 standard deviation (about .697 point) increase in rural elders' financial adequacy, the probability of rural elders reporting "very unsatisfied" with their lives decreased 87.7%; the probability of rural elders reporting "somewhat unsatisfied" with their lives decreased 73.1%; the probability of them reporting "somewhat satisfied" increased 109.4%; the probability of them reporting "very satisfied" increased 72.2%.

Emotional Care

Frequency of contact had a positive relationship with rural elders' life satisfaction. The more frequent contact their migrated children had with the rural elders, the more satisfied the rural elders were. Results from Table 6-6 also demonstrated more detailed explanations of probabilities across all categories. For 1 standard deviation (.676) of increase in their levels of frequency of contact, the probability of the rural elders reporting "very unsatisfied" decreased 73.4%; the probability of the rural elders reporting "somewhat unsatisfied" decreased 66.6%; the

probability of them reporting “somewhat satisfied” increases 17.6%; and the probability of them reporting “very satisfied” increases 39%.

Community Support

Based on results from Table 6-5, Closeness to Relatives Nearby had a positive relationship with the dependent variable. According to Table 6-6, when holding all other independent variables constant at their means, with one standard deviation (.725) increase on the level of closeness to relatives nearby, the probability of the rural elders reporting “very unsatisfied” decreased 65.4%; the probability of them reporting “somewhat unsatisfied” decreased 61.7%; the probability of them reporting “somewhat satisfied” increased 66.2%; and the probability of them reporting “very satisfied” increased 37.2%. Having a close relationship with relatives nearby had a great impact on decreasing dissatisfaction and increasing life satisfaction among rural elders.

Support from Neighbors was only found to have a significant effect on rural elders’ life satisfaction from category 3 “somewhat satisfied” to category “very satisfied.” According to Table 6-6, when holding all other independent variables constant at their means, with one standard deviation (.732) increase in help from neighbors the probability of the rural elders reporting “somewhat satisfied” increased 44.5%; the probability of them reporting “very satisfied” increases 151.9%. Having help from neighbors played an important role on increasing rural elders’ life satisfaction when their children were migrated.

Health Conditions

Self-rated Health was found to be positively related to rural elders’ life satisfaction. based on Table 6-6, when holding all other independent variables constant at their means, with other standard deviation (1.103) increase in rural elders’ self-rated health, the probability of them

reporting “very unsatisfied” decreased 71.6%; the probability of them reporting “somewhat unsatisfied” decreased 65.1%; the probability of them reporting “somewhat satisfied” increases 15.2%; and the probability of them reporting “very satisfied” increases 30%.

Severe illness was also found to have a significant effect on rural elder’s life satisfaction. When holding all other independent variables constant at their means, the probability of rural elders with severe illness reporting “very unsatisfied” was 31.9% higher than that of elders with no severe illness. The probability of those with illness reporting “somewhat unsatisfied” was 27.5% higher than those with no illness. The probability of those with illness reporting “somewhat satisfied” is 1.3% lower than those with no illness; and the probability of those with illness reporting “very satisfied” was 38% lower than those with no illness.

Number of Children, Living Alone, and Taking Care of Grandchildren

According to Table 6-5, number of children was only partially significant in relation to rural elders’ life satisfaction. Table 6-6 showed that for one standard deviation (1.527) increase in the number of children a rural elder had, the probability of him/her reporting “very unsatisfied” decreased 85.3%; the probability of him/her reporting “somewhat unsatisfied” decreased 57.3%. However, having more children did not have any impact in improving rural elders’ life satisfaction.

Living alone was found to be only partially significant in relation to rural elders’ life satisfaction. Table 6-6 showed that when holding all other independent variables constant at their means, the probability of rural elders who lived alone reporting “very unsatisfied” was 37.9% higher than those who did not live alone; the probability of rural elders who lived alone reporting “somewhat unsatisfied” was 32.7% higher than those who did not live alone.

Taking Care of Grandchildren was also found to be partially related to rural elders' life satisfaction. According to table 6-6, for rural elders who did take care of their grandchildren, their probability of reporting "very satisfied" was 84.7% higher than those who did not take care of grandchildren.

Chapter Summary

This chapter explored rural elderly parents' life satisfaction after their children migrated. As the last finding chapter, this chapter's statistical analysis attempted to pull the results from Chapter Four and Chapter Five to gain a coherent understanding of Chinese rural elders' living conditions after their children's migration. The key questions answered in this chapter are: 1) How was life satisfaction among rural elders? Who were more satisfied and unsatisfied? ; 2) what were the roles of financial condition, emotional care, evaluation of migrated children's filial piety and community support in influencing rural elders' life satisfaction? Results from the statistical analysis were rather complicated. Five of the proposed hypotheses were rejected. Three of them were supported. One of them was partially supported. Table 6-7 provided a summary of the hypothesis tests.

[Insert Table 6-7 Here]

Descriptive results showed that the majority of the elders seemed to be satisfied with their lives when their children were away and most unlikely to provide physical support. Having children staying back home did not necessarily mean that elderly parents have higher levels of life satisfaction. Elders with all children migrated or most children migrated were not necessarily less satisfied than those with some children staying back home. Evaluation of migrated children's filiality also did not present a significant impact on their life satisfaction. The question rises. If it was not about the children's physical locations (home or migrated), then what

were the key factors? Results from this chapter presented at least four important indicators—financial adequacy/wellbeing, elder's health conditions, emotional care from children, and importantly, community support from extended family and neighbors. Again, this chapter echoed findings from chapter five—the importance of emotional support from migrated children.

The most important implication of these findings was probably the crucial roles that social and economic conditions in rural China played in shaping the elders' lives. Very often, most attention was paid to the relationship between the migrated children and elders, in particular, how much money the elders received from their children. However, findings from these two chapters revealed that social, economic, and community environment of the villages where rural elders reside deserve more attention. Was the remittance enough for elders to survive or enjoy a relatively adequate life, especially with rising cost of living in China right now? How about health care system in rural China? Was regular health care and medical treatment for severe illness accessible and affordable to rural elders? One of the most striking findings of this chapter was how important community support could be for rural elders when their children were far away and maybe unavailable for physical care. In the discussion chapter, these questions and interesting findings were addressed and analyzed with reference to previous research and social policies in China.

Table 6-1: Descriptive Statistics of Rural Elder's Life Satisfaction after Children's Migration

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev	Min	Max
Elder's Life Satisfaction after children's Migration	3.017	.596	1	4
Elder's Gender (Female)	.489	.500	0	1
Elder's Age	67.53	6.041	54	91
Elder's Education	.346	.476	0	1
Elder's Marital Status	.675	.468	0	1
Number of Children	4.472	1.527	1	10
Percentage of Children Migrated	.603	.274	.1	1
All Children Migrated	.236	.425	0	1
Elder's Self-rated Health	2.967	1.103	1	5
Severe Illness	.296	.457	0	1
Live Alone	.134	.341	0	1
Take Care of Grandchildren	.161	.367	0	1
Whether migrated children give money	.789	.408	0	1
Financial adequacy in 2003	2.705	.697	1	4
Emotional Closeness	2.183	.509	1	3
Frequency of Contact	2.497	.676	1	3
Evaluation of migrated child's filial piety	.081	.341	-1	1
Closeness to Relatives Nearby	2.009	.725	1	3
Support from Neighbors	2.244	.732	1	3

Table 6-2: Descriptive Results of Dependent Variables and Key Independent Variables

Variables	*Percent*	*N.*
Levels of Life Satisfaction		
Very Unsatisfied	1.8%	37
Somewhat Unsatisfied	11%	228
Somewhat Satisfied	69%	1402
Very Satisfied	16.4%	336
Financial Adequacy		
Very difficult	4.8%	97
Somewhat Difficult	29%	588
Somewhat adequate	57.1%	1157
Adequate with extra savings	9.1%	185
Evaluation of Migrated Child's Filial Piety		
Less filial	2.1%	43
As filial as before	87.7%	1800
More filial	10.2%	209
Closeness to Relatives Nearby		
More distant	25.8%	381
Same as before	47.4%	699
Closer	26.7%	394
Support from Neighbors		
No help	17.6%	356
Some help	40.4%	817
Frequent help	42%	850

Table 6-3: T-test of Mean Comparisons across Genders

Variables	Women		Men		
	M	SD	M	SD	t
Life Satisfaction	3.00	.02	3.11	.02	3.70***
Percentage of Children Migrated	.58	.01	.63	.01	3.91
Living Alone	.18	.38	.09	.29	-5.36***
Taking Care of Grandchildren	.18	.39	.14	.35	-2.51*
Having No Self-earning	.58	.50	.41	.49	-4.51***
Self-Rated health	2.76	1.06	3.16	1.1	8.35***
Severe Illness	.35	.48	.25	.43	-4.83***
Whether Migrated Children Give Money	.80	.01	.79	.01	.936
Financial Adequacy	2.6	.02	2.8	.02	6.73***
Emotional Closeness	2.17	.02	2.19	.02	1.01
Frequency of Contact	2.48	.02	2.51	.02	1.21
Evaluation of Filial Piety	.05	.01	.11	.01	3.56***
Support from Neighbors	2.21	.02	2.27	.02	1.85*
Closeness to Relatives Nearby	1.94	.03	2.07	.02	3.34***

NOTE: Men=0; women=1
*p<.01. **p<.05. ***p<.001

Table 6-4: Brant Test Results for Ordered Logit Model of Rural Elderly Parents' Life Satisfaction after Children's Migration

Variable	Chi^2
Elder's Gender (Female)	5.52+
Elder's Age	2.03
Elder's Education	1.87
Elder's Marital Status	2.26
Number of Children	8.43**
Percentage of Children Migrated	6.14
Elder's Self-rated Health	0.30
Severe Illness	2.34
Live Alone	10.79**
Take care of Grandchildren	14.79**
Whether migrated children give money	.25
Financial adequacy in 2003	2.07
Emotional Closeness	3.17
Frequency of Contact	2.12
Evaluation of migrated child's filial piety	1.45
Closeness to Relatives Nearby	5.60
Support from Neighbors	7.11*

+p<.10, *<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001. Significance represents a violation of the parallel regression assumption.

Table 6-5: Coefficients of Partial Generalized Ordered Logit Regression for Rural Elderly Parents' Life Satisfaction after Children's Migration

Variable	1→2	1→2 Odds Ratio	2→3	2-3 Odds Ratio	3→4	3→4 Odds Ratio
Constant	-2.296***	-	-5.043***	-	-10.278***	-
Elder's Gender (Female)	-.168	.857	-.168	.857	-.168	.857
Elder's Age	.024	1.026	.024	1.026	.024	1.026
Elder's Education	-.154	.839	-.154	.839	-.154	.839
Elder's Marital Status	.369	1.408	.369	1.408	.369	1.408
Number of Children	.435*	1.493	-.018	1.291	-.135	.656
Percentage of Children Migrated	.092	1.479	.092	1.479	.092	1.479
Elder's Self-rated Health	.427***	1.604	.427***	1.604	.427***	1.604
Severe Illness	-.352+	1.442	-.352+	1.442	-.352+	1.442
Live Alone	-1.578**	.199	-.206	1.291	-.437	.656
Take Care of Grandchildren	-.470	.636	-.492	.611	.682*	1.904
Whether migrated children give money	.018	1.036	.018	1.036	.018	1.036
Financial adequacy in 2003	1.037***	2.795	1.037***	2.795	1.037***	2.795
Emotional Closeness	.267	1.289	.267	1.289	.267	1.289
Frequency of Contact	.534***	1.714	.534***	1.714	.534***	1.714
Evaluation of migrated child's filial piety	.331	1.352	.331	1.352	.331	1.352
Closeness to Relatives Nearby	.258*	.774	.258*	.774	.258*	.774
Support from Neighbors	-.562	.564	.043	1.069	.434*	1.588

N=1006 clusters
Pseudo R^2=.169
Chi^2=110.12***
+p<.10, *<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001.
1=very unsatisfied; 2=unsatisfied; 3= satisfied; 4=very satisfied

Table 6-6: Absolute Changes in Probabilities of Rural Elderly Parents' Life Satisfaction after Children's Migration for Partially Generalized Ordered Logit Regression Coefficients

Independent Variable	1	2	3	4
Number of Children	-.024 (-85.3%)	-.031 (-57.3%)	-	-
Elder's Self-rated Health	-.011 (-71.6%)	-.156 (-65.1%)	.109 (15.2%)	.06 (30%)
Severe Illness	.002 (31.9%)	.025 (27.5%)	-.001 (-1.3%)	-.028 (-38%)
Live Alone	.013 (37.9%)	.029 (32.7%)	-	-
Take Care of Grandchildren	-	-	-	.062 (84.7%)
Financial adequacy in 2003	-.057 (-87.7%)	-.400 (-73.1%)	.418 (109.4%)	.039 (72.2%)
Frequency of Contact	-.012 (-73.4%)	-.170 (-66.6%)	.124 (17.6%)	.058 (39%)
Closeness to Relatives Nearby	-.002 (-65.4%)	-.032 (-61.7%)	.014 (66.2%)	.048 (37.2%)
Support from Neighbors	-	-	.039 (44.5%)	.048 (151.9%)

For continuous and ordinal Variables this represents an increase of 1 standard deviation, for dichotomous variables it represents a one unit change from 0 to 1 with all other variables held equal to their means. Variables that failed to achieve statistical significance in the model are excluded from this table.

1=very satisfied; 2= unsatisfied; 3= satisfied; 4=very satisfied

Table 6-7: Summary of Hypotheses

Variables Examined	Hypothesis	Results
Cultural Expectations		
	Hypothesis C1: Rural elders' life satisfaction is negatively related to the proportion of children who migrated.	Rejected
	Hypothesis C2: Rural elders' life satisfaction is positively related to their evaluations of migrated children's filial piety.	Rejected
Financial Care		
	Hypothesis C3: Rural elders who received financial support from children have higher levels of life satisfaction than those did not receive financial support.	Rejected
	Hypothesis C4: Rural Elders' life satisfaction is positively related to their self-rated financial adequacy.	Supported
Emotional Care		
	Hypothesis C5: Elderly parents' life satisfaction is positively related to the levels of emotional closeness with their children.	Rejected
	Hypothesis C6: Elderly parents' levels of life satisfaction are positively related to children's frequency of contact with them.	Supported
Community Support		
	Hypothesis C7: Rural Elders' life satisfaction is positively related to their levels of emotional closeness to extended family relatives.	Supported
	Hypothesis C8: Rural Elders' life satisfaction is positively related to the levels of support they receive from the neighbors.	Partially Supported

CHAPTER SEVEN

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In the preceding three chapters, findings were extrapolated by statistical analyses of clustered data. This chapter organized and discussed the major findings under three topic headings which directly related to the earlier conceptual propositions in Chapter 3. The discussions provided both contextual explanations and relevant theoretical connections for the major findings. Most importantly, this part of discussion established meaningful theoretical linkages among all the findings from the preceding chapters and thus provides a coherent and systematic explanation on rural elder care practice, rural elders' living conditions, their cultural perception and expectations of filial piety, and their financial and emotional wellbeing within the social context of rural-urban migration.

Migrated Children's Provision of Financial Care for Elderly Parents

The theoretical model of political economy of aging (PEA) suggests that aging and elder care should be discussed with close examination of three levels of factors—the macro-level (the societal dimension), the meso-level (the institutional and organizational dimension), and the micro-level (the individual dimension) of analyses—and in-depth understanding of the role of ideology (Estes et al., 1984; Estes, 2001). Utilizing this theoretical model, Chapter Four included a wide range of independent variables related to rural-urban migration to predict dependent variable—actual amount of financial support by migrated children. These independent variables denote all three levels of factors as well as the role of ideology. For instance, having self-earning or not, health, illness, migrated child's financial condition denote both macro- and meso- levels of socioeconomic contexts where rural elders and migrant workers

were situated. Migrated elder's gender and migrated child's gender were the micro- and ideological dimensions of the social context.

Exchange-Based Financial Care

The modernization theory, according to Goode (1970) posits a negative relationship between modernization and family financial ties. As a society becomes more urbanized and industrialized, the economic ties among family members breaks down. Findings from Chapter 4 seemed to reject this argument. The mass majority of the migrated children provided care to their elderly parents, the economic ties between the young and the old continued to be held strong. As a matter of fact, more than 50% of the elders' main income source came from their migrated children. Such a result echoed findings from previous research (Lee & Xiao, 1998)

However, when more details regarding how financial care were provided, more nuances were revealed which might suggest more complicated implications toward the application of modernization theory in China. Under the big theoretical "umbrella" of PEA, three theoretical models of elder care, were carefully measured and tested in Chapter Four. These models have been widely used in studies of western societies; they include the need-based model, the bargaining power model, and the exchange model. Findings from Chapter Four presented some interesting yet complicated results.

All independent variables measuring the need-based model did not show statistical significance in the model. Self-rated health, severe illness, living alone, and having no self-owning appeared to have no significant relationship with the amount of financial support from migrated child. In other words, rural elders who were in great need of financial support did not necessarily receive more financial support than others. The need-based model was rejected.

The bargaining power model, which was measured by whether or not the elders had self-earning, was also rejected based on the statistical analysis. Whether elders had some self-earning, or bargaining power, did not necessarily receive more financial support. However, when power was defined more broadly by including age and gender, findings revealed that older and female elders, who were more likely to have less bargaining power and authority, tended to receive significantly less financial support than their counterparts.

The exchange model appeared to be the only model that was strongly supported based on the statistical analysis. Elders who helped take care of the migrated child's children received over 500RMB more than those who did not. Results from this chapter seemed to indicate that the motivation of providing financial care for elderly parents was exchange of child care rather than filial piety or compassion over parents who were in need. Results regarding migrated child's demographic backgrounds also seemed to reinforce this result. Children whose financial conditions were better tended to provide more care. The migrated children apparently had the most bargaining power in this process of intergenerational support—how much to give and how to give. They provided support to their elderly parents when they economic conditions allowed and when they needed child care from the elderly parents.

Such a result presented an opposite conclusion from many previous studies in intergenerational financial transfer from children to elderly parents when migration was not taken into consideration. In one of their studies about intergenerational support in both urban and rural China, Xiao and Lee (1998) found that elderly parents' needs strongly influenced financial transfer from adult children. Adult children gave more to their elderly parents if the parents had lower incomes, lower occupational positions, or poor health. In this study, migrated

children presented a more exchange-based rather than need-based pattern of elder care. Has migration changed the patterns of financial care and the practice of filial piety in rural China?

Implication for the Cultural Values of Filial Piety—Is Filial Piety Undergoing Erosion?

The surprising finding of the elder care patterns from Chapter Four posed a serious question—has the traditional values of filial piety undergone erosion as the children migrated to the cities? According to the traditional values of filial piety, a migrated child would be expected to provide financial care to subsidize their unavailability of physical care for frail parents or parents who are in great needs. The results presented a contrasting picture. Elders who were in worse health conditions and living alone did not actually receive any more support from their migrated children. Only elders who provided child care for the migrated children received significantly more financial care. Did this finding suggest that filial piety has declined in the process of rural-urban migration?

However, another important finding, which was not indicated in the finding chapters, may bring another twist into this question. As a matter of fact, migrated children on overage provided significant more financial support than children stayed behind[7]. Migrated children on average gave 586.46 RMB; whereas children stayed home on average gave 257.74RMB. Migrated children gave 328.72RMB more than children stayed back. Three plausible

[7] The original dataset included information regarding the amount of financial support provided by migrated children and non-migrated children respectively. The number of migrated children in the original dataset was 2034; the number of the non-migrated children in original dataset was 1742. Simple descriptive analysis showed that migrated children on overage provided significant more financial support than children stayed behind. Migrated children on average gave 586.46 RMB; whereas children stayed home on average gave 257.74RMB. Migrated children gave 328.72RMB more than children stayed back. However, unfortunately, the original dataset did not include the same amount and types of socioeconomic and demographic backgrounds of the non-migrated children as those of the migrated children. Therefore, for the purpose and design of this dissertation, only the migrated children sample was used throughout three chapters of statistical analysis.

explanations can be proposed: 1. Migrated children were in greater need for exchange of child care than children who stayed back. Therefore, they had to provide more financial support for their elderly parents in exchange for services of child care. 2. Migrated children were more financial capable than children who left behind because of their higher income in urban areas. 3. Migrated children continued to fulfill the traditional obligation of filial piety even though they were far apart from their elderly parents. The traditional values of filial obligations motivated that to give more as their financial conditions improved with migration.

The key questions rose: What was the role of filial piety in the process of exchanging support? Has the traditional value of filial piety undergone modification, or perhaps erosion? According to Sung (1998), filial piety behaviors consist of showing respect for parents, reciprocating support received from parents, harmonizing the family centered around parents, fulfilling filial responsibility, making filial sacrifice, and expressing affection toward parent. Did Chinese migrated children's behaviors of reciprocating child care with financial care fit into Sung's definition of filial piety (1998)?

Or as classic modernization theory suggests, filial piety has declined with the processes of industrialization and modernization; Familial elder care has become a pure reciprocal relationship when the process of urbanization progresses. Or as the new theorists of modernization since the late 1970s point out that filial piety in actuality is not mutually exclusive from modernization and urbanization (So, 1990; Sung, 2000). Filial piety continues to serve as the central value and hold Asian societies such as China together (Sung, 2000; Zhang & Thomas, 1994). The tradition of filial piety may be not conflicted with industrial development and rural-urban migration.

Findings from Chapter Five explored how elders' perception of filial piety has changed since their children's migration. Learning from elders' own evaluation of migrated children's filial behaviors may help shed some light to the questions proposed above. Before moving on to discussing the implication of the findings on filial piety, the following sections focused on analyzing rural economic condition

Poverty among Rural Elders and Consequences of Dependency on Children

China's rapid economic growth has drawn much attention from all over the world. Westerners are constantly amazed by how much commodities they consume on a daily basis are manufactured in China. They are also shocked by how much upscale luxuries were consumed in China every year. Since the Economic Reforms in 1978, China has well maintained a consistent 9.4% economic growth rate per year. It had become an important manufacturer in the global economy. However, while large amount of wealth has been created in urban China, insufficient attention was given to the welfare of rural residents.

Since the economic reform in rural China, mainly the enactment of family responsibility system, rural agricultural productivities have increased in general to a large degree. A few rural regions in China, especially those in the coastal areas such as Jiangsu, Jiejiang, and Guangdong, have become some of the richest areas in China (Kanbur & Zhang, 1999; Ravallion & Jalan, 1999; Yang, 1999). However, for the rural families in hinterlands with limited resources, many still struggle everyday to survive, not to mention surplus crops for extra cash income. Rural areas of China received less than 10% of the total budget of the nation (Yang, 1999). As a result, the nation's leaders now consider the number one economic and social problem to be rural poverty despite the substantial improvement in the living standard of the rural population in recent years.

Rural elders have become the most vulnerable social group in the process of economic reform. Unlike their children, who are young, strong, more educated, and consequently favored by the booming manufacture industry, most Chinese rural elders continue to farm on the land using the very same farming skills passed down through generations. Elderly farmers were set free in the market competition. Although the government has abolished grain tax nation-wide in 2006, farmers are still obligated to sell their grain at a rather low price to the government. After they fulfilled the government quota, they are free to sell their surplus crops in the market with a price protected by the government (Grain Purchasing Regulation, 1998). However, the crops they grow were often just enough to feed the family and turn in the grain quotas to the government. Little is left to be exchange in the market for some self-earning or cash income.

The lack of pensions and health insurance further jeopardized the livelihood and wellbeing of rural elders. Only a small fraction (4.67%) of rural elders lives on pensions (Feng & Xiao, 2007; Giles & Mu, 2007). Many rural elders continued to work in the field until they become too ill or immobile in order to feed themselves. According to 2000 Census Data, 43.4% of Chinese rural elders aged 60 or above continued to participate in farming. As a result, these structural constrains forced rural elders to continue to rely on their children, especially migrated children with relatively higher income, for later life financial support.

Findings from this study may serve as a vivid example of poverty in rural China, especially in those hinterland provinces, such as Anhui, Henan and Hebei. About 54% of the rural elders in this sample did not have any self-earnings. More than 60% of them reported that their main income source came from migrated children, not to include those provided by children still resided in the villages or nearby. Family care continued to serve as the solo elder care system in rural China. Migrated children may bear even more financial care responsibility than

children who stayed behind in the villages, assuming those stayed behind may fulfill more physical care responsibilities.

Feminization of Poverty and "Interlocking System of Oppression"

> "Women do two thirds of the world's work…yet they earn only one tenth of the world income and own less than one percent of the world's property. They are among the poorest of the world's poor"—Barber B. Conable Jr., President of the World Bank, to the 1986 Annual meeting of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund.

Feminization of poverty is a worldwide phenomenon, maybe more so the case in rural Chinese society than any other places in the world. Compared to their urban elders and rural male elders, Chinese female elders in rural areas were probably the most disadvantaged social group. Descriptive data from Chapter Four suggested that rural elderly women in China were indeed situated in the most disadvantaged position—they were much more likely to be widowed, live alone, have no self-earning, have worse health conditions, and experience more illness than elderly men. Elderly women were also more likely to take care of grandchildren than elderly men since child care was historically defined as women's job. Nevertheless, with their greater need for financial support, rural elderly women on average received significantly less remittance from their migrated children than their rural elderly men (Female: 478.4 RMB; male: 691.44 RMB).

The theoretical model of Political Economy of Aging (PEA) provided a useful tool to analyze the phenomenon of feminization of poverty among the respondents in this study and among all rural elders in China. PEA delves into the complex interrelationships among structural factors—such as sex/gender, class, social policy, and the state—and their impact on individual elder's livelihood and wellbeing. This approach is often summarized as the "interlocking system

of oppression" (Estes, 2001, p13). In this section, I will use this concept to discuss how gender, class, the state, and ideology interact with each other as an interlocking system of oppression that deeply impacts individual woman's life in rural China.

PEA suggests that women's socioeconomic status and health in old age is a product of their life experience. Similarly, in this study, Chinese rural women's disadvantaged social, economic, and health conditions was a product of their life-time subordination by the patriarchal family system, gendered social policies, the social transformation of rural-urban migration, and the state.

Traditionally, women were considered secondary citizens compared to men. Such an ideology is deeply embedded in both private and public sectors. The contemporary Chinese society continues to be patriarchal, patrilineal, and patrilocal (Stacey, 1983; Wolf, 1985). Within family, women were taught to follow the rule of "three obediences"—to obey father before marriage, obey husband after marriage, and obey son after husband dies. In this study, almost half of the women were widowed and thus had to be subordinate to their sons. The migrated children may adopt such ideology and provide less financial support for their elderly mothers than fathers.

In the public, land distribution in rural China is still male-centered (Johnson, 1983). Such a gendered policy reinforces rural women's socioeconomic disadvantage. As a result, women are much more likely to have no self-earning than men. Consequentially, they have greater dependency on their children for financial support. Greater dependency on children, combining with their subordinated social and family position, might have contributed to less financial support they received from their migrated children.

In addition, even though mass majority of women had worked or are working in the farming work, Chinese rural women continue to fulfill the responsibility of social reproduction, mainly housework and caregiving. For the elderly women in this study, most of them had experienced several socialist movements that compelled women to participate in the public labor force. All of them had probably participated in farming work throughout their entire lives. However, as they entered old age, they continued to be expected to conduct reproductive work. With adult children's migration, especially younger women's migration, elderly women were often obligated to provide childcare for their grandchildren left behind in the village. Findings in this study suggested that the increased amount of financial support from migrated children might have been the major means of financial resource for elderly women; their financial income came as a result of their childcare provision. Is it possible, then, when elderly women did not provide childcare for their migrated adult children, even when they had the actual need, they might not receive adequate financial support? Indeed, findings in the last chapter did indicate that financial need of the elderly was not a statistically significant factor that influenced migrated children's financial provision for aging parents at home. Putting these two issues together, I would argue, societal level of elder care is merging to be in great need to protect the vulnerable rural elderly women.

Patrilineal Tradition—Continuation and Changes of Gendered Provision of Care

Besides migrated children's differential financial provision for rural elderly women and men, results with regard to the gender of the migrated children were also intriguing. Traditionally, sons, especially the oldest sons were expected to fulfill all the responsibility of financial support for their elderly parents. Daughters, especially married daughters, were not expected to fulfill

any financial obligation to their elderly parents. Daughters often provided emotional support or some supplemental care when needed (Greenhalgh, 1985; Yang, 1996).

Findings from Chapter 4 suggested that migrated sons continued to give significant amount of financial support to their elderly parents (429.12 RMB more than migrated daughters). However, the results also showed that migrated daughters were also giving some financial support to their elderly parents (average 157.25RMB). This suggested that the traditional pattern of old-age support was still dominant, but migration of rural females might have shrunk some of the gender difference.

Studies from urban China may provide some useful insight in analyzing the continuing but changing tradition of old-age support. Scholars found that the traditional old-age support system of reliance on sons may have been largely weakened in urban China. Aging parents in urban areas are as much or more likely to reply on married daughters as married sons (Chen & Adamchak, 1999; Gu et al., 1995). In several realms, daughters may even provide significantly more support than sons. Other research also suggests that most sons and daughters in urban China gave financial support to their parents regularly (Goldstein & Ku, 1993; Guo, 1996; Wang, et al., 1998).

As an important step of urbanization, rural-urban migration may play an important role in "urbanizing" rural old-age support pattern. Although the analyses from the study revealed that the traditional patrilineal pattern of old-age support was still dominant in rural society, out-migration of rural females helped to weaken the gender difference in old age support. Thus, with increasing rural-urban migration and the proportion of no-son families increasing in rural areas caused by "one-child" policy, will the traditional patrilineal pattern of old-age support continue to hold its dominant position? Or could it be weakened and possibly even eliminated, as has

happened in urban China? Could out-migration of rural women on a large scale be a trigger to intensify elder care crisis related to son preference in rural China?

A Summary: Rural-Urban Migration and Familial Elder Care

The above discussion presented some interesting yet complicated implications for rural familial elder care. It seemed that rural-urban migration, on the one hand, reinforced and strengthened the need for familial elder care; and modified the patriarchal and patrilineal traditions of elder care on the other hand.

First, rural-urban migration, to a large extends, deprived rural economy, leading to rural elders' higher level of financial dependency on their migrated children. In some of the hinterland provinces, the huge demand of manufactory labors in urban and coastal areas and the meager government investment for rural development consequently have led to a constant flow of rural-urban migration by young laborers. Rural economic development and agricultural production often have suffered from rural-urban migration, mainly due to the loss of young laborers. It is not uncommon to see acres of the land in rural China being abandoned and undeveloped because of the lack of financial investment and laborers. One of the most direct consequences was the deprivation of rural elders' self-earnings and the stay-back children's ability to provide financial care for the elders. Consequently, the migrated children had to take a large portion of the financial responsibility for their elderly parents.

Second, an informal family support exchange system was thus constructed within the context of the rural-urban migration. Rural-urban migration triggered a stronger bond of intergenerational exchange of support than ever before in China's history. Migrated children were in great need for child care due to their irregular life style and busy work schedule. Whereas rural elderly parents in poverty needed a lot of financial support. Rural-urban

migration created a unique family structure that was rare in the history of Chinese family—grandparents taking care of grandchildren without the presence of the parents. When parents migrated to the urban areas to find more financial resource for the family, they often left both the old and the young at home. The task of taking care of the young was often fulfilled by the old. The long history of patriarchy has defined a gendered division of labor. Elderly women became the "natural" caregivers for the grandchildren left behind. In turn, elderly parents received financial support from their migrated children in return for the child care provided.

Third, rural-urban migration may have shifted the patriarchal power structure in traditional Chinese family and also created more interdependency across generations. Traditionally, under the guideline of filial piety and other Confucian conduct, the elderly parents, especially elderly males, had the most power and controlled most of the resources within the household. Because of the unavailability of rural pension and the lack of health insurance system, rural-urban migration increased migrated children's financial power and decreased the elderly parents' financial power. The financial vulnerability of Chinese rural elders, especially elderly women, led them into a powerless and disadvantaged position in the family. As a result, they may have to exchange their labor of child care in order to receive financial care from migrated children.

Fourth, rural-urban migration may have also shifted the patrilineal tradition of gendered provision of financial care in rural families. Although the results showed that sons continued to fulfill the main obligation of financial support for their parents. Some migrated daughters, who were empowered by their financial status, also sent remittance to their elderly parents. With the increase of no-son families in rural China, the gendered pattern of financial care may be

weakened. As the one-child generation became the major demographic composition of the migrated laborers, the patrilineal tradition may be challenged or even diminish.

The above section provided an in-depth look at the results from chapter Four. Using the theoretical model of PEA and three elder care models, a close examination was conducted to explore the impact of rural-urban migration on financial care among rural elders. The part of discussion have shed some light to some important questions, and also posed some more intriguing questions. One of the most vital questions this chapter left behind is filial piety. With the rejection of need-based model and support of the exchange model, did filial piety indeed still play a role in elder care among familial with migrated children? What was the role of filial piety in the process of intergenerational support exchange between the migrated children and rural elderly parents? Or did the results echo the conclusions from the classical modernization theory that when a traditional society modernizes, the traditional values especially those emphasizing collectivism and altruism such as filial piety diminish whereas individualism rises and became the dominant value? In the next chapter, I will mainly focus on the discussions around filial piety within the context of rural-urban migration. Discussions based on findings from Chapter Five provided valuable insights in exploring the above questions.

Elderly Parents' Perception of Migrated Children's Filial Piety

Stemming from statistical analysis based on Chapter Five, this section of discussion will delve into the deep cultural, social, and theoretical implications of the changing dynamics of filial piety within the context of this vital social transformation of rural-urban migration. Although this section of discussion will be focused on results regarding filial piety, great effort will also be devoted to connect the result of filial piety with the discussion of financial care, which was based on the statistical analysis of Chapter Four. The main goal of this section of

discussion is to disentangle the complicated question raised in the previous section—how is modernization, in this case, rural-urban migration related to the Chinese tradition of filial piety when taking into account both financial and emotional aspects of familial elder care provided by the migrated children. Again, the theoretical model of PEA will be used to guide the analysis throughout this section. Multi-levels of analyses, which include the examination of rural poverty, ideology of gender inequality, rural social and welfare policies, and individual/group characteristics, will be conducted to gain a comprehensive understanding of the changing dynamics of filial piety in rural families.

Migrated But Not Necessary Less Filial

In traditional Chinese society, when an elderly parent was still alive, a child should not travel far. As Confucius taught, "Thou shall not travel far while your parents are still alive." As a matter of fact, a filial child should co-reside with the elderly parent and take care of him/her financially and physically. According to this traditional expectation, in this study, the migrated children would have be condemned by their elderly parents as "less filial" due to their unavailability for physical care and living far apart from the elderly parents. However, results from Chapter Five presented a different picture. Vast majority (87.72%) of the migrated children received the same evaluation of their filial piety score before and after their migration. One in ten (10.19%) migrated children actually receive higher evaluation after compared to before their migration. Only 2.1% of the migrated children were considered as less filial than before their migration. If Confucius were still alive, he would be shocked by these results. Why didn't the rural elderly parents consider migrated children as less filial when they completely betrayed the traditional expectations of filial piety, which have guided Chinese family and society for thousands of years? To answer this question, it is crucial to have an in-depth understanding of

two important aspects of elder care—financial care and emotional care—especially in this situation when physical care was almost inaccessible or even impossible as children migrated to the urban areas. The theoretical perspective of PEA points to having a thorough examination of the social context, which are the situation of poverty and the lack of health care in rural China.

Relating Financial Care to Filial Piety

Based on the results from Partial Generalized Ordered Logit Regression and probability test, the more financial care a migrated child provided to his/her elderly parent, the more likely that he/she would receive an evaluation of being more filial, the less likely that he/she would receive an evaluation of being "less filial." In other words, financial care, how much money the children gave, played a crucial, maybe the utmost role, in determining rural elders' evaluation of their children's filial piety.

Thus, it seemed reasonable to understand why in this study migrated children were receiving relatively positive evaluation of filial piety by their elderly parents. Numerous studies in China and other Asian countries have suggested that the remittance from migrated children often became the main source of income for the entire family in the village (Du, 1997; Li, 2001; Lee & Xiao, 1998). Findings from Chapter four echoed this conclusion. Migrated children indeed provided more financial support than children who stayed back home. Migrated children gave 328.72RMB more than children who stayed back. Connecting findings from these two chapters, it appeared that the increase of financial support provided by migrated children may somehow compensated the lack of physical care and became the most important criteria to evaluate filial piety.

But, why did the rural elders' need for physical care become less important when children migrated? Why, when financial care increased, the rural elders' expectations for

physical care were lowered? Was it because all rural elders were healthy and mobile like the "third agers" in the United States who just didn't need much physical support? Statistical results about the demographics of the elders revealed a rather depressing picture—about 1/3 of the elders had severe illness and about 1/3 of them did not have a very positive outlook at their health conditions. So, what exactly was the reason that rural elderly over-emphasized the value of financial care over the value of physical care?

Taking a closer look at the poverty and inaccessibility of health care system in rural China, one may find the answer. Poverty is rampant and the elders are the most economically disadvantaged social group in rural China. In this study, about 54% of the rural elders in this sample did not have any self-earnings. For those who indeed had some earnings, mostly from farming work and crops selling, their self-earnings could barely cover the basic expenses for survival. The privatization of medical services and inaccessibility of loans for agricultural development left rural elders with no choice but depending on their children completely in financial needs. In this study, more than 60% of the elderly respondents reported that their major source of income came from their migrated children. Therefore, it was why rural elders put so much emphasis on financial support and so little value on the importance of physical care and co-residing with their adult children. As the theoretical model of PEA suggests, it is the structural factors—rural poverty as a consequence of social policies —that may have shaped or changed rural elders' expectations of filial piety.

Exchange-Based Care and Filial Piety

The above analysis provided a structural analysis for the reasons that rural elders continued to hold the same evaluation of filial piety toward their children after their migration. Now let's relate these analyses to the results from Chapter Four—migrated children provided

financial care based on exchange rather than need. As indicated in Chapter Four, it was not those rural elders with bad health conditions, lived alone, or had no self-earnings that received more financial support. Rather, it was the rural elders who provided child care that received the most amount of financial support. Connecting to results from Chapter 5 about the unchanged evaluation of migrated children's evaluation, an important question rise: why didn't the elderly parents perceive their children less filial, when did migrated children provide care based on exchange rather than need?

Again, the theoretical model of PEA can be used to deconstruct the complex social, cultural, and economic factors contributing to this unique situation of intergenerational support in rural China within the context of rural-urban migration. In the above section, a detailed analysis of the rural poverty among the elderly parents was provided. However, it is also extremely important to examine poverty among the migrant laborers. According to Table 4-1, on a 4 point scale, the rural elders evaluated their migrated children's financial condition as 2.77—right in-between "2 difficult" and "3 sufficient." Only 3.4% of the children were reported to have extremely difficult financial condition. Roughly 1 in 5 (22%) of them were reported to have some financial difficulty. Most (64.6%) of the migrated children were considered as only financially sufficient. Only 10% of them were considered to be beyond financial sufficiency and have some extra savings. The migrant laborers, often referred to as "floating population" lived at the very bottom of the social stratification in cities. They had no regular legal status (*Hukou*); this puts them in a "lower class" social status. They had no right to enjoy welfare benefits such as housing, health insurance, child care support, and public education for their children. Rural-urban migration did not fundamentally solve the problem of rural poverty for migrants, even though it did improve rural migrant laborers' living conditions to some extent. Female laborers

also became unavailable for child care at home. The high expenses of child care and public education for their children in the cities became a huge financial burden on the migrant laborers. Having grandparents taking care of grandchildren may have become the most practical and inexpensive way for child care.

As discussed above, rural migrant laborers were facing tremendous structural constraints that might have created many obstacles for them to fulfill the traditional expectations of filial piety. They could not take care of their parents physically and meet all their elderly parents' financial needs due to their own financial situation. Having their elderly parents help with child care might have been a crucial way for the migrant laborers to survive while still fulfilling some of their obligations of filial piety. The interlocking system of poverty among rural elders and poverty among migrant laborers may have led to an interdependent pattern of intergenerational exchange that mutually benefited both parents and children. It is plausible that rural elderly parents continued to value their children's exchange-based financial provision as filial behaviors because they understood their migrated children's difficult financial conditions in the cities and their urgent needs for child support.

Having exhausted the economic constraints that have led migrant children to the exchange model of support, let's turn to understand the cultural and ideological aspects of intergenerational support. As one of the central values of Chinese culture, filial piety, has strictly defined individuals' positions and roles within the family. It is important to note that besides regulating children's respect and care for the old, the tradition of filial piety also clearly articulates the expectations and obligations for the old to fulfill in order to maintain the harmony and stability of the family (Chow, 1999). Traditionally, older men, as the powerful patriarchs, provided advice, knowledge, and wisdom to the young and educate the younger generations such

as grandchildren. Older women, on the other hand, continued to play the affective role by providing childcare for grandchildren, passing on social/family rituals, and maintaining family networks. Essentially, they served as “kin keepers” for the family (Chang, 1999).

Placing these values of filial piety within the context of rural-urban migration, even though migrated children held obligations toward their elderly parents, elderly parents, on the other hand, also held some levels of obligations toward their migrated children. Providing child care has been traditionally considered as a grandparents’, especially elderly women’s responsibility. Thus, it is reasonable to argue that rural elderly parents did not devalue their migrated children’s filial piety because they exchanged child care support for financial support.

Compounding analyses of structural constraints faced by both parents and children and consideration of cultural expectations toward elderly parents, I would argue—*no, the traditional values of filial piety is not undergoing erosion with the rapid process of rural-urban migration*. Rather, providing financial care based on intergenerational exchange is an effective way of coping with financial hardships experienced by both rural elders and migrant laborers. It also echoes with the Confucian expectations of filial piety toward rural elders to maintain the overall stability and continuation in the family when the children are physically unavailable and geographically distant. Within the context of massive rural-urban migration, the traditional values of filial piety is changing, rather than declining.

Emotional Care and Filial Piety

Physical care, financial care, and emotional care have been three of the foremost aspects of filial piety as practiced in Chinese society for thousands of years. When children migrated to urban areas for better job opportunities, physical care became inaccessible or impossible. With the absence of physical care, will financial care and emotional care become more prominent and

important? Based on the above analysis, financial care or children's financial provision played a vital role in the elderly parents' evaluation of migrated children's filial piety. The following discussion will turn to analyzing the role of emotional support in shaping rural elders' perception of migrated children's filial piety.

Statistical analysis from Chapter Five revealed that 70.81% of the migrated children were reported to be emotionally as close as before migration with their elderly parents. Nearly 1 in 4 (23.73%) of the children were reported to have a closer relationship with their elderly parents after their migration. More than 60% of the migrated children were reported to contact their elderly parents frequently. Results from regression analysis indicated that emotional closeness had a positive effect on the elders' evaluation of filial piety for the migrated children. Contact parents less often negatively impacted the elderly parents' evaluation of the children's migration. All in all, this study revealed that emotional support continued to be fulfilled by the migrated children; elderly parents also highly valued the provision of emotional support from their migrated children, especially when the children were geographic distant from them.

Scholars have found that in some highly urbanized Asian countries, such as South Korea and Japan, the expressions of filial piety are now shifting from more economy-based to affection-based (Sung, 2000). Studies in China also predict such a trend in major cities such as Shanghai and Beijing. Among elders with sufficient pension and health insurance, their relationships with younger generations have become more emotional and leisure-oriented (Whyte, 1997).

In this study, findings regarding emotional support among rural elders did not reflect such a shift as happened in Korean or Japanese societies because the intergenerational relationships between migrated children and rural elderly parents, to a large extent, were predominantly

financially-based due to poverty among rural elders in China. Filial piety was still largely valued by how much financial support was provided. However, this study revealed the importance of emotional care for poor rural elders, when taking into consideration their children's migration and geographic distance. Scholars and social policymakers often have paid much attention to the financial aspect of family care and ignored the emotional needs among rural elders due to their poverty. This study revealed that for rural elders also expected their migrated children to express filial piety through emotional support. As the children's length of migration extended, emotional connection may have become an even more crucial aspect of filial piety for the rural elders. Hopefully, this study could draw some attention from scholars and government officials to understand Chinese elders' emotional needs and thus create social policies to allow better communication between elders and migrated children in the process of the Chinese urbanization.

Parental Authority and Filial Piety

The concept of filial piety is often understood in the West to be primarily children's financial and physical obligations for their elderly parents. Besides providing care, the concept of filial piety also includes respecting and obeying elderly parents. An in-depth discussion of the financial and emotional care and its implication on filial piety was provided in the previous sections. This part of discussion will turn to how the other aspect of filial piety—parental authority—has shifted with children's out-migration.

In a research conducted in Chengdu, a thriving urban city in Southwestern part of China, Whyte (1997) found that there have been major changes in urban China in terms of parental authority. In the wake of economic transformation, young people are more likely to choose their own marital partners, to set up a new household rather than co-residing after marriage with their parents, and to emphasize independence when socializing their own children, rather than

stressing obedience and extended family obligation. The strong shift from arranged marriage to free choice marriage reflected the declining emphasize in parental authority and children's obedience. Based on his research, Whyte proposed a thought-provoking question regarding filial piety: Is it not logical to assume, then, that this new spirit of independence will be reflected in a weakened emphasis on filial obligations and on loyalty to the large family unit (Whyte, 1997)?

Results from this study seemed to be different from Whyte's findings. According to Chapter 5, about 20% of the migrated children were reported to "discuss important life events less often with their elderly parents in the villages." The majority of them (78%) were reported to discuss life events as often as before they migrated. A little less than 2% of the migrated children actually discuss life events more often than their parents. Although the survey did not provide any information with regard to the role of parental advice or authority in determining migrated children's decision-making on important life events, the results about the frequency of discussion may imply that the rural elderly parents' opinions continued to be valued and respected by their children after their migration to the cities.

Results from the Partial Generalized Ordered Logit Regression and Probability tests demonstrated that migrated children who discussed life events less often received negative evaluations from their elderly parents in terms of their filial piety; migrated children who discussed life events as often or more often continued to receive the same evaluations of their filial piety as before their migration. This finding indicates that rural elderly parents continued to value the importance of parental authority in terms of guiding or having some say-so in their children's lives after the children's out-migration. Rural elderly parents continued to emphasis their authority within the family based on their expectations of filial piety.

As an important step of urbanization, rural-urban migration may also "urbanize" the migrated children's perceptions of filial piety. Although the analysis from Chapter Five revealed that parental authority was still respected by the majority of the migrated children, about 20% of the migrated children did reduce their frequency of discussing important life events with their elderly parents. Thus, as the length of migration extends, will more migrated children making important life decisions without consulting their elderly parents back in the village? Instead, will they pay more attention to their day-to-day influence by urban culture and lifestyles, especially the new spirit of independence? Is it possible that this important part of filial piety—parental authority and children's obedience— is weakened, as has happened in urban China like what Whyte indicated? How would rural elderly parents respond to these changes as their children stay in cities longer than ever before—would their evaluation of migrated children's filial piety keep declining? Or will they adjust their expectations of migrated children's filial piety and focus more on the role of financial support in evaluating children's filial piety? These questions deserve to be addressed with the application of longitudinal studies in the future.

Feminization of Poverty and Filial Piety

Analyses about rural elder's perception of migrated children's filial piety have presented two interesting results regarding gender difference: 1. Female and older elders tended to give more negative evaluations toward their migrated children; 2. Migrated daughters were more likely to receive positive evaluations than migrated sons with regard to their filial piety. The next two sections will focus on these two interesting results and their theoretical implications.

To understand the first result, it is important to relate it back to findings from Chapter 4—actual amount of financial support received by female elders in comparison to male elders. As pointed out in the statistical analysis of Chapter 4, rural elderly women on average received

significantly less remittance from their migrated children than rural elderly men (Female: 478.4 RMB; male: 691.44 RMB), even though they were more likely to be widowed, in worse health conditions, live alone and take full responsibility of grandchild care. Feminization of poverty, compounded with less financial care and unavailability of physical care, may contribute to female elder's low evaluation of their migrated children's filial piety.

Previous studies suggested that elder's age is positively related to their attachment to filial attitudes (Ho, 1996). They tended to hold on to the traditional expectations of filial piety and were less willing to adapt to social and cultural changes. Results from Chapter 5 indicated that older elders tended to give more negative evaluations to the migrated children than younger elders. In this case, the older respondents might expect more physical care due to their old age. Similar to female elders, older elders received less financial support from migrated children as well. Inadequacy of financial care and lack of physical care might also explain why older elders tended to perceive migrated children as less filial than before.

Continuation and Changes of Gendered Expectations of Filial Piety

Another finding regarding gender difference deserves much attention. Statistical analysis from Chapter 5 indicated that migrated daughters were more likely to receive positive evaluation of their filial piety than migrated sons. To understand this gender difference, I have to connect this finding to the discussion of gendered provision of financial care based on Chapter 4.

Findings from Chapter 4 suggested that although migrated sons continue to give significant amount of financial support to their elderly parents (429.12 RMB more than migrated daughters), migrated daughters are also giving some financial support to their elderly parents (average 157.25RMB). This result suggests that the traditional pattern of old-age support was still dominant, but migration of rural females might have shrunk some of the gender difference in

terms of provision of financial care. The patrilineal tradition was still dominant among rural families with migrated children; but female children were starting to play a role in financial provision for elderly parents.

According to the patrilineal tradition, sons were deemed to be the ones to provide financial, emotional, and physical care on a daily basis for their elderly parents. Daughters did not have any formal obligations for their elderly parents; but for their parents-in-law. Therefore it is reasonable to understand that elderly parents perceived the migrated daughters' financial provision as behaviors of filial piety because these daughters went above and beyond the normative expectations of filial piety for daughter There is profound theoretic implications in this gendered pattern of evaluations. Will the higher evaluation of daughters' filial piety boost daughters' status within rural families? By providing financial support for elderly parents, will daughters gain power over other important life events like as more freedom in choosing marital partners, pursuing higher education, etc? With the increasing number of no-son families as consequence of the one-child policy, will daughters be expected to fulfill all the responsibilities that were defined as sons'? Will the meanings of filial piety go beyond the boundary of gender and apply to both genders?

A Summary: Changing Faces of Filial Piety in Rural Families with Migrated Children

Chapter 5 presented many intriguing findings related to the changing dynamics of filial piety in the massive process of rural-urban migration. By connecting findings from Chapter 5 with those from Chapter 4, a thorough examination of how and why filial piety has undergone changes rather than erosion was conducted. Using the theoretical framework of PEA, this section of the discussion provided an in-depth analysis of the changing faces of filial piety by closely examining multi-levels of factors such as rural-urban migration, rural poverty, migrant

laborers' socioeconomic status, and history. Specifically, this section first reevaluated the roles of financial care and emotional care in shaping elders' perceived filial piety of their children when physical care became unavailable due to children's migration. Then, a close examination was conducted to look at how another important aspect of traditional filial piety—parental authority—may have also undergone subtle changes. Finally, the deep theoretical meanings of two interesting findings regarding gender were explored and illustrated.

In sum, the discussion of results from Chapter Five may suggest the following conclusions: 1. Due to rural poverty and financial constraints faced by migrant children, financial support, in the form of intergenerational exchange, was still an important aspect of filial piety perceived by rural elders. 2. Due to the lack of physical care, the importance of emotional care may be more emphasized by rural elders. 3. In the process of urbanization, a new trend of intergenerational relationship may emerge—a move from authoritarian and patriarchal relationships to a more egalitarian pattern of mutual support between generations. 4. Due to feminization of poverty, female elders tended to have lower evaluations toward their migrated children. 5. The gendered tradition of patrilineality may be experiencing changes as daughters are evaluated as more filial than sons. All of the above arguments may lead to a final conclusion—under the social context of massive rural-urban migration, the traditional culture of filial piety was not under erosion as suggested by modernization theory. Rather, it was undergoing many crucial changes. Those changes may be even more intensified as the one-child generations become the major composition of the migrant laborers.

Life Satisfaction among Chinese Rural Elders

The previous two sections explored the patterns of financial elder care by migrated children and its consequence in rural elderly parents' perception of filial piety within the context

of rural-urban migration. Analyses revealed that intergenerational exchange was the major form of elder care and elderly parents' expectations of filial piety might have been swayed from the traditional practice due to the deterioration of rural economy and rampant poverty among migrant laborers. This section attempts to establish theoretical connections between findings from Chapter 6 and findings from Chapter 4 and 5. As a result, the analyses explore one of the most important questions that concerns most of social scientists and gerontologists—are rural elderly parents indeed satisfied with their lives when their children are migrated? Discussions in this section will be focused on the impact of intergenerational exchange and the changing practices of filial piety on rural elders' life satisfaction, taking into consideration of rural social and economic environments within the context of rural-urban migration.

Financial Adequacy—How Much is Enough for an Elder to Survive in Rural China?

Statistical analysis from Chapter 6 suggested that the majority (86.77%) of the rural respondents were somewhat satisfied or very satisfied with their lives; about 1 in 4 (23.23%) of them reported to be somewhat unsatisfied or very unsatisfied. Whether migrated children provided financial support or not did not appear to have any effect on the rural elders' life satisfaction. Instead, financial adequacy appeared to be one of the most important factors that affected rural elders' life satisfaction. In other words, whether the remittance from children was enough for the elderly parent to survive, rather than simply receiving money, had directly impact on rural elders' perception of life satisfaction. This result confirmed findings from previous research—better financial condition, especially better perceived financial wellbeing is related to better life satisfaction.

To gain a deeper understanding of the impact of financial adequacy rather than financial support, I think it is particularly valuable to look at the economic environment in contemporary

rural China. Health care is probably the most important aspect of economic constraints that affects rural elders' financial wellbeing and psychological wellbeing. Chinese rural elders are facing tremendous difficulty in accessing medical support and insurance. First, with the privatization of medical services, the price for appropriate health care has increased dramatically, despite the increasing supply of health facilities. Second, the government invests less into public health. Since the 1980s, China's annual health expenditure has increased at a consistently higher rate than the economic growth rate. China's official statistics showed that the percentage of total health expenditure out of GDP increased from 3.17% in 1980 to 4.82% in 1998. However, the government's share of the total spending shrank from 36.4% in 1980 to 15.5% in 1998 (Health Economics Institute, 2001). The decrease of governmental share means the higher financial burden on families in terms of health expenses. Third, meanwhile, the mass majority of rural elders are not provided with any health insurance as urban elders are. The majority of rural elders have to pay out-of-pocket cash for any health services. Surveys conducted in both rural and urban China have consistently found that illness and poor health is the number one cause of poverty in Chinese households (Jalan & Ravallion 1997; Yuan & Wang, 1998). For rural elders who are in great need of health care, large medical expenses can cause a financial catastrophe, which can be detrimental to their psychological wellbeing. Some rural elders simply choose not to seek any medical assistance due to the high cost, unless they have life-threatening illness.

Regression results from Chapter 6 revealed that both elders' self-rated health and severe illness had direct impact on their psychological wellbeing. The better health an elder had, the more satisfied he/she was. Elders without severe illness reported higher life satisfaction than those with severe illness. Such results were consistent with previous studies in both United States and China. These two results could also be directly related to the role of financial

adequacy on rural elders' life satisfaction. On the one hand, better health and having no severe illness means less spend on health services, which may directly translate to higher level of financial adequacy. On the other hand, being unable to access proper health care due to the escalating cost for health services would further deteriorate rural elders' health. As a result, their life satisfaction suffers.

Statistical analysis from Chapter 6 showed that in 2003, roughly 1/3 (33%) of the rural elders reported their financial conditions as difficult or very difficult. The majority of them (67%) of reported their financial condition as adequate or better. With the increasing rate of inflation in the last few years, will the migrant children's limited remittance still considered adequate for the rural elderly parents? Will rural elders continue to keep a relatively positive evaluation of their life satisfaction?

Intergenerational Exchange in Relation to Life Satisfaction

Statistical analysis from Chapter 6 suggested that taking care of grandchildren was partially associated with high levels of life satisfaction. For elders who were somewhat satisfied with their lives, taking care of grandchildren significantly increased their life satisfaction to "very satisfied." However, taking care of grandchildren does not make any impact on elders who were "very unsatisfied," "somewhat unsatisfied". This result may suggest that taking care of grandchildren, may work as a double-bladed sword in shaping rural elders' life satisfaction.

On the one hand, for elders who had a relatively adequate and healthy life, taking care of grandchildren could further boost their life satisfaction. This result confirmed findings from previous studies that skipped-generation households, living with grandchildren without the middle generation present, was actually associated with better psychological outcomes for elders (Silverstein, Cong, & Li, 2006). Three plausible explanations are provided below. First, the

value of remittances received from absent children was the primary reason that living with grandchildren in a skipped-generation household was psychologically beneficial to grandparents (Silverstein, Cong, & Li, 2006). As pointed out in Chapter four, elders who provided child care to their migrated children received significantly more financial support. The valuable child care that older parents were able to provide for their child served as reciprocity for financial resources derived from children. As a result, providing child care meant more monetary support for themselves, which led to higher levels of life satisfaction. Second, elderly parents directly benefitted from providing support for their children through demonstrating their value for the family, enhancing their self-confidence, and reducing the feeling of dependence on their children. Providing support to migrated children may further enhance parents' power in the family and strengthen their ability to reciprocate with children, factors shown to be important for psychological health in later life. Third, as mentioned earlier, the Confucian conduct of filial piety also defines elders' roles in the family, mainly in maintaining the overall harmony and stability of the family. Taking care of grandchildren, by both elderly men and women, helped reduce migrated children's burden, provided better-quality child care, and further maintained family cohesion and integration.

However, on the other hand, for elders who struggled on a daily basis and were financially inadequate or ill, taking care of grandchildren might have been an extra burden, which apparently did not have a positive impact on their overall life satisfaction. Sometimes, taking care of grandchildren could bring them more remittance from migrant children. However, remittance might not always be adequate when taking into consideration of rising cost of living and health care due to inflation. For elders who were still financially struggling, the burden of

child care might balance out the feeling of fulfillment and maintaining family cohesion, and eventually led to low levels of life satisfaction.

Cultural Adaption to Structural Constraints—Changing Expectations of Filial Piety

According to Chapter 6, evaluation of migrated children's filial piety appeared to have no significant impact on rural elders' life satisfaction when elders' self-rated health and financial adequacy were controlled for. Such a result is similar to what Cheng and Chan (year) found in Hong Kong—there was no evidence that adult children's practice of filial piety was detrimental to elderly parents' wellbeing, especially when financial strain and health limitation were controlled. However, such a result was completely opposite to findings from most previous studies which showed that strong correlations existed between filial piety and life satisfaction among Asian elders. Elders, who perceive higher evaluations of children's filial piety, tended to report higher levels of life satisfaction (Mjelde-Mossey, et al., 2005). The question rises. Within the context of rural-urban migration, why was children's filial piety less important than elders' health and financial conditions from the perspectives of the elders? Taking a thorough examination of the structural constraints faced by rural elders in conjunction with chapter 5 findings may provide some plausible explanations.

As the discussions based on Chapter 5 presented, rural elders' perception of migrated children's filial piety did not decline after their migration. Rather, rural elders may adapt to the familial and economic changes brought by rural-urban migration. They put more value on financial care and emotional care provided by their migrated children to compensate for the lack of physical care due to children's unavailability. The traditional patriarchal intergenerational relationships might have been replaced by a more egalitarian and reciprocal relationship because of the structural constraints that both rural elders and migrated children were facing. Connecting

to these findings listed above, it seemed to be reasonable to argue that rural elders might have adjusted their expectations on migrated children's filial behaviors and thus placed less emphasis on the importance of filial piety on their overall wellbeing. Rural elders might have understood that the traditional practice of filial piety had become more and more difficult to attain due to current social, economic, and familial changes brought by rural-urban migration. Therefore, placing less emphasis on filial piety might have been an active strategy that rural elders used to adapt to the social changes currently underway in both rural and urban China.

However, it is important to point out that although rural elders placed less emphasis on children's filial piety, such an argument does not imply that filial piety was devalued or undergoing declining in rural families with migrated children, as implied by modernization theory. Rather, filial piety might have become more of a strong financial and emotional bond that ensured intergenerational exchange and support and thus maintained family survival and integration. Filial piety might have become less of a moral bond that placed moral sanction and judgment on individuals in order to reinforce orders and patriarchal power structures within the family.

Furthermore, as mentioned earlier, filial piety should be understood from a more comprehensive perspective—it is a value system that ensures the provision and respect toward elderly parents; however, it is, maybe more so, a value system that maintains family continuation, integration, and cohesion for both the old and the young. Taking into consideration of the harsh economic conditions that both rural elders and migrant children are facing in rural and urban China, it is reasonable to believe that the family integration function of filial piety may be more emphasized by the rural families to ensure survival of both the old and the young.

Having understood filial piety as an effective family survival strategy, it is not difficult to recognize why rural elders who had all children migrated or most children migrated were not necessarily less happy than those who had one or some children left in the village, as indicated in Chapter 6. According to the traditions of filial piety, living with children or having children nearby secures one's old age. However, the results from chapter 6 provided a different picture among elders with migrated children—having no children left behind did not necessarily affect elder's life satisfaction negatively. Several reasoning can be provided. First, having more children left behind may mean less likelihood for the elders to be financially adequate, taking into the harsh economic conditions in rural China. With more children left behind in the village, rural elders might be able to receive certain amount of physical care. However, children who stayed behind were less likely to provide financial support to the elderly parents. But for most rural elderly parents, financial care were placed at the most urgent need for their wellbeing due to their lack of self-earning and the rising health and living expenses currently. Thus, having all or most children migrated might had been a choice that the elders had to make in order to maximize their financial wellbeing. Second, with the ultimate goal of family continuation and cohesion in mind, rural elders might choose to allow their children to migrate and seek better life opportunities rather than forcing one or two children to stay back home and be poor. Rural elders might be considered selfish to restrain one child's financial future and life opportunity because of their filial expectation of being taken care physically back in the village. Therefore, having all children migrated could be a strategy to ensure all members in the family to survive and thrive—the migrated children would have better employment opportunities and the elderly parents would therefore receive more financial care to cope with rising living expenses and health care.

The above analysis explained why rural elders' life satisfaction were not affected by the number of children migrated and their evaluations of the migrated children's filial piety. In traditional Chinese society, these two factors were deemed to be the utmost elements in the practice of filial piety that determines Chinese elders' wellbeing and life satisfaction. However, when taking into consideration of the structural constraints at the historical time of economic transformation in China, rural elders may have adjusted their expectations for filial piety. By connecting to the results from Chapter 5 regarding the changing face of filial piety, it is illustrated that placing less emphasis on the moral function of filial piety might be an active strategy that rural elders used to adapt to this dramatic social and familial changes brought by rural-urban migration. It also could have been an effective strategy to maintain intergenerational support and ensure the survival for both the old and the young with the difficult structural constraints that both generations were facing.

Support from Extended Family Relatives and Neighbors

Statistical analyses from Chapter 6 demonstrated that closeness to relatives nearby was positively related to rural elders' life satisfaction after their children's migration. Support from neighbors could also largely boost their psychological wellbeing among elders who were already satisfied with their life after children's migration. Such results were consistent with findings from earlier studies in the West—older adults with high levels of social supports or high levels of social network involvement reported higher levels of psychological wellbeing and life satisfaction (Antonucci et al., 1997; Chen & Silverstein, 2000; Krause et al., 1994; Oxam et al., 1992).

The absence of children as a result of migration often caused the lack of physical support and lower levels of emotional support among rural elderly parents. The results confirmed that

with children's absence, community support from extended family relatives, neighbors, and village leaders played a positive role in enriching rural elders' social wellbeing and providing some levels of physical support when needed.

Modernization theory suggests that urbanization promotes nuclear family and undermines the traditional extended family. Asian countries mirror what had happened in Western societies that extended families have became less valued. Results from this study however, rejected this argument. Numerous studies have found that extended family and kinship continued to be highly valued in rural China. To further the argument, it is important to recognize the fundamental differences of extended kinship in western society and Chinese society. The Chinese kinship circle is much larger and across many more generations than Western kinship circle. Western concept of extended family often refers to one household across two or three generations. In traditional Chinese society, extended family circle included "six kinship ties" (*Liu Qin*). The "six kinship ties" were those between husband and wife, parents and children, brothers, the children of brothers, the children of brothers' children, and the children of brothers' childrens' children. In addition to these, one also had mutual obligations to the immediate relatives on one's mother's and wife's side of the family. As we can see, the kinship circle in China was much larger and much more influential than those in Western society. Each individual in the kinship ties were deemed to have some levels of obligations to other individuals in the extended family, no matter how "far" their kin relationships were. It was this greater circle of kinship and a wide range of kinship obligations that constituted the importance of extended family in China. In traditional Chinese society, when someone had no children, they often turned to their relatives in the kinship circle. If one had none of the "six kinship ties" to rely on (*liu qin wu kao*), it was said that one had nobody to turn to. One obvious example of the "six

kinship ties" can be found in the classical literature "Dream in the Red Chamber" (*Honglou Meng*), where individuals could turn to their relatives three or four generations removed for support, such as elder care, childrearing, and financial assistance.

Although nuclear family is gradually becoming the primary family structure in rural China, kinship and family relatives, especially the "six kinship ties" may still be valued as an important supportive network. The kinship circle nowadays may not be as large as in traditional society. However, support from relatively closer kin members such as siblings, cousins, nephews or nieces, are extremely common in China, especially rural China. When elderly parents' children migrated to the urban cities, elderly parents often turn to their kin relatives for physical and emotional support. This study further confirmed the importance of extended kinships in rural China, thus rejected the assumption proposed by modernization theory.

Besides kinship ties, neighbors were also highly valued in rural society. Although in this study, the positive effect of neighbor's support on elder's wellbeing was not as consistent compared to kinship ties, some attention could be drawn to understand the role of community in facilitating familial elder care in rural China. The old saying in China—"A distant relative is not as good as a near neighbor" well explained the value of neighbors in providing immediate help and some levels of physical support for rural elders when children are migrated.

A Summary: Understanding Rural Economic and Social Context and Rural Elders' Adaption to the Context

This section of discussion is primarily based on findings from Chapter 6—Rural elders' life satisfaction after their children's migration. By connecting to results from both Chapter 4 and Chapter 5, this section of discussion delved deeply into understanding the roles of financial care, emotional care, rural elders' perception of filial piety, and community support in shaping

rural elders' psychological wellbeing. All in all, readers may take away three important arguments from this section: 1.Structural constraints have largely shaped rural elders' needs for care. These needs for care in turn largely determined their life satisfaction. 2. Rural elders actively adapted to the familial and social changes brought by rural-urban migration. 3. The community support from extended kinship and neighbors had a positive effect on rural elders' life satisfaction. Below, I will further elaborate on each argument.

First, the serious structural constraint rural elders were facing has reshaped their expectation and needs for care. As a result, their life satisfaction was largely dependent on the fulfillment of these needs. The government's lack of investment in agriculture, along with the rising cost of living expense and health care, has forced rural elders to place much more emphasis on their financial needs rather than physical needs. Financial adequacy became the foremost important indicator of rural elders' life satisfaction.

Second, rural elders actively adapted to the familial changes due to children's migration as an effort to maximize their life satisfaction. Their adaptation strategies included the follow two aspects: 1. Provide exchange-based care for the migrated children to demonstrate their value for the family, enhance their self-confidence, and reduce the feeling of dependence on their children. Providing child care support to migrated children may further enhance parents' power in the family and strengthen their ability to reciprocate with children. 2. Adjust their expectation for migrated children's filial behaviors and emphasis the whole family's survival and continuation. Taking into consideration for the economic and social struggles that both the elders and the children were facing, rural elders might be placing much less emphasis on the role of filial piety as moral judgment of individuals in the family. Instead, they placed more emphasis on

the role of filial piety as financial and emotional bond that held the family together and promoted the survival and thrive of every individual in the family.

Lastly, the social networks of rural society—especially extended kinship and neighbors—continued to positively affect rural elders' life satisfaction. The "six kinship ties," which encompassed a large number of individuals with assumed informal obligations for each other, continued to serve as important source that rural elders could turn to for physical and emotional support, especially when their children are migrated. Or with the migration of adult children, the values of extended family relatives and neighbors could be more emphasized. A community-based physical and emotional support network may be formed to compensate children's absence for physical care and immediate support for the elderly parents. Such a community-based network could further boost rural elders' emotional and social wellbeing, thus positively impact their life satisfaction.

This chapter delved into the detailed results based on previous three chapters of statistical analyses. Using the big "theoretical" umbrella of Political Economy of Aging, a thorough examination of rural elder care pattern, rural elders' perception of filial piety, and rural elders' life satisfaction after their children's migration was provided in three sections of discussion. It is important to note that each section of discussion should not be treated as an independent unit. Rather, many theoretical linkages were established to connect the three sections with each other in order to form a coherent story of rural elders' living conditions within the context of rural-urban migration. The goal of this dissertation is to offer a *systemic* look at the impact of rural-urban migration on familial elder care in rural China. In the Conclusion Chapter, great effort will be made to elaborate on a coherent and systematic presentation of familial elder care in rural China and its theoretical implications and contribution to the areas of modernization.

CHAPTER EIGHT

CONCLUSION

As mentioned earlier, this dissertation is dedicated to provide a systematic examination of familial elder care among rural families with migrated children. Specifically, three research objectives were proposed: 1) to examine the pattern of financial care provided by migrated children for the elderly parents; 2) to understand rural elders' perception of migrated children's filial piety; 3) to explore the factors that shape rural elders' life satisfaction after their children's migration. Applying statistical analysis, previous chapters have carefully reviewed the social and historical background and provided in-depth theoretical analyses of this crucial social issue of elder care currently underway in China. The chapter summarizes this dissertation by providing a synthesis, point out the significant contribution of this study, and proposing several policy suggestions derived from the theoretical analysis.

A Synthesis—Modernization Theory Revisited

The basic assumption of modernization theory underlies that modernity and traditions are mutually exclusive from each other (Goode, 1963). It is argued that as a society modernizes, traditional values such as filial piety will decline and break down. Family cohesion and intergenerational integration would inevitably deconstruct as modernity thrives. Repercussions of modernization will diminish the status of the old (Palmore & Manton, 1974). The process of urbanization leaves older family members behind in rural areas, undermining the traditional extended family and the prominent position of older members within them. The new family form in modernizing societies such as China is the nuclear family. With the increasing social and spatial distance between the young and the old, intergenerational support system breaks down. In sum, modernization theorists view elders as the victims of the modernization process that, the

upward mobility of the young as being accompanied by downward mobility among the elders in their families. Applying this theory to China, with the rapid process of rural-urban migration, the traditional values of filial piety which regulates adult children's physical, financial, and emotional care provisions to elderly parents will break down. Migrant children will be removed from their filial duties and social sanctions related to filial piety. Elders in rural China will suffer from receiving no support from their migrant children and became powerless within the family. Modernization theory has been harshly criticized by later scholars due to its failure to recognize the role of culture in shaping power and family cohesion in non-western societies, especially in Asian countries such as China and Japan where filial piety is a fundamental ideology guiding individual behaviors and attitudes. A new modernization theory addresses how cultural traditions such as filial piety and modernity are not mutually exclusive from each other.

Results from this study revealed a different story from what modernization theory suggests in terms of the relations between modernization and tradition of filial piety in China. The process of urbanization may not be exclusive from the tradition of filial piety. Similar to the new modernization theory, rural-urban migration and the practice of filial piety coexist and may even be beneficial to each other. Rural-urban migration may have placed great challenge in the pure tradition of filial piety, especially the practice of physical care. However, the financial support and emotional support aspects of filial piety were found to continue to be practiced across generations. Filial piety is undergoing modification but continues to hold rural families together and provide support across generations. Below, I will provide a comprehensive summarization of the findings regarding the continuation and modification of filial piety from the discussion in Chapter Seven.

Continuing Provision of Financial and Emotional Care by Migrated Children

Different from modernization theorists' argument of the breakdown of intergenerational support system, this study revealed a strong and consistent pattern of elder care provisions by the migrant children. According to the modernization theory, migrant children would sway from their filial obligation and provide no support to their elderly parents (Benjamin et al., 2000, Goode, 1963). Statistical analysis from this study revealed a different picture—remittance from migrant children was the main income source for most rural elderly parents who are left behind; migrant children provided more financial care to their elderly parents than children who were left behind. As a matter of fact, due to the lack of self-earning and great need for financial care, rural elderly parents were largely dependent on their migrant children for financial support. In return, rural elders valued migrant children's provisions of financial care and continued to hold their rather positive evaluation of their migrant children's filial piety, even though when physical care was absent.

Besides financial care, rural elders also maintained consistent emotional connections with their migrant children. They tended to maintain frequent contact and relatively close emotional distance with their migrant children. Similar to the provision of financial care, rural elders valued the migrant children's provision of emotional care and deemed it as important aspect of their children's practice of filial piety.

According to the traditional teaching of filial piety, adult children were obligated to provide three aspects of care for the elderly parents—physical care, financial care, and emotional care. With the deterioration of rural economy and booming economy in urban areas, migration to urban areas for manufactory jobs may be the only solution for adult children to fulfill the obligations of filial piety, in particular, financial support. In other words, physical care was

somehow sacrificed for financial care due to the economic constraints in rural China. The value of emotional care might also be emphasized more with the lack of physical care and the existence of long distance between the parents and the children. In sum, different from modernization theory that condemn the breakdown of filial tradition, this study argues that filial piety continued to be valued and practiced among rural families with migrant children by adjusting the importance of financial care and emotional care over physical care.

Exchange-Based Care Pattern—Intergenerational Dependence

The practice of filial piety also took different forms as far as how care was provided. The modernization theory tends to purport a bargaining power model which suggests that as a society modernizes, elders lose their bargaining power for care due to their disadvantages in important resources such as education, money, and technologies, in comparison to their children. Results from this study rejected this modernist argument. Statistical analysis revealed that financial care was provided based on intergenerational exchange rather than bargaining power—rural elders who provided child care for the migrant children received the most amount of financial care.

Interestingly, findings also revealed that financial care was not provided based on elderly parents' need—elders with worse health conditions or with no self-earnings did not receive more financial support than those with better health and some self-earnings. The rejection of need-based model seemed to suggest the abandonment of the tradition of filial piety.

However, when we realized that not only the old but also the young were facing financial constraints, it was not difficult to understand why the provision of care was based more on exchange rather than need. It was important to note that these elders who were in great need do receive care, although the care they received were not significantly more than those received by the other elders. The need-based model only took into consideration of the need of the old, not

including the need of the young. Migrant children were facing tremendous amount of financial pressure due to their disadvantaged social and economic position in the cities. They were in great need for help and support, especially child care. Thus, an exchange-based pattern of care can fit the needs for both the young and the old and provided the best solution to maintain the integration and continuation of the whole family. Empirical results also proved that most elders continued to hold relatively positive perception of their children's filial piety based on the exchange-based model of care. Marginalized economic conditions for migrated children and marginalized economic status for the elders intertwined with each other and stimulated the formation of such exchange-based financial care pattern.

Furthermore, providing child care for migrant children enhanced rural elders' self-confidence and might serve as a "bargaining power" for more financial support, which would further boost their sense of wellbeing as a productive member of the family. Therefore, an exchange-based model of elder care was not action of moving away from the practice of filial piety, rather, it was an adaption of rural families to better the whole family and strengthen intergenerational dependence due to the economic constraints faced by both the young and the old. The exchange-based model may suggest the practice of filial piety within rural families may become more based upon intergenerational interdependence rather than a from-top-to-bottom patriarchy power structure with the elderly parents possessing the most power in the family.

Continuation and Changes of Patrilineal Tradition

The structural changes brought by rural-urban migration may also reshape the practice of patrilineal tradition. Rather than a declining of filial piety, the migration of daughter's migration implied a continuation and some changes with regard to gendered elder care among rural families. Statistical analysis showed that migrated sons provided significant more financial

support for their elderly parents than migrant daughters, which suggested a continuation of the patrilineal tradition—that sons were the primary caregivers for the elderly parents. However, it is important to note that daughters also provided financial care, even though it may not be as much as that provided by migrated sons.

Another important sign of the continuation and changing perception of filial piety was that migrated daughters received relatively higher evaluation of filial piety than migrated sons. Such a result indicated that rural elders continued to hold gendered expectations of filial piety toward migrated sons and daughters. However, gendered expectations of filial piety may be challenged more as daughters became the main source of migrant laborers due to the long-term impact of one-child policy.

Family Survival, Integration, and Development as a Whole

Different from modernization theorists' argument of declining family cohesion, this study suggested that rural Chinese families continue to hold strong and cohesive through intergenerational support. Filial piety continued to function as a glue to hold family members together. Its role as moral judgment for individual may have been less emphasized by the rural elders; whereas its role as strong financial and emotional bonds continued to be valued and practiced to ensure the integration and continuation of the whole family. Filial piety was not just limited to the obligations of young to the old, but also includes the elders' responsibility to maintain family's continuation and each individual's development. Thus, within the context of rural-urban migration, filial piety was not undergoing decline or erosion; rather, its meanings and significance have been broadened by their elderly parents to adapt to dramatic social changes currently underway in China.

A New Modernization Theory

All the above analysis rejected the arguments of modernization theory that assumes the mutual exclusiveness between modernization and traditions. Findings from this research provided empirically-based critiques against such an argument. The cultural values of filial piety was not undergoing decline, rather, it took different forms to adapt to the structural constraints brought by rural-urban migration. To a large extend, filial piety ensured the practice of familial elder care by taking the form of intergenerational support and emphasizing all family members' survival within the context of massive rural-urban migration. The study confirmed arguments from the new modernization theory, which suggests that the tradition of filial piety is not mutually exclusive from each other. Filial piety may in turn benefited the modernization process by providing intergenerational support for each individual in the family; whereas modernization reshaped and broadened the meanings and practice of filial piety in rural Chinese families.

Significance of the study

The significance of this study can be summarized in four aspects: first, this study has been a successful first effort to have a comprehensive examination on familial elder care in rural China within the social context of massive rural-urban migration. It was a unique study that examined how two crucial social transformations in China—rapid population aging and urbanization—intertwine with each other and deeply affect individual elders' lives. It offered a clear understanding of the relationships between structural changes and patterns of familial elder care and cultural expectations of filial piety.

Second, findings of this study contributed to the literature of urbanization and modernization theories, taking China as a variant of earlier urbanized Western societies. This study deeply challenged the usage of modernization theory in analyzing Chinese familial elder

care by taking into consideration of the unique cultural, historical, social, and economic changes currently underway in China. Specifically, this study provided a better understanding of social and cultural impact of urbanization on Chinese traditional practices of filial piety in general, elder care in particular.

Third, this study demonstrated the merit of using some Western theoretical perspectives in analyzing Chinese familial elder care. These theoretical perspectives included the political economy of aging (PEA), and feminist perspectives. PEA has guided the researcher to analyze the complicated relationships among state policy, social contexts, economic constraints, ideology, family and individuals. Feminist perspectives have brought the researcher a deep understanding of feminization of poverty in rural China through examination of state policies, cultures, and elder care practices within families.

Finally, this study's results can provide insights for future social policy making, considering the one-child generation is becoming the main work force of migrant laborers. These insights involve six main issues related to elder care in rural China: developing social welfare for rural elders, managing rural health care, facilitating family elder care and child care, protecting migrant laborers' rights, and promoting social care. More detailed analyses regarding these six issues will be elaborated in the policy implications section.

Limitation of the Study

The limitations of this study are five folds. First, this was a secondary dataset that I was not involved in the survey design and data collection processes. Thus, I had limited control over the quality of the sample quality and data organization. There were some fundamental weaknesses regarding the measurement of the key variables, such as the lack of composite measures of life satisfaction and other key variables, such as filial piety. However, because this

was a secondary dataset, there was little I could do to improve the design or enhance the measurement of the variables. Second, although the sample was selected from three typical labor-exporting provinces, it was not representative of all areas in China. The dynamics of rural-urban migration and demographics distribution may be different in other provinces. Thus, the results of this study may not speak to all elders with migrated children in China. Third, this study was based on surveys with elders. Their reports of children's support, such as the amount of financial support, might not be an objective measure of the actual financial support from adult children. Early research revealed that elderly parents tended to over-report such number due to the fear of "losing face". Future study will benefit from gaining reports from both elders and adult children. Fourth, there was no paired-sample survey of adult children to examine their reports of their elder care patterns compared to the reports given by their parents. Finally, the sample only included elders who had one or more children who had migrated, so it was not possible to compare the care-receiving experiences of rural elders whose children had migrated with those elders whose children had remained nearby to them.

Policy Implications

Rural elder care in China will continue to experience a number of ramifications from the continuing process of massive rural-urban migration, population aging, and the deterioration of rural economy. As the one-child generation becomes the main work force of migrant laborers, the challenges that rural families will have to face are unprecedented. It is time for policy makers in China to address these issues. This section provides policy suggestions stemmed from the careful methodological and theoretical analyses in this dissertation.

Developing Social Welfare for Rural Elders

As discussed earlier, adult children continue to be the main source for elder care in rural China. Migrated children bear the major or sole responsibility of financial support for the elderly parents. Rampant poverty and the lack of welfare system in inland provinces of China forced rural elders to heavily depend on their migrant children for financial support. However, meanwhile, the migrated children—the floating population—whom the elderly parents rely on, are facing tremendous economic disadvantages such as low pay, high living expense, lack of child care and health insurance, and low job security. Although familial support from the elderly is deeply rooted in Chinese traditions and institutionalized by the government, the double economic constraints that rural families are currently facing suggest that the capacity and willingness of migrated children to provide care may be weakening or diminishing. With the one-child generation becoming the main work force of migrant laborers, rural elders with one son or no sons could be in an extremely vulnerable position.

To avoid rural elders' vulnerable situation in China, there is an emergent need, at the structural level, for the government to develop social welfare for rural elders. In current China, only 4.67% of rural elders are covered by the government through two programs. One is the national program of "Five Guarantee Households" (*Wubaohu*) which covers individuals who have lost ability to work and to support themselves, and have no other means of support, i.e. no children and no other income sources. Namely "five guarantee" means that these elders are guaranteed food, clothing, housing, medical care, and a proper funeral after death. The second type of welfare is called "hardship household" welfare (*Kunnanhu*), which is available to people who are not officially on the rolls of the five-guarantee household, but are in dreadful need (as determined by local officials). However, for the majority of rural elders, who are barely able to

survive but unable to have medical, they could not receive any welfare and pension from the government. This study suggests that all rural elders, not just those in extremely marginalized situation, deserve proper financial support and health insurance from the government.

Managing Rural Health Care Market

In the first decades of CCP, Chinese government made a national effort to provide basic health care such as free services such as vaccinations, antibiotics, and instruction on sanitation to each villager. Thanks to this national effort, the life expectancy rise and mortality rate fell. Rural elders were able to receive some free medical attention when needed. However, since the economic reform started in 1979, rural health care system has experienced a collapse while the economy and the health industry have developed rapidly in urban areas. With commercialization of medical services, the rural areas of China quickly lost in the battle of market competition. The consequences included the rising medical cost and the lack of qualified health care practitioners in rural China. As a result, rural elders, who are in the most disadvantaged social position due to lack of income and health benefits, became largely marginalized for health care.

Findings from this study revealed health played a crucial role in rural elders' life satisfaction and financial wellbeing. Better health directly related to better financial and psychological wellbeing. Better health for the elderly parents may also lead fewer needs for physical care, which may make the negative impact of the adult children's migration less detrimental for rural families. Financial support from the migrated children could be used more in areas such as leisure activities rather than medical expenses to enhance life quality. Thus, it is important for policy makers to improve rural health care market by lowering medical costs, drawing better health practitioners to rural areas, and ultimately providing proper health care insurance for rural elders. The government needs to: first, take a step further into intervening

rural health market and set protective prices for medical and pharmaceutical costs; second, provide rural elders basic health care such as flu shots, antibiotics, and sanitation training just as practiced in China before the Economic Reform; third, reward health practitioners in rural areas and provide these rural practitioners proper training at no cost. Fourth, most importantly, develop some health insurance program to cover rural elders' health costs.

Facilitating Familial Elder Care and Child Care

To relieve the double demands of elder care and child care for the rural families with migrated children, family caregiving for both the young and the old can be subsidized by paying family members who provide care for dependent elder parents (children who left behind) and young children, perhaps in wages, reimbursements for free medical care, food stamps, or perhaps a family-earned income credit. First, without compensation, more children who stayed back and available for physical care will choose to migrate and leave rural elderly parents with no one to rely on for medical and physical immediate care. Second, without compensation, rural elders have to continue to bear the responsibility of taking care of grandchildren in order to exchange for financial support from their migrated children. For rural elders who are young and still healthy and mobile, taking care of grandchildren may not be too much of a burden. However, for elders with health problems, taking care of grandchildren could be a day-to-day struggle for them. Subsidizing their child care by providing benefits such as free medical care or monetary compensation would promote intergenerational support and help maintain the intergenerational bond of exchange. As a result, the elderly parents are healthier and more capable of providing child care to support their migrated children, which could weaken children's of child care and may create more possibilities for financial support to the elderly parents.

Most child care, of course, has been provided by elderly women. Chinese women, regardless of age, were historically expected to the "kin keepers" and to fulfill the task of child care. Feminists suggest that a society needs to redefine the meaning of caregiving in order to evoke societal and governmental responsibilities for women. The meaning of child care should be shifted from a "familial" or "individual" concept to more of a "societal" and "governmental" concept, as practiced in European countries, where women have benefited tremendously from various social welfare programs. With the massive process of rural-urban migration, many rural elders, especially women, are overwhelmed by the task of child care. If a redefinition of childcare became possible, rural women should be able enjoy financial compensations, health care subsidies, and other benefits from the government. As a result, Chinese rural women would be empowered and the phenomenon of "feminization of poverty" would be changed as well.

Protecting Migrant Laborers' Rights

Findings from this study have repeatedly stressed the structural constraints that both rural elders and their migrated children were facing. The above discussion of policy implications has addressed the issue of economic and health constraints faced by rural elders. This part will be mainly focus on policy suggestions that may deal with the structural disadvantages faced by the migrated children.

The migrant laborers, referred to as the "floating population" live at the bottom of the social ladders in urban China. They have no permanent legal status (an urban *Hukou*), which defines a person's rights to welfare benefits including health care, childcare, education, housing, pension, etc. Without such legal status, the migrant laborers usually work as contractors with no health and retirement benefits for themselves and their family members. Furthermore, migrant workers tend to work in low-entry manufacturing and construction jobs with dangerous or

unsanitary working conditions where they have had no or little protection under the law. These jobs often require long working hours with no or little vacations time and job security. Their labor rights are often violated or ignored. As a result, they themselves are in an extremely disadvantaged economic position in the society; whereas they are the major providers of financial care for their elderly parents. In other words, the rural elders suffer from the lack of law protection and welfare that their migrated children are facing in the urban areas. To ensure the provision of financial care for the old, the government who institutionalized children's obligation to the elderly parents, needs to protect migrant laborers' right, welfare, and job security. Although Chinese government has enacted new labor laws to protect peasant workers' rights, the enforcement of such laws by private manufacture-owners are still questionable. More efforts need to be made to not only make new laws but also enforce these laws.

Promoting Social Care

One of the major concerns of rural-urban migration is the lack of physical care due to adult children's unavailability as a result of rural-urban migration. As the one-child generation becomes the main work force of migrant laborers, the number of rural elders with no children left at home or nearby for physical care will increase tremendously. Results from this chapter revealed that support from extended family relatives and neighbors played a positive role in shaping rural elders' life satisfaction. Due to the larger circle of kinship historically defined in Chinese culture, members of extended families also mutually bear some informal obligations for other members in the kinship circle. Neighbors were also historical defined as valuable sources for support. Thus, it is meaningful to develop a community-based social care program that encourages mutual support from the entire society of rural China. For elders who have no son or only one son, a community-based program may become the major source of physical support.

To care for rural elders, especially with current situation of no government official support, the entire rural community may be required to pool together as many resources as possible to meet the care needs for the rural elders, especially the baby boomers.

Future Study

As elaborated above, results from this research provided valuable implications for social policy making. Furthermore, Findings of this study raised more research questions for future studies in elder care in China. First, with the unavailability of physical care from adult children, will institutional care become an option for rural families with migrated children? Will the migrated children provide the expenses of institutional care for their elderly parents and shift the responsibility of physical care to institutions? If so, how will rural elders who reside in institutional care facilities perceive and evaluate their children's filial piety? How about rural elders' life satisfaction within institutional care facilities? Previous scholars (Chen, 2003; Zhan, Luo & Feng, 2008) have brought up new concepts such as "subcontracting filial piety" and "institutionalized filial piety" to describe how filial piety was practice among Chinese Americans in the United States and Chinese families in urban China. Will these concepts be also applicable in rural China? These questions deserve great attention in the future.

Second, recent reports from China showed that many migrant laborers returned to their home provinces due to the negative impact of global economic recession on China's manufacturing industries. However, studies have shown that when migrant laborers return, they tended to move back to a city or town centers rather than rural villages where their parents physically reside. Some of them actually did bring their parents out of the village and co-reside with them in the cities or town centers. More research questions rise here. Will the pattern of elder care experience another shift because of the return of the children, especially with the

possible availability of physical care from migrated children? Will the exchange-based model continue to be the predominant pattern of financial elder care? How about the elders' perception of returned children's filial piety? Will the returned children be perceived as more filial than before their return? A longitudinal research that traces a group of rural families may provide valuable answers to these questions.

Third, this research was based on data collected from interviews with rural elders. It explores rural elders' perceptions of financial care provided by migrated children and their perception of migrated children's filial piety. From a methodological point of view, future research will benefit from collecting data from the migrated children. As a result, the researcher may gain a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamic of intergenerational financial care and the changing culture of filial piety from the perspective of migrated children. Furthermore, results from such research on migrated children may initiate some interesting comparisons with the current project, which is based upon rural elders.

Finally, results from this study discovered the important role of community support and extended family assistance on rural elders' psychological wellbeing. Future research will benefit from conducting field work in rural China by conducting in-depth interviews or participant observations of rural communities. Results from such research will generate more valuable insights for social policy making in the areas of social care, as explained in the previous section of policy implication.

Conclusion

In a nutshell, this project is a timely research that looks at the effects of two social transformations—population aging and rural-urban migration—on individual rural families in China, through a comprehensive examination of financial care pattern, the changing dynamic of

filial piety, and rural elders' life satisfaction. Results from this study had implications at an academic level in terms of future research as well as at a practical level in terms of social policy makings. This study may serve as a start of a long-term research agenda on elder care in rural China.

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