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THE IMPACTS OF MODERNITY ON FAMILY  
STRUCTURE AND FUNCTION:  
A STUDY AMONG BEIJING, HONG KONG AND YUNNAN FAMILIES

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PHD

LINGNAN UNIVERSITY

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by  
CAO Ting

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## ABSTRACT

The Impacts of Modernity on Family Structure and Function: a Study among Beijing, Hong Kong, and Yunnan Families

by

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Doctor of Philosophy

For a generation in many sociological literatures, China has provided the example of traditional family with good intra-familial relationship, filial piety and extended family support which is unusually stable and substantially unchanged. However, with the emergence of modernity, in the forms of industrialization and urbanization; capitalization and public policy transformation, the family structure has undergone changes where nuclear and asymmetrical types have emerged. At the same time, family support for the elderly is affected by the changes in family formation, family dynamics, as well as people's values and their way of life. Do the theories concerning the relationship between modernity and family change that have been proposed and developed by western scholars, apply to Chinese societies also? Are there any differences between Western and Chinese culture in forming family organizations during modernity?

For answering these questions, this study explores the impact of modernity on family structure and changing functions in terms of family support for elderly in China. The aim is to understand why and how family change in its structure and functions within modernity. To fit the purpose and nature of this study, the exploratory strategy is used. By adopting historical review in the first stage, families in six historical stages (legendary and heroic age; Neolithic age; Xia, Shang and Western Zhou dynasty; Spring and Autumn, Warring States, Qin and the Western Han dynasty; from Eastern Han to early and middle period of Qing; and Late period of Qing until more recent years) are examined to show the "macro-transformations" and "micro-adaptive adjustments" that had happened to Chinese families in history.

Then, adopting the methodological concept of invariance, multiple-case (M-C) studies in three areas in China are conducted to illustrate the Chinese families in different level of modernization, namely the agrarian pre-modern (Yunnan), the transforming-mix modern (Beijing), and the capitalist modernized (Hong Kong). Based on the survey data and from analysis of semi-structured interview with 62 respondents about their own family experiences and 8 experts about their viewpoint and explanations, there is evidence showing that corresponding structure and family support for elderly changes are aiding modernization under diverse socio-economic characteristics (i.e. under developed, developing and developed localities).

To explain this phenomenon under study, a geo-adaptation model is developed from both macro and micro perspective to give insight on how modernity affects the ways of family support for elderly members. It has concluded that the development of modernity, as one of the vital reasons, contribute to changes in family structure globally (i.e. from stem and extended to nuclear and diverse form), but the care function for the aged, is not destined to deteriorate. To some extent, the Chinese tradition of filial piety and the family policy could strengthen social cohesion by maintaining the core functions once provided by the stem and extended family.

## DECLARATION

I declare that this is an original work based primarily on my own research, and I warrant that all citations of previous research, published or unpublished, have been duly acknowledged.

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**(Cao Ting)**  
**Date:**

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CASS	Chinese Academy of Social Sciences
CCM	Constant Comparative Method
C-H	Comparative-historical
CSSA	Comprehensive Social Security Assistance
M-C	Multiple-case
MPF	Mandatory Provident Fund
OAA	Old Age Allowance
SAR	Special Administrative Region
SSA	Social Security Allowances



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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

Societies have generally assumed that “the family is the natural and fundamental group unit and is entitled to protection by society and the state” (United Nations, 1948). From different disciplines and perspectives, study of the family has always attracted scholars and policy makers, even at times lay persons. The reason underlying such great interest in study of the family may be attributed to the close relationship between society and everyday aspects of life. This study seeks to explore the impact in China as modernity affects the structure of the family and changes its function as regards family support for elderly people. The purpose of the study is to understand why and how changes in family structure and function take place with the rise of modernity. Using exploratory approach, the research employs historical review and multiple-case study methodology to illustrate the phenomena under examination.

Chapter I opens with an overview of the context which frames the study. There follows a statement of the purpose of the study and the research questions, illustrating these through provision of a rationale and the significance of the study. This chapter also discusses the approach to research and the assumptions in this research.

### **1.1 Overview of Context**

For a generation much sociological literature has discussed China as an example of traditional extended family life with good intra-familial relationships, filial piety and extended family supports which are unusually stable and substantially unchanging (Yang, 1959; Baker, 1979). This phenomenon was so unique that it motivated a

considerable amount of research from the 1940's to the 1960's. Many sociologists attributed to this traditional extended family structure certain features which greatly influenced family life in China, including the traditional patterns of a "familistic" society, the influence of former ideologies, political factors and class systems, and a predominantly agricultural economy (Levy, 1949; Yang, 1959; Fei, 1948). However, these explanations no longer seem applicable when applied to interpret Chinese families in the current era. As China moved into modern, under the influence of particular forms of industrialization and urbanization, capitalization and adaptation to technology, family structure has undergone changes where nuclear and asymmetrical types of family grouping have emerged (Chen, 1985; Zeng, 1992; Tang, 2005; Wang, 2006). To some extent, the Chinese family mirrors its western counterparts in form and structure while still there persists Chinese characteristics in its means of supporting and protecting family members. To this time there has been very little literature on which a sound appraisal of the processes accounting for such changes can be based, either in quantity or quality.

On the contrary, such studies as have examined processes of social and economic change undertaken in western countries, mostly in the 1950's and 1960's. Some sociologists believe that there is a close relationship between family structure and function, and related processes of industrialization and modernization (Parsons & Bales, 1955; Goode, 1963). The rise of modernity not only brings about rapid economic change and advancement in technology but also alters people's values and their patterns of life. Processes of change in society have, accordingly, been accompanied by changes in the structure and function of the family. Under varying socioeconomic situations people choose to form different family types and structures as part of an adaptive process allowing them to fit into the changing environment. It is argued that the function of the family accompanies the spread of modernity irrespective of cultural and political differences (Parsons & Bales, 1955; Goode, 1963; Young & Willmott, 1973). Recent research concerning modernity, while accepting some elements, also goes against the basic assumptions of classical modernization

theory which are in support of the universal model of modernization. Contrary to this view, the authors of the research argue that modernity might be achieved by multiple pathways, and thus the consequences or impacts of modernity are much more complex than formerly predicted. They further indicate that although the convergence of industrial societies can be seen at the basic structural or institutional level, it has also become more apparent that there are great diversities in ideological and cultural features which differentiate societies (Eisenstadt, 2001; Robertson, 1995).

It has turned out that the recent studies provides a much more refined version of modernity and that this could be used to illustrate changes in the family brought about by modernity. In this view, both convergence and divergence in modernity should be considered since interdependence between the two is the key for a better understanding of this process and change in the family. Thus, if the impacts of modernity are examined, visible changes should be evident both at a universal 'macro-transformative' level where the structure of the family will be seen moving from a larger size down to smaller sizes, such as from extended to nuclear or to asymmetrical, and at a specific 'micro-adaptive' level where the family should come through different processes of adaptation to meet the demands made on it by corresponding socio-economic and cultural conditions.

As fertility rates decline and life expectancy increases many countries, including China, face the challenges of sustaining an aging population and the burdens of a high dependency ratio. Some praise Asian countries, particularly China, for strengths arising from extended kinship relations within the family which provide strong familial support for aged relatives (Cowgill, 1986; Leung, 1996; Phillips, 1992). They imply that these maybe sustainable and unchanged. However, with the modernity it is evident that the Chinese family is challenged by similar thrusts which themselves require changes and adaptation of strategies.

The unique dual structure in China which encompasses both a rural and an urban economy has put the country into different levels of modernity, implying unbalanced economic and social development among different regions. Modernity of the central and western regions, particularly the latter, tends in general to lag behind that of the coastal regions of eastern China. Thus the Chinese family in modernized cities such as Hong Kong appears similar in structural patterns to families seen in any developed or western country. Families in recently modernized cities, such as Shanghai or Beijing, appear to have arrived at “cross roads” in terms of structure and their ability to adapt to new roles. In villages, particularly some in poor mountainous areas, the family is still very much as it used to be, remaining as an extended type and providing strong family support for aged relatives. Since filial or familial care for the elderly has been assumed to exist in Chinese families regardless of time, some people doubt the extent to which this cultural trait still exists today in those places where family structure has experienced dramatic change. It could be argued that there may be similarities in changes of family structure but the care function for older people is not necessarily the same. This study aims to unfold this myth and attempts to explore the delicate processes through which modernity induces change both in family structure and in the function of support of older relatives, especially elderly parents.

## **1.2 Statement of Purpose and Research Questions**

With the rise of modernity family composition in China seems to be undergoing sequent adaptive processes. At the same time, China, while roughly following the developmental pattern of earlier developing countries, has made adaptations in accord with its own historical and cultural experiences. Apart from British and other European countries, where the rise of modernity began in the late 18th century and early 20th century, China’s path to modern began relatively late but proceeded at a much faster speed. In recent years, especially after reforms and the implementation of policies for opening up the country, China has experienced substantial industrial growth, rapid

urbanization and immense cultural changes which are shaping “modern China” (Babkina, 1997; Moody, 1995). At the same time, however, it would be wrong to say that particular cultural and economic features of Chinese society have disappeared. The history of modernity in China is a process of continuous adaptation and development in which people respond to new economic and social conditions rather than completely abandoning the old ways of doing things. Both cultural and socio-economic dimensions shape the strategies that people devise to adapt their new roles and responsibilities in their communities. In this sense, there is a need to take account of events or processes both of which are thought to be important according to the theory of modernity and social change, and the specific cultural and historical features possessed by China in its path to modern. Such an account should provide us with a more comprehensive and dynamic view of modernity.

When considering cultural and economic differences it can be questioned whether theories concerning the relationship between modernity and family change that have been proposed and developed by western scholars apply to Chinese societies. Are there differences between Western and Chinese cultures as regards the formation of family organization within modernity? The answers to these questions require a comprehensive perspective for looking at modernity processes in China and their impacts on family which are based on empirical evidence. Moreover in order to see how people respond to “transformations” and make adjustments, apart from an examination of general processes such as industrialization and urbanization, it is important to investigate people’s own perceptions of family life, the formation of family, and care giving for elderly members. By combining both macro-transformative and micro-specific factors the current study uses a geo-adaptation perspective<sup>1</sup> to describe how people change their beliefs, values, and behaviors, and modify their relationships with family members and the course of their family life while adapting to the forces of modernity. The primary purpose of the study is to explore the mechanisms by which

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<sup>1</sup>As this study is framed within grounded theory methodology, the geo-adaptation approach is derived from data collected.

rapid socioeconomic development may affect change in family structure and function as regards elderly support in China. To shed light on the problem, the following research questions will be addressed:

1. What are the main factors which transform the structure and supporting function of the Chinese family in the path to modern?
2. How do these factors influence Chinese family dynamics as these are reflected in structure and care for elderly people at both macro and micro levels?
3. What adaptive strategies are employed by family members to deal with changing familial relationships, including support and care for aging family members?

### **1.3 Rationale and Significance**

China's path to modern has occurred in the context of socialism. In the past 60 years a few sociologists, such as Fei Xiaotong (1948), Yang C. K. (1959), Levy (1949), and Fried (1959) undertook pioneering research on village life, the peasant family and the urban family, but their work described a period in time when economic development had just begun in China. Recent research studies on the Chinese family are mostly demographic analyses based on statistics from population censuses and other secondary sources which aim to provide information on basic trends and general patterns (Zeng, 1992, Tang, 2005, Wang, 2006). Few have contributed to our understanding of the general sociology of the family and the forces behind change within the family. Furthermore, related studies do not offer convincing interpretation of these processes of change in the Chinese family. A central question is "will China, with its Confucian tradition of filial piety, follow trends in family development similar to those seen in Western countries?"

The theory of modernization and its impacts on family structure and function began basically in the 1950s and 1960s (Webster, 1990; Harrison, 1988). Related



discussions and controversies in this period centered around notions suggested by many functionalists that modernization and industrialization led to a shift from a predominantly extended to a predominantly nuclear family structure and that this shift arguably weakens the traditional functions of the family in general (Parsons & Bales, 1955; Goode, 1963). However, most studies have focused on processes of industrialization and urbanization while other central features, including particular cultural and economic conditions and historical events, were often deliberately ignored. To speak, as above, of a general trend does not necessarily imply that the approaches or paths to development and modernization are identical in every society. Accordingly, these differences may not lead to similar consequences as regards change in a family. This suggests that, apart from considering the similarities which the Chinese share with other western populations on the path to modern, it is crucial to study the particular features of China that could affect its family development. The classical modernization theory fails to provide reasonable illustration on this.

Furthermore it can be considered that modernity and its related transformations are not fixed states but are dynamic and involve ongoing and developing processes. Modernization theory concerned with examining changes which took place fifty to sixty years ago in western countries differs from that of today with respect to diverse social, cultural and political contexts. In fact, from the late 1960s, modernization theory has undergone critique and refinement. There is a growing acknowledgement that developments in the contemporary era in various institutional arenas, such as the economy, the polity, and the family, come together in different ways in different societies. Some leading scholars, such as Eisenstadt, Riedel, and Sachsenmaier (2001), point out the great diversity, complexity, and changeability of modern societies. Thus there are gaps of genuine interest to be filled and contributions to be made to a better understanding of development of modernity in China and their impact on family structure and function.

In order to offer a convincing account of the development of the Chinese family

within modernity and to better understand processes of changes in family dynamics, in particular family formations, and supporting functions for elderly people, this study contributes to family study from the following aspects. Firstly it may be noted that related studies conducted in western societies are mostly historical studies (Goode, 1963; Young & Willmott, 1973) tracing family change over a specific period of time. Having regard to the Chinese economic distributional patterns outlined above, this study will be the first outside the west to look at different levels of development at a particular point in time. It will also be the first study to examine the development of modernity within two differing political systems, Socialism and Capitalism. Three specific cities, Yunnan, Beijing and Hong Kong, have been chosen as research settings to represent differing socioeconomic conditions potentially containing correspondingly dominant family structures which themselves represent differing levels of socio-economic development. These are an agrarian-extended society in the stage of pre-modern, a newly modernizing society, and a modernized society. Further, these three areas fall under two different political systems: Yunnan and Beijing under socialism, Hong Kong under capitalism. Hence, this study seeks to provide opportunities to understand both the developmental and familial trends and also the significant socio-political forces that promote change in the structure and function of the Chinese family.

Secondly, China's path to modern is unique in that, leaving aside Hong Kong and Macau, under socialism tremendous economic and social changes have taken place with little or no dramatic political change. Yet at the same time widespread changes are occurring in the Chinese family. In some developed areas families mirror change in western democratic societies. Perhaps the emergence and development of social policies related to the family that have arisen from changes in the social and economic system, education and the welfare system may play a more significant role in the transformation of the Chinese family. Family planning in particular, formerly intended to control rapid population growth, to some extent accelerated the decline of the traditional extended family in China. The development of social welfare policies

are amendments that support families in adapting to varying economic developments and social change. Therefore at the theoretical building level the study reviews the role of public policy, in particular social welfare and population control, in the formulation of family and prioritizes factors that drive the Chinese family to change upon modernity.

Thirdly, using family support for elderly people as an example, the study shows how various social transformations have influenced the Chinese family and changed family patterns and dynamics. By analyzing “pressures” that have been created by social-economic conditions and people’s changing perceptions, views and behaviors towards family, the study illustrates the challenges faced by today’s China. At the theory building level it examines and compares different paths of development in social policies, especially policies regarding social welfare, family planning, and old age security, and illustrates their relation to corresponding social-economic changes in three settings. Finally, in the case of elderly support, the study shows how the divergent approaches of government social policy (i.e. social security, education, health, housing, pension, and fertility) have strong influence over the Chinese family and interact with other aspects of society such as economic patterns and kinship systems, thus contributing to changes in patterns of support and the methods that people adopt to provide care for elderly family members.

In order to reach the aims outlined above, the study attempts to achieve the following specific goals:

- By using historical review, the study aims to explore families throughout Chinese history and identify common impacts on family change through historical perspectives found in literature.
- In the multiple-case study, the study will attempt to provide evidence to explain in current differing stages of modern life the ‘macro-transformations’ and ‘micro-adaptive adjustments’ that have occurred in Chinese families, namely the agrarian pre-modern stage as in Yunnan, the transforming-mixed modern stage

as in Beijing, and the all-forms modern stage as in Hong Kong.

- Adopting the methodological concept of invariance, the ‘macro-transformation’ of family structure outcomes (extended, nuclear or asymmetrical under diverse socio-cultural characteristics) will be used to illustrate and explain why corresponding structures are aiding modernity at different times and under differing conditions.
- As a result of the above an explanatory model will be developed from both macro and micro perspectives giving insight into how the development of modernity affects family formation, thus changing the pattern of family support for elder members. This model will be called the “geo-adaptation approach” to the understanding of the related social and economic development which pertain to China and its families.

In summary, theoretically for the first time in history the present study will yield a typology, a model of a theory capable of explaining the outcomes of family that exist in corresponding socio-economic eras. Methodologically the places chosen as comparative case illustrations will have significant bench-marking effects for perspective-comparative studies in the future as the three locations studied can be compared with places at similar levels of modernity in under-developed agrarian, developing, and developed economies. From a practical perspective, mainly through explicating the processes of adaptation to modern, the study will provide solid insights for policy-makers or governments who would wish to strengthen social cohesion by maintaining the core functions once provided by the extended family.

## **1.4 Research Approach**

Given the nature of this study, triangulation of data is needed and will be achieved by converging both quantitative (broad numeric trends) and qualitative (detailed views) data. In this study the approach is to draw on exploratory strategies. First of all relevant literature is reviewed and the findings used to refine two stages of

data-collection. In the first stage history of Chinese family is reviewed and set the historical background for family changes in modern times. From the outset various strategies will be employed to shape a analytical framework. A multiple-case (M-C) study will then examine three selected locations, Hong Kong, Beijing, and Yunnan. Findings from the case study will provide further empirical validation guided by the conceptual framework proposed.

### **Justification of the selection of three cases**

In this study three areas in China have been selected to represent three different stages of socioeconomic development. These three cases are used for testing the conceptual and theoretical framework. There are both theoretical and practical reasons for choosing a three-case research approach to undertake analysis and comparisons. Firstly Yunnan is a pre-modern and underdeveloped area, while Beijing and Hong Kong represent two areas which are undergoing or have undergone high levels of modernity. The Yunnan as against Beijing-Hong Kong comparison is based on the dichotomous conception of traditional as against modern societies in classical sociology. As Eisenstadt (1974: 226) indicates, “whatever methodological and substantive criticisms have been raised for decades against these typologies—and they have been abundant—they nevertheless dominated research on this subject for a very long time and gave rise to a picture of traditional and modern societies which persisted over a long period”. From this view the central concern with tradition in Yunnan as contrasted with modernity in Beijing and Hong Kong contributes to the understanding of development of societies and families under diverse socio-economic conditions. Particularly when certain micro-level aspects are considered, as for example individual socio-economic and behavioral characteristics, the dichotomy of tradition and modernity is useful for reflecting the impacts of macro societal structures (i.e. institutional features) on family dynamics. Consequently it has turned to become an effective way to interpret transformations of family in terms of structure and care giving functions in modern era.

Secondly, concomitantly with the recognition of the possibilities of there being multilateral ways for societies to modernize, the field of modernity study is shifting away from its classic universalizing models. As the result, the culturally specific character of historical phenomena and societal processes are emphasized (Eisenstadt, 2001). In this sense, the Hong Kong-Beijing comparison provides a good opportunity to study the development of modernity under different political regimes, namely capitalism and socialism. In particular, the difference between the two regimes becomes visible if we focus on structural conditions such as the role of the government in economic development and welfare provision. The different approaches or pathways to modern in these two areas greatly influence the main problems and challenges confronted by family and kinship organization, thus developing distinctive reaction patterns and adaptive strategies. As a result they contribute to our understanding of how modernizing and modernized societies under different political regimes come to have divergent experiences and how these experiences impact family in its formation and care functions for elders.

In addition, Yunnan, Hong Kong and Beijing serve as examples of distinctively Chinese social, political, and value systems in which the Chinese family is embedded. Accepting the fact that modern societies no longer follow the same paths in transcendental order, the existence of multiple forms of modernity has gained increasing recognition. It is important in this context that the research does not attempt to treat Yunnan, Beijing, and Hong Kong as lying in linear sequential stages, but rather see them as being at different levels of modernity. Therefore the study not only reviews histories of development in three settings during the past several decades, but also emphasizes horizontal comparisons between them in a given time. For the former, the text describes modernity and corresponding changes so as to provide empirical evidence for the different forms of development in the three settings. For the latter, comparisons are made regarding some of the main indicators of modernity and it is argued that certain core features are shared by societies situated in different levels of modernity. In this sense, the comparisons between

Yunnan, Beijing, and Hong Kong could be expanded to serve as a reference for societies under similar socio-economic and political conditions.

Theoretical considerations aside, there are also practical considerations in determining the choices of sites to study. In Yunnan a Yi tribe has been selected for study because of its underdeveloped social-economic characteristics and a distinctive culture. In Yunnan most Yi engage in agriculture and a small percentage raise livestock in mountainous areas. The relatively isolated environment has resulted in a traditional tribal structure where language, culture and customs remain relatively untouched by the outside world. The researcher lived in Yunnan for nearly 18 years and has had many contacts with the Yi living in remote areas. From these experiences she developed an understanding of this people's socio-economic context, the characteristics of Yi tribal life, and had opportunities to access their villages which enhanced awareness, knowledge and sensitivity to many of the changes they face in family life.

Hong Kong and Beijing form the additional two areas selected for this research. In terms of socioeconomic development and cultural values they differ in many ways. The selection of these two settings is based on purposive sampling criteria and feasibility of access to research subjects. As has been illustrated above, Hong Kong is a city which developed under a capitalist system while Beijing is in a period of rapid economic growth within a socialist system. Presumably, the both places are grounded in and influenced by the Confucian ethic of filial piety but have different political systems. For instance, one hundred and fifty years of colonization brought Western culture and values into Hong Kong society and accelerated Hong Kong's path to modern, whereas Beijing's rapid changes reflect the influence of a developing economy.

In sum, historical review gives important insights into the dynamics of transformation of the Chinese family in history. In the meantime, multiple-case (M-C)

approach helps study of the Chinese family on the basis of analysis of real cases. The three-case design rests on theoretical considerations and is appropriate for obtaining information about patterns of change in different levels of modernity. It is particularly useful for analyzing changes in attitudes and behavior. Although such a research approach might not provide a broad description of the totality of change in the Chinese family it can suffice for general comparative and exploratory purposes. The representativeness of the cases and sampling method is discussed in more detail in Chapter 4.

## **1.5 Assumption Made of Change within the Chinese Family**

The impacts of modernity are indirectly related to changes in family structure and function. The various forms and functions of the family depend on people's various adaptation strategies.

At the macro level, industrialism and capitalism have greatly accelerated economic development and this is reflected in a rapid growth in GDP, an innovative commercial capitalist system, adoption of new technology and so on. Urbanism changes the proportional structure of the labor force in some modern cities in China. More and more young people in the countryside have left their hometowns for cities to seek out better opportunities. Consequently tremendous population mobility has changed population distribution in different areas. Politics, which at first glance has not changed much of the structure and the essential nature of the political system, has not followed the same development as in most western democratic countries as they experienced the processes of modernization. However, considerable changes in the substance and processes of politics have greatly affected the relationships between individuals in society. A wide variety of government policies have influenced marriage and the family. For example, China's restrictive birth planning policy promoted late marriage and late childbearing and, even more importantly, has contributed to a drastic decrease in the birth rate.



One of the most influential sociologists, Karl Marx, has claimed that economically developed societies display the future to less developed societies (Marx, 1973). Although, this view has been challenged by empirical evidence which demonstrates that during the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century non-western societies, East Asia for example, unexpectedly surpassed their Western role models in certain key aspects of modernity. Marx successfully predicted that industrialization itself would transform the world. Today, theories about modernity and new empirical evidence have supplemented Marx's theories in many aspects however the basic rule that socioeconomic development greatly impacts major social, cultural, and political changes, which in turn shape families, is correct. Modernity in China, although showing a different path from other western countries, has exhibited prevalent impacts resulting in basic economic, social, and cultural change. Meanwhile, given differences in culture and tradition, the consequences of modernity and its impacts on family might be much more complex, reflecting both general and peculiar patterns of development.

The above thinking leads to the following assumptions:

1. Under the effects of modernity, basic values, beliefs, and behaviors towards family might be replaced by modern patterns similar to those exhibited in western countries. At the same time, however, the distinctive cultural traditions and historical experiences from Chinese heritage might still persist and influence family life.
2. The structure and care function of the Chinese family differs under differing socio-economic conditions and at different levels of modernity. It cannot be predicted that the family as found in today's modern areas can be taken as the life pattern which will emerge in the future in currently less developed areas, although it may indicate probabilistic trends.
3. Different paths towards modern might have different outcomes associated with family formation and care provision for the elderly. Social policies regarding marriage and family exert great influence over the family as regards structure and

care functions thus making a contribution to the tremendous changes seen in today's Chinese family.

At the micro level people choose adaptation strategies in response to tremendous changes in society. Psychologists usually refer to four basic psychological modes of adaptation to describe an individual's changes in thoughts, values, and behaviors when confronted with environmental change (Yang, 1998). Briefly speaking, people resist, accommodate, cope or withdraw from the changes they encounter and they adopt one or more modes of adaptation to deal with change. However, related psychological theories place more emphasis on an individual's passive adaptation to natural and social conditions while the mechanisms which caused people to change in their values, thoughts, and behaviors are multi-dimensional and are filled with paradoxes and dilemmas.

The family forms a good setting in which to observe change in people's values, thoughts and behaviors within modernity. China, as much of East Asia, is generally understood as a country with a high level of co-residence of parents with married children (Leung, 1996; Jones, 1993). Stem patterns and extended family forms still account for a higher percentage of households as compared with western countries. It is widely accepted that children have to take care of their parents and that this is expected by many Chinese people. It is ideas such as this that have led to the belief in the persistence of traditional family values in this region (Leung, 1996). Recent surveys however show that the proportion of nuclear families has increased and there is also a rising number of one-person households (Tang, 2005; Wang, 2006). Women have fewer children in the course of life, especially in urban cities. Young people today have more freedom to choose the kind of family form they wish to create rather than this being predetermined by their parents. Hence, some scholars have claimed that the Chinese family is "modern" in the sense that some of the changes which western families have experienced in the past are evident in contemporary China (Chan, 1997). These two arguments have been the main focus of discussion

about the Chinese family in recent years. However there are doubts about the inevitability and universality of the above statements. Both statements are oversimplified in that they simply highlight aspects of change in the Chinese family. It may be that these different points of view may complement each other.

When people face tremendous environmental change, a geo-adaptation perspective could be used to explain the drives changing Chinese families. To some extent, the individual disparities are the results of macro-societal development. For example, modern modes of production contribute to the different socioeconomic situations which affect the decisions people make under various challenges. Urbanization makes some people migrate to cities while others remain in their hometown. Thus, at an individual level, family change reflects both the impacts of macro transformations and the differences in specific conditions which individuals experience. Adaptive strategies differ from individual to individual as each copes with the perceived consequences of modernity. For instance, as they adapt to diverse socio-economic and individual conditions, the family lives of upper and middle class families differ from those of lower class families. Similarly, people adopt differing family patterns and forms in their responses to a changing environment. Geo-adaptation perspectives enable us to examine a wide range of the responses people make and may include how individuals restore emotional stability, modify their values, beliefs, and their behavior in family life and adapt to change or even resist it.

Following the above lines of thinking leads to consideration of the following assumptions:

4. Individual characteristics greatly determine the kind of family life a person chooses to have. Individual variations such as in socio-economic conditions, family relationships, life experiences, and income level affect family formation and care and support for the elderly.
5. Change in family is a continuous and complex process filled with paradoxes and dilemmas. In theory an individual's behavior is closely associated or connected

with beliefs, thoughts, and values but in practice ideas and behaviors may be dissociated to some extent. In terms of care provision for elderly people, it is possible that the ability and willingness of care provision might not be consistent.

## **1.6 Organization of the Study**

This study includes ten chapters. Chapter 1 provides a background for the study, a statement of purpose, research questions, matters pertaining to the rationale and significance the study, the research approach adopted, and initial assumptions.

Chapter 2 presents a review of the literature. This includes definitions of family, concepts pertaining to modernity, and theories relating to modernity and family change from the past two decades. Changing family structure and function in China as a whole is then described and illustrated. Chapter 3 discusses the analytical framework of modernity and its relations to Chinese family change. It begins with the introduction of Giddens's work on modernity and goes on to discuss and analyze its implications for China. Furthermore, a framework based on four processes of modernity is proposed which can be used to examine dynamic changes and developments in the Chinese family in modern era. Chapter 4 describes the methodology used for the study. Specifically the research design, data collection methods, data sources, and methods for data analysis and synthesis are described as occurring at two stages during the research, a historical review and exploration through multiple-case studies.

Chapter 5 presents findings from the historical review. These include examination of changes in the Chinese family at six historical stages with illustrations. Chapters 6, 7, and 8 present findings from multiple-case (M-C) studies. The developmental processes of modernity and family changes in Yunnan, Beijing, and Hong Kong are described respectively. In Chapter 9, modernity levels and family outcomes are analyzed and compared in three selected settings. Following that, an exploratory

model to be called the geo-adaptation model is developed and findings are discussed. Chapter 10 provides a summary of the entire study, an overview of findings together with discussion. Implications for theory and practice, and recommendations for policy makers are provided. In conclusion, limitations of the study are discussed.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

This critical review explores the relationship between modernity and changes in family structure and care function for the elderly. To attain insight into this relationship, three major areas of literature are reviewed critically: the concept of family and the development of modernity, the key features of modernity and its impacts on the family and, changing family structure and function in China. A review of the literature on consequences of modernity provides an understanding of changes in socioeconomic conditions, and the personal values, beliefs and behaviors that are perceived as the major socio-economic development processes in the modern era. The literature reviewed modernity and its impacts on the family in western countries provides a comprehensive explanation of family change from both theoretical and empirical perspectives, from which the rationale for this proposed research approach is built. The literature review concerning Chinese family life is aimed at giving an interpretive summary illustrating trends and patterns in family change, in particular with respect to the structure and function of support for elderly members, which then contributes to the development of the study's conceptual framework.

#### **2.1 The Definition of Family**

The family is perhaps the most vital personal care network in human society. From different perspectives many people have tried to define the family but failed to give a definition that could be applied to all societies (United Nations, 1996). For example, George Murdock (1949) indicated that the family is a social group which includes at least two adult members who live together, share resources, work as a unit and rear children. Kathleen Gough (1971:760) defined family as “a married couple or other

group of adult kinsfolk who cooperate economically and in the upbringing of children, all or most of whom share a common dwelling.” However, it has been argued that such norms are too narrow and vary between peoples. For example, some argue that the upbringing of children is no longer the main function of the family, thus is not the purpose for building a unit. Others would see the family as providing the most important emotional support in society. In addition, since many new family types have begun to emerge, such as single-parent families and couples without children, the definition of family is rather complex and situationally diverse. As Diem (1997) has said, “the definition of family depends on who answers the question”. He enumerated concepts of family given by social scientists, the state and ordinary people, and concluded that differences among them can be due to the inclusion of many factors and purposes. Thus norms vary across cultural and historical demarcations.

Katherine Allen (2000:7) further stated “our insights about family processes and structures are affected by our membership in particular families, by the lives of those we study, and by what we care about knowing and explaining.” In the case of those who agree with Allen, family definitions are believed to be linked with ideological differences and change as society changes. Thus, it would be not possible to arrive at a definition of family that is universal (Trost, 1990; Allen, 2000). Rather, many experts in the field reject giving a specific and established definition of family, and attempt to incorporate great variety when developing our understanding of family by providing evidence based on individual family experiences. For example, David Cheal (1993) used the term “families” to replace “the family” in order to emphasize family diversity in postmodern societies. The definition of “families”, he stated, included whatever the individual perceives as family. This view is also supported by other researchers. In a recent study conducted by Brian Powell and his team (2010) in Indiana University, the evolving definition of family from an American view point can, in general, be traced. Three surveys between 2003 and 2010, involving more than 2,300 Americans, found that with time definitions of family are moving to become more expansive and malleable. Though the traditional view of family, constituted as a

married, heterosexual couples with children, is still held by most people (about 98%), other types of relationship, such as same-sex couples with or without children and cohabitating couples, are also being accepted and counted as family by some proportion of those surveyed.

The discussion above indicates that the understanding of family can be experienced as a process moving from simple to complex. At the outset, the definition of family focused mainly on economic matters. Next it proceeded to involve with cultural and historical differences and those changes in society linked with people's varying perceptions and purposes. In recent times the definition of family has become rather fluid and uncertain, not only in the definitions given by scholars but also because of individual family experiences. Instead of proposing any one exact definition of what or who constitute a family, it now seems more important to focus on structural similarities among families in differing cultural and historical contexts and thus allow for theoretical analyses as well as applied research. For example, no matter what kind of relationships or social groups is perceived to be "a family" it has generally been assumed that family is the most natural and fundamental group unit of society (United Nations, 1948). With the rise of modernity rapid changes have been seen in many aspects of social life which have altered the roles and functions of the family (Hareven, 1976; Wrigley, 1972; Haralambos, 2000). However, families continue to provide "the natural framework for the emotional and material support essential to the growth and well-being of their members" (United Nations, 1996: 9).

## **2.2 The Concept of Modernity**

The term "modernity" has a long history and is central to sociology. According to Giddens, "modernity" refers to "modes of social life or organization which emerged in Europe from about the seventeenth century onwards and which subsequently became more or less worldwide in their influence" (Giddens, 1990:1). The interpretation and analyses of the modernity and emergence of modern social



institutions were diverse. Different explanations of these processes have been produced from divergent views and perspectives from Marx (1818-83), and Durkheim (1858-1917), to Weber (1864-1920), all of whose thoughts are still influential and have laid the foundations for modern social theories. For example, Durkheim proposed that there were two basic types of society, the “traditional” and the “modern”, the latter creating a new pattern of organic solidarity. This contrasted with the former which had been based in mechanical solidarity (Durkheim, 1984). Weber (1971) explored the emergence of industrialism and capitalism in Western Europe and also draws a distinction between traditional and modern society, particularly in terms of their contrasting patterns of ideas, attitudes and values.

Today, as the continual expansion of modernity throughout the world, a variety of terms has been suggested to further illustrate this transition, a few of which refer to the emergence of new type of social system, such as the “information society” or “knowledge society”, but most of which suggest to use more closely related concepts such as “post-industrial society”, “post-modernism”, “post-capitalism” to explain the more recent general social changes. To some extent these concepts are closely linked and may be appropriate when referring to worldwide development. However, these concepts with their different focus and in their various implications have arisen widely debates about generalization of proposed social life and patterns of social development. More commonly, as there is currently no universally accepted concept of what exactly can be termed modern society and what shall rather not so be termed, these controversies seem more focused on issues of philosophy and epistemology. In too many instances, we appear to give too much attention to the social scientific typologies, but are in fact largely ignorant of the complex characters of the contemporary world. As Giddens argued, “it is not sufficient merely to invent new terms.....instead, we have to look again at the nature of modernity itself which, for certain fairly specific reasons, has been poorly grasped in the social sciences hitherto” (Giddens, 1990; 3).

With these understanding, instead of seeking to demonstrate a coherent and general concept of modern or what is called “post-modern” or “post-modernity”, I would argue, it is more appropriate to take a different track to interpret the key features of modernity in a more general term. It is because that modernity, as a new paradigm of daily life, incorporates major socio-economic development process in the modern era and has more distinguishable and profound consequences than in previous forms of society.

### **The nature of modernity**

Despite the different views and propositions proposed by sociologists, it is widely accepted that a complex and modern society differ in several key respects from any previous type of social order, and their development has had significant consequences stretching far beyond their origins in Europe (Giddens, Duneier & Appelbaum, 2002). The emergence of modernity is then seen by some theorists as associated with a cluster of structural and institutional developments. Several structural characteristics of a “modern” society are identified such as growing social mobilization, development of communication and mass media, tendency to structural differentiation, and also changes in the agency of education and other social institutions. Concomitantly, modernity has been seen as constructing processes and comprising distinct social, economic, and political features.

In significant respects, the classical theories of modernization that predominated in the 1950s and 1960s, as well as theoretical traditions in sociology, including those stemming from the writings of Marx, Durkheim, and Weber, have implicitly or explicitly identified the core and the nature of modernity, of modern social structure, and the concomitant development of new structural, institutional, and cultural features. For example, while Marx tended to see the rise of capitalism as the major transformative force shaping the modern world, Durkheim, on the other side, criticized this interpretation and traced the modern institutions primarily to the impact

of industrialism. The emergent social order of modernity, in Marx's view, is capitalistic in both its economic system and its other institutions (Webster, 1990; Giddens, 1990; Calhoun, 2002). The mobile character of modernity is then explained by the outcome of the capitalist economic systems which stimulate considerable growth and increase productivity, and have an incentive to reinvest in technological innovation and capital equipment. However, for Durkheim, capitalistic competition is not the central elements of the emerging industrial order (Giddens, 1990; Calhoun, 2002). Durkheim further argued that the rapidly changing character of modern life and social institutions derived from the complex division of labor, in which people are allocated not in a capitalist, but in an industrial social order according to merit and rewarded accordingly.

Weber spoke of capitalism too, but in rather different terms. He tended to see modern society as being structured around capitalist institutions. In his usage of "capitalism", he means that it is associated with the processes of rationalization, secularization, and disenchantment, and the end of traditional forms of authority and ways of understandings about the world (Habermas, 1985). In Weber's view, "rational capitalism" does not just comprise the economic mechanisms, for example the commodification of wage labor as specified by Marx, but also represents a new way of thinking (Macionis, 2012).

It is to be noted that classical theorists, Marx, Durkheim and Weber for example, have tended to look to a single principal forces that drive societies to develop or overriding dynamic of transformation in interpreting the nature of modernity. In fact, as Giddens argued "we should not regard these as mutually exclusive characterizations. Modernity, I propose, is multidimensional on the level of institutions, and each of the elements specified by these various traditions plays some part" (Giddens, 1990: 12). In this view, any simplistic version of modernity that focuses solely on one or two aspects of change is problematic and has potential shortcomings. Therefore it is imperative that we consider the nature of modernity which covers a series of broad

social, economic, and political consequences of development.

Indeed, as societies modernized in the contemporary world, new visions or understandings of modernity have deepened the recognition of development in a much broader sense. Here follows a brief summary of important refinements of theories of modernity shared by most of theorists in the contemporary era.

1. There is no general notion of progress that can be defended. The modern world is not destined, as classical theorists in modernization school hoped, to follow the similar sequential developmental stages. Instead there may be several paths to modern rather than a single linear evolution. Such a variety of approaches could be adopted because of factors, such as differences in the starting points of modernizing societies, the influences of external forces (i.e. wars and disasters), and multiple cultural and historical conditions (Norlan & Lenski, 1999). At different historical periods specific societies may have undergone structural change and this might not have followed Western models.
2. There is growing acknowledgement that modern societies occurring in a variety of forms, could be shaped by distinct cultural traditions, historical experiences and specific socio-economic conditions. As Eisenstadt proclaimed, “in many non-Western societies, all distinctively and undeniably modern, there was little disposition to imitate the West, or indeed to praise its qualities” (Eisenstadt, 2002). These forms differ in the socio-political structure of the society, in economic institutions, and in value and cultural systems. Even more recently, the term “multiple modernities” has been proposed by many sociologists and set against the classical theory of modernization and views of the convergence of societies in the contemporary era (Eisenstadt, Riedel, & Sachsenmaier, 2002).
3. Cultural traits are closely related to overall patterns in the development of society. Forms of social association and cultural institutions might vary in different

societies. For example, as Inglehart and Welzel (2005) have found in their study of more than eighty societies, cultural and value changes are “path dependent”. On the one side modernizing forces tend to bring long term value changes, such as “changing gender roles, changing attitudes towards authority, changing sexual norms.....more critical and less easily led publics” (Inglehart & Welzel, 2005: 19). On the other side, however, societies with distinctive value systems are still greatly influenced by their cultural traditions and heritage. Thus, while it may be that values change and move in similar directions they continue to reflect a society’s distinctive cultural system and traditions.

4. Modernity takes the dual features of “universality” and “peculiarity”. It can be noticed that while societies might have developed differing ideological and cultural features there are a number of core characteristics shared by most modern societies. For example, in the social and economic realms, modern societies are characterized by features such as high levels of industrialization, urbanization, literacy, rising income levels and increased occupational specialization. In the political realm there are changing attitudes toward authority, and broader political participation. But at the same time, it is also a fact that modern societies have developed different ideological and institutional dynamics. For instance, many communist countries, while successfully proceeding to modern, have developed their distinctive political and economic system.
5. Modernity is multi-dimensional, including different aspects of changes particularly on an institutional level. For example Anthony Giddens describes modernity as: “(1) a certain set of attitudes towards the world, the ideas of the world as open to transformation, by human intervention; (2) a complex of economic institutions, especially industrial production and a market economy; (3) a certain range of political institutions, including the nation-state and mass democracy. Largely as a result of these characteristics, modernity is vastly more dynamic than any previous type of social order” (Giddens 1998, 94). This fact is

important for a better understanding of modernity and making us reflect on institutional and structural features of modern world.

It is in fact that the notion of modernity is undeniably sophisticated, since it has reflexivity, variability and changeability in its nature. Clearly, for countries that are experiencing explosive economic growth and rapid social changes, it is difficult to rely on a universal view of modernity to describe these changes. Concomitantly with the growing recognition of the complexity of modern and contemporary societies, there is a need to link such changes to how people think about their life and their relation to the society. Although people develop different thoughts and concepts concerning modernity which in part contribute to ongoing discussions and contradictions about the propositions as well as the content of modern societies, modernity has to be seen as significant causes of rapid change in the notion of family.

### **2.3“Modernity” and Its Impacts on Family**

As mentioned above, a definition of the term “modernity” presents many difficulties as a social scientific concept because of the various disciplinary understandings that cover economic, political, and philosophical sphere. Much recent discussion however relates to a somewhat narrower definition focusing on changes in specific areas. Today there are many new trends in family form but it cannot be said that these are all due to modernity. Yet modernity is definitely one of the important reasons (Cheal, 1991; Giddens, 1992; Morgan, 1996, 1999; Stacey, 1996). In order to understand the impacts of modernity on the family it needs to be made clear what the family in modern society is being compared to.

#### **2.3.1 The changing structures within the family**

It has been argued that pre-modern society has been described as a stage in which

family and kinship relationships in general are the basic organizing principles of social life. Anthony Giddens (1997) distinguished three main types of pre-modern society, hunting and gathering societies, pastoral and agrarian societies, and non-industrial civilizations. For example, among the people of non-literate societies, such as hunter-gatherers, the position of leader descends from a common ancestor of the group. Quite often such groups are very large and include more than two generations. Older members of the group have more status and influence than younger ones. Another form of pre-modern family, sometimes known as the classic extended family, is often found in some traditional peasant societies. Arensberg and Kimball's well known study of Irish farmers, entitled "Family and Community in Ireland" describes the traditional Irish farming family as a patriarchal extended family. Such families emphasized the absolutely authority of men because property was passed down through the male line. On the farm, the father-son relationship was also that of owner-employee (Arensberg & Kimball, 1968).

At one time most farming families followed the traditional structure and relationships. The family operated a home farm, mainly to supply family households with fresh produce rather than to augment cash income by selling on the market (Mathias, 1969). In the farming family, the home-unit is also the work-unit. This kind of self-sufficient economy requires knowledge and experience of weather conditions and optimum temperatures. Because elderly people were always the owners of the land and had a great deal of experience, they made all important decisions. The head of the family and "director of the firm" was a man.

From the literature, it can be seen that in pre-modern families, family is a somewhat larger notion than that of the present day nuclear family (Young, 1975). For this reason many social scientists refer to this kind of family as "extended". Typically, the extended family consists of parents, their children, and the parental parents, the people who pass on the farm to the next generation. Such a family also incorporates any unmarried brothers and sisters.

Some scholars have argued that the formerly accepted view that the extended family was common in every pre-modern society is no longer accepted as accurate (Laslett, 1972, 1977). However, most researchers believe there are many advantages for extended families when they maintain large kinship groupings since these offer many forms of support to individual group members when specific circumstances arise.

1. In the absence of a welfare state individuals are largely dependent on family and kin. The functions of the family are very important in daily life. For example, parents living with their unmarried children benefit both of them. Children provide support for elderly members of the family who allow them go out to earn a living. The extended family can furnish social services that are usually lacking in a society which does not have specialized agencies or organizations. An individual can get help from his or her family members, no matter if he or she is aged, ill, or disabled. The burden an individual brings to the family is less than that borne by a nuclear or conjugal family.
2. High rates of death and sickness encourage a wide network of kin to help each other as a family. Kinsfolk and neighbors can give individuals continuous economic and moral support throughout their lives. A high death rate leads to a large number of orphans, many of whom then receive help from their relatives. A large family becomes one of the most important suppliers of care and help for family members.
3. An extended household in a pre-modern society is more durable than a smaller household. It is the family which is the unit of production especially for agricultural products or textiles. The husband, wife and unmarried children work as a team. "Individuals come and go, but the unit maintains its identity, property and its collective responsibility" (Goode, 1963: 51). The existence of additional members of the household lowers the share of rent paid by each individual and thus increases productivity.
4. Finally, the working experience of elderly members of the family can be passed down from generation to generation. In such circumstances the extended family is better able to help each individual gain more experience and amass capital.



Although the extended family grows and then declines over the years with the effects of social change and development it offered many supports to individuals under different types of circumstances.

With the emergence of modernity however the dominant extended family of pre-modern society has been replaced by the nuclear family. A nuclear family consists of parents and their biological or adoptive descendants. Nuclear family is the typical family form in modern industrial society (Parsons, 1965, Parsons & Bale, 1955). In his theory of social evolution, Parson brought forward the idea that the evolution of society involves a process of structural differentiation, and in this process family and kinship groups no longer perform a wide range of functions. Instead specialist institutions such as business firms, schools, hospitals, police forces and churches take over many formerly family functions. In addition, Parson has used the word “isolated” to describe the nuclear family as being structurally isolated from other parts of the social structure such as the economic system. William J. Goode (1963) in his book “World Revolution and Family Patterns” said that industrialization tend to undermine the extended family and larger kinship groups. Although he argued that “the individual can maintain an extended kin network if he wishes to do so”, the nuclear family is the predominant family pattern in the modern world (Goode, 1963; Anderson, 1971, 1977)

Based on Parson (1965) and Goode (1963), the following explanations summarize the processes of family change:

1. Family changes do not move in a simple, direct, linear line from traditional to “modern”. Older patterns may drop out or become less important but later once again become widespread. Goode’s study found that the upper classes are more likely to maintain extended families because since “ruling classes and elites have an important influence on appointments to top jobs, the retention of family ties makes economic sense” (Goode, 1963). However, the smaller family type is more

prevalent in modern society.

2. The high rate of geographic mobility in modern society undermines large kin systems and moves family systems generally toward “some version of the conjugal system” (Goode, 1963: 7). Both Goode (1963) and Anderson (1977) reached the same conclusion realizing that a nuclear family is shaped to meet the requirements of the modern economic system and is functionally related to other parts of society. A modern industrial system requires a specialized division of labor demands and also requires considerable geographic mobility from its labor force. Therefore many workers with specialized skills are in demand and are induced to move to big cities. Such moves undermine family ties and also increase the dependence of spouses on each other. In addition Parsons has argued that the stabilization of adult personalities is a major function of the family in modern industrial society.
3. Many of the functions once performed by the family have been replaced by outside agencies such as schools, business firms, hospitals and other specialized institutions. In early 1949, Murdock named the four basic functions of family in all societies as sexual, reproductive, economic and educational (1949). In 1964, Goode stated that people cannot count on a large number of kinfolk for help and the larger kin group can no longer be counted on for emotional sustenance (Goode, 1964).
4. In a society based on achieving status, family and kinship groups have less to offer their members. The prime social characteristic of any modern industrial enterprise is that the individual is given a job on the basis of ability. This cannot occur in primitive, pre-industrial societies, where occupational status is largely ascribed, since an individual’s position in the family and kinship group usually determines his or her job. In contrast within a modern society if, for example, one’s father is a doctor, the father cannot decide his son’s future occupation. Parsons further argued that in such circumstances conflict would tend to arise in a family unit larger than the isolated nuclear family. In these circumstances many young adults are likely to choose a “neolocal” residence. Another explanation might be that members of working class families become upwardly mobile. As a result they spend much more time at work and adopt the lifestyle, attitudes and values of their new social class.

All of these reasons would tend to decrease dependence on family and kin.

From such views the nuclear family is described as well-adapted to the requirements of modern industrial societies. Some of the conclusions reached are still widely accepted by many people, such as the high rate of geographical mobility in society. Work has moved out of the home into factories, shops, and offices. Growing pressure has emerged for a “living wage” for breadwinners, most of whom are male. The introduction of compulsory education has increased literacy rates, etc. All such factors lead to the transformation of the family from extended to nuclear.

However, the view of the nuclear family outlined above has been challenged by other scholars who have provided case studies to show that the nuclear family has long been preminent (Laslett, 1972, 1977; Anderson, 1971). Some scholars have argued that early stages of industrialization increased rather than decreased the extension of the family (Roberts, 1984; Anderson, 1971). Parson (1965) and Goode (1963) might have over-simplified some of the directions of change. However in recent years subsequent research has shown a general shift occurring towards the increased prominence of the nuclear family worldwide.

In addition to Parsons’s (1965) and Goode’s (1963) view of the nuclear family and its relation to industrialization and the spread of modernity some scholars still doubt whether there can be a universal view of the nuclear family in modern society (Young & Willmott, 1973; Litwak, 1960; Allan, 1985; Willmott, 1987). Some have argued that the nuclear family cannot represent well all the changes occurring in family and family life. In a book entitled “The Symmetrical Family”, Young and Willmott (1973) traced the development of the family from pre-industrial England to the 1970s. They suggest that there are four stages of development in family history. Two stages found in modern industrial societies are those of the early industrial family, which extends its network to include relatives beyond the nuclear family, and the symmetrical family, which has taken a nuclear family form and is home-centered (Young & Willmott,

1973). The latter in particular is regarded as another important stage which succeeded the nuclear family as being the best adapted family form for modern society. In this famous book Young and Willmott proposed two developments from this period which have rarely been discussed. Firstly they comment on the introduction of compulsory education for all children which began in the second half of the last century. This change brought about two losses: the income children might have earned and the new expenditures for children's schooling. Secondly they note the slow improvement in the status of women (Young & Willmott, 1973: 75). They used data from the Department of Employment and Productivity and found that the proportion of women who were employed in the country as a whole was maintained as well as it had been in the last half of the nineteenth century. These two phenomena initiated changes in attitude and behavior which brought about overt and covert feminism, more effective birth control, mass consumption and household technology. The resultant life pattern is what the authors have called a symmetrical family.

The "symmetry" referred to is the relatively similar status of men and women within the family. Although struggle and conflict still exist, under the influence of the growth of symmetry, in the long run a new state of feminism arose inside the family. Compulsory schooling and delayed child bearing provided women with opportunities to work outside the home which in turn led to greater symmetry since women could contribute to family income even though experiencing economic inequality in the job market and the retention of economic inequality between men and women. In addition, a most interesting point argued was that the gradual acceptance of both traditional and modern techniques of birth control could be regarded as having the same importance as a causation of social change as the vociferous campaigns of middle class women for legal equality. All of these changes are reflected in almost all dimensions of family life: sexual equality, reduction in the number of children, educational opportunities, and job opportunities for women.

The other important theoretical contribution of this book to family sociology is the

principle of stratified diffusion. Young and Willmott have stated that the future development of the family will, to large extent, depend on technological developments. Moreover, Young and Willmott devised a theory to explain these changes: the principle of stratified diffusion. This simply means “many social changes start at the top and work downwards”. Industrialization provides people with higher living standards and thus leads to changes in virtue, attitude and expectations which diffuse from the upper middle class downwards. What some people do today maybe what others will do in the future. Like Young and Willmott, others have rejected the concept of an isolated nuclear family brought forward by Parsons (1951). They argue the use of new ways to explain the adaptive family forms in modern society which provide a more accurate description of the range of kin relationships. The terms “modified extended family” (Litwak, 1960), “modified elementary family” (Allan, 1985), and “dispersed extended” (Willmott, 1987) have been used to describe family life.

Nowadays, changes in economy and society have all contributed to changes in family structure and living arrangements at the household level. Studies from the 1980s and 1990s began to emphasize family and kinship relationships. In the last few decades marital breakdown has increased. With the growth of dual-earner households a large proportion of married women undertake paid employment outside the home. Demographic changes characterized by declining birth and death rates have increased the proportion of elderly people in the population, thus affecting family and kin relationships. Unmarried cohabitation, lone parenthood, late marriage, and births outside marriage have all challenged the family and family life. There is far more diversity in household and family patterns today than there was fifty years ago.

Many researchers have said that the decline in conventional family forms and increasing diversity are part of a global trend (Rapoport, 1989, Demo & Acock, 1993; Stancey, 1996). The nuclear family, still the most prevalent form in modern societies, is just one of the possible choices people experience during their lives (Kiernan &

Wicks, 1990; Silva & Smart, 1999). The assumption that a specific family type would emerge as predominant no longer applies to the family as it exists in recent years. Although people still disagree about whether socioeconomic development has brought changes in family, or that the family has contributed to some extent to social change and family diversity, there are many new explanations being proposed by researchers.

In the book “The Transformation of Intimacy: Sexuality, Love and Eroticism in Modern Societies”, Giddens (1992) argues that the nature of intimate relationships has undergone major and profound changes in the most recent phase of modernity. Confluent love and pure relationships, which he sees as a trend in the development of modernity, have the potential to create more equal relationships between men and women. Institutional reflexivity, he argues, plays an important part in creating self-identity, thus giving people far more choices in lifestyle than in the past (Giddens, 1992). Similarly, Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (1995) come to the same conclusion by saying that the family no longer exists as a specific form widely accepted by all people. People are less bound by obligation and duty. They have greater independence in which to pursue more satisfying relationships in family life. However Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (1995) explain this process as involving individualization, rather than reflexivity and see the consequences being shaped by modernity rather than pessimism. Individualization, they believe, is not the same as individualism, but rather refers to the way in which individuals can begin to shape their own biographies and identities and reflect on their social lives. Giddens (1992) and Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (1995) seem to provide theoretical explanations concerning greater pluralism of family form and the decline of other conventional family patterns. The major changes which they believe have taken place in modern societies can be seen as characteristics in the development of modernity and these are of great significance for understanding today’s notion of family.

Unlike Giddens (1992) and Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (1995) other sociologists, while agreeing that we have a greater diversity of family arrangements and family forms,

see these changes in quite a different way. They try to avoid using specific words, such as modernity and postmodernity, to differentiate stages in family development. Rather they see family as an ongoing process of change which overlaps considerably within the society (Morgan, 1996; Williams, 2005). This approach rests on empirical evidence rather than focusing on debates about “typical” family structure in a specific period of time.

### **2.3.2 The changing functions of the family**

Although the structures of family vary, over time, within a social system, or across cultures, for some sixty years the family has been claimed to be universal and to have at least six core functions: reproduction, protection, socialization, regulation of sexual behavior, affection and companionship, and provision of social status (Ogburn & Tibbits, 1934). It is also clear that when family structure changes (almost invariably to a smaller size) to fit the demands made by urbanization, industrialization and other factors, its functions also change.

When Functionalists, such as Parsons (1965), argued that the predominant nuclear family structure relates to the industrialization process, they also explained loss of functions formerly performed by the family. In the theory of “structural differentiation”, as performance of work moved outside the home, institutions such as schools, hospitals, welfare organizations, and businesses became specialized social institutions providing services and the family gradually changed over time from a production unit to a unit of consumption. However this does not imply that the importance of the family has declined. Rather, relieved of the productive function, the family has become even more specialized in two other main functions: caring for and socializing the personalities of young people and stabilizing the personalities of adults (Parsons, 1965). The same view is supported by other sociologists who claim that a large range of functions once performed by the family have largely disappeared in

modern industrial societies (Young & Willmott, 1973, Popenoe, 1993). Yet all maintain that the family still remains a vital institution for supporting family members.

Other scholars argue that institutions outside the family do not weaken its functions but rather improve these in detail and add importance (Fletcher, 1966; Delphy & Leonard, 1992). For example, Fletcher (1966) pointed out that families have three essential functions: providing a stable environment for sexual needs and activity, producing and carefully raising children, and providing a stable home environment. Even though he admits that the family has lost its function as a unit of production, the function of consumption still remains. From a feminist perspective Delphy and Leonard (1992), while accepting that industrialization created new units of production, proclaimed that the family performs some productive functions at a much higher standard. Much of the work in the family is unrecognized because it is unpaid and usually done by women.

The above studies focus mainly on discussions rising from the functionalist view that in modern industrial societies the family has lost several of its functions. Even though challenged by other scholars, both from radical feminist and Neo-Marxist perspectives, the structuralist argument remains powerful and influential. Studies in the 1980s and 1990s however have taken a different approach in which “decline of the family” has become the focus of increasingly heated debates. Supporters believe that there has been a striking decline in family structure and function, thus bringing about negative consequences which result in divorce, single parenting, and specifically affect the psychological, social and economic well-being of relatively dependent family members such as children and the elderly. For instance, Preston (1984) has suggested that families have relinquished more and more responsibility for the support of elderly people in the same way in which they divested from care for children in the 1960s. Similarly, Popenoe (1993) has indicated that at least two important functions of the family cannot be performed better elsewhere: childrearing and the provision to its



members of affection and companionship. Additionally they suggested that a purely structural approach provides only a partial explanation, and more important is the increased prevalence of a world view based upon individual self-interest rather than on collective goals. The pursuit of selfish goals, they claim, is widely accepted as a unique and recognized right for individuals. As a result families have relinquished more and more responsibility for supporting family members (Preston, 1984, Popenoe, 1993).

The “family decline” hypothesis is based on the fact that the nuclear family structure has decreased, accompanied by an increase in the divorce rate with a higher percentage of children living in single parent families in recent decades. However, some scholars have argued that this hypothesis is mainly based on the nuclear family arrangement. It does not include important aspects of family functions that extend beyond boundaries of co-residence (Bengtson, 2001), what Riley and Riley (1993) have called “latent kin connections”, and consideration of emotional and economic support for family members across several generations (Bengtson, 2001).

Yet in the last few decades the development of modernity through advancement in technology has also contributed to increased life expectancy and a decline in mortality worldwide. It is not surprising that rapid and profound changes in families have given rise to anxieties, especially as regards caring for the elderly. As Stacey (1996) has argued, contemporary Western family arrangements are “diverse, fluid, and unresolved”. This has created room for thinking about possibilities for and the availability of functions which families will perform in the future in order to cope with a rapidly changing world. As needs arise, discussion about the family function of caring for elderly members will become imperative and interesting.

## **2.4 Changing Family Structure and Function in China**

The traditional Chinese family, with its strong Confucian norms and highly

differentiated status hierarchy, is normatively extended. There is an old saying “San Dai Tong Tang , Wu Shi Qi Chang” (三代同堂, 五世其昌), meaning, three generations living under one roof is the ritual, and five generations is well expected. In traditional Chinese living patterns, such as in pastoral or agrarian societies, filial piety as a strong social value and extended family as a structure that is stable and unchanging, have been reported as widely pursued by Chinese people in much of Chinese literature. One of the pioneering studies conducted by C. K. Yang (1959) portrayed this well-known aspect of the Chinese traditional family vividly. He described situations in which “the Chinese traditional family is the integration of the extended kinship circle, normally within three generations along the paternal lineage, into a single household whenever economic conditions permitted” (Yang, 1959: 9). In comparison with a smaller family, Yong believed that the extended family at the least performed two important functions: standing as a source of social and economic strength and serving as an exemplary model of traditional family organization for the common people. The structural principles of the extended kinship system, as well as ideological, political and class systems within a predominantly agricultural economy, could counteract the tensions between generations and between sexes successfully and make the traditional family system substantially stable.

Apart from Yong a number of sociologists have stressed filial piety as pivotal (Fei, 1948; Burgess & Locke, 1945). They indicate that the emphasis on filial piety in Confucian doctrine plays a key role in regulating social and family relationships in traditional Chinese society and that these thoughts are primarily taught and practiced within the family. Beyond providing filial care for aged parents, all children are expected to obey and respect their parents absolutely. Hence the expectation that adult sons will live with their aged parents after marriage and the belief that this practice is a symbol of prestige. In addition, parents are accustomed to the idea of living with their adult sons, as has been reflected in a widespread old saying “Yang Er Fang Lao” (養兒防老)—meaning raise children (in particular sons) for the purpose of being

looked after in old age. The general applicability of this organizational principle creating a relatively self-sufficient economy is compatible with the character formation of members of the traditional family. From such beliefs and practices the family came to serve as the major functioning unit in traditional China.

The emergence of modernity, however, has produced tremendous economic, political and social changes which have altered the earlier relatively static picture of the Chinese family. Several field studies have shown that the extended family, with several generations living together, was rare and the average family in the 1940s consisted of about five people (Fei, 1962; Hsu, 1959; Lang, 1946). The factors that limited the distribution and frequency of the extended family were diverse. For example, historical literature on the Chinese family shows that there is a gap between the ideal extended family type that still remains strong in people's views of family life and the existing economic situation which made it difficult to maintain the multifamily household (Levy, 1949; Hsu, 1959). Thus the directions of change depend on the effects of these two sets of factors under different situations and at different specific times. In addition, some scholars argue that the Communist revolution has, in practice, contributed to the decline of extended kinship within the family. The development of rural collectives since the mid-1950s has eliminated private ownership of land by peasants which in turn has accelerated the process of disintegration of the feudal mode of production and weakened the ideal extended family. In addition, the implementation of the New Marriage Law in 1950, the Marriage Reform Campaign of the early 1950s and the government's periodic attacks on "feudalistic" practices, such as patriarchal authority within the extended family, have to some extent altered the traditional view of the Chinese family and separated the large extended household into smaller ones (Baker, 1979; Johnson, 1983). Alongside the decline in family households came changes in mutual support networks among family members which were believed to be one of the important characteristics of the traditional Chinese extended family. As Levy (1949) argued, supporting a large household was costly especially for those poorer households that could not keep

everyone under the roof decently fed and clothed. Thus the separation of the large extended kin group also resulted in decline of the functions that the traditional family once performed such as accountability for the welfare of all family members.

As China moved into the early stages of industrialization and urbanization, the past three decades witnessed dramatic demographic transitions from high rates of fertility and mortality to very low rates of fertility and mortality. Much of this change has been due to socioeconomic development and birth planning programs. This period saw a great increase both in quality and quantity of research concerning the Chinese family. Some sociologists began to examine the interaction between demographic processes and family structure. They believe that the strict family planning program introduced in the late 1970s, aimed intensively at decreasing population growth, brought direct and latent effects on Chinese family structure and thus on family function (Chen, 1985; Zeng, 1992; Tang, 2005). Based on an analysis of two large-scale population censuses from 1982 and 1990, Zeng (1992) described patterns of structural change in the Chinese family. He found that the predominant family type was nuclear (67.3% in 1990), followed by the stem family (19.06% in 1990). The number of extended families, as had existed in traditional China for a long time, was quite small. The same could be said about single parent families which accounted for just 6.3% in 1990. In comparison to the 1980s there was a slight decline in one-person family households and single parent families while extended family households showed an increase. In addition, by using regression analysis, he found that there was a significant negative relationship between socioeconomic situations (reflected in Per Capita GDP, consumption level and the level of urbanization) and family size in an area. In his paper Zeng anticipated a rise in challenges in elder-care in a coming era of population ageing arising from the continuous decrease in the fertility rate (Zeng, 1992).

It is clear that both socioeconomic development and public policy have influenced strongly the changes that have taken place in the Chinese family. Research in the 2000s has provided more detailed information on structural change in Chinese family

life. In a study conducted in 2002, Tang (2005) found that the number of single person families and empty nest families had increased in some modern cities, even though the prevalence of the nuclear family type was maintained. Tang recorded changes in family support for elderly people and believed that there had been a change in the power relationship between elderly parents and their children, thus influencing filial support for elderly family members (Tang, 2005). This view is also supported by Wang (2006). By comparing the 1982, 1990 and 2000 census data, Wang noted the continuous decline of the nuclear family between 1990 and 2000, together with a significant increase in childless families. Perhaps the most interesting finding is the increased proportion of stem family households, a different trend from that exhibited in modern Western societies. Wang (2006) indicated that the urbanization process, where young people move to the cities to find jobs while leaving their children with their own elderly parents, attributed to this phenomenon (Wang, 2006).

Logically, when a place develops or modernizes, inevitably industrialization, urbanization, technological advancements and capitalization creep in and make impacts on the family structure and function regardless of creed, religion, or cultures (Lee and Newby, 1983). However, family studies in the '60s to '80s, while writing about the dismantling of the extended family as one of the many impacts of modernity in western societies as they advance (Parson & Bales, 1955; Goods, 1963; Young and Willmott, 1975), observe that Asian families (Chinese, Indian and Pakistani in particular) have always been filial and kinship-bound. In much writing a similar myth about the Chinese family still persists today, that it is a well-knitted kinship helping network where children are obliged to look after their elders.

If the family road to modernity were invariably the same, impacts and changes affecting different phases of family life would be evident and be seen in both its structure and functions. Arguably evidence of this kind has emerged only in recent years as areas of China have slowly modernized. A study by Tang (2005) has shown that in some cities young people who do not co-reside with their elderly parents

support their parents by paying regular visits, giving money, and offering help instead. The notion that filial piety requires staying with parents and taking good care of them has become difficult for young and middle-aged groups. Family support systems for the elderly are weakening in some rural areas as an increasing number of young people move into urban areas, (Huang, 2003, Zhang, 2001). Additional evidence of change in the value of filial support is the fact that more and more elderly people would like to live independently rather than with their adult children (Tang, 2005; Wang, 2006).

As Chinese culture has long emphasized filial care as a personal responsibility there are increasing numbers of people who believe that supporting elderly people is also part of the duties to be undertaken by government. Although the decline in co-residence does not mean that filial piety has entirely faded away the evidence suggests that today new forms of filial care for elderly parents have emerged in China.

## **2.5 Chapter Summary**

Modernity and its impacts on family have been discussed for more than half a century. It is clear from the literature reviewed above that the road to modernity in each society may not be explained in the length of an article or even a book since it definitely affects our society in every aspect of human social life. As some social scientists have remarked, we connect changes in the family to the development of modernity because society is undergoing certain profound changes at least partly due to the rapid advancement of science and technology and increasingly fierce international competition between the strengths of nations.

Inglehart argues that societies around the world follow a similar path of development—from pre-modern to modern to postmodern—albeit at different times, different paces and through distinct meanderings. He describes the reasons as follows: as societies around the world experience similar socio-economic conditions, they

undergo “similar cultural changes in politics, economics, sex and gender norms, and religion” (1997). This kind of understanding also can be used to explain the changes that happen in families. From the historical review and comparisons of the development of the family, it has been found that family structure also follows a similar path from extended to nuclear to diverse types. Families, as other components of the society, always adapt to existing conditions and to each other. Although this study does not cite an abundance of instances to prove that families have been moving through similar development over past centuries, it provides appropriate circumstantial evidence and summarizes related studies on family change.

One question that needs to be proposed is “how do these changes in family occur in the process of modernity in China, even within a process of postmodernity?” This literature review has given existing explanations based on theoretical research but has provided little convincing evidence to corroborate this question. While there is evidence of a link between modernity and family change the evidence between different regions and ethnic groups on the impacts of modernity on family life in China remains unsupported. Moreover, under the influence of Confucianism, there seems to be different pattern of changes in terms of elderly care. Concerned with the operation of cultural traditions in the modernizing process, many questions would be proposed, for example “would modernity lead to “homogenization” of family patterns?” “Could cultural traits such as filial piety possibly survive? If it is the case, how could these be compatible with the development of other social institutions in the contemporary era?” As China develops, a study which can provide convincing evidence on these question will further enhance research into the nature of the family.

## CHAPTER 3

### AN ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK CONCERNING

### MODERNITY AND CHANGE IN THE CHINESE FAMILY

The literature on modernity and its impacts on familial change in the Western context have made a great contribution to our understanding of family development. However, it can be noticed that when adopting modernity as universal experiences of development, the uniqueness of each country or society should also be considered. In this sense, despite the fact that China is greatly influenced by the Western model of development, the Chinese approach to modernity also reflects Chinese culture and historical experiences and is thus unique as compared to other societies. Accordingly, the development of the Chinese family in the course of modernization should also differ from other countries and be affected by China's specific developmental path.

Just as modernity carries with it the dual nature of "universality" and "peculiarity", it is important that when adopting a "general" paradigm or theory of modernity from the West to analyze changes in the Chinese family, appropriate modifications and adjustments should be incorporated into the "specific" context. Taking this viewpoint as understood, this study adopts Anthony Giddens's work of modernity as the basic blueprint and incorporates certain changes affecting certain practical dimensions of the theory so as to fit the present study.

### **3.1 Four Institutional Dimensions of Modernity and Its Implications**

Instead of discussing what the concept of modernity is or what makes a



pre-modern/modern society, Anthony Giddens look at how modernity proceeds in societies and shift their focus onto the major socio-economic and political development processes brought about by the development of modernity. In his book, “The Consequences of Modernity”, he argue that there are four main institutional dimensions of modernity (1990):

1. **Industrialism.** An industrial revolution transforms societies from economies based largely on agriculture to economies based primarily on manufacturing. Technological innovation creates major changes in the methods of production and thus affects the social relationships which surround the organization of production. Application of new technology boosts productivity and thus increases income. The accumulation of capital allows investment in innovation towards even more new technology, in turn enabling the industrialization process to continue to evolve. With an increase in specialized division of labor, more people require specialization for their employment. Instead of working as the requirements of agriculture demand a large majority of the employed population finds jobs in new factories. It affects not only the workplace but brings about changes in transportation, communication, as well as people’s domestic life.
2. **Capitalism.** In general, capitalist societies are recognized as one distinct subtype of modern societies. Although the precise definition of capitalism is debated there is, however, little controversy about whether capitalism involves wage labor and the creation of goods or services for the purpose of making a profit. It also incorporates the concept that the traditional feudal mode of production is replaced by a system that emphasizes the market, in which prices and wages are elements. It is an economic system which followed the demise of feudalism. Developing first in Europe it spread gradually throughout the world in the late 19th and 20th centuries and finally has become the world’s most dominant form of economic model. Capitalist system has a number of specific institutional features. For instance, the competitive and expansionist nature of capitalist enterprises tends to promote technological innovation; economic relationships have considered of

most importance in the society; the control of polity or other institutions is far less than complete because of the economy which greatly determined by capital accumulation. On the whole, capitalism provided the main means of industrialization and a new class structure began to emerge: a class of entrepreneurs and a class of wage laborers.

3. Surveillance. It refers to the monitoring of the behavior, activities, or other changing information of subject population in the political sphere. Surveillance is usually associated with observation of individuals or groups by government as a basis of administrative power for the purpose of maintaining social control, in particular control of information and social supervision. In Giddens's view, it depends essentially upon the structuring of information, and represent the way in which new systems of administrative power is built on (Giddens, 1998). Surveillance is very useful to modern nation-states where it increases governments' ability to monitor the activities of their subjects (usually their citizens), and make corresponding actions or take all necessary steps. Although it is important as a basis of public administration, it sometimes creates negative effects.
4. Military power. As was argued by Giddens, control of the means of violence is the fourth institutional dimension to be distinguished with the rise of modernity. Military power was always a central feature of pre-modern civilization, but there are major changes in the nature of military in the modern period. By successful monopoly of the means of violence within its territories, nation-states could secure stable military support. It is in turn leading to industrialization of war. With the development of mass warfare which is a different form of military power from previous types of system, the nature of war is associated with development of science and technology and a machine-based civilization. For Giddens, military power is also seen as being separable from the other three dimensions of modernity.

The four institutional dimensions of modernity mentioned above represent the major transformations of modern societies. This research employs Giddens's explanation as

the blueprint for analysis because it has several important theoretical and analytical implications. First of all, the four major transformations incorporate some of the important processes in modernity and reflect corresponding major social, economic, and political changes. In particular, industrialism and capitalism were seen as providing the most general and pervasive force of development for most countries in the world and often regarded as playing major roles in the way societies develop (Eisenstadt, 1974; Webster, 1990; Harrison, 1988). Moreover, as we have discussed in the preceding part of this chapter, although the work of sociologists such as Laslett (1972, 1977) and Wrigley (1972) has demolished stereotypes of preindustrial family patterns, their findings have revealed that convergence in these central developments in modernizing societies, such as those of urban and industrial development, political organization, show relevance for some characteristics of the family in modern times.

Secondly, some theorists like Talcott Parsons (1951, 1965) assumed that modernity is inevitably linked to some general or abstract institutional and structural characteristics, for example secularization, bureaucracy, individualism and structural differentiation. Although these are perceived as important concepts for characterizing the modern or modernizing world, some of them—the defining core of the concept—are rather thin or vague and hardly could be used as a yardstick to measure the stage or level of development of societies today. Instead, Giddens's model emphasizes evolutionary perspectives and especially the concept of "levels" which allows for comparison between different societies with distinctive features. For example, according to Giddens, the four institutional dimensions represent the most basic characteristics of modern institutions and have global relevance. The path towards modern is thus considered as a complex, dynamic and continuous process influenced by the development of the four major "changes". In this view, the level of modernity in a society could be reflected in major developments in relevant social, economic, and political systems. This combination of developments in the model displays methodological and analytical advances which could give rise to a more refined and differentiated approach to comparative macro-societal analysis.

### **3.2 The Analytical Framework of the Present Research**

According to Giddens, the four basic institutional dimensions of modernity represent general directions of socio-economic and political development in the modern era. From such a perspective the new systems or social structures that are created can be seen to cope with changes in general and various internal and external challenges in particular. Behind this model there is an assumption that the emergence of modernity is along with the rise industrialism, capitalism, surveillance and military power. Nevertheless, the real situation is much more complex. Possible diversities in the form of modern societies, as well as multiple pathways towards modernity must be recognized. For instance, China serves as an example of culturally specific encounter with modernity. Historically China's path to modernity has not been inevitable or intrinsic but from the very beginning driven by exogenous force. Different international contexts and distinctive cultural and historical traditions make China's form of modernity different from experiences in Western developed countries. Like Eisenstadt, Riedel and Sachsenmaier indicated, "structural openness and continual contestation make any form of modernity thus a dynamic system of development and reformation" (Eisenstadt, Riedel, and Sachsenmaier, 2001: 10).

In addition, as noted in the literature, there are reasons to believe that not all the four institutional dimensions of modernity have the same effects on change within the family as regards its structure and caring functions for the elderly. For example, surveillance and military power are basically associated with the developments in political sphere, and do not fit in this context. Besides, under the influence of the Confucian spirit of family cohesiveness and filial piety the Chinese family may confront specific challenges and face different problems in its path to modernity. Thus an explicit analysis based on empirical evidence is essential to an understanding of the nature of the relationship between modernization and change within the Chinese family.

In this sense we have had to reconsider some of the assumptions of the model and to accommodate practical experiences in the light of what is actually happening in China. Special emphasis should be given to orientation and the ability of families to cope with changes affecting economic, political, social, and cultural order.

### **3.2.1 Macro institutional consequences of modernity in China**

As was argued by Giddens, the emergence of modernity is not only the creation of a modern economic order, but also involves formation of a distinctive kind of state—nation-state. That is why the institutional consequences of modernity include wide socio-economic as well as political development. Among them, capitalism and industrialism are perceived to provide the significant driving forces of change. The creation of capitalistic economic order in particular changes the traditional way of life and also the nature of exchange relationship. Industrialism, on the other hand, contributes to the transformation in the production of goods and through emphasizing the central role of machinery in the production process affects not only the workplace but other areas of life as well.

In Giddens's view, urbanism is not separately mentioned when he proposes industrialism as an important institutional consequence of modernity. However, it is in fact that in many countries' experiences urbanization and industrialization sometimes has occurred simultaneously where high levels of economic development are attained. Even more, industrial expansion is often considered a cause as well as a consequence of urbanization. In this study, I propose to treat urbanism separately from the development of industrialism, since it refers to another important consequence of modernity. Firstly, urbanism and industrialism is highly related. In many countries' experiences, urbanization is accompanied by the rise of industry, increase in the rate of growth of urban population and rural to urban migration. For instance, industrial technology tends to erode the village community; the

developments in transportation permit the population excess from rural districts to migrate easily to the towns. Secondly, from a sociological perspective, urbanism is not just about the physical entity of the city, but also about changes in ways of life. In many sociological literatures, urbanism is widely perceived as one of important factors influencing family life and patterns in modern societies (Goode, 1963; 1964; Gore, 1990; Stancy, 1996). Some explanations are frequently cited by many scholars. For example, with the growth of well established urban communities, many people move from rural areas to cities, bringing high social mobility and migration which lead to the geographic separation of family members.

Surveillance and political power, in turn, is more related to development in political sphere. The former is fundamental to the rise of modernity and to the operations of the nation-states, while the later, which depends essentially upon the structuring of information, basically refers to the shifted nature of war as well as military technology. It is true that these two dimensions of modernity have some effects on many aspects of social life, but the present study is concerned with analysis of the family. Thus these two dimensions are not well suited to this context. Instead, it is argued that the development of public policy, in particular the social policy has a more influential effect on family formation and changes in care for the elderly. It is because that as a key element of development in political sphere, improvements of social policy reflects the institutional context mediating and responding to change in economic and social conditions. In addition, as we will discuss in the following, social policy which covers the areas such as social security, health, education, housing, social services and protection is closely connected with people's wellbeing, thus having a far reaching effects on our lives.

Because of the reasons mentioned above, industrialism, urbanism, capitalism, as well as the development of social policies will be discussed and reviewed in China.

### Industrialism and urbanism in China

In the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, China experienced an “industrious revolution” but rapid growth began only from the 1950s with the aim of transforming the country from a primarily agrarian economy into a modern communist society. With help from the Soviet Union the First Five Year Plan (1953-1958) was implemented in accordance with a state-led industrial policy which focused on the development of heavy industries (Bramall, 2009; Jin, 2010). As a result in a very short time and due to a government increase in investment, China’s manufacturing sectors grew dramatically and a relatively independent, fairly comprehensive industrial system emerged. By the end of the 1960s manufacturing industry had become the main driving force behind the country’s economic development (Jin, 2010). Nevertheless, the Great Leap Forward (1958-1960) and Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) worsened social and economic conditions and ended in catastrophe since they triggered a widespread famine and led to huge losses in wealth and millions of deaths. This period was followed by the formulation of coordinated, balanced development strategies. As the Cultural Revolution drew to a close, from the mid-1970s it was recognized that China needed to change this path of extensive, factor-driven development if it were to strive to achieve industrialization and modernization smoothly.

The economic reforms of the late 1970s marked a milestone in the abandonment of the Soviet model of industrial development and substantially increased the role of the market in the economic system. Thus, market socialism was conceived and featured prominently in the economy of the country. The foci of changes in economic policy in this period were the promotion of sustained industrial growth through adjusting and restructuring the industrial system, introducing market competition, and accelerating technology upgrades and innovations. Given the fact that there is a great imbalance in capabilities between heavy and light industrial sectors, the reforms shifted state investment away from machine-building and metallurgy, towards production of consumer goods and support for the agricultural subsector of heavy industry. In addition institutional and structural barriers to entry by private and

foreign companies were removed and private ownership was countenanced and allowed. Yet the reform did not abandon the system of central planning and state sectors still occupied a dominant role in the economy. The aims of the new policies were to make state-planning function more effectively in accordance with China's existing political economic conditions. State industry was preserved and retains important status but a non-state sector of industry has been allowed to develop in parallel. As a consequence, in the 1990s and 2000s, by making use of the comparative advantages of low-cost labor resources and rapidly expanded production capacity China has created a strong core competency in world markets and boosted rapid development of industry.

Alongside the reforms discussed above, the industrialization of rural areas in this period was accompanied by encouraging local government structures to establish new Township and Village Enterprises (TVEs). There is wide agreement by scholars in this field that the explosive growth of TVEs has made a decisive contribution to the success of rural industrialization and to the rectification of imbalance between urban and rural areas (Jin, 2010; Arrighi, 2009; Bramall, 2009). In addition, the emergence of a large number of enterprises run by villages and townships has absorbed millions of surplus productive agricultural laborers. According to Arrighi and Zhang (2007), the number of workers that TVEs employed is more than twice as many as all foreign, private, and jointly owned urban enterprises combined during the period from 1980 to 2004.

In summing up industrial development over the past 60 years there is clear evidence that market-oriented economic reform generated rapid industrial growth, especially in the last two decades. The annual rate of industrial growth was 11.98% between 1978 and 2008, which supports a national economic growth rate of 9.6% (Jin, 2010). China's industrial development has been called the "Chinese miracle" and has attracted much attention worldwide. At present the country is one of the world's largest exporters of manufactured goods and an important site for transnational



investments. Its rapid industrialization has not only offered tremendous opportunities for achieving growth and reducing poverty but has given a strong boost to the process of economic modernization in China.

Many researchers consider urbanization to be accompanied by industrial development. However, until the early 1980s, China's urbanization was greatly affected by government planning and control of intra-country migration. Beginning from the mid-1950s, the government introduced the household registration system which separated China administratively into urban and rural districts. Migration from rural to urban areas was under strong administrative control and this suppressed the growth of the urban population and the pace of urbanization. A slackening of policy controls began in the late 1970s with the phasing out of the people's commune system. From then on urbanization in China began to take place at an unprecedented pace. According to Yan and Ding (2007) in the 1980s fewer than one fifth of the Chinese people (18%) lived in cities. This proportion increased to 30 percent in 1995 and 39 percent in 2002. By the end of 2011 more than half of the people of China were living in cities (National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2012).

It is agreed by most researchers that China's rapid urban growth since the early 1980s is clearly linked with an increase in population, policy changes, and industrialization (Kojima, 1995; Yan & Ding, 2007). On the one hand migration from rural and nearby areas, together with rapid population growth, has generated large scale urban development. Although the household registration system is still in existence the economic reforms which began in the late 1970s brought changes in socio-economic transitions and accelerated the process of urbanization. On the other hand industrial expansion was accompanied by a great demand for labor and the growth of new urban centers. At first, seeking for industrialization without urbanization, the government implemented a policy of "leaving the land but not the villages, entering the factories but not cities". Yet evidence has shown that it could not have one without the other. When large urban centers are built and urban

industries are established many jobs are created and these attract a large number of surplus rural labors into newly built areas in search of work.

After periods of economic reform in particular, while the general pattern of industrialization and urbanization resembles that of other developing countries, in some places urban growth follows a different path. For example urbanization in some colonial areas such as Hong Kong and Macau is very different from its mainland counterpart and has been crucially influenced by the colonial expansion of imperialist powers and the pursuit of wealth. Isolated from surrounding regions, these places grew to serve the needs of colonial investors and were used as a vehicle for the export of raw materials and for importing goods from Europe.

#### Capitalism with Chinese characteristics

There is a controversy concerning whether the rise of modernity intrinsically involves capitalism while some scholars have argued that the capitalist system of production does not arrive with industrialism, although the two are often emerged together in the developmental experiences of certain Western countries. While that might be the case, in some countries there is no doubt that industrialism and urbanism certainly promote and spread the spirit of capitalism, and capitalism rather than feudalism and socialism eventually has become the dominant economic system in the modern world. Today most economists emphasize that capitalism is generally perceived as encouraging economic growth.

In the case of China, the expansion of modernity was obviously accelerated by capitalism, especially since the reform of the late 1970s. Before that China's economy was a centrally planned system with strong governmental control over production and distribution processes. Transition from a socialist to a market economic system has extended, deepened, and progressed. Barriers to spatial mobility have been removed with the introduction of the household responsibility system in rural areas and, since the mid-1980s, surplus rural agricultural workers

have been allowed to seek jobs in the emerging collectively owned Township and Village Enterprises (Arrighi, 2009). The growth of manufacturing industries in cities, and changes in policy have given rise to a rapid increase in foreign, private, and jointly owned urban enterprises which create many jobs for both urban and rural workers. The result has been explosive economic growth and an expansion in the size of the domestic market which, in turn, has created the conditions for new rounds of investment, leading to capital accumulation and specialization of the labor force. During the 1990s further attempts were made to redefine property ownership, encourage direct foreign investment, and support the development of private enterprise, all of which contributed to a rapid growth in the economy over the past 20 years.

China's capitalism, however, has shown certain significant differences from that in Western states. For example, some scholars use the terms "state capitalism"<sup>2</sup> or "state developmentalism"<sup>3</sup> to differentiate China's capitalism from western liberal capitalism and emphasize the alternative developmental pattern followed by some East Asian countries, including China. While some researchers argue that the governments of the great powers who hold control of state-owned enterprises challenge the western model of liberal capitalism in the free market, and that this may cause a variety of problems, others support the view that this kind of capitalism can provide stability as well as growth. It is perhaps too early to give an overall evaluation of the Chinese model but the rapid growth of the economy has seemingly confirmed the effectiveness of state capitalism. It appears to be the fact that the rise of capitalism in China offers a better path to modernity than did the socialist version of a centrally planned economy.

#### Political changes in the form of development of social policy

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<sup>2</sup> *The Economist* launched a weekly section to discuss state capitalism in emerging markets (including China). See the Rise of State Capitalism, *The Economist*, January 21st, 2012.

<sup>3</sup> See So, A. Y. (2003). Rethinking the Chinese Developmental Miracle. In Ho, F. H. (Ed.). *China and the Transformation of Global Capitalism in the 21st Century* (pp.50-64). Johns Hopkins University Press.

The development of social policy in China has taken an alternative approach different from most western capitalist countries. There are roughly three stages of changes during the past one and half a century. The first stage began from the 1950s, which was the period following the establishment of the PRC. By adopting Soviet-style socialist system, the government placed great emphasis on central planning and developed institutions to provide basic social welfare and services (Leung, 1997; Wong & Mok, 1995). However, the establishment of state-centered social welfare and security system was based on rural-urban dualistic structure. On the one hand, upholding the socialist ideals of equality, the government provided comprehensive and generous social welfare and benefits which covered education, medical care, and to employees in state-owned enterprises in urban China. Social welfare and policies were aimed to reduce disparities in living standards and consumption, and maintain social stability (Leung & Nann, 1995; Mok, 2000). Besides, urban workers were guaranteed lifelong employments in state-owned enterprises. On the other hand, in rural areas, with the abolition of private ownership and collectivization of agriculture, people's communes were established. Rural residents became members of communes and worked in production team, earning income based on a work points system. Individuals were encouraged to rely on the commune and families for the resources necessary for living (Xu, 2001; Leung, 1996). Since the state played a primary role in social policy and welfare provision, the roles previously taken by individual and families in economic support, medical care, education, housing and protection were greatly reduced (Wong & Mok, 1995; Xu, 2001).

The second stage of social policy development began from mid-1980s and was a response to its economic reforms. The reform of social policy and welfare has been in line with a series of structural social and economic changes. In order to assist the implementation of the economic reform initiatives, Chinese government has begun to restructure its social policy by adopting strategies of privatization, marketization, and commoditization. In an attempted to reduce welfare expenditure and relieve the

burden on work units, reform focused on providing a minimal social relief to people in needs and involving various non-state actors (i.e. private sectors) in welfare provision (Mok, 2000; Chan et al, 2008). Meanwhile, a series of reform measures were adopted to transform the social welfare systems by shifting responsibilities of providing housing, health care, education, and social services by government to the market, community, individuals, and families. People were encouraged to seek jobs in the labor market, which meant that the government would no longer take responsibility for providing a job for everyone. These changes have represented the transformation of notions by the government that the delivery and provision of social welfare and services should rest with the market and be shared among the state, communities, and individuals. Thus it is not surprising to see that the Chinese government has actually reduced its provision of social welfare and services, and taken practices and strategies commonly adopted in many neo-liberal economies (Mok, 2000).

The new social policy and welfare system is believed to be compatible with its socialist market economy. The main welfare initiatives adopted by the Chinese government in the mid-1980s and early 1990s include constructing an unemployment insurance scheme, establishing nationwide medical care system but with reduced subsidies by central government, providing nine-year compulsory education for children and promoting the privatization of public housing (Chan, et al, 2008). Generally speaking, by introducing market mechanism and through privatization and commoditization, the changes in China's social policy and welfare are rapid and enormous. However, as argued by Chan (2008), because that there was lack of a blueprint for the overall national welfare provision, "privatization leading to increased service fees and rescinding the welfare duties of state-owned enterprises" (Chan et al, 33). People especially those who were unprivileged had to pay high prices for public services and resulted financial difficulties accruing to families and individuals.

From the mid-1990s, in response to the changing social and economic situations, there have been gradually improvements in major social welfare and policy. In terms of medical care, the government published several policy papers proposing to form a more comprehensive medical insurance scheme in urban areas. The new rural cooperative medical scheme was also established in 2002 with the aim to provide financial assistance and subsidies for rural residents. Concerning education, the government expanded higher education by giving public and private schools and higher education institutions more autonomy to run their own businesses. The national policy was actively to encourage and support them according to laws and provide guidelines and strengthen administration (Mok, 2002). In housing policies, allocating accommodation to employees in state-owned enterprises and government departments were ended. Instead, urban housing reform required the contributions of both employers and employees to tackle housing needs. The responsibilities of government shifted from providing direct services to that mainly focused on regulating housing prices in the market and providing rental housing with low prices for poor and low-class families (Chan et al, 2008).

To summarize, the reform of China's social policy has been a process of gradual development. During the past several decades, the Chinese government has fundamentally changed its welfare system from the one that was based on socialist model to a market-oriented system compatible with the economic reform and operation of a market economy. It should be stressed that some improvements have been made, which include the extension of coverage of various types of welfare programs and the extension of public assistance from cities to the countryside (Chan et al, 2008; Leung, 1996). However, it has led to the destruction of old welfare institutions and the reduced welfare benefits in the areas of social security, education, housing, and public health. To some extent, the modern Chinese government is similar to that of some western capitalist states that provide public and welfare services in many areas, at the same time, give a minimal amount of assistance for disadvantaged groups to maintain social stability. China's experience reveals the

similarities as well as differences of social policy development as compared to many modern countries. It seems that the path of social policy reform is still a long one for the Chinese government and it still takes time to wait.

A review of four processes of transformation taking place in China makes it evident that while China's path to modern is somewhat similar to that of Western countries, it also has its own characteristics due to different cultural and historical experiences. China's path to modern is, in general, integrated and comprehensive, and includes not only tremendous socio-economic progress but also political advancement. Tradition and modernity have interacted together in this process giving rise to a new type of society and creating aspects of social life which affect people. As a basic social unit the family has undergone enormous changes in this process and its structural formation and functions are greatly influenced by the changing external environment. The following sections outline an analysis of expected relationships between macro-societal development and change within the family. Special emphasis is given to orientation and the ability of a family to cope, in a general way, with these four processes of development.

### **3.2.2 Four processes of development and change within family**

It has been agreed that changes within the family are closely related to industrialization and urbanization. Although some studies have shown that family change, development of industrialization and urbanization might not occur simultaneously it is unwise to deny the relationships among these three factors. Industrialization and urbanization bring rationalization, secularization, and stratification of social structures, placing increasing emphasis on development of technology and science. Today the nuclear family has become the most prevalent type in China. Industrialization and urbanization have changed the Chinese family towards smaller, nuclear and diversified forms and this has given rise to changes in

family support for elderly members. For instance, the traditional Chinese family system is founded on the concept that the older parents have enormous authority and power over other family members through control of land and property. However the status of elderly people tends to be declining in a modern industrial economic system, partly due to the loss of control over means of production and to changes in production methods. As more and more people live separately from their parents after marriage, the traditional arrangement which required living together and providing instant care and support for family members appears either unrealistic or impossible. Instead, new forms of old-age family support and care have been emerging as an adaption to provision of support for older members in the society.

Although whether capitalism should be included as intrinsic to modernity is still controversial, there is wide acceptance that the rise of capitalism is the consequence of wide general social development. Capitalism plays a crucial role in promoting development in society and has important impacts on family formation and on interaction between family members. In some western countries industrialization occurred simultaneously with the development of a capitalist market economy in which new forms of economic production disrupted traditional forms of social life. As Marx (1976) argued, when the vast majority of workers came to sell their labor for wages relationships between people changed.

When wage-earning becomes the main resource for living in a modern society there follows an occupational division of labor and a change in employment patterns. As a necessary feature of capitalism, such change encourages interdependence between people and leads to transformation of the relationships existing among family members. For example, according to Crawford Macpherson (1964) seeking for profit on the basis of wage labor and a free market is believed to destroy blood ties and enhance individual autonomy. The capitalist mode of production separates work from the family, changing the family from a unit of production to one of consumption, education, and procreation. In China the introduction of a market economy has



tended to destroy traditional family ties by giving individuals, especially young and middle-aged people, opportunities to improve their skills in response to the demands of modern knowledge-based industries and to exchange their labor in an open market place. Material security then depends on individual ability to secure economic income which may depend on the value of specific skills in a competitive market. In turn, those people able to earn more and contribute more to total family income may have more negotiation power and gain a relatively higher status within the family.

From a different perspective the emergence of employed labor has caused family functions to become more specialized. Take family support as an example, when economic production no longer depends on physical energy and experience, the social and economic status of elderly people in the family declines as the status of adult children increases. China is a typical case of this phenomenon. Adult children often become the bread-winners within Chinese families while physically and intellectually disadvantaged elderly people either lack reliable income after leaving the workforce or depend on their adult children for financial support. Because of this family authority, in which older people formerly controlled productive resources and family property, is shifted and handed over from the older to the younger generation. It is under such conditions that the nature of intergenerational relations is changed. Adult children no longer depend on their older parents rather it is the parents who are more likely to rely on their children for provision of support.

As to the relationship between political development and change within the family, this study argues that the emergence of modernity has been accompanied by significant improvement in the political sphere which has itself had direct impacts that have changed family structure and functions. Just as Marx (1976) argued, the development of the economy determines the superstructure of the society. This remark implies that as the economy develops to a certain stage there should be a certain degree of concomitant political development. When considering change in family structure it would appear that it is the emergence and development of public

policy rather than the political system that has played an important role in family formation and dynamics and had a far-reaching effect on the well-being of Chinese people. In relation to China, this study argues that public policy, in particular social policies covering public policy and practices in such areas as health care, housing, education, social security, pensions, and personal social services, has contributed to changes in the Chinese family and change in the ways people adapt in order to care for their elderly parents.

When social policies are underdeveloped society and government provide only limited welfare and protection for the elderly. Thus responsibilities for care fall heavily on the individual family as the source of support and responsibilities have to be taken on by family members and relatives. Demands for care and support provided by the family have greatly reduced as social welfare has developed, partly because other social institutions have taken on many functions once provided by extended kin within the traditional family. One of the important implications of this progress is that traditional family support systems are likely to undergo change as society gradually takes on more and more responsibilities for citizens by providing various social protection and welfare programs.

However, as a counterbalance to these effects, the main spirit behind the development of social policies appears to vary considerably across countries due in part to the different developmental paths to modernity. For instance, in a welfare state it is believed that the state or government should play a key role in protecting and promoting the economic and social well-being of citizens. Thus social policies perhaps reflect a country's aim of taking up adequate responsibility and encompass those obligations believed to be due to individuals and families. Whereas in societies guided by principles of "big market, small government" the role of government is perceived as limited, and it is thought that intervention is required only when the market is unable to solve problems. This liberal perspective suggests that, as opposed to the perspectives of a welfare state, individuals should take relatively more

responsibility for care and support for themselves, their own family, and extended family members.

### **3.3 Rethinking Four Processes of Developments and Change in**

#### **Family**

Reviewing the Giddens's model of modernity it is evident that there is still much to be desired in the interpretation of change within the Chinese family. As was suggested above the model does not take the specific socio-cultural and historical background into analysis thus, to some extent, the strength of its interpretation is limited when applied to cross-cultural variations of family change. For instance, when using the model to explain family support and other phenomena that relate more closely with culture, the Giddens's model lacks a comprehensive perspective from which to view changing family dynamics at both macro and micro levels. Taking China as an example, evidence can be traced that the developmental path of the family system in China differs from that of western countries because of the great influence of Confucian family values. Over an extended period of time filial piety, an important part of Chinese culture, has been transmitted from one generation to the next. Although industrialization and other macro-social processes have tended to bring about dramatic changes in the worldview of Chinese people, Confucian traditions continue to have a lasting imprint on their family values and behaviors.

Furthermore, while Confucian values carry much weight in explaining the macro processes of development of change in family structure, Giddens's model does not take into account additional impacts from other factors relating to individual attitudes and behavioral change. In fact changes in family structure and support functions for elderly people should be seen as interactive processes that incorporate both macro-environmental changes and individual adaptive strategies. It is likely that while people located in the same environment are subjected to the same influences

from macro social conditions, individuals respond differently when facing external change to restrictions imposed on them. There can, therefore, be different choices in the form of family life chosen by people living in the same era under identical historical conditions.

The interactive processes which take place could be better interpreted if macro-social processes were to be incorporated into the analysis. For example, industrialism and urbanism are two inseparable processes in modernity. Their effects on individuals and families are rather pervasive and universal, creating no significant differences across countries. Capitalism, while a distinct process quite often closely connected with industrialism, is recognized as an important factor in social development. However, given the various types of capitalism developed in societies with differing cultural and historical traditions, the interaction between capitalism and economic and social relations is not identical. Social policies best embody the differences between countries and create great impacts on family and social relationships. They have a direct influence on individuals making corresponding reactions to changing external conditions and hence can be seen as the best exemplar of interactions between macro and micro factors. It is not possible, therefore, to grasp fully the nature of change in family in the modern world solely from considering the effects of macro-social processes on family organization. An attempt to incorporate major effects on the family from both macro processes and micro individual differentiations can be seen to be important.

On the basis of the thinking outlined above, this study explores how macro processes and personal adaptation interact to shape family and how Chinese Confucian family values affect family, generating new patterns of support for elderly members. In order to provide a comprehensive perspective the study will analyze the development of the Chinese family from the following aspects:

1. The study will review the development of the Chinese family throughout history

and provide a historical background for understanding changes in Chinese family. The object of this historical overview is to enable the reader to understand the unique historic-cultural basis for Chinese social distinctions and the family system.

2. Through combining distinctive historical experiences and culture values, the study will examine changes in the Chinese family that are taking place as China modernizes. Specifically the study exams modernity and development from a historical perspective in three research settings and describes changes in family structure and the resulting patterns of care for elderly people.
3. As a final aim the study will present a model based on four processes of development in modernity that explicates the interactive effects between macro and micro factors. A detailed explanation will be derived from investigation of the effects of selected factors of macro-social change on family support for elderly people in modern China.

# CHAPTER 4

## METHODOLOGY

### 4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study is to explore the impact of modernity on changes in the family at both macro level (social-cultural, political, and economic factors) and micro level (an individual's adaptive strategies) and to explain these processes through exploration of initial cases. To fit the purposes and nature of the study exploratory strategies will be used to better understand the research questions which converges data from quantitative, broad numeric trends, and qualitative, detailed views. Given the nature of the study qualitative methods will be used to review the family changes in Chinese history. Multiple case studies from the areas in China, Hong Kong, Beijing, and Yunnan will then be conducted to explain the change in family at different modernity levels.

The exploratory strategies in this study include:

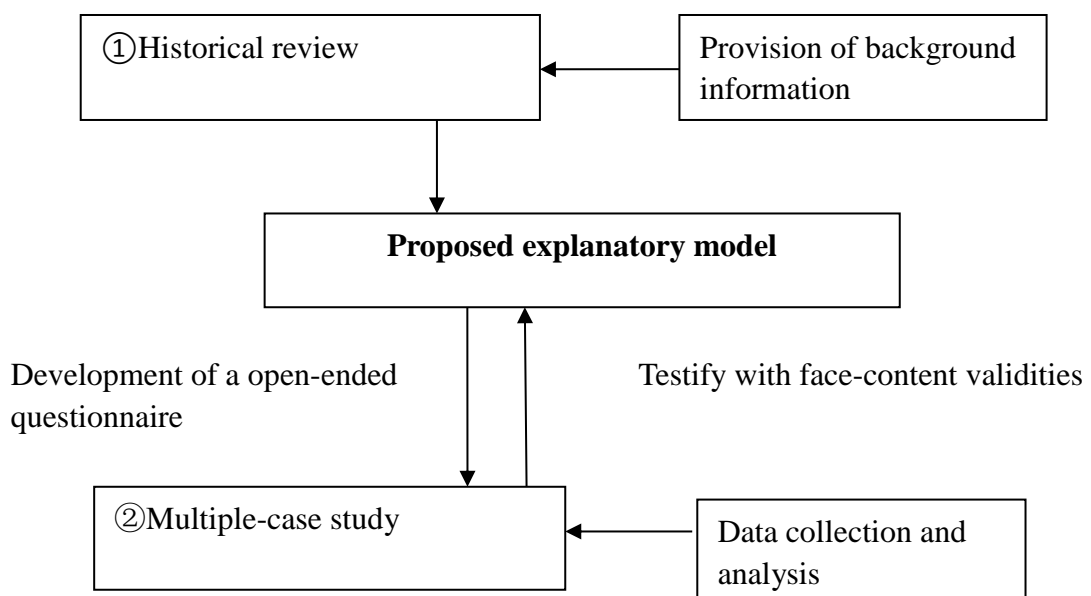


Figure 4.1 Approach of the Proposed Study

This chapter describes the study's research methodology through historical review

and multiple-case studies. In the first section, the purpose of doing historical review is clarified. It is followed by discussion about data sources. Discussions on the multiple-case studies in the second section centre on the following areas: (a) rationale for the research approach, (b) overviews of the research design, the research sample and information needed, (c) data sources and collection methods, (d) data analysis and synthesis, (e) issues of trustworthiness. At last, summary and issues of trustworthiness of the methods being used in this study is provided.

## **4.2 Historical Review**

The central premise of the present study is that family structures and care functions for the elderly show contrasting patterns in different levels of modernity, an idea that has some support in the literature but requires further empirical evidence if it is to be applied to China. Historical review is necessary because it seeks to understand changing family structures and functions in different social, economic, and political conditions and from this knowledge construct a general model to explain differences and similarities across different historical settings. Additionally, it may explain changes in the Chinese family by tracing their origins through broad historical processes and investigating the factors that determine the nature of family structure and function in society. By reviewing Chinese family changes it is possible to address issues with regard to family life that have remained understudied and overlooked and provide a new perspective for understanding the Chinese family in modern era..

The other important reason for reviewing Chinese family in history is that it provides a good opportunity for realizes Chinese distinctive culture and historical context. Family development is the prime example of this. It is significant also because, as has been seen in literature, filial piety has been particularly important to the development of Chinese family and changing relationships among family members. By reviewing development of filial piety in Chinese history, we could see that the

contents of family values are distinguishable in different historical stages and it has been a process of gradual development rather than big changes. These alter not just the way people communicate with the elderly family members, but how people change their values and beliefs. Together with the changing socio-economic and political conditions, these have very particular social consequences which affect Chinese families a lot. Therefore when we talk about the changes of Chinese family changes in modern era, the distinctive cultural and historical traditions could not be neglected.

## **Sources of data**

A variety of combinations of data, qualitative and quantitative, can be employed to provide corroboration and supportive evidence so as to meet the need for data “triangulation”. In this study, four types of historical evidence including primary, secondary, running records, and recollections are collected to gather information. The aims are to understand Chinese family changes in structure and elderly care from a macro-historical perspective and explain the reasons for these with empirical evidence. Therefore the primary sources of data are official records, historical literature or related articles of the period while secondary resources are books and articles by historians and other researchers in this field. Running records are found within government data and also included are recollections about their past lives or experiences based on the memories of individuals. Below follows detailed information about the process to be covered in the historical review:

### **Primary sources**

Published and unpublished written documents are the most important type of primary source (Neuman, 2003). In this study, written documents provide the background information about historical eras or comparative settings since these describe relevant technology, cultural beliefs, customs, and social institutions in different



dynasties. Some classical historical records such as *Records of the Grand Historian* 史記, and *The Books of Rites* 禮記 will be retrieved. To acquire a broad picture, general books written by historians about the micro-history of China will also be searched and read.

Additionally, since there is little, or even no, written evidence about social structures in pre-historical eras, i.e. the Paleolithic and Neolithic periods, evidence from archeological records will be located and evaluated.

### **Secondary Sources**

Secondary sources refer to the writings of specialist historians who have spent years studying primary sources, and also those of experts in the field of Chinese family research. A clear benefit of using secondary sources in historical review is that the works of historians present a mass of empirical detail as evidence of past conditions. They also provide much of the background work that has already been carried out, for example there is literature written by Chinese scholars who have studied the Chinese family for many years but such work has not been translated. In this study secondary sources of data play an important part in the amassing of data.

### **Running Records**

Running records consist of official reports and existing statistical documents maintained by certain organizations or governmental departments and include census and survey reports. In this study running records come mainly from official reports concerning population registration, household surveys, and statistics from several social surveys conducted by numerous research institutions. Also included is information obtained from pilot projects or programs.

## **4.3 Multiple-Case (M-C) Study Methodology**

### **4.3.1 Introduction and rationale for multiple-case study methodology**

Case study is the in-depth examination of one (a case) or a few instances (cases) of some social phenomenon through detailed data collection involving multiple sources of information (Creswell, 2003, 2007; Stake, 1995; Babbie, 2007). The purpose of case study may be descriptive, explanatory, or exploratory depending on the nature of study and the research questions. As compared with other qualitative approaches, case study is not appropriate for scientific generalizing but for providing an in-depth understanding of a case or multiple cases and developing a detailed analysis. Usually there are two types of study which make use of case study research design: the single case study and the multiple-case study, or collective case study. A single-case study may be appropriate when the researcher focuses on an issue or concern and selects one case to illustrate this issue. On the other hand in-depth study of several cases can yield explanatory insights, as when the researcher seeks to illustrate differences among cases within a context or surroundings (Yin, 1994; Stake, 1995).

In this research the study seeks to understand family changes in corresponding socio-economic conditions and explain how such processes proceed. Based on the model proposed and theoretical arguments brought forward in the first phase of analysis, the purpose of the second stage of study is to provide rich illustrations of the phenomenon of family change. As Creswell indicates, “case study is a good approach when the researcher has clearly identifiable cases with boundaries and seeks to provide a detailed description of the cases or a comparison of several cases” (Stake, 1995: 74). Thus, a multiple-case study approach is appropriate in the second stage of this research as it is suited to the purposes and nature of the study.

### 4.3.2 Overviews of research design and procedures

Several procedures take place within a case study (see Stake, 1995; Creswell, 2003, 2007): (1) a search for theoretical propositions and the formalization of a loose theory or a conceptual framework for linking the data to be collected and initial questions drawn from; (2) the use of a preliminary model or theory developed as the basis for establishing a rationale for sampling strategy and to decide on the units of analysis in the study; (3) the selection of cases for gathering information and collecting data through multiple methods, such as observations, interviews and documents; (4) analysis of data contrasting the results by using appropriate strategies. These general procedures take place in a single-case study and when undertaking multiple-case design. Specifically, Yin (1994), for example, provides additional detailed steps for conducting a multiple-case study (See Figure 4.2)

Using the approach for multiple-case studies recommended by Yin (1994) as a general procedural guide, the steps to be used to carry out this study can be summarized as follows:

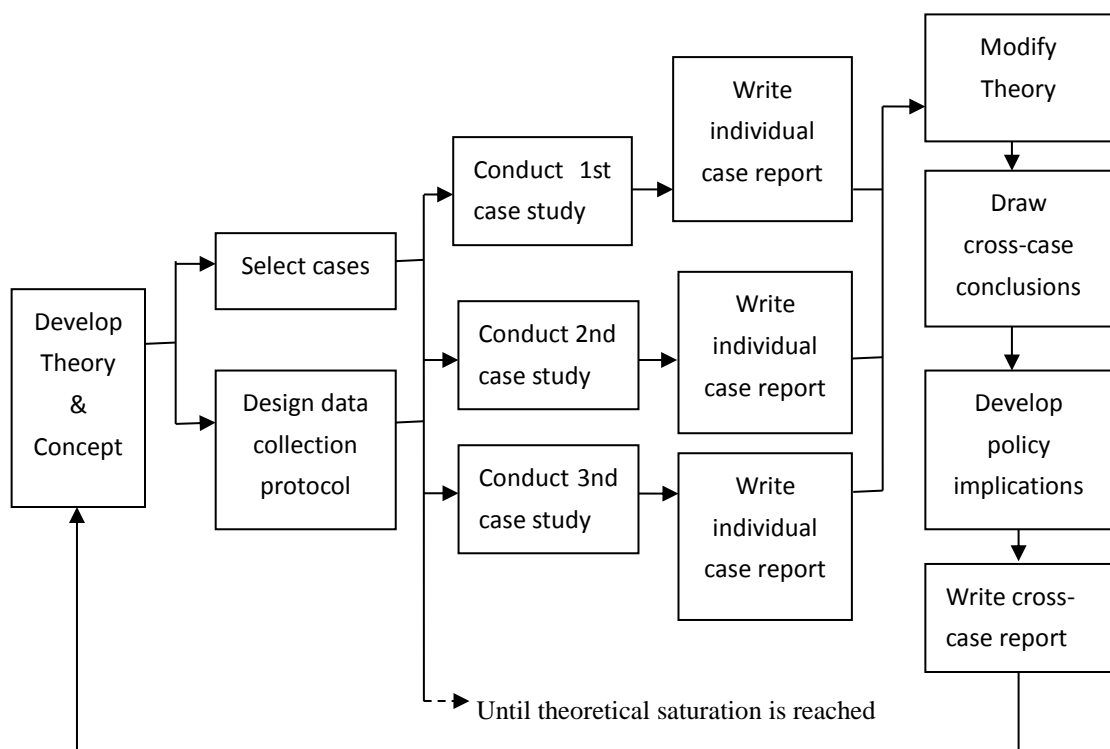


Figure 4.2 Procedures in Multiple-Case Study

Source: R. K. Yin, 1994.

Notes: in order to fit requirements for this particular research modifications have been made as appropriate

- First, based on the conceptual framework developed from the historical review and general model, several research questions relating to family structure and care for elderly family members are formalized.
- Cases that represent a critical test to the theoretical model are selected by using appropriate sampling methods. In this study, three territorial areas in China are selected, Yunnan, Beijing and Hong Kong, which represent different levels of modernity. Concurrently a preliminary design for the research, covering research questions, units of analysis, data-collection methods, and also strategies for analysis, is constructed.
- Data are collected from these three areas through various data collection methods including observation, in-depth interviews, and document review. Following collection of data a detailed description of each case area, Yunnan, Beijing, and Hong Kong, is provided and analysis within the case, sometimes called within-case analysis, is conducted.
- There follows a thematic analysis across cases, sometimes referred to as cross-case analysis in which differing levels of modernity and changes in family structure and care functions for the elderly are reflected in order to compare characteristics and empirical findings from the cases.
- Finally, findings from cases are interpreted and used as the initial empirical evidence to test the theoretical framework. Alternative illustrations will be provided if cases do not support the model to permit modifications based on empirical findings.

### **4.3.3 The research sample and units of analysis**

In a multiple-case study selection of the research sample is usually purposeful and

referred to as purposeful sampling or judgment sampling (Yin, 2003; Creswell, 2007). The primary purpose of sampling is less to make statistical inferences about a population than to collect information-rich cases which clarify and deepen understanding of the phenomenon studied. In this study, in order to yield rich information about the Chinese family under differing socio-economic conditions and permit comparison of features, purpose sampling is used to select the study sample. This study has chosen Yunnan, Beijing and Hong Kong to represent different stages in socioeconomic development. The units of analysis are families identified with the three areas. As the research aim is to compare family structure and care functions for elderly across three settings the selection of the sample is based on variations in family structure such as the living arrangements of family members. In particular, predominant family types in these three settings will be the main targets under study. Among them, family structure and functions for older parents that change over time will be the focus.

#### **4.3.4 Data-collection methods and data sources**

Data collection in this multiple-case study is not limited to any single type of evidence. Data from different sources will be used to provide extensive information about the context and the phenomena being studied. The use of multiple sources of evidence will allow data and methodological triangulation, which will provide multiple measures exploring the same research questions and support events or facts of the case study by more than a single source of evidence, thus making findings or conclusions more convincing and accurate (Patton, 2002, Yin, 2009). Yin (2003, 2009) states that it is possible to collect six types of information in a multiple-case study: documents, archival records, interviews, direct observations, participant-observations, and physical artifacts. In this study four such sources of evidence are included for the collection of data.

## Interviews

Semi-structured interviews are conducted as one of the most important sources of evidence in a case study so as to describe complex interactions and processes, and provide extensive and context-rich information about interviewees' behavior, perceptions, and perspectives. There are two parts in the interview. Part one contains short questions, those concerning personal particulars such as age, gender, educational level, and family formation. Part two includes open-ended questions about their family experiences. Information from each interview is recorded on audiotapes which are later transcribed into a computer format. This study collects data from two kinds of interviews.

### In-depth interviews with ordinary people

Open-ended interviews will focus on respondents' personal experiences of family life as well as their opinions about family support for elderly family members. To yield the most information about the phenomena under study a purposeful, or theoretical, sampling procedure is used to select individuals from diverse family types. In particular, 30 elderly people, aged 60 and above and 32 adult children, aged between 18 and 55, from different family types are selected in order to understand their various perspectives on family structure and care for elderly people in Yunnan, Beijing, and Hong Kong. Table 4.1 shows the distribution of cases in each family form. In addition respondents are asked to explain and describe how and under what circumstances they or their adult children do in fact help elderly parents or family members.

Family types	Elderly(aged 60+)			Adult Children(aged between 18 and 55)		
	Yunnan	Beijing	Hong Kong	Yunnan	Beijing	Hong Kong
<b>Nuclear</b>	1	0	4	5	9	8
<b>Stem</b>	5	3	2	3	2	1
<b>Extended</b>	3	0	0	2	0	1
<b>Single-person</b>	0	1	1	0	0	0

<b>Empty-nest</b>	1	6	3	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	10	10	10	10	11	11

Table 4.1 Distribution of cases selected in each family form

### In-depth interviews with experts

In order to better understand the prevalence of opinions and attitudes as well as behavioral changes among ordinary people in the above three areas a total of eight expert interviews (3 in Yunnan, 3 in Beijing, and 2 in Hong Kong) are to be conducted in which experts in the field of family research are asked to propose their viewpoints and explanations about family change in the three different settings. In addition, based on data collected from the interviews with ordinary people, a series of interpretive questions will be asked relating to family support for elderly people in the three settings. The aim of the interviews with experts is to gain from their understanding of the process of change and to test the theory that has been proposed.

### **Document review**

In this research documents for review include records, documents, and census data which provide documentary evidence and additional specific details about the general socio-economic, political, and demographic context of the research settings. In particular, reading and reviewing writings of specialists will help to corroborate historical change in family life as well as change in related public policies. Government reports that are relevant to policies concerning housing, medical care, and pensions will provide useful information for analyzing policy changes in social welfare, family planning, and other areas.

### **Direct observation**

Direct observation provides a further source of evidence for this multiple-case study. The process of observation includes recording and describing the field settings where interviews are conducted. It also records people's behavior and environmental conditions by presenting narrative and detailed description free from interpretation or

judgment about the evidence arising in the three research settings. It is particularly the case that where statistical data and documentary evidence is limited, as in the village of Yunnan, direct observation is extremely useful for providing additional information about the context enabling understanding of the daily life of people. Photography at the case study sites is also helpful for conveying important information about natural settings and case characteristics.

### **Archival Records**

Archival records in this study include census and statistical data from state and local governments relevant to the research questions. Statistics about family structure in three settings are collected to reflect basic trends over a specific period of time. Survey data, such as data about radically changing economic factors, employment, and urbanization, are used in conjunction with other sources of information to provide a holistic picture of socio-economic and demographic change caused by the rise of modernity.

### **4.3.5 Methods for data analysis and synthesis**

For data analysis and synthesis both **within-case analysis** and **cross-case analysis** are used. After that, a **conditional matrix** is created to examine the range of conditions and potential consequences that result from the spread of modernity. The reason for using within-case and cross-case analysis is that these processes are useful analytic tools for examining and comparing key characteristics within and across cases, thus providing more convincing data at both specific and general levels (Huberman & Miles, 1994; Babbie, 2007). A conditional matrix, on the other hand, allows theory development and linkage between broad conditions, ranging from the most general to the specific, which closely relate to phenomena under study and specifiable consequences (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, 1998). In this study, within-case and cross-case analysis are used for comparing modernity level, family structure and



care provision for elderly people in the three settings after which a conditional matrix is built for further theoretical elaboration, confirmation or qualification of findings.

#### Within-case analysis

The aim of within-case analysis is to describe and explain a pattern of relationships. Such an analysis usually takes place prior to the work of cross-case analysis (Mishler, 1990; Huberman & Miles, 1994). Within-case analysis provides a useful way to understand what really happens in specific settings in greater depth through describing actors, events, and settings, and explaining processes, actions, or phenomena.

Bernard (1988:317) suggested that an analysis should “make complicated things understandable by reducing them to their component parts”. In this study, starting from the theoretical model proposed, within-case analysis begins by describing modernity history in three settings, considering these as including economic modes, division of labor, urbanization, public policy, family structure and support provision for elderly members of the family. After this all relevant case-level data are examined to provide information required for analysis. At the same time a set of causal links is derived and a narrative explanation formulated about the phenomena and processes. Finally, for each individual case area, a separate case narrative is written based on a series of themes.

#### Cross-case analysis

Cross-case analysis applies specifically in multiple-case studies (Yin, 2009). According to Huberman and Miles (1994), cross-case analysis involves either a variable-oriented or case-oriented analysis. A variable-oriented strategy is effective for finding probabilistic relationships among variables, while case-oriented strategy is advantageous for examining specific, concrete patterns. In this study mixed strategies are used. Variable-oriented strategy is first adopted because the focus of analysis is to make contrasts and comparisons, exploring interrelations among

variables. Following that a case-oriented approach is used to give a narrative account and an overall illustration for each case.

To be specific, after inductive coding, three main variables including “level of modernity”, including mode of economy, division of labor, development of urbanization, and social policy development, “family form (structure)”, and “supporting patterns for elderly people” are identified across three settings. In specific, main indicators of modernity level are justified and compared in three research settings. Information from the three cases is then displayed by developing a contingency table in order to permit easy examination and comparison. Findings from each case regarding family form and support for elderly members are further described and explained in the sequential process of the analysis. Meanwhile, using case-oriented approaches, the researcher re-examines the case-level data and searches out similarities and differences among cases. Finally, a detailed view of various aspects of the cases is provided in accord with the findings being displayed.

In general, within-case and cross-case strategies in this study aim more at providing evidence and exploring partial plausible explanations than giving theoretical illustrations. However, as Creswell (2007) pointed out, a detailed description of the facts and an explanation provides a good basis for developing generalizations about cases in terms of themes.

#### Conditional matrix

Conditional matrix is a theory-driven approach enabling the researcher both to distinguish and link levels of conditions and consequences. Strauss and Corbin (1998:183) indicated that “it (conditional matrix) emphasizes that both micro and macro conditions are important to the analysis.....they too should be brought into the analysis.” Sorting all this out is where the conditional matrix is helpful. Since it helps to develop or modify theory and does not merely describe a phenomenon it is a powerful analytic tool for explicating a given phenomenon resulting from a wide

range of conditions.

According to Strauss and Corbin (1990) the conditional matrix is represented as a set of circles. Conditions at all levels (circles) should be relevant to the central phenomenon. By tracing the conditional and consequential paths from action/interaction through different levels, the researcher can examine both macro and micro influences on a given phenomenon. In this study, conditions at five levels are examined and analyzed: national, sub-organizational (provincial), individual, group and individual, interactional, and action levels (see Figure 4.3).

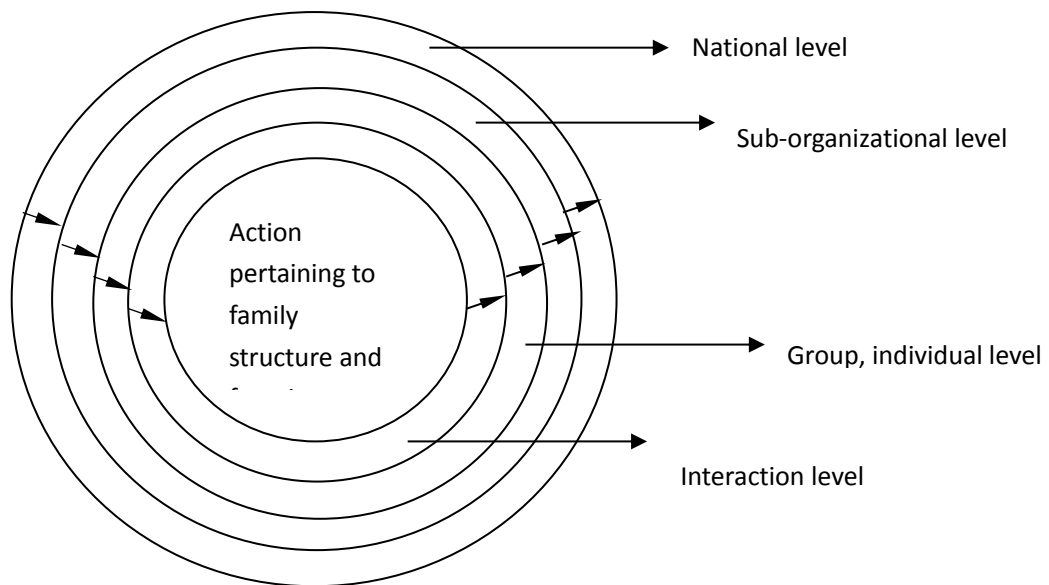


Figure 4.3 The Conditional Matrix in This Study

1. National level. This level includes governmental regulations, culture, and values that pertain to family structure and function (elderly care). In particular, policies, social welfare and service programs that relate to family and care given to the elderly are examined.
2. Sub-organizational (provincial) level. This considers particular features such as different levels of modernity in settings selected within China where the study is taking place, Yunnan, Beijing, and Hong Kong.
3. Group, individual level. This level includes socio-cultural status, knowledge,

family and experiences of persons and families. Also analyzed and synthesized is the interview data from the perspectives of elderly family members and adult children which relates to explanations of family change.

4. Interactional level. At this level people do things together, or with respect to one another, through an interactional process related to a phenomenon (Becker, 1986; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). It is at this level that interactional processes among various levels of condition are shown and illustration given about how broad conditions such as macro-structural and micro-individual factors influence the responses and actions of people toward family.

5. Action level. According to Strauss & Corbin (1990: 164), this level represents the “active, expressive, performance form of self and/or other interaction carried out to manage, respond to, and so forth, a phenomenon”. In this study, the analysis includes explaining why people choose to have specific family forms, adopt various ways of caring for elderly family members, and how they change strategies to maintain or accomplish associated tasks.

By using a conditional matrix, the analysis is able to relate family change specifically to conditions at the above five levels and link a wide range of possible macro and micro conditions to action/interaction processes, thus helping to explain a number of consequences and finally explore or modify theory. The study first examines major impacts of macro and micro factors pertaining to impacts of modernity on family change, suggesting a holistic picture of causal relationships between sets of factors. Then the study uses family support for the elderly as an example to further examine the interactive process between selected macro-transformative factors and the micro-individual factors for the purpose of providing a detailed explanation of family changes.

#### **4.4 Summary and Issues of Trustworthiness**

While historical review provides contextual background of Chinese families, a

multiple-case study allows the use of different sources of information for further investigating a broad range of issues such as people's considerations and behaviors. In this study historical review and multiple-case study are adopted. Data from historical review form the basis for understanding background of the development of Chinese families and multiple-case methodology is used to build or improve theoretical explanation.

The methodological advantages of using mixed methods are the triangulation of data from multiple sources using a variety of methods of data collection, and enhancement of the reliability as well as the internal validity of the study. In particular an historical review of the family in ancient China is conducted for the purpose of understanding family evolution in different historical periods and providing background information of Chinese family changes over time. This is followed by case illustrations which provide comprehensive interview data together with statistical and documentary evidence from three different settings, Yunnan, Beijing, and Hong Kong.

Through a combination of historical review and multiple-case study this project can cross-examine the consistency between a general explanatory model and specific cases. Moreover, relying on the methodological concept of invariance, the convergence of results from both stages of the study is able to provide a systematic analysis of macro structural and micro process changes so as to better understand family transformation within modernity. In addition, because the study incorporates combining methods, the theoretical model can be better tested or explored. This also helps to create a detailed illustration of the theoretical model.

#### Validity and reliability

As in any other research, in qualitative research validity and reliability are used to address issues of trustworthiness. Although the terminology used may differ, for example Guba and Lincoln (1998) use the terms credibility, dependability,

conformability, and transferability to assess and evaluate quality of qualitative research, it is believed that researchers must seek to control for potential biases and ensure excellent quality in their research. In this section the strategies employed to enhance the trustworthiness of the study are discussed. In particular, validity (credibility) and reliability (dependability) are displayed and indicated in detail.

Validity concerns accuracy of information and the degree to which measurements actually measure what they are supposed to (Babbie, 2007; Creswell, 2007). Creswell (2007) recommended eight strategies frequently used by qualitative researchers. In this study, the following three strategies are employed.

First, rich and detailed description enables readers to make decisions regarding transferability (Erlandson et al., 1993; Merriam, 1988; Creswell, 2007). In this study a detailed description is provided about the focus of the study including research settings, levels of modernity in three areas, family forms and care giving methods. These give a clear and holistic picture of three selected cases. Secondly, triangulation of data, methods, investigators, and theories helps the researcher provide corroborating evidence (Erlandson et al., 1993; Creswell, 2007). As stated above, evidence is collected from different and diverse sources. In addition, multiple analysis strategies are adopted to shed light on the phenomena under study with the aim of enhancing internal validity. Finally, as several researchers have suggested (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Creswell, 2007), external audits allow for examining both the processes and credibility of findings and interpretations. As a validation strategy in the study, findings, interpretations, and conclusions are taken back to experts in the field of research so that they can examine and judge the accuracy of the account and provide further illustration.

As compared with validity, reliability is a matter of dependability, stability of the findings and whether the same results can be achieved repeatedly by using the same measurements (Creswell, 2007; Babbie, 2007). Several ways can be used to address

reliability in qualitative research. In order to ensure reliability in this study the following strategies are employed.

Firstly, the use of detailed field notes created by obtaining audio-tape recordings and transcribing the tapes (Silverman, 2005; Creswell, 2007) helps to enhance reliability of the findings. After participants grant permission, all interviews in the three research settings are recorded using a good-quality digital voice recorder. These raw data are then transcribed into computer files available for further checking and analysis.

Secondly a detailed and thorough account of the research methods and procedures used is provided so that the data are available for review by other researchers. In this study detailed information regarding the thick description of research methods, data collection procedures, data analyses and synthesis is given. Although the findings from the three selected areas are not expected to be generalizable to other settings it is likely that the methods and procedures might be useful for researchers interested in the topic and who wish to undertake further research.

## CHAPTER 5

### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF CHINESE FAMILIES

#### **5.1. The Problems of Defining Chinese Family Type**

In the literature about the Chinese family certain common terms have been used by historians and sociologists to illustrate the typical family forms of traditional Chinese society. For example Maurice (1971) used the terms “elementary”, “stem” and “joint” to distinguish three different family structures existing in traditional China. In his study of “Chinese Lineage and Society” the elementary family was one consisting of two generations while the stem family referring to a family composed of three generations of which the middle one consisted of only one married pair. The joint family was said to be made up of three or more generations. In comparison with what Maurice called a stem family, an intermediate one consisted of more than one married pair. When Baker (1979) compared the Chinese family in his book “Chinese Family and Kinship” these terms were changed and replaced by “simple” (or nuclear or conjugal), “stem”, and “extended”. Baker further refined the “stem” family as one “where an only son brings his wife into the family and where only one son amongst several did so” (Baker, 1979: 2).

The distinction between extended family and stem family is critical because it emphasizes kin-relationships that are used to form familial ties in traditional Chinese society. The stem family is a direct reflection of the patrilineal principle followed by traditional Chinese society. According to this principle the expansion of kin occurred only through the fathers’ side. Married daughters, together with their husbands and their children, were not included in the mother’s side of the family. The most common instance was that daughters married and moved out from the parental home. They would live with their husbands and become members of their husband’s side of



the family. The exception was when a family did not have a son. In such a situation the parents might want their sons-in-law to move in with them but this did not happen frequently. The situation was totally different as regards the sons in a family. Baker emphasized the importance of sons within the family saying that “it’s not only in order to provide for the parents in their old age, but also in connection with ancestor worship” (Baker, 1979:3). In fact living with a son was quite common in traditional China especially for families which could not afford to provide economic recourse for all family members.

The following quotation is what might be found in a description over the vast majority of rural China in the last century:

“It seems that the most peasants in Jiangcun (a village in JiangSu province that is in southeast China) have adult sons living with them and providing care in their old age. For families that there is only one son, this son would be criticized of corrupting the ethics and moral standards of the family, if he wanted to setting up separate family. Whereas if there is more than one son in a family, the common instances are where a son bring his wife and children to live with parents, and where others separate to build up their own families without being criticized”<sup>4</sup>.

Certainly in a society with a patrilineal system the father’s side was given greater importance than the side of the mother. Extended families, usually called *Dajiating* (“big family”), also followed the strict patrilineal kinship principle (Fei, 1992; Lang, 1968; Baker, 1979). There were a few exceptions such as including married daughters together with their husbands and children. If they came from the paternal side an extended family could incorporate more distant relatives. In some extreme cases an extended family could include more than five generations, with an estimated number of hundreds of people living under the same roof. If we were to take the western classification extended family would include what is called the stem family. The only difference would be when a married son stayed with his parents and brought his wife and children into the family that this family would be included in

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<sup>4</sup> 費孝通 (1986)。三論中國家庭結構的變動。北京大學學報 (哲學社會科學版), 第三期。

the category of stem family.

By comparison, the concept of nuclear family (sometimes called the elementary, simple or conjugal family) was much clearer. Nuclear family usually meant a family consisting of parents and their unmarried children (Fei, 1986; Lang, 1968). In traditional China this kind of family was also called *Xiaojiating* (small family). In literal terms the difference between *Da* and *Xiao* is equivalent to using the English words “Big” and “Small”. In practice this use emphasizes the structural characteristics between the two types (Fei, 1992).

Clearly the classifications of Chinese family type depicted above that most anthropologists and sociologists have used are based on their experiences or surveys taken in traditional rural China. Use of the term “stem family” in particular reflects well traditional Chinese society with its strong ethical norms and patrilineal system. It does not include the new categories of people found urban family groups (or modernized groups), for example intellectuals, and blue or white collar workers. In fact studies of the Chinese family in recent decades, especially studies about urban families, have made important changes in our understanding of family structure both in rural and urban China.

The table below is a refined generalization which confirms the main concepts used to define Chinese family types:

<b>Main Family Types</b>	<b>Definition</b>
<b>Extended Family</b> (also called large or joint family)	Consists of three or more generations of which two or more pairs of married couples from one generation live with their unmarried children.
<b>Stem Family</b>	Consists of two or three generations including parents, unmarried children, and one married child (from father's

	side or mother's side) with spouse and unmarried children; stem families also include one parent living with one married child, their spouse and unmarried children; or parents and one married child with spouse.
<b>Nuclear family</b> (also called conjugal or small family)	Consists of one married couple and their unmarried children; also includes one married couple without children.
<b>Other family types:</b> Single person family	Consists of one person (included are unmarried, married, divorced, and widowed persons)
Skipped-generation family	Consists of grandparents and their grandchildren whose parents are absent from the household
Single parent family	Consists of one parent with unmarried children
Other	Refers to families other than those mentioned above

Table 5.1 The Main Types of Chinese Family

Table 5.1 shows the main changes encountered in the course of family expansion. In the past, with few exceptions, families did not include relatives from the mother's side. However the years between the end of the Qing dynasty and the consolidation of Communist rule marked a watershed in Chinese history. Old rules and customs which used to define the traditional families of society changed greatly. With an extension to incorporation of relatives from both parents' sides the emphasis on sons previously seen as having the greatest importance to a family became less apparent. Although it is possible that, after marriage more sons live with their parents than do daughters, the influence of old views in which preference is given to sons is continually decreasing.

Another important change is the increased diversity in types of family. In addition to the extended, stem and nuclear families which are seen as the main family types in traditional China, without characterizing structural differences by specific terms,

other types can be seen including the category of “broken family” (or “uncompleted family”). Yet it is reasonable to exclude other types from a classification of family because of the relatively low percentage of occurrence among the total of types of Chinese family in former years. It is becoming common for sociologists to analyze structural family change in China in recent decades in terms such as single person family, skipped generation family, and single parent family. For example, five categories of family type were used in a longitudinal-study conducted in cities in 1982, thirteen categories in 1993, and eleven categories in 1997 (Liu, 2000). Although the classification of family includes a greater number of variations three main types remain: the extended, the stem and the nuclear family types.

## **5.2 Family History in Ancient China**

It is obvious that the family is formed by the social, economic and political structures which surround it. Yet looking at how family has emerged and developed throughout history we are able to see a gradual process from a primitive form where family could not be regarded as a dependency unit to a more complicated social institution. Such a form serves many functions in society.

This section will discuss the organization of early primitive societies, giving special emphasis to family formation and function changes from a functional perspective. The first, focus will be on the emergence of the Chinese family in the pre-imperial period, followed by the evolution of the family system in different historical periods and dynasties, observing both structural and functional changes as features of early Chinese civilization. Finally, recent changes in the Chinese family will be reported and these compared with the Chinese family of former times.

### 5.2.1 The legendary and heroic age and the emergence of the family

The beginnings of family and family life can be traced back to the pre-imperial period. This is the legendary and heroic age of ancient China, a period which was much longer than all subsequent imperial dynasties added together. There are myths concerning three heroes: You Chao Shi 有巢氏, Sui Ren Shi 燧人氏, Fu Xi Shi 伏羲氏 and Shen Nong Shi 神農氏

The period of You Chao Shi 有巢氏 and Sui Ren Shi 燧人氏 roughly equals the earliest and middle sectors of the Old Stone Age and was populated by early humans differentiated from other primates. The lifestyle of these early men is not yet adequately known but through analyzing the data from early hominid localities and studying living nonhuman primates it appears that these early humans lived in social groups of some kind (Potts, 1988). An old Chinese book, *Leizi • Tang asks* 列子 • 湯問, described group life in the period of You Chao Shi 有巢氏 as “Zhangyou Qiju, Bujun Buchen; Nannv Zayou, Bumei Bupin”(長幼齊居，不君不臣；男女雜遊，不媒不聘) , which means that old and young people live under the same roof without hierarchy, men and women live together without marriage. In Hunli Mulu 婚禮目錄, the famous scholar Zheng Xuan wrote (in the Donghan Dynasty) “SuiHuang zhishi, zeyou fufu”燧皇之時，則有夫婦 (means that couples initiated in the period of Sui Ren Shi 燧人氏), suggesting that marriage had been formed long before the formation of states. The marriage bond, as was mentioned in this book, should be considered as basic to the beginnings of family life without which the latter could not have existed.

The period associated with Chinese legendary hero Fu Xi 伏羲 is roughly the late Paleolithic or late Old Stone Age, dating from 10,000 to 40,000 years ago. Legend says that Fu Xi taught men how to fish with nets and how to rear domestic animals. He made calendars and instituted etiquette for marriage. In some ancient books such

as Gushi Kao 古史考<sup>5</sup> (written by Jiaozhou 譙周), there was a saying that “Fuxi zhi jiaqu, yi lipi weili” 伏羲制嫁娶，以儷皮為禮 (which means Fu Xi established wedding etiquette, setting into use two leather deerskins as the betrothal gift). A similar saying can also be found in Shi ben 世本<sup>6</sup>, and Yi Li<sup>7</sup> (The Book of Etiquette and Ceremonies) 儀禮. Although no set of constitutions or regulations about family can be definitely inferred about the basis of these findings at the least they provide the earliest textual evidence that people stipulated rules about building marriage relationships. They indicate that marriage began to formalize and needed to obtain official recognition in social settings. Furthermore, the establishment of wedding etiquette also meant that the social and cultural foundations of the human family had formed. From that time onwards marriage between the different sexes was not merely a private and personal concern but also needed to be accepted by the public. The family, which was associated with wedding etiquette, may have already formed at that stage although it would not have been bound by a wide variety of rules and regulations as it was in later years.

The legendary and heroic age in ancient China, or so called Old Stone Age, lasted for millions of years. The early humans in this stage inhabited diverse environments. From fire using and building shelters to making sophisticated implements for varied uses, these early human gradually acquired the skills needed to survive and developed highly efficient subsistence strategies to deal with their environment. Although there is no direct evidence showing their lifestyle and related social organization, the literature has indicated that they showed increasing social awareness and social complexity which distinguished them from other primates. The onset of wedding etiquette means that they already had a sense of practicing rituals to

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<sup>5</sup>GuShiKao 古史考, is written by Jiaozhou 譙周, a famous historian in the Wei and Jin periods. It is a book about general history in ancient China.

<sup>6</sup> Shi Ben 世本 (also translated as *The Book of Lineages*), was written in about the 3rd century BC. It records history in the Pre-Qin period (from legendary and heroic age to warring states period).

<sup>7</sup> Yi Li (The Book of Etiquette and Ceremonies) 儀禮, Is one of “three ritual texts” (a further two are Zhouli (Zhou Rites) 周禮, and Liji (Record of Rites) 禮記. It is a Chinese classic text about Zhou Dynasty rituals.

confirm marriage bonds in social settings.

### 5.2.2 Shen Nong Shi 神農氏 and the new stone age

Around 10,000 years ago in some areas of the world human history entered a new stage where humans began to make intentional conscious efforts to alter or modify the environment rather than remaining highly dependent on natural resources from the environment. From getting food, through gathering and hunting, to food production the shift marks one of the most pivotal changes in human history.

In Chinese legend, the hero Shen Nong Shi 神農氏 (the Divine Farmer) taught people to make ploughs and sow different kinds of grains. This accounts may never be verified, but with the domestication of plants and animals it seems humans came to live in settlements tied to a fixed place more than is the case for people whose lives are rely on hunting and gathering. In adapting to a different environment they developed more complicated techniques for making tools. As a result, since approximately 10,000 years ago, a number of regional cultures can be clearly identified from archaeological record, such as Yangshao (from 5000 to 3000 years ago) and Longshan (from 3000 to 2000 years ago) culture.

#### Family in clan (gentes) society

By studying both contemporary hunter-gatherer societies and discoveries from archaeological sites, researchers have come to believe that early and middle Neolithic (New Stone Age) peoples lived in matrilineal clan societies. In *Lüshi Chunqiu* • *Shi Jun Lan* 呂氏春秋 • 恃君覽<sup>8</sup> (literally “Mister Lü’s Spring and

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<sup>8</sup> *Lüshi Chunqiu* is an encyclopedic Chinese Classic text, which was compiled around the period of the Warring States (475-221 B.C.) under the patronage of the Qin Dynasty Chancellor *Lü Buwei*. See Carson, M. & Lowew, M. (1993). "*Lü shih chun chiu* 呂氏春秋." In M. Loewe (Eds.).*Early Chinese Texts: A Bibliographical Guid* (pp324-330). Berkeley: University of California, Institute of East Asian Studies.

Autumn • Relying on Rulers”) there was a saying which vividly described the social life that the people lived during this period:

“.....there were no rulers, but people lived together in societies. They know their mothers but not their fathers. There were no distinctions made between close and distant relatives, older and younger brothers, husbands and wives, and male and female; no Dao for dealing with superiors and inferiors or older and younger.....”(Knoblock & Riegel :511)

Study of archaeological sites of this period has also given archaeologists similar conclusions. It had suggested that the individual family was part of a larger kinship group (matrilineal clan), and had group characteristics for many activities such as agricultural production (Huang, 1997; Jian, 2006).

However, by the late Neolithic age with the development of more sophisticated technology and accumulated food surpluses, along with increased private wealth, mother-right gave way to father-right. The change also brought a new element into the family. As men began to play a major role in agricultural production they became also the ones who owned the resources, the domesticated animals and household goods. As Engels remarked, “the reckoning of descent in the female line and the matriarchal law of inheritance were thereby overthrown, and the male line of descent and the paternal law of inheritance were substituted for them” (Engels, 1986: 86). Since then matrilineal family has been replaced by patriarchal family and the exclusive supremacy of men established. Although the individual family still relied on a large patriarchal family, and even on clans, the power relationships between family members had been substantially changed. In the same time, there was the possibility that an individual family might have emerged as an independent economic unit but the family still needed to rely on its clan to survive since it was restricted by the low level of production prevalent at that time.

The so-called Shen Nong Shi 神農氏, the New Stone Age, marks a new stage in human (Chinese) history. The advent of domestication during this period brought



many changes to societies, including a more settled life, increased social stratification, and growing social complexity. The “elders”—the oldest and most experienced men—usually were in higher status in the community and had an important say in major decisions affecting the clans. In this period, individual families were based not merely on natural but on socio-economic conditions and depended on extended kin (from matrilineal or patrilineal side) and clans.

### **5.2.3 From Xia, Shang, and Western Zhou: family in the “fengjian” system**

In “Shi Ji. Xia Benji” 史記·夏本紀(Records of the Historian.The Basic Annals of Xia), Xia 夏 is regarded as the first recorded “dynasty. Phratries, subdivisions of the tribe constituted by several related clans, were replaced by state authorities similar in many ways to the social organization of ancient Greece. In archaeology, this period is also referred to as the Bronze Age, which is characterized by the bronze technology, the development of a writing system, as well as larger urban centers. The social structure and political system of Xia and the early Shang dynasty is hardly known because the earliest written Chinese texts, the so-called oracle-bones, were found for the late Shang dynasty. Yet by comparing traditional accounts about Xia and Shang, also the archaeological evidence and the information in oracle-bone inscriptions, it becomes evident that the states were based on closed kinship relationships which formed the core structures of the dynasty.

#### **Families in “Fengjian” system**

In a society structurally based on kinship relationships it is undoubtedly logical to assume that people lead quite different lives in terms of their differential association with the king or the royals. Thus, the family of a peasant was likely to be vastly different from that of a nobleman. In Xia, Shang, and Western Zhou the families of

noblemen were structurally complex and extended. They usually consisted of several generations and may have included great-grand parents, grandparents, husband, a wife, several concubines, children, remote relatives, and non-kin such as slaves and domestic servants (Song, 1994; Wang, 1992). Despite their size and complexity however, families followed strict patrilineal principles. In these royal families kinship was the basic determinant of status and social relations, and was also a distinctive means of maintaining power and privileges. To maintain these advantages, kinship worked both as a social and as a political institution.

As compared with royal families, the families of peasants, handicraftsmen and small tradesmen were quite simple. These people were not allowed to have more than one wife and a monogamous style family must have been quite common. There has been much debate about to what extent the individual families of common people needed to rely on larger kinship groups. As far as can be determined there were hundreds of individual families together comprising a larger patrilineal family group within which people lived and worked together (Chang, 1986). Because peasant families were compelled to be attached to the land and mobility was strictly forbidden by their rulers, individuals served within the feudal hierarchy through cooperative work and had to depend largely on the kinship system. Even in the time of the Western Zhou dynasty, when peasants held private land for cultivation and began to own farm implements, they still needed to rely on their lineages to obtain status in society. In turn, as important social organizations, the lineages tended to perform a wide range of social and religious functions for their members such as ancestor worship, protection, and care for the disadvantaged.

#### **5.2.4 Spring and Autumn, Warring States, Qin and the Western Han Dynasty: the gradually independence of the individual family**

After disintegration of clans the family ought to have separated gradually from

lineage or other kinship groups to become an independent social unit, however, in China this process has taken several hundred years in development. In Spring and Autumn, Warring States, Qin and the Western Han Dynasty individual families gradually became independent economic entities and were released from large kinship groupings.

### **The prevalence and independence of individual families**

The basic trend in family development in this period became the individual family, which gradually released from a large patrilineal kinship grouping to become an independent self-sufficient social unit. Such change was accompanied by progressively simplified family structure and reduced family size. To some extent large extended families still remained in the upper classes but except under special circumstances there were fewer two generation families consisting of parents and their adult sons.

It is possible to conclude that this was a period full of chaos and change but it represented the transition from families dominated by large patrilineal kinship groups to the family as an independent social unit. By surveying historical records, scholars such as Wang & Zhang (2007) found that most family types seen in today's China had already formed in the distant past (see Table 5.2).

<b>Family Type</b>	<b>Example in historical records</b>
Extended Family (also called large or joint family)	Su Qin's (蘇秦) family <sup>9</sup> . According to the Records of the Grand Historian, Su had a family which included at least his wife, daughter-in-law, and parents.  Zhong Zi's family (仲子) <sup>10</sup> . In Mencius, Zhong Zi and his wife once lived with his married brother, his sister-in-law and his mother in the period before he set up his own family.

<sup>9</sup> 《史記》卷 69 《蘇秦略傳》

<sup>10</sup> 《孟子·離婁上》

Stem Family	Shang Zhai's (商翟)family <sup>11</sup> . It was recorded that Shang Zhai lived with his wife and his mother before he was 38 years old. After his wife gave birth to two children, his family consisted of five persons.
Nuclear family (also called conjugal or small family)	Bei Guo's family(北郭) <sup>12</sup> . In historical records, Mr. Bei's family included only two persons, himself and his wife. Fan Li's family <sup>13</sup> (範蠡). According to historical records, Fan Li had a family of five persons, his wife, three sons and himself.
Other family types	Broken family: Feng Xuan's (馮諼) family <sup>14</sup> . It was recorded that Feng Xuan's family consisted of only two persons, his mother and himself. Polygamous upper class families: in Meng Changjun's (孟嘗君) family <sup>15</sup> . Meng's father had more than forty children. Meng was given birth by one of his father's concubines.

Table 5.2 Family Types in Historical Records (Spring and Autumn, the Warring States, Qin and the Western Han Dynasty)

Source: 王利華 & 張國剛 (2007), *中國家庭史 (卷一)*, 廣東: 廣東人民出版社。

The independence of the individual family contributed to the improvement of social status of family members by putting them into the uniform household system of the state. Taxation increased greatly and helped the state accumulate and concentrate wealth through family-based agricultural production and the specification of labor by gender. During this period, in harmony with trends in family and social development, such family independence appears to have adapted to the needs of the economy and to productivity. However, in some sense, the separation of families seemed to undermine those family ethics which emphasized that relatives provide mutual support and help for each other. Knowledge of how to establish a new set of rules and regulations regarding family relationships gradually became an urgent need.

<sup>11</sup> 《史記》卷 67 《仲尼弟子列傳》

<sup>12</sup> 《韓詩外傳》卷 9

<sup>13</sup> 《史記》卷 41 《越王勾踐世家》

<sup>14</sup> 《戰國策·齊策四》

<sup>15</sup> 《史記》卷 75 《孟嘗君列傳》

### **5.2.5 From Eastern Han to the Early and Middle periods of Qing : traditional Chinese family**

In the history of Eastern Han, the early and middle periods of Qing, saw large families (i.e. stem and extended types) replace small families (i.e. nuclear type) to become the ideal and predominant forms of family in China. Apart from in Western Han, factors which contributed to an increased proportion of traditional large families over the course of hundreds of years included long periods of war and division, the spread of feudal ethics and Confucianism as national ideology, the prevalence of feudal landlordism, as well as laws which encouraged filial support and extended kinship networking among family members.

#### **Traditional family and filial support**

In Western Han, Emperor Wudi refected other schools of thought and proclaimed Confucianism as the official state ideology. Subsequent dynasties emphasized aspects of Confucian thought (ritual 禮 and humanity 仁) and these practices endured for thousands of years. In Confucius family values, family members living under the same roof are required to care for each other, especially when elderly parents are still alive. Separated housing seems to be associated with estranged parent-children relationships which could lead to problems in the support of parents in their old age.

Because of this reason large families in stem and extended types were believed to be the ideal for this period. On the one hand, extended family ties provided basic protection for individuals in times of social upheaval. On the other, when the state couldn't afford to support the old, frail, young, and ill, mutual aid and cooperation among relatives could be used as a means relieving the economic burdens of local and central governments, and ease conflicts among social classes. However, great structural differences existed between families of ordinary people such as peasants and handicraftsmen as against those of the upper classes, the high officials,

aristocrats, and bureaucratic landlords. The terms “horizontal extended” and “vertical extended” were used to emphasize the structural principles of these two kinds of large family.

The horizontal extended family shares some similarities with the large families in Qin and Western Han in that these families mostly possessed substantial wealth and political power. Such families are large because they not only include family members and relatives but also many non-kin such as household servants, whose number may greatly exceed family members. Another structural characteristic which differentiated this kind of family from the large families in Western Han and the Three Kingdoms period was the vastness of family kinship networks. Since the late Eastern Han, especially in the succeeding dynasties including the Song, Yuan, Ming, early and middle Qing, upper class families might be extended to embrace even more remote relatives. This kind of family has been portrayed vividly in a great deal of Chinese classical literature.

As compared with families of upper class, families of ordinary people show many differences. This kind of extended family differed from that of the ruling class in that it usually had few people in one generation but many generations living together. As governments strongly promoted Tongju Gongcai 同居共財 ( which means living together and having unified family finances) and Leishi Tongju 累世同居 (which means living with several generations), in this period contact and communication between family members became frequent thus it was not surprising that there came to be an increasing number of extended and stem families. In the Tang dynasty, after achieving long-term social stability and economic prosperity, a series of laws and regulations were promulgated in order to maintain and reinforce the feudal patriarchal family system. These were also adopted in later dynasties: Song, Yuan, Ming, and Qing. The government also encouraged cohabitation of family members by giving material rewards, reducing taxes, and even by giving out positions of authority. Compared with a horizontal extended family, vertical extended families

were simpler in structure and smaller in size.

### **5.2.6 Late period of Qing and family revolution**

In previous dynasties the Chinese family system had arisen from adaptations to the structures of bureaucracy, in particular the feudal ownership of land. However in the late Qing period, with the growth of a commodity economy, political changes, and the spread of industrial civilization, the traditional family system underwent great changes.

#### **The road towards modern family forms**

With the development of modern industry there emerged an urban economy which, in addition to supporting social and political factors, exerted great influences upon the development of the family institution. In fact there were still great disparities between families from the upper classes and those of ordinary people. Especially in the early 20th century, when the democratic revolution exerted great influence on China's social and political structures, effects on individual families differed according to class differences. In general, the major changes in family were as follows:

1. There was gradual decline in the traditional large (extended) family and an expansion of the small (nuclear and stem) family. Rapid development of a commodity economy led to decline in the strength of patriarchal authority which shook the traditional family and its social-economic foundations. Nuclear and stem families might be the main family types in this period (Buck, 1937; 368). However, there were in reality a small proportion of families of bureaucrats and landlords still retaining extended family types and including dozens of persons.
2. There were reduced structural disparities between upper class families and the families of ordinary people. Upper class families were the most affected by the

strain of socio-economic influences and continued pressure from dramatic changes in ideology. For example growth of urban educational and occupational opportunities for young people increased their social and economic independence, thus creating internal tensions and conflicts between the old authorities and the younger generation. An increasing number of young people working in modern factories and governmental institutions were freed from financial dependence on family. In consequence they tended to struggle against the sex and age hierarchies of both the traditional family system and feudal ethics by pursuing free marriage, individual equality and independence. All of these factors, together with the external attack on feudalism and bureaucracy which formed a part of the family revolution, contributed to the disintegration of the many upper class patriarchal extended families and the formation of small families in the western mode.

3. There was growing specialization of family functions. Specialization of social institutions as well as the increased mobility of populations brought about by wars and expansion of urbanization meant that many functions once performed by the traditional family declined or were lost. One notable example was the decline in the economic function of the family. With the development of industrialization and urbanization an increasing number of family members took paid jobs in newly established state-owned or privately-owned enterprises. The family was no longer an economic unit and reliance on wages became more and more common. However not all functions once played by the extended family reduced. Instead the family became more specialized as some functions were replaced by alternative social organizations. For instance, with the establishment of modern education system, educational function of the family is replaced by modern schools. Similarly are care functions for the family members who are aged, ill, or disabled. Hospitals and other specialized agencies and institutions were built and provided professional services for those in need. The family maintained care for elderly people because of the very deeply rooted Confucian ethic of filial piety and the existence of gaps in the new social system as regards taking care of elderly parents.



### **5.3 Chinese Family in History: Universality and Disparity:**

Through taking a historical perspective on the occurrence of developmental trends in the Chinese family it can be seen that the processes of change may not be as simplistic as they may appear. Both the existence of disparities between different social strata or groups and the presence of common characteristics can be found in each sequential historical era. The family system of the past arose not only as a consequence of the prevalence of dominant ideologies, such as the spread of Confucian family ethics and compulsory behavior by-laws and regulations, but also from the practical choices made by people under varying social and economic conditions.

The following explains the interplay of macro and micro factors in the development of the Chinese family in different historical periods and sketches a paradigm for analyzing changes affecting the Chinese family in the modern world.

#### **5.3.1 Analysis of general family patterns**

In the past macro factors, such as economic modes, land ownership, political systems and, in addition, national ideology, have greatly decided the predominant family structure and the main functions the family played. In primitive societies for example, where people still needed to rely on natural resources, survival was the basic motivator for existence, for both individuals and society. In this long period, now known as the Old Stone Age, people lived in social groups. The family had not emerged but marriage had begun to formalize and there was an adequate social cultural foundation which could support a human family. In the Neolithic period however, particularly the later Neolithic stages, due to the development of agriculture and advances in techniques for producing stone and wooden farming tools, an individual family could survive by cooperating in agricultural production, hunting

and gathering. Because agriculture was still undeveloped and insufficient to produce enough food to support people's lives the individual family, as an integrated part of a larger kinship group, relied on extended relationships within its own clan for support and defense.

The early formation of clans in a tribal society stands as witness to the development of more sophisticated social structures and social stratification. While political systems were based on kinship relationships the social status of an individual or family was determined by the distance away from kin relationships with the royals. Therefore families were organized into and belonged to stratified segmented lineages. In addition, as each lineage was not only a group related by blood but also an economic or even political, institution, a family was in the position of depending on a lineage in which the lineage ruler also controlled and ruled their family members. Economically, a family possessed neither private farming implements nor agricultural land for cultivation. It was cooperation within the lineages which insured that individual families did not fall into destitution due to the relatively low productivity of the entire community.

After the Spring and Autumn period individual families were gradually released from large patrilineal kinship groups and formed independent self-sufficient economic units. In particular by Wei and Jin dynasties, due to the establishment of Confucianism as the national ideology, came a long period of wars and division in which mutual support and care between relatives became extremely crucial. The result was to encourage the formation of stem and extended families as the ideal forms and these were promoted by the central government. For instance, in *The Book of Rites* and *The Classic of Filial Piety*, both of which were edited and published in the early days of Western Han, feudal ethics as the basic principles of values had been formed and universally recognized and these emphasized filial piety 孝道 as

the core together with the three cardinal guides and the five constant virtues<sup>16</sup> 三綱五常. From that time forward these gradually became an integrated part of traditional cultural norms, infiltrating into people's daily lives and becoming conventionalized. Alongside this ethical spirit, the government gave tax reductions or exemptions for families of officials who cohabited with their parents, brothers, and children. These two reasons, together with the predominantly agricultural approach to production, were traditionally important for leading the Chinese family system to undergo major changes during this period and were carried on for more than hundreds of years until the late period of Qing.

In summary, in a traditional patriarchal society based on simple divisions of labor, family-based agricultural production fitted economic and social development or, to put it differently, adapted to the social structures and economic foundations appropriate for that time. Under such circumstances a family was an independent social and economic unit contributing to the increase in agricultural productivity and to the maintenance of feudal hierarchy in society. Additionally, because there was little or no social welfare or protection offered for individuals, the family was also a multi-functional social organization whose functions including production, procreation, education, and religion. The family also provided compulsory labor, paid taxes, and performed military services. Among these functions care and support for elderly family members was regarded as important and this notion has had far-reaching effects since that time.

Since the Han dynasty it is evident from historical records that the Chinese family system was formed and shaped by distinctive cultural characteristics which were maintained through each following dynasty. Although certain variations occurred during this process the basic features, or the important structural elements of the

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<sup>16</sup> “The three cardinal guides” 三綱 means rulers guiding their subject, fathers guiding sons, and husbands guiding wives; “the five constant virtues” 五常 include benevolence (humanity), righteousness, propriety, wisdom and fidelity

family system which differentiate it from that of other civilizations, changed very little. Not until the late Qing dynasty did the situation finally begin to change under both internal and external pressures. From the mid-19th century to the socialist revolution there is a copious quantity of literature concerning sequences in the transition of the Chinese family as a result of foreign invasion. Some major factors of social, economic, political, and cultural change can be clearly identified as explanations for a dramatic transition. In addition to political changes in the form of socialist reforms these include the development of productivity, in particular the rapid development of industry and commerce and also cultural factors such as the spread of Western culture and modern values. As a consequence, Chinese families began to undergo further adaptation towards modernization.

Table 5.3 summarizes family evolution and shows the differing socio-economic modes in historical periods.

<b>Socio and Economic Mode</b>	<b>Family structure and function</b> (predominant)	<b>Characteristics</b> (normative)
<b>Primitive Society</b>	Emergence of the family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marriage began to formalize</li> <li>• Adequate social and cultural foundations for the human family</li> </ul>
<b>Clan (tribal) Society</b>	<p><b>Structure:</b> unknown (family reliance on extended relationships within the clan)</p> <p><b>Function:</b> Survival-basis (procreation, protection, cooperative production)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family members cooperate in hunting, gathering and simple agriculture</li> <li>• Reliance for support and defense on extended relationships within clans</li> <li>• Family important for making a significant contribution to the maintenance and survival of the whole society</li> </ul>

<b>Feudal (Fengjian) society</b>	<p><b>Structure:</b> Patrilineal families (complex extended or augmented &amp; stem families)</p> <p><b>Function:</b> Mixed (procreation, ancestor worship, production, education, protection of the young and the old)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family members cooperate in agricultural production with family as the self-sufficient social unit</li> <li>• Patriarchal principles of family organization</li> <li>• Confucian family ideology incorporates filial piety, sex and age hierarchy</li> </ul>
<b>Waged Labor Capitalistic Society</b>	<p><b>Structure:</b> independent families (simpler nuclear families),</p> <p><b>Function:</b> specialized</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Predominance of factory production</li> <li>• Pressure for male breadwinners to earn wages</li> <li>• Small, two generation families</li> </ul>

Table 5.3 Family Evolution in Chinese Society

### 5.3.2 Analysis of differences in the Chinese traditional family

As how the Chinese family emerged and changed over the past thousand years becomes apparent it can be realized that consideration of macro-societal factors alone cannot give a reasonably complete picture of the evolution of the Chinese family throughout history. It is apparent that predominant family forms in different historical periods should be seen rather as the ideal or standardized family model. Reality could not have been so simple. There were dramatic differences between families, especially as society became more stratified and sophisticated. Significantly, macro-societal factors pertain to the explanation of family formation and development generally but fail to interpret the disparities existing between different social strata and groups. As reviewed above, the very different realities of people's political and economic circumstances decided their differing adaptations within their family formation and functions. These disparities become particularly evident as class differences become more strict. Close examination of the Chinese family in ancient history reveals significant patterns pertaining to the interplay of macro and micro forces which affect family development.

There were few differences between individuals in primitive societies because

society produced no surplus. However in the final stages of primitive society, that is in the Neolithic age, improved agricultural production and a surplus of wealth initiated the emergence of social differentiation. The following Xia, Shang, and Zhou dynasties saw the development of sophisticated social ranking as societies experienced many crucial societal and political transformations. As illustrated previously, because of the existence of socially created inequalities, in a feudal hierarchy society those belonging to the upper or ruling classes enjoy prestige and many privileges which distinguish them from members of other social strata. It is not surprising that with inequalities of wealth the social and economic system was based on kinship relationships since an individual's status was ascribed rather than achieved, and power were usually linked to differences in family living. These differences were not only manifested in family structures but also in functions.

Even after the Qin dynasty when kinship relationships were no longer regarded as the basis for distribution of wealth and resources it was the case that under the hierarchical feudal system an individual's social status and the resources each person possessed also differed greatly. In later dynasties, when the class system was not as strictly followed, a hierarchy of social groupings still exercised an influence on how people led their social lives.

It can be noted that since the late Qing dynasty this situation has changed dramatically. The families of aristocrats and landlords fell into decay as their political and economic privileges disappeared with the development of an economy based on commodities, the downfall of the monarchy, and the establishment of a nominal republic. In a series of newly enforced laws and regulations some outdated feudal family practices and ethics have been abandoned while modern values such as individual equality and freedom of marriage have been promulgated. Consequently, to a certain extent, the structural disparities between individuals have been gradually reduced. However this is not to imply that differences between individual families have disappeared. Instead, in some sense, an individual's relatively increased

economic independence and the differing abilities allowing access to social resources make these disparities more complex. Such factors indicate the necessity to examine macro and micro interactions to explain changes in the Chinese family.

### **5.3.3 Implications for the development of the Chinese family in modern times**

As briefly reviewed above, the development of the family is a complex and dynamic process which has incorporated both the impacts of macro-societal development as well as micro personal adaptations to practical socio-economic conditions. From a historical perspective, macro social, economic, political, and cultural developments have played a decisive role in family evolution while individual disparities have increased the complexity and dynamic nature of this change.

In this regard, reviewing evolutions in the Chinese family throughout ancient history contributes to an understanding of how families change over time and helps to provide an alternative comprehensive framework for analyzing the Chinese family in modern times. The developmental course of the Chinese family is unique because the ways in which families change are built on the past and are characterized by strong linkages with Chinese traditional culture and history. Meanwhile, in the face of similar thrusts, Chinese families share not only a number of elements but also many similar societal characteristics as compared with the processes affecting family development in western countries. In this sense, the universality of Chinese family development is that these changes are closely related to the outside world and to the external changes brought about by social, economic, and political developments while the uniqueness of the Chinese family lies in the distinctive historical and cultural contexts from which it has developed. The significance of this fact manifests as follows:

1. The development of the Chinese family depends both on factors internal to the system and external relationships with other systems within the interaction sphere. In this regard the family system in a specific historical stage is compatible with the existing social, economic, political, and cultural structures of that stage, within which they are closely related and interact with each other.
2. While individuals in the same era face a similar thrust, individuals in differing social groups and social strata adapt to the external environment and changes differently, reflecting their great disparities of family formation and lifestyle. Such similarities and differences need to be carefully analyzed by combining both macro socio-economic developments and the micro adaptive strategies that individuals adopt to fit their practical conditions.
3. It is evident that certain administrative or legal actions of governments intervene into the family system to greater or lesser degrees. One good example can be seen in the Confucian filial piety tradition which has influenced the promulgation of national laws and regulations and has had a great influence on the formation and development of family systems.
4. Chinese traditional culture and history has had long-lasting impacts on family formation and development. One of major reasons for analyzing the Chinese family throughout history is that such an analysis makes it possible to understand how the Chinese family has developed as an indigenous and independent process and how this process both resembles and differs from similar processes in Western countries exhibiting distinctive cultural and historical traditions.

In sum, this study proposes the use an analytical framework combining macro- and micro-level analyses to investigate family evolution in China in order to provide more comprehensive views and perspectives for understanding the development of the Chinese family over time. Such an analysis can shift the understanding of change within the Chinese family from a broad picture to an understanding of the more complex issues which focus on specific contexts and individual circumstances that



significantly decided family practices as society developed. However, due to the limited availability of data and also methodological constraints, it has not been possible to give a totally detailed and focused explanation of family development at sequential historical stages. Constraints have included the paucity of textual and inscriptional material available for investigating the strategies people adopted to fit specific social and political conditions. Yet the review and analysis of family evolution across history is still able to provide a historical background for understanding changes of Chinese family. In the succeeding section of the study families in Yunnan, Beijing, and Hong Kong are taken as examples from which to explicate the transformation of Chinese families in modern times, since the interplay of macro and micro factors for family development is analyzed in more detail.

## CHAPTER 6

### PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS: MODERNITY AND FAMILY CHANGES IN A YUNNAN VILLAGE

#### 6.1 Wenlin: a Brief Introduction

Wenlin(文林) is a village located in Jiulong(九龍), a Yi and Miao ethnic minority autonomous town in Luquan(祿勸) county. It is in the vicinity of south Kunming, the capital city of Yunnan province. Geographically, Yunnan is a mountainous province of Southwest China, with the Tropic of Cancer running through its southern part. The town of Jiulong is in the northeast of Luquan county near the northern edge of Kunming. Wenlin is one of 16 villages<sup>17</sup> in Jiulong and lies some 25 kilometers from the seat of urban government.

Topographically, Yunnan province is largely mountainous, with an average elevation of 1980m. The elevation around Wenlin is a little higher, about 2310m, and is truly mountainous. The village has an area of 29.14 square km, of which 3444 mu<sup>18</sup> or 567 acres is given over to cultivated fields, accounting for about 12.7 per cent<sup>19</sup> of the total area. In 2008 the county government specified the population of the village as 2,218 persons. There is, then, a general density of 76 persons per square kilometer and each person owns about 1.55 mu or one-fourth of an acre of cultivated land. Apart from the land available here for cultivation there is about 40,266 mu or 6,633 acres of natural forest, accounting for 92 per cent of the total area. One villager commented “we have more than enough land for every person in village”, suggesting that there is no apparent pressure on the man-land ratio in this region. The weather in

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<sup>17</sup>The data and statistics about Wenlin village quoted in this research come from field investigation unless special explanation is given.

<sup>18</sup> A Mu is a Chinese unit of area (=0.0667 square meter)

<sup>19</sup>An unpublished report from Wenlin Villager Committee, 2008

the village, which is characterized by plateau monsoon climate with annual average temperatures of 15°C and a total annual rainfall of 106 cm, provides good conditions for a multi-crop agricultural economy. There are extensive differences in rainfall and temperature between the dry and the wet seasons and these provide advantages for growing grain and crops such as corn, barley, potatoes, beans and additional cash crops such as tobacco. In consequence, even considering that the birth rate in the village is higher than that of urban areas, the large quantity of land enables greater population growth to be sustained.

Wenlin village is composed by 13 villager groups<sup>20</sup> (units) and includes 532 households. Over 90% of those of working age, about 1491 people, participate in agriculture. The village is an ethnic minority autonomous region with three main ethnic groups: Yi, Miao, and Han. Among them, minority nationalities (Yi and Miao) account for about 67% of the total population. Most of people in the village speak the Yi language. Although some of them can speak a few words of Mandarin communication has been limited to exchanging only the few words that are in common use. Even people from the Han and Miao groups must learn the Yi language to integrate into the village.

Because of the relatively isolated mountainous environment and the use of a minority language inhabitants have limited contact with the outside world. Tradition patterns of life in the village have experienced few outside influences. Connected to the town of Jiulong only by a narrow unsurfaced mountain path, vehicle access to the village is limited. Vehicle transportation is seldom used except to transport bulky cargo such as fertilizer and seeds. People from the village seldom leave unless for important activities, for example going to a market held periodically to buy and sell things.

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<sup>20</sup> The Villager group is the grass-roots organizational pattern in rural areas. it has been given different names in different historical periods. For example, it was called an Agricultural Cooperative (農業生產合作社) before the Land Reform, a Production Team (生產隊) in the period of the People's Commune, and a Villager Group after the economic reform of the 1970s. A Villager Group is composed of several, tens of, or even dozens of family households, depending on the population size of an area.

Villagers would see this as an important event and need days to prepare to go to market. Before 2009 there were no public transportation services between the village and the town center. The nearest public transportation is about 25 kilometers away in the town of Jiulong. It was not until 2009 that a regular bus service connecting surrounding villages began to operate from a station just outside the village. Although there is only one bus daily going between Jiulong town center and the villages this has subjected the villages to many urban influences.

On the whole Wenlin is still an agricultural community characterized by an economy which is highly self-sufficient. However the village has experienced changes under the influence of the rural economic reforms<sup>21</sup> which took place in the late 1970s. In some aspects of life visible traces of urban influence and modernization have a wide-ranging influence on people's socio-economic lives and can be clearly seen. For example, public transportation has been greatly improved. Now twelve out of thirteen villager groups have a daily public transportation service connecting their villages with Jiulong. In the village of Wenlin there is one car, also three agri-transportation trucks, two tractors, and one hundred and ninety-eight motorcycles. The living conditions of villagers have also improved. By the end of 2008 all the villager groups could use electricity and six out of thirteen could use running water. In addition, a telecommunication service is now available for the whole village. Many people have mobile phones, allowing them to keep in close contact with family members, although they still need to visit the town center and go to a China Mobile shop or a Customer Care Center to apply for such services. Television ownership is widespread and most people watch, except in some households where there is financial hardship.

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<sup>21</sup>Here, rural economic reform means de-collectivization of the rural areas, characterized by replacing the system of people's communes to one based on household responsibility.

## **6.2 The Impact of Modernity in the Village**

### **6.2.1 Agricultural economy**

Economically Wenlin village epitomizes a traditional Chinese rural society. The non-farming population forms less than 5% of the total village population. Compared with Luquan county as a whole, which has a non-farming population of about 30.64 per cent, this reflects very low development of commerce and native industry. In Wenlin most people make a living by working in the fields. They raise animals such as cattle, sheep, chickens, pigs and dogs, and plant crops such as corn, potatoes, wheat, barley, and soybeans. Only in recent decades, with support from the local government, have they begun to plant cash crops such as tobacco and walnuts.

The traditional way of farming still remains and there have been no dramatic changes over the past dozens of years. There is a little reservoir in the village that is used to conserve water but for those families that have no running water, roughly 77 percent of all family households, carrying water to irrigate crops is common. Because of geographical conditions and other economic reasons few farmers cultivate by using tractors and other modern agricultural machinery that could raise agricultural production substantially. Most still rely on traditional agricultural techniques and use cattle to plough the fields. Although villagers have learnt to use pesticides and fertilizers the simple basic ways of farming have not fundamentally changed.

Table 6.1 shows the major industries in Wenlin village and the proportion of income which came from these in 2008. In that year the gross income of the whole village was 7.16 million RMB, with an average per capita income of 1,587 RMB. Taking the standard classification of industry into three divisions, agriculture, the primary industry, alone accounted for about 96 per cent of total income going to the local government.

<b>Industry Structure</b>	<b>Income (millions)</b>	<b>Income (percentage)</b>	<b>Remarks</b>
<b>Primary industry</b>			
Crop farming	3.78	53%	including income from cultivation of grain and cash crops
Animal husbandry	2.78	39%	Including 2,087 pigs, 970 beef cattle, 808 sheep and 5,258 chickens sold to market
Forestry industry	0.32	4%	
<b>Secondary and Tertiary Industry</b>	0.28	4%	
<b>Total</b>	7.16	100%	

Table 6.1 Major Industries in Wenlin Village Showing the Proportions of Income in 2008

The life of people in Wenlin village is greatly influenced by the agrarian economy, the underdevelopment of commerce, and isolation from the outside world. People's lives depend on the land because crop farming and animal husbandry are the main economic activities in the village. Under the household responsibility system, which began in the 1980s, land and farm plots have been distributed to each family together with production quota contracts. Family members work together in the fields until they become old and cannot manage their own plots. Normally, after paying taxes to State and local governments to fulfill the contracted quota, farmers are able to keep a sufficient surplus for themselves. Moreover, as a supplementary source of income, people in this village raise pigs, sheep, chickens and other domestic animals such as oxen, buffaloes, and horses. While the pigs and chickens supply villagers with meat the surplus can be sold in the periodic market.

In Wenlin village the family is a self-sufficient unit providing welfare and a variety of forms of support for individuals. Family members serve as the main laborers in agricultural production and make an important contribution to household income. Moreover, in a society where the economy is, to a large extent, self-sufficient most important goods and commodities, such as food, are provided by the family itself. Monetary income is used for other normal living expenses, which may include the

cost of children's education, medical care, and recreation. Consequently family-based agricultural production becomes the primary source of daily living for most people in the village.

### **6.2.2 Division of labor**

The simple modes of production used in Wenlin entail neither specialized labor nor a wide-range of types of cooperation. Therefore the individual family, as a basic unit, is itself a self-sufficient economic unit. Despite certain biological distinctions between men and women, among the Wenlin villagers the division of labor is not based on biological and psychological differences. Instead, it is based on differentiation according to culture and tradition. In Wenlin village there is a very clear division of labor between the sexes. In general, women cook and do laundry and cleaning, while men usually work in the fields. Aside from the few people who take paid jobs in villages or towns, for example, as a school teacher or as a village leader, men usually are the ones who perform physical labor in the field. It is only during busy farming seasons that family members, including wives and children, join together and play an active part in farming.

Compared to their parents, the roles of children are different. Sending children to school is an economic loss for their parents since children could contribute useful labor in the house or on the farm. Also, although village families may be exempt from paying educational fees, the cost of clothing and other provisions makes it difficult for many families to afford to send their children to school. Consequently children, especially girls, usually have few opportunities to attend school. From an early age they need to learn to cut grass, feed the cattle, and gather firewood. When boys grow up, usually around age twelve to fifteen, they begin to participate in farming activities with their fathers, while girls are allocated other duties and remain at home. Generally they work along with their mothers, helping with household

duties such as taking care of the younger children, preparing meals and cleaning the home. However, since the introduction of nine years of compulsory education, the role of children has become rather complex. Young children in the village now have much more education because of the establishment of a primary school in the village and a junior high school in Jiulong, although they also need to take additional responsibilities in the fields or in their homes. A villager told me that there are two children from the village attending the university in Kunming. Dozens of children obtain a certain degree of higher education. As compared with past, these numbers are quite amazing.

The situation of old people in the village is also different from the life of old people in the cities. Because few people undertake paid employment there is no retirement age for either men or women. With the exception of those who are physically dependent people continue to work until very old age. Even when their physical labor begins to decrease they often engage in light jobs such as helping with weeding, or gathering mushrooms and medicinal herbs in the mountains. Zhang Z, for example, was still working in the fields, although he was in his early seventies he was helping with light tasks such as weeding and harvesting crops.

In general, in Wenlin village the division of labor largely depends on the needs of agricultural production since industry and commerce have not as yet developed. In the past very few people were wage laborers employed by businesses or enterprises, or earned salaries from non-agricultural work. Since there is no enterprise in the village the most common paid job is to be hired as a laborer helping with farm work when necessary. During busy farming seasons families having few laborers might hire people to perform the additional physical labor. Such opportunities for agricultural employment are seasonal and provide little reward, since there remains a long slack period of unemployment.

However, as industry has risen in nearby towns and cities simple forms of division of



labor based on agriculture are gradually changing. Development of industry nearby creates a large demand for laborers, thus absorbing the surplus laborers from the village. Consequently some young adults may find short-term jobs in nearby cities when there is less work in the fields. Paid employment, even if from part-time work, enables young people to supply more money to support the family and also gain increased economic independence. In consequence they achieve much greater autonomy as regards family issues, for example, they participate in decisions about many important agricultural events.

Moreover, the development of an administrative system and the establishment of additional social institutions in the village both provide positions offering paid employment. By 2010, eleven people had been elected to be village officials, taking various positions in village governance and helping to manage public affairs such as the distribution of welfare funds to families in need, the allocation of funds to support schools, and other public services. Eight people worked in the elementary school in the village earning a fixed monthly salary.

From the analysis above it is clear that, aside from children and a few people on salary, most people in the village depend on the land and on subsidiary short-term occupations. However, the implementation of compulsory education has raised opportunities for obtaining higher education and remunerative employment. Furthermore, owing to better transportation and the development of industry in nearby towns and cities, more people take part-time jobs in non-busy seasons. As the effects of these processes continue, although agricultural production remains the primary source of income for the majority of people, income from non-agricultural activities is becoming more and more important in household economy. Consequently young people, especially adult males, are both physically and intellectually advantaged, while the circumstances of elderly people have become linked with many social and economic disadvantages.

### **6.2.3 Isolation and low mobility**

The low level of mobility in the village is closely related to the agricultural economy. In Wenling, and other neighboring villages, the surname of most people is “Zhang”, indicating that the village is composed mainly of one lineage which thus accounts for the majority of the village population. There are a few people and a few families having other surnames, such as Chen, Bi, and Liu. Usually these are people coming from surrounding villages who have married local residents in Wenlin.

The low mobility in the village is influenced by the very nature of the farming activities. People cannot leave freely because they cannot entirely control agricultural production. The growth cycle of each crop requires different types of work at different time periods. The farming season at its busiest requires much more labor than in non-busy times which means that the amount of work needed on the land is not fixed but varies according to different crops and their cycle of growth. Farmers, therefore, settle in the same place generation after generation, from birth to death. Most of the generations born in the 1930s and 1940s, now elderly people aged seventy to eighty, have never travelled further than the town of Jiulong. Quite a number have never been to Kunming, not to mention other places outside Yunnan province.

Of course this immobility is not, however, absolute. As China is undergoing a rapid process of modernization, people now have more opportunities to leave for a better job or better educational opportunities. Mobility is increasing with the development of the transportation system and the opportunities for employment provided by industry are also increasing. For example, as settlements are scattered in the mountains and separated by deep valleys, in the past villages were connected only by rough, narrow mountain trails. These trails were unpaved and unsuitable for vehicles. Walking has always been the most common, and for many, the only means of getting around. Owing to difficulties in communication, the underdeveloped transportation

system and the mountainous landscape, people seldom moved from their villages to other places. Village life in these mountains was, and to a certain extent still is, isolated, thus villagers are less affected by modern industrial civilization than are people living in cities. However, a rapid transformation has been taking place over the past decade, brought about by rapid economic and social developments. In particular, because of the introduction of modern vehicles such as motorcycles and trucks and the development of a transportation system, it now takes only about one and half hours from the village to the town center in Jiulong. Now villagers can travel by bus because public transportation services are available in twelve out of the thirteen villager groups.

Industrial development in nearby cities gives rise to a large demand for laborers. As illustrated in the section above, the amount of labor required in farming activities depends on the amount of work at different times of year. Since there is very little work on the farm in non-busy seasons, usually spring and winter, there is a surplus of labor during these periods. Attracted by job opportunities in factories in the nearby towns and cities, short-time employment is becoming more and more common for people from the village. Because of the improved transportation system young male adults find jobs in nearby areas to supplement family income during non-busy periods, leaving their parents at home to take care of grandchildren and do other household work. At the time for transplanting crops, and at harvest time, the busiest periods in farming, they come back and work on the land with other family members.

However a few villagers leave Wenlin and go outside for long periods of time. The majority of emigrants are young male adults still of active working age and children who receive a high school, or higher, education. Their reasons for leaving are the access they can gain to opportunities for jobs or higher education. In 1990 only sixteen people moved out of Wenlin while by 2008 a total of one hundred and fifty-six Wenlin villagers left the village for jobs or education in cities (see Table 6.2), accounting for 7.03% of the total population. Among people who emigrated more

than 90% were still living in Yunnan province while about 5% were living in other provinces.

	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage of total emigrated villagers</b>	<b>Percentage of total Wenlin population</b>
<b>Emigrated villagers in Yunnan province</b>	147	94.23%	6.63%
<b>Emigrated villagers outside Yunnan province</b>	9	5.77%	0.41%
<b>Total</b>	156	100%	7.03%

Table 6.2 Villagers Who Emigrated from Wenlin Village in 2008

Note: These numbers do not include those who taking temporary work in non-busy farming seasons.

In sum, the self-sufficiency of the agricultural economy in Wenlin is close related to the isolation and low mobility characterizing the village. Compared to other rural areas geographically situated near to a city where rural industries are highly developed, the peculiar topography of Wenlin village prevents the influence of modern civilization from spreading easily. Thus the pace of modernization in the village is rather slow when compared to other rural areas. Only in recent years has this situation gradually begun to change. An increasing number of people is being attracted to nearby towns and there is some migration of the population from the village to more developed areas. Although to some extent those migrating form only a small percentage of the village population, in the long run this trend will continue and more and more villagers will leave their homes and move to towns and cities. One of the consequences of this situation is the separation of family members. When an increasing number of people, especially young people, leave to take up work, it is the most vulnerable groups of people, such as children and the elderly, who are left behind.

#### 6.2.4 Social policy related to family in the village

In the 1950s the Chinese government officially promulgated a restricted Hukou system<sup>22</sup>, which divided the entire population into agricultural and non-agricultural households and prohibited free individual migration between rural and urban areas. Before amendments were made in the 1970s, the number of people in rural areas who were allowed to move from a rural to an urban area was tightly controlled. Except for educated people admitted by a college or a university, and those conscripted into the army, individuals in rural areas had few opportunities to go to the cities. Further, villagers came under different welfare services and were subject to different public policies from their counterparts in cities.

In Wenlin, after the 1950s, a series of communist reforms, in particular the Land Reform Movement<sup>23</sup>, the Collectivization of Agriculture<sup>24</sup> and the Marriage Reform<sup>25</sup> took place and brought about drastic changes in the traditional Chinese family system. In the Land Reform Movement, regardless of sex and age, family members were given land on an equal-share basis. Moreover, the personal shares of land could be taken away if a member of either sex chose to live apart from the family. This gave young people and women greater economic independence and higher social status (Yang, 1959). Collectivization of Agriculture changed the economic basis of agricultural production away from the traditional ways of rural areas. Under the communist system all the villagers were grouped into thirteen

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<sup>22</sup>Huko refers to a permanent residence registration system, dated back to ancient China. According to this system, people are divided into rural and urban residents, each with different households. During the 1960s and 1970s, there were strict restrictions on people in rural and urban areas designed to decrease migration from villages to cities.

<sup>23</sup>Land Reform started in the early 1950s after the establishment of the PRC (People's Republic of China). This reform took land from the rich and redistributed it to the poor, greatly changing the structure of landed property from a few people owned much land to every person in the family having similar land ownership.

<sup>24</sup>Collectivization of Agriculture forms part of a series of Collectivization Movements that started after 1949 and aimed to replace family as the basic unit of production. It proposed implementation of collectivization of agriculture in four stages. For more details see, for example, Yang, C.K. (1959). *Chinese Communist Society: The Family and the Village* (pp:154-161). The M.I.T. Press: Cambridge.

<sup>25</sup> The Marriage Reform refers to the promulgation of the New Marriage Law in 1950. For more details see, for example, Meijer, M. J. (1971). *Marriage Law and Policy in the Chinese People's Republic*. Hong Kong University Press: Hong Kong.

production teams. These replaced the family in its roles as the primary organizational unit for production and as the provider of welfare and various forms of support for individuals. With this change the economic function of individual families declined. Individuals were encouraged to rely on production teams for the resources necessary for living rather than on their families (Xu, 2001; Leung, 1996). Under the Marriage Reform not only were family members, especially women, given legally equal property rights to land, but also rights in marital affairs and in inheritance. Also stipulated in the Marriage Law, 1950, and Marriage Registration Regulations in 1955, came rights to free-choice in marriage based on love and mutual respect, equal male-female relationships, and equal rights to initiate a divorce.

However the rural economic reforms begun in 1978 have had a great impact on rural social and economic systems, in particular those concerning family and support at the local level for older people. As rural areas have undergone de-collectivization the people's commune has supplanted the household responsibility system<sup>26</sup>. In the village, farm plots are distributed to each household under the name of the head of the household. Family members work together in the fields until they become so old that they are unable to manage their own plots. Not until this time are the plots of each man and woman divided up and shared among family members, usually their children. Up until 2008 a total of 534 Wenlin households (100%) had participated in this system, managing their own family plots independently through long-term contracts. Normally, after paying taxes to the State and local government in accordance with the quotas contracted, farmers could keep a sufficient surplus for themselves. In this process the family farming system, which had been abandoned in the collectivization of agriculture in the 1950s and 1960s, has been re-introduced by government and the peasant family has, once again, become the primary unit of economic production. Moreover, as a farm plot is not the private property of any

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<sup>26</sup> The Household-responsibility system (also called the contract responsibility system or contractual household output-related responsibility system), was an agricultural practice of the early 1980s. It was characterized by "collective ownership and scattered family management". See for example, Lin, Yifu (1988). The Household Responsibility System in China's Agricultural Reform: A Theoretical and Empirical Study. *Economic Development and Cultural Change*.36 (3)

household, an individual's share can be taken back and redistributed by the village committee. Thus the head of the household, usually an old person, no longer has the right to control distribution of family resources and or influence the inheritance of family land. One important consequence is that the economic foundation of the patriarchal family system in rural areas has been destroyed and relationships among family members become equal (Xu, 2001).

A further two important policy changes which greatly influenced rural families came into effect the 1980s: the birth planning policy (also called the "one-child policy") and compulsory education for nine years. The implementation of the birth control policy has varied from one locale to another (Gu, Wang, & Guo et al, 2007). In Yunnan, under the general guidelines, local government has revised regulations on fertility policy as concerns the number of children allowed and also the criteria for exemptions. In accordance with demographic and socioeconomic conditions, each rural minority couple in border areas is officially permitted to have two children. This policy has resulted in a steadily declining birth rate since its announcement in the early 1980s. Although no county-level data is available to show the exact average number of children per household, provincial-level data indicate a continuous decline in total fertility level, from 3.38 in 1982, 2.42 in 1990, to 2.03 in 2000 (Yunnan Statistics Department, 2001). Women in each family are giving birth to fewer children, thus family structures have been greatly influenced and the size of a typical family household has been reduced.

The Compulsory Education Law of the People's Republic of China promulgated in 1986 requires equal rights and equal opportunities for access to education for school-age children and adolescents. To improve the previously low enrollment rate of school-age children and to promote literacy on a mass scale nine years of primary and secondary education are offered at the county, township and village levels. In the case of Wenlin, two prominent problems confronting the village have been the financial difficulties faced by families and inadequate resources such as lack of

school facilities, equipment and teachers. Moreover, when children reach twelve to fifteen years of age they are already seen as labor for the family farm so that attending school means financial sacrifice. Formerly the village provided only four grades of lower primary schooling. Only well-to-do families could afford to send their children for higher education in a township. The consequence was a high rate of illiteracy and little opportunity to attend school in the village. Since the implementation of the 9-year compulsory education policy this situation has changed greatly. The illiteracy rate has decreased from about 41.8% in 1990 to about 20.6% in 2008, while the percentage of people obtaining secondary education increased from 11.6% to 21.5% (see Table 6.3).

<b>Educational Attainment</b>	<b>Year</b>	
	<b>1990</b>	<b>2008</b>
<b>No Schooling/Illiterate</b>	803 (41.9%)	477 (21.5%)
<b>Primary</b>	891 (46.5%)	1228 (55.4%)
<b>Lower Secondary (Junior High school)</b>	217 (11.3%)	504 (22.7%)
<b>Higher Secondary (Polytechnic School or Senior High School) or above</b>	5 (0.3%)	9 (0.4%)
<b>Total</b>	1916 (100%)	2218 (100%)

Table 6.3 Population by Educational Attainment in Wenlin village, 1990, 2008

Further, after 2006 rural students became exempt from all tuition and miscellaneous fees for the duration of their nine years of compulsory education. Students from poor families could also receive free textbooks and subsidies and this measure has provided substantial financial relief for their families. Improved educational attainment obviously increases opportunities for employment in modern industry through migration from the village to towns or cities. More importantly, by spending a few years in school, young people gain a better chance of entering the outside



world and taking up an occupation other than farming which enables them to become economically independent of their families.

Perhaps the social security system of the village is one of the strongest influences affecting the structure and functioning of rural families. When compared with other rural areas in China the level of social security in most rural areas in Yunnan is still relatively low. The State has provided little for rural families and so they lack social services and have limited welfare protection. Rather the government encourages the individual family to take up responsibility for support of people in their old age, for socialization, and for protection of the young. From the 1950s until the late 1990s, the rural security system covered only those without means for living, ability to work, or other resources to depend on. People in these categories were provided “five guarantees”—support for food, clothing, housing, medical care and funeral expenses. Only three village households qualified under the “five-guarantee” system in 1990. Other villagers were not entitled to protection from any rural welfare system. Families bore the responsibility for providing care and support for vulnerable members.

However with rapid growth in the aging population aging and an increasing awareness of the low level of security in rural areas, from the 2000s onwards the government began to supplement rural families with a series of welfare protection measures and services. These include “cash subsidies for families with only one child or two girls”, “the minimum living standard security system”, “the rural cooperative medical system”, and “the rural old-age insurance system”. In Wenlin village the rural cooperative medical system was established in 2002. It aims to alleviate medical burdens on rural families and address the problem of poverty caused by illness. By 2008 a total 2218 (100%) villagers participated in this system. Seventy-six people were by then covered by the minimum living standard security

system and were receiving public assistance every month. The old-age insurance system is still in the trial phase. But since 2007 there has been one type of allowance for elderly people, every villager aged eighty years or above receives 300 Yuan per year from the local government. Additionally, an individual who left village as a young man and became successful in Kunming makes a yearly private contribution through which each person aged over seventy is given an additional 200 Yuan per year, and two bags of rice at the Chinese New Year.

In sum, policy changes in the rural areas are having major impacts on the social and economic situation of family members, thus changing relationships among family members as well as their family lives. Since the 1950s, by introducing collectivization activities, the government has tried intervening in family affairs and replaced some major family functions by those of the people's commune. It has also introduced modern ideas concerning marriage, gender equality, and family relationships. After rural economic reforms in the 1980s, economic and social functions of the family in rural areas were reinforced and, for most families, the demands of household-based agricultural production came to require cooperation among family members which helps strengthen family solidarity. In addition to the lack of social and welfare protection services, family and kin relationships still bear primary responsibility for supporting family members, in particular the old and young. But in recent years, faced by population pressures, a rapidly aging population, and migration from rural to urban areas, government has again taken up part of the functions once performed by rural families. Policy changes are again greatly affecting both the structure and functions of the family.

## 6.3 The Changing Family Structure and Support of Elderly in

### Wenlin Village

Over the past two decades, two general trends in family formation are apparent: an increasing number of nuclear families since the 1980s and the stabilization of stem families. According to the 2008 official records, the 2,218 villagers of Wenlin live in 532 separate households. The average family size is about 4.2 persons, excluding long-term emigrants who come back to the village occasionally. Since, in 1990, the average family size was 5.0 persons this number shows a trend towards reduction of family size over the past decade. However, the actual number of persons in each family varies. Some families have more children and when several generations live under one roof the size of the family may extend to include more than ten people. Other families may have only one or two members. Analysis of family structure provides more useful clues to family size.

Figure 6.1 displays data for analyzing family composition in Wenlin collected at random from 125 families. Together with field observation this throws some light on the actual state of family formation in the village.

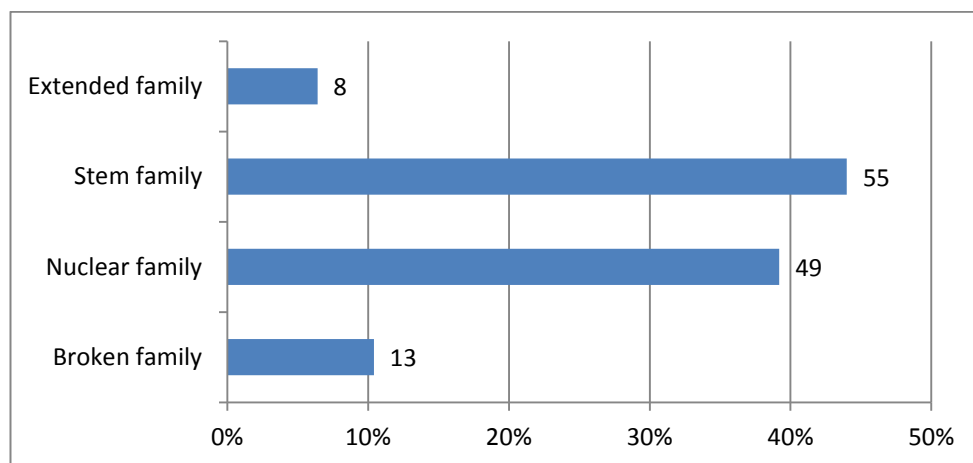


Figure 6.1 Number of Broken, Nuclear, Stem, and Extended Families as a Percent of A Random Sampling from 125 Families in Wenlin Village, 2010

The data collected show that the majority of families in the village are of stem type, followed by nuclear families. The former account for nearly 45% of all family households whereas the latter account for a further 39%. The two types together make up about 83% or over four-fifths of all families in the village. In contrast, extended family, usually referred to as “large family” in Chinese, and broken family types, all families other than nuclear, stem, and extended types, are quite rare in the village, accounting for only about 15%.

Despite statistical analysis showing certain change in family formation, other crucial facts have to be considered. As rural societies experience rapid change and integrate into urban industrial patterns, this causes corresponding changes in the possibilities for organizing a family. Compared with the past, there are greater disparities among villagers, thus influencing their differential family strategies of elderly care. Change in family forms is creating concerns about whether reductions in family size and structure undermine traditional support for elderly family members. For example, in families where certain adults have left the village to live in towns or cities, do other family members provide assistance for their older parents? Do traditional thoughts of filial piety still influence people’s family value thus affecting their behaviors? In answering these questions, the changing support for elderly people in the village should be examined.

#### The changing function of the family in Wenlin village: support for elderly people

Over the past few decades, because of an undeveloped social security system and under the influence of Confucian ideology as regards filial piety, Wenlin village has maintained traditional modes of support for elderly people. The obligation to care is described in the saying “Yang er fang lao” 養兒防老, implying people raise children in order to have support in old age. From the perspective of children, caring for elderly parents is regarded as a moral obligation. For their elderly parents, on the other side, to be dependent on children is seen more as a symbol of prestige and respect rather than a burden to the family. Most families with elderly parents have at

least one adult child living with them providing daily assistance, financial support, and emotional care. An old woman, Mrs. Bi, said:

[Case YNE04] “Taking care for the aged is our tradition. In the village, the people who don’t respect and take care of their parents will be looked down upon and regarded as contemptible. If somebody doesn’t follow the rule, I will intervene and educate him/her.”

Traditionally there were different roles for children to take when caring for the aged. In Wenlin village, support by sons operates within clearly defined areas of responsibility and divisions of labor. The support sons gave their parents could, in general, be divided into three categories: providing practical and emotional support, giving financial assistance, and supplying food and other daily necessities. The customary practice was for the youngest son to live with the parents, helping cultivate land and supplying grain and other domestic materials. Other sons paid regular visits and provided daily assistance when there was a need. If it was an extended household care responsibilities were shared among sons and daughter-in-laws. In comparison with sons, the usual function of daughters was to serve as an alternative source of support. Because daughters held no fixed responsibilities regarding either the type or amount of support given, their role was rather ambiguous and on a voluntary basis. The most common type of support they performed was to provide economic assistance and pay regular visits. Mrs. Zhang H recalled:

[Case YNE07] “In the past there were many children who could provide help. But the economic situation at that time was not good. My mother was cared for by my older brother, and my younger brother lived with my father. I wanted to give them some help but I myself had difficulties in supporting my own family.”

Under the collective economy system provision of support was strongly related to the needs of elderly parents. For example, when old people were still in good physical condition and able to live independently they might still participate in agricultural

production and earn work points<sup>27</sup> in the production team. Usually their children did not need to give such parents instrumental support but might provide financial assistance to help meet various expenses such as living expenses and the cost of taking part in activities, i.e. celebrations of birth and marriage. However, when parental physical capability began to decline, increased physical help from children was needed. In particular, adult sons were responsible for providing them with practical support, financial assistance, and food supplies as the old people became too weak to perform agricultural labor.

Recent social changes in rural society, however, especially those involving economic reform and changes in living arrangements, exert posited influences on family organization. On the one hand, provision of care for the aged is still believed to be a heartfelt behavior rather than enforced obedience; on the other hand, corresponding changes in care patterns for elderly parents can be clearly seen. Two villagers recalled,

[Case YNA01] “When I was still a little child, my parents educated me and raised me up. Now they are old, and it’s time for me to take care of them. I have nothing to return for their care and upbringing but to provide support for them in their old age”

[Case YNE08] “There is no difference in our heart (as regards taking care of elderly people). It’s just because the situation and conditions have changed. In the past, our parents were primarily cared for by our two brothers... we lived together and never divided. Now, I live with my daughter...she takes care of me and I help her to bring up my grandchild.”

There are two tendencies toward change in the ways through which family members take care of the elderly. Firstly, the traditional village way of supporting people in old age, which formerly followed strict traditional rules and customs, has been replaced by a complex of possibilities. The type and the amount of support from sons and daughters depend not only upon prescribed roles but also upon individual conditions.

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<sup>27</sup>Under the rural collective economy system, work points were the measurements of labor contributions from peasants in production teams. These were usually graded according to the labor capacity of villagers.

For example, growth of a wide range of wage labor and migratory employment opportunities available for young adults has brought about much greater diversity among different families. In some families the geographical distribution of family members has reduced the ability of children to provide their parents with daily help. Instead, immigrant children are more likely to give monetary assistance and let other family members undertake personal care.

[Case YNA09] Mr. Chen L, the only son in the family, described the support he and his sister had arranged. He recalled: "Last year I left Zhejiang province. I wanted to see the outside world in the years while my parents are still healthy and can care for themselves...I send money back to my parents while my sister provides daily care for them. Of course I will go back and be a good son when they become weak."

[Case YNA05] Mr. Zhang J is the oldest son in the family. As his younger brother has gone to a city he lives with their parents. He said: "My parents are too old to do the hard work. I cultivate their lands and am responsible for their eating, clothing and other daily expenses. My brother often comes back, bringing money and some healthy products for them. To care for my parents, we all have responsibilities."

A second tendency observed since the onset of economic reform is that increasingly household economy has come to depend on non-agricultural activities to supplement family income, thus affecting generational relationships. Those adult children who take on wage labor and earn more money than their parents increase their social and economic independence. In consequence they are more likely to provide monetary assistance for their parents rather than direct care. However, the independence of children does not mean that the young become givers while the old are receivers. Elderly parents also support their children. For example, even in old age some elderly people still help with light work such as cooking, laundry, and caring for grandchildren.

[Case YNE01] Mr. Zhang Z said: "I live with my youngest son's family. He went away for jobs, leaving my daughter-in-law to take care of me. My son is filial. He often calls us and sends remittances. Besides, he comes back twice every year."

Obviously, in Wenlin village the value of filial responsibility towards elderly parents

is still maintained although in some instances the care provisions do not strictly follow the old patterns. As economic aid villagers are more likely to give their parents material assistance such as daily expenses, clothing, and food rather than money. As daily practice, living with parents and providing them with instrumental care and emotional support prevails. However, as has been mentioned, types of care and support arrangements are influenced by individual-level factors. For example, in some families sending remittances to parents has become an alternative way of making up for the unavailability of daily care support. In some instances the role of daughters in providing support for their parents is increasingly important and recognized as indispensable.



## CHAPTER 7

### PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS: MODERNITY AND

### FAMILY CHANGES IN BEIJING

#### 7.1 Beijing: a Brief Introduction

Beijing, the capital of China, is on the edge of the North China Plain, with Tianjin municipality on its south and Hebei province to the north. To the northeast are the Jundu Mountains, part of the Yanshan Mountain range, and to the west, the long and winding Taihang Mountain range forms a strip of land bordering the vast Mongolian plateau. The coast of the Gulf of Bohai, just 113 kilometers to the southeast, is called “Beijing Gulf” because its vicinity to Beijing. In Chinese *Fengshui*<sup>28</sup>, the geographic position of Beijing with the sea on one side and the mountains in the background, is believed to symbolize auspiciousness and good fortune. This advantageous geographical location not only created Beijing as an historical site for militarily strategic reasons but also destined the area as the capital for several dynasties reaching back more than 800 years.

Because of its location (39°54'50"N, 116°23'30"E), Beijing has a continental monsoon climate with four distinct seasons. Winters are often cold and dry while summers are always hot and humid. Spring and autumn are the best seasons of the year but they are quite short, lasting no more than two months. With an average temperature of approximately 10-12 degrees and an annual precipitation of about 644 millimeters, Beijing is a favorable place for human habitation. Records have shown that as early as about half a million years ago “Peking Man” came to live in this area,

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<sup>28</sup> Fengshui (literally translated in English as “wind-water”) is an ancient Chinese system of aesthetics, a belief that there is a kind of relationship between the universe and the people. The location of a place or a building is understood to have an influence on the people’s fortune.

leaving behind in history much important evidence.

As an ancient city, with a history extending over more than 3,000 years, Beijing has been the nation's political, educational and cultural center for centuries. It has the vast administrative apparatus for central government, lots of research institutions and universities, and also historical and cultural sites. With its great importance in the nation's culture and politics it is a place which attracts people from other provinces. Today Beijing has an area of 16,807 square kilometers, with a population of over 22 million people<sup>29</sup> and is one of the most densely populated parts of China. As a centrally administered municipality of China it has sixteen administrative districts and two counties, with two hundred and eighty-nine towns and villages in the township level.

As international business and exchange grew Beijing came to serve as a transit point for communication between China and foreign countries. Within China it has become a transportation hub with five ring roads encircling the city, nine expressways, and also city express routes, several railway routes, and an international airport. The public transportation system is elaborate. There are nearly seven hundred bus routes, and eight railways serving one hundred and twenty-three stations. At first glance the Beijing of today looks similar to many other modern cities but it still retains special features.

## **7.2 The Impact of Modernity on Beijing**

### **7.2.1 The development of industrialization**

As compared with many western cities when developing industrialization Beijing

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<sup>29</sup> National Population and Family Planning Commission of China. (2 March 2010). Beijing's Population Exceeds 22 Million". Retrieved from <http://www.npfpc.gov.cn/en/detail.aspx?articleid=100302125224937535>.

experienced a different path. Several field investigations indicate that industrial sectors were insignificant for the entire economy prior to 1949. For example, in Republican Beijing Dong (2003) cited a social survey conducted by Sidney Gamble. The survey had been undertaken in 1919 and in it Gamble stated: “Peking has little industry that is efficient and on a modern basis...The principle examples of modern industry are the telephone company, the electric light company, the water company, a match factory, a glass factory and a government uniform factory.” (Gamble, 1921; 219) Instead, the predominant mode of production in the city was production of handicrafts. Most daily necessities, including books, leather, clothes, shoes, soap, matches, paper, and rubber, were either imported from Britain and Japan or were created in small-scale workshops using old methods of handicraft production. Dong (2003:105), in her study of Beijing, described an example of the local production of knitted socks in the city in the early 1930s. She noted “numerous families made socks with one or two simple machines at home, usually without the tax man’s knowledge.....The sock knitters sold their homemade products at temple fairs, outdoor markets, and street stalls”.

From the descriptions above it is obvious that until the 1930s Beijing’s economy was mainly based on agriculture and handicraft production. It was a pre-industrial society, more like a market for trade. Production chains carried imported goods and other products at that time, but Beijing did not serve as a center for industrial production, despite the many small producers of certain low-end necessities. In the succeeding years Beijing experienced eight years of Japanese occupation and more than three years of civil war. The city’s economy deteriorated. Not until 1949, the year in which the Communists took control of China, was peace finally restored in the city. According to a government report from 1949, the year of formation for the People’s Republic of China, there were one hundred and forty state-owned enterprises, eighteen collectively owned enterprises, and many private handicraft industries in Beijing. Although the total number of businesses had grown to 13,268, few of these employed more than 10,000 workers and these together accounted for 5% of

Beijing's total population (Wu, 1988: 39). Agriculture and small-scale handicraft industries still played an important role in the whole economy.

The period between 1949 to the late 1970s was the time when modern industrial economy began to be integrated into Beijing. This period saw a rapid growth in the proportion of industry within the whole economy which in form followed the Soviet Russian model in placing at first primary emphasis on the development of heavy industry, and only later light industry. When China's economic reforms began in 1979 secondary industry had already come to account for over 60 % of Beijing's GDP, peaking in 1978, although during that time per capita GDP was less than 800 USD (Beijing Municipal Bureau of Statistics, 2009). This high proportion began to decline when China changed strategies and began to encourage both heavy and light industry to place a greater emphasis on domestic capital, in particular high-tech manufacturing industries and service sectors. Accompanying this process, after a certain falling off in 1988, there has been some degree of growth in agriculture.

Based on the principles of a centrally planned economy, rapid industrial growth in this period related closely to high levels of saving and an increasing proportion of investment in fixed assets, in particular in productive capital. In turn, personal consumption was artificially depressed and the living standard of workers was quite low. Although there had been a degree of increase in average income many families needed to rely on official subsidy of basic consumption items to sustain a basic level of living. A large proportion of family income was spent on daily necessities such as clothing, food, fuel, and lighting. In addition several large scale intensive political movements such as the Great Leap Forward of 1958-1960 and the Cultural Revolution of 1966-1976 brought about economic recession resulting in little improvement in people's lives.

The period after the 1978 economic reform saw rapid development in industrialization and an adjustment in the structure of industry. Tertiary sectors

including commerce, restaurants, finance and services began to increase while manufacturing sectors shrank because of the relocation of labor-intensive industrial activity to other areas. The acceleration of tertiary industry began in the 1990s, growing from 38.8 % of GDP in 1990 to nearly 50% in 1995 and to over 50% for the first time in 2000. During this period both secondary and tertiary industry became important sectors for the total economy. However from the early 21th century, although manufacturing kept its place as an important driver of Beijing’s economy, the city rapidly shifted to an orientation towards services. The GDP share from tertiary industry increased dramatically from 54.6% in 2000 to 66.6 % in 2005 and finally surpassed 70% in 2006. Meanwhile primary and secondary industry declined continuously from 8.8% and 52.4% in 1990 to only 1.1% and 25.7 % in 2008 (see Figure 7.1). Rapid economic growth also accompanied this tremendous change in production structure. By the 1990s Beijing’s GDP and GDP per capita had experienced sustained rapid growth from only 50 billion RMB and 4635 RMB in 1990 to about 1.1 trillion RMB and 63,029 RMB in 2008, (see Figure 7.2).

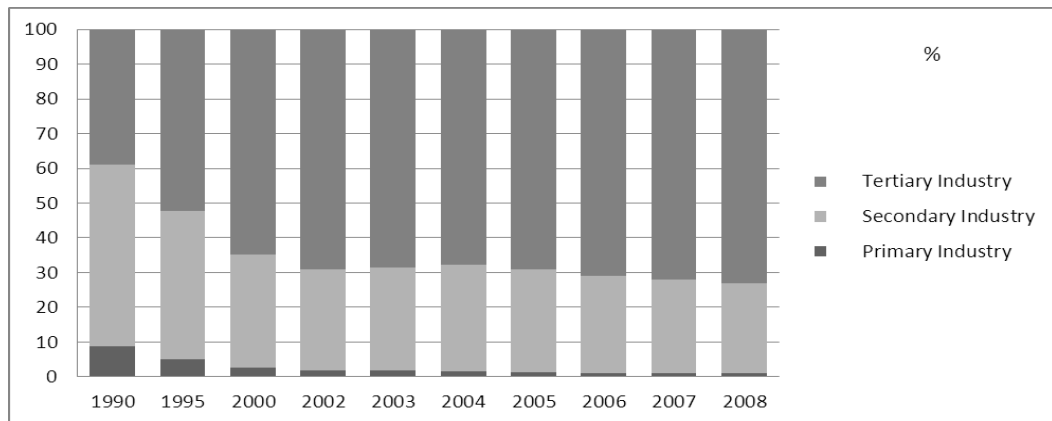


Figure 7.1 Gross Domestic Product by Broad Economic Sector in Beijing between 1990 and 2008

Source: Beijing Municipal Bureau of Statistics (2009). *Beijing Yearbook 2009*. Beijing: China Statistics Press.

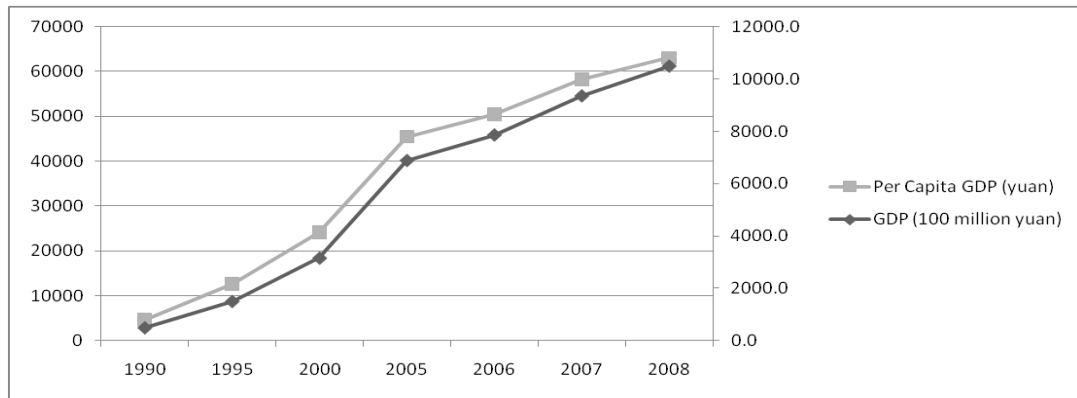


Figure 7.2 Gross Domestic Product and Per Capita Gross Domestic Product in Beijing by Broad Economic Sector From 1990 To 2008

Source: Beijing Municipal Bureau of Statistics (2009). *Beijing Yearbook 2009*. Beijing: China

Note: Figures display value terms for GDP at current prices, while growth rates show comparable prices.

At the present time, tertiary industry, especially the service sectors, contributes a significantly large share towards Beijing's economy while agriculture and secondary industry have become less significant. Beijing is increasingly becoming known for its high-tech and creative enterprises. Absorption of new technologies and advanced communication systems generate a great demand for highly skilled, knowledge workers and offer many more jobs appropriate for a middle class. The supply and quality of human capital has overtaken physical capital as the principal driver of economic growth in the city.

The path to development which Beijing experienced through industrialization can be clearly seen in these macro-economic data:

1. Agriculture and handicrafts were the main industries before the 1940s, the period of low industrial development. The secondary sectors, manufacturing and construction, accounted for a certain proportion of GDP but were insignificant in the total economy.
2. Rapid development of industrialization took place between the 1950s and the late 1980s as a result of central planning and administrative interventions. The processes of development since 1949 changed Beijing's economy from one built largely on agriculture and handicrafts to one based predominantly on secondary

industry (accounting for over 60% of GDP) , especially heavy industry.

3. There has been an increase in tertiary industry with a decline in primary and secondary industry from the early 1990s until the present time. This current period is characterized by greater structural balance in the economy with rapid growth in service sectors, high-tech (especially electronics), and financial industries. In consequence the composition of the economy has undergone a further major structural transformation in which tertiary industry has replaced secondary industry as the greatest contributor to GDP.

### **7.2.2 Wage labor and employment changes**

Wage labor, an important element in capitalism, represents a process of historical development accompanying industrialization. As described in the proceeding paragraphs in this Chapter agriculture and handicraft production were the pillars of Beijing's economy in the early 20th century. As there was little modern industry there was very little employment in factories and other public institutions. A 1930s workers' union survey listed the number of workers employed in modern industries such as the electric company, a match factory, the water company, and the printing industry. Also included were people who worked in modern communications and the transportation industry. Added together the figure came to fewer than 9,000. Since the population at that time was about one million persons such workers accounted for less than 0.9% of the total population in Beijing (Yu, 1930: 125).

In addition to the few workers employed by modern factories many people in the city were handicraft producers, making daily necessities and a few specialty products at home. Quite a few people made their living in such businesses and other kinds of institutions because commerce and credit systems were still underdeveloped. Most people in the suburbs and rural counties played a part in agriculture by supplying grains, vegetables, and other agricultural products for the urban population. In 1949

more than 60% of the population in Beijing was still reliant on agriculture and handicraft production (Wu, 1988).

However since the late 1940s, when the city transformed an economy largely based on agriculture and handicraft production to one more reliant on the manufacturing industry, and later still on business and service sectors, a more complex division of labor came into being and in this wage-labor became the major form of activity. In 1949 Beijing provided work for a total of 433,399 people. From 1949 to 1957, as industry developed, a tremendous effort was made to revive the economy and the total number employed in the city increased two-fold, a net increase of 778,388 jobs. Most of the increase through newly created jobs came from industrial sectors which added about 204,662 jobs. Together with the construction sector, which added about 156,914 jobs, the two sectors accounted for about 50% of all additional work. Culture and education added a further 15% to total employment figures. The overall contribution of the newly active sectors represented about 65% of the jobs added in Beijing (Sit, 1995).

Yet through much of the 1960s and 1970s there were fewer spectacular increases in employment because of the influence from several political movements such as the “Shang shan xia xiang” movement<sup>30</sup> of the 1960s Cultural Revolution which was active between 1966 and 1976. After 1960 members of the recruitment force of new workers, those who had once migrated to Beijing to meet the great demands for labor, were sent back to their home villages because of collapse within the Great Leap Forward Movement and stringent controls imposed on migration. During the Cultural Revolution employment was almost suspended for ten years in institutions concerned with Research and Development, Culture, and Education. Hundreds of thousands of the urban population, such as cadres, professionals, and students, were sent to the countryside. According to Sit’s (1995) study total employment in Beijing grew only

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<sup>30</sup> Shang shan Xia xiang, literally, going to the mountainous areas and the countryside, was a political movement that required educated urban young people to work in the countryside and rural areas.



by 35% during this period and about 90% of this growth was concentrated in industry.

An upsurge in economic development and industrial reconstruction after 1978 led to transformations in the structure of employment. There began to be increases in employment in service sectors, the high-tech industry, finance, and insurance. Tertiary industry was beginning to play an important part in supporting the large urban population. As the result of a drastic reduction in the share of state-owned enterprises and an increase in competition, together with non-public sectors of the economy flexible small and medium-sized enterprises came to be the main channels for growth in employment. Modern manufacturing industry was still one of the principle drivers in Beijing's economy and provided the greatest opportunities for employment although the industrial share in GDP declined through the late 1980s. As can be seen in Table 7.1, in 1978 28.3% of people were employed by primary industry, 40.1% in secondary industries, and 31.6% in tertiary industries. By 1989 the percentages changed to 15.3%, 44.9%, and 39.8% respectively.

Year	Employed Persons (10000 persons)			Composition (%)		
	Primary Industry	Secondary Industry	Tertiary Industry	Primary Industry	Secondary Industry	Tertiary Industry
1978	125.9	177.9	140.3	28.3	40.1	31.6
1979	121.4	195.2	153.9	25.8	41.5	32.7
1980	118.0	207.3	158.9	24.4	42.8	32.8
1981	117.2	220.4	174.1	22.9	43.1	34.0
1982	115.1	228.6	191.5	21.5	42.7	35.8
1983	117.1	240.2	194.7	21.2	43.5	35.3
1984	111.3	247.9	197.0	20.0	44.6	35.4
1985	100.6	260.4	205.5	17.7	46.0	36.3
1986	96.1	262.7	213.9	16.8	45.9	37.3
1987	92.3	264.1	223.8	15.9	45.5	38.6
1988	88.4	267.6	228.1	15.1	45.8	39.1
1989	91.0	266.3	236.6	15.3	44.9	39.8

Table 7.1 People Employed in Three Industries in Beijing and Their Respective Percentages between 1978 and 1989.

Source: Calculated from Beijing Municipal Bureau of Statistics. (2009). *Beijing Statistical Yearbook 2009*. Beijing: China Statistics Press

From at least the late 20th century onwards the contribution industry made to the economy began to shrink while that of services began to expand, thus leading to another round of transition in patterns of employment in Beijing. In 1991, 14.3% of people were engaged in primary industry as compared with 44.1% in secondary and 41.6% in tertiary industries. As a result of governmental effort to promote new high-tech activities and services in the late 1980s and early 1990s the share of employment in tertiary sectors increased significantly while the contribution from secondary industry showed a continuous decline in both contribution towards the GDP and employment. In 1991 nearly 45% of total employment came from manufacturing industries. In 2008 this figure had fallen to 22%. In contrast, the percentage of employment in tertiary industry saw a dramatic increase rising from 41.6% in 1991 to 72.4% in 2008 (see Figure 7.3).

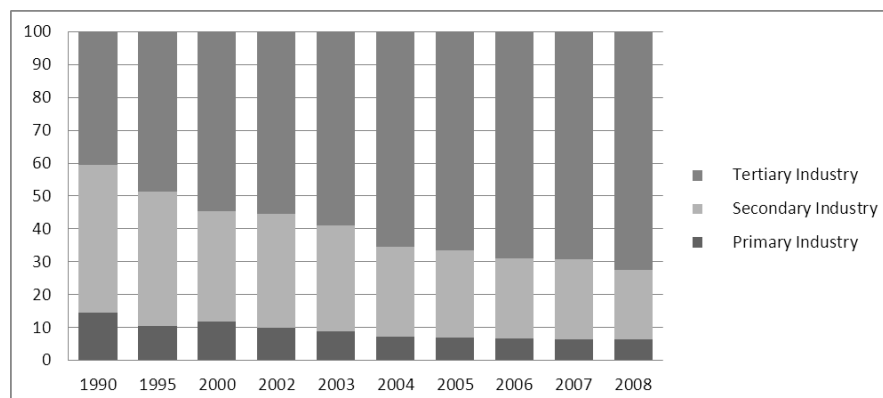


Figure 7.3 Employment by Broad Economic Sector in Beijing from 1990 to 2008

Source: Calculated from Beijing Municipal Bureau of Statistics. (2009). *Beijing Statistical Yearbook 2009*. Beijing: China Statistics Press

The expansion of financial and business services and an emphasis on the development of high-tech industries resulted in greater specialization in employment. In 1993 the three broad economic sectors were made up of just sixteen subsectors. In 2008, with subsequent modifications and extensions, the number of subsectors had grown to twenty (see Table 7.2). The new economic subsectors added included “information transmission, computer services and software” and accounted for 6% of total employment. Several service subsectors, such as social services and also

Economic Subsectors	1993		Economic Subsectors	2008	
	Employees (persons)	Employees (%)		Employees (persons)	Employees (%)
1 Farming,Forestry,AnimalHusban dry and Fishery	659676	10.51	1 Farming,Forestry,Animal,Husban dry and Fishery	25171	0.50
2 Mining	46310	0.74	2 Mining	45389	0.89
3 Manufacturing	1937987	30.87	3 Manufacturing	921572	18.13
4 Production and Distribution of Electricity, Gas and Water	46745	0.74	4 Production and Distribution of Electricity, Gas and Water	65057	1.28
5 Construction	765004	12.19	5 Construction	282387	5.56
6 Management of Water Conservancy	39490	0.63	6 Transport,Storage and Post Information	423825	8.34
7 Transport,Storage and Post	242213	3.86	7 Transmission,Computer Services and Software	315794	6.21
8 Wholesale, Retail Trade, and Catering Services	657813	10.48	8 Wholesale and Retail Trade	400239	7.87
9 Finance and Insurance	53217	0.85	9 Hotel and Restaurants	229111	4.51
10 Real Estate	52454	0.84	10 Financial Intermediation	156445	3.08
11 Social Services	437122	6.96	11 Real Estate	252536	4.97
12 Health, Sports, and Social Welfare	131664	2.10	12 Leasing and Business Services	525943	10.35
13 Education,Culture, and Entertainment	423668	6.75	13 Scientific Research,Technical Services and Geologic Prospecting	342207	6.73
14 Scientific Research and Technical services	335965	5.35	14 Management of Water Conservanc,Environment and Public Facilities	75848	1.49
15 Government Agencies and Social Organization	331681	5.28	15 Services to Households and Other Services	60909	1.20
16 Others	116483	1.86	16 Education	351005	6.91
Total	6277532	100.00	17 Health,Social Securities and Social Welfare	171303	3.37
			18 Culture,Sports and Entertainment	131271	2.58
			19 Public Management and Social Organization	307155	6.04
			20 International Organization		0.00
			Total	5083167	100.00

Table 7.2 Economic Subsectors and Their Share of Employment in Beijing, 1993 and 2008

Source: Beijing Municipal Bureau of Statistics. (1994). *Beijing Statistical Yearbook 1994*. Beijing: China Statistics Press; Beijing Municipal Bureau of Statistics. (2009). *Beijing Statistical Yearbook 2009*. Beijing: China Statistics Press

wholesale and retail trade, were further subdivided into different categories. From detailed statistical information concerning the past decade two major changes emerge: heavy and light industries, in particular manufacturing and construction, have lost their former share in the economy while other service subsectors, including leasing and business services, transportation, storage and post, finance, insurance, real estate, leasing and business services, have increased in prominence. Employment, formerly largely comprised by the work of unskilled or semiskilled workers in secondary industry, became more diversified.

### **7.2.3 Urbanization and mobility**

As reflected in the history of other developed cities, industrialization is a basic drive causing urbanization and is accompanied by industrialization processes. Beijing forms no exception to this observation. Improved facilities for transportation allow commuting to work which reduces time and financial expense while creating opportunities for jobs, education, and housing. Increasingly populations from outside are attracted to Beijing leading to rapid urbanization and high mobility levels.

While few documents are available which show in detail the composition and mobility of the Beijing population before the 1940s it is clear that it was greatly influenced by continuous wars and disorganization. When Beijing became the national capital in 1949 it had a territory of only 707 square meters with a total permanent population of 4.14 million. Rural residents made up almost 60% of the total population, that is about 2.38 million, (see Table 7.3). In addition immigration from nearby provinces was increasing annually as Beijing gradually transformed from a consumer city to one that produced and exported goods and some low-end daily necessities such as handicrafts. According to a report from 1936, local residents accounted for only 42.5% of the total population while immigrants from thirty other provinces accounted for the remaining 57.5% (Li, 1987: 54).

The First Five Year Plan covered between 1949 and 1958 saw a great increase in total population, especially additions to the urban population, together with a substantial expansion of territory. During this period there was a great increase in manufacturing and heavy industry in the new capital, especially in production of iron and steel. There was an aim to transform Beijing from a city based on consumption to a center of production and this generated large opportunities for employment in new factories and state-owned enterprises. The new jobs were filled mainly by people coming from the countryside and nearby provinces and thus the urbanization rate accelerated continuously. To facilitate the development of industry and the consequent heavy concentration of people, the entire municipality grew to 16,800 sq. km, extending over huge areas of land mainly in Hebei and Tianjin provinces (Sit, 1995). Yet the time in which the Great Leap Forward collapsed, 1958-1960, and the subsequent period of retrenchment that started in 1960, and even later the Cultural Revolution of 1966-1976, together led to a distortion in the economy of the city. In the time of the “Shang Shan Xia Xiang” movement a large number of urban young people were sent to the countryside. Three years of natural disasters followed between 1959 and 1961 which caused a great famine with high rates of death and brought about a dramatic decline in population growth. Thus the process of urbanization almost stagnated.

Economic recovery began after 1977, the year following the end of the Cultural Revolution. Those born in the 1960s’ baby boom gradually entered the labor force to the accompaniment of rapid development in the manufacturing sector. This circumstance led to a second round of urbanization. Rapid development in the secondary and tertiary industries generated millions of new jobs in urban areas with such growth creating ever higher demands for work. Large numbers of people with expertise were selected and recruited from the suburbs and other provinces by central and municipal government offices, also research and higher educational institutions. However before 1978 the strict rural-urban household registration system was still in

Year	Permanent population (10000 persons)	Urban population (10000 persons)	Rural population (10000 persons)	Urban population %	Rural population %	Added total population (10000 persons)	Added urban population (10000 persons)	Added rural population (10000 persons)
1949	414	175.95	238.05	42.5	57.5	88.4	60.68	27.72
1953	502.4	236.63	265.77	47.1	52.9	129.4	113.39	16.01
1958	631.8	350.02	281.78	55.4	44.6	115.6	82.73	32.87
1963	747.4	432.74	314.66	57.9	42.1	22.7	0.82	21.88
1966	770.1	433.57	336.53	56.3	43.7	12.4	-22.75	35.15
1971	782.5	410.81	371.69	52.5	47.5	46.06	36.61	9.45
1976	828.56	447.42	381.14	54	46	72.24	75.04	-2.80
1981	900.8	522.46	378.34	58	42	70.4	64.14	6.26
1986	971.2	586.60	384.60	60.4	39.6	122.8	221.42	-98.62
1991	1094	808.03	285.97	73.86	26.14	165.4	149.87	15.53
1996	1259.4	957.90	301.50	76.06	23.94	104.2	99.44	4.76
2000	1363.6	1057.34	306.26	77.54	22.46	174.4	228.74	-54.34
2005	1538	1286.08	251.92	83.62	16.38	157	152.98	4.02
2008	1695	1439.06	255.95	84.9	15.1			

Table 7.3. Basic population statistics by residence in Beijing for important years between 1949-2008

Source: Data for 1949-1986 come from Beijing Municipal Bureau of Statistics. (1992). *Beijing Statistical Yearbook 1992*. Beijing: China Statistics Press; data for 1991-2008 from Beijing Municipal Bureau of Statistics. (2009). *Beijing Statistical Yearbook 2009*. Beijing: China Statistics Press.

effect and migration between rural and urban was under strict central control. Table 7.3 shows that the movement of people from rural to urban areas in Beijing increased steadily with the urban proportion of the population increasing from 54% in 1976 to 58% in 1981.

Rapid urbanization began from the mid-1980s with a general shift from secondary to tertiary activities and arose as a response to the economic reforms and policy changes geared towards an increasing emphasis on the role of the market. This period was characterized by dynamic economic growth which first led to changes in the characteristic shape of industry and, as a result of such change, led to increased personal freedom of movement. In 1991 the permanent population in Beijing amounted to a total of 10.94 million persons of whom the urban population accounted for more than 70%. In 2008 the number had grown to almost 85%, much

higher than that of the entire county. Given the low natural population growth rate (3.42%<sup>31</sup> in 2008), the rapid growth of permanent urban residents in Beijing was almost equal to total urban migration.

Through industrialization and rapid growth of the urban economy the city of Beijing provided good opportunities for education, social services, and employment, leading to high rates of migration and mobility. On the one hand people surplus to labor needs in nearby suburbs were attracted to, and concentrate within, four urban districts of Beijing taking on work in construction, light manufacturing, household services and other occupations. On the other hand, as a result of a much more relaxed household registration system, several million urban migrants supplemented the labor markets and constituted a significant floating population in the city. According to statistics released by the Beijing Statistical Bureau, between 1996 and 2000 people who migrated from other parts of China accounted for 14.2% of Beijing's total population (Beijing Municipal Bureau of Statistics, 2000). Compared with the 5.4% proportion for 1995, this figure had increased by 8.8% and these figures do not include those who were not registered as permanent residents.

In contrast with other large cities in China over the last two decades Beijing has become a city where the urban percentage of the population has become much higher. In 2008, out of a total population of 16.95 million, 84.9% were urban residents. Rural people accounted for about 15% of the total (Beijing Municipal Bureau of Statistics, 2009). In reviewing the urbanization of Beijing it is clear that in the long run the process has corresponded well with the expansion of the industrial sector and the development of service, finance and high-tech industries. Although for short periods of time the rate of growth came under the influence of several political movements rapid urbanization processes have also brought about high population mobility in the city by creating myriads of employment opportunities for workers and lots of

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<sup>31</sup> Beijing Municipal Bureau of Statistics. (2009). *Beijing Statistical Yearbook 2009*. Beijing: China Statistics Press.

challenges.

#### **7.2.4 Social policy related to family in Beijing**

As discussed in the previous section urban residents, especially those who work in state-owned enterprises, come under different public and welfare policies from their counterparts in rural areas. The year 1978 in particular stands as a watershed year in the modern history of Chinese policy. Before the economic reform China followed the Soviet model of economic development as well as Soviet style policies concerning social welfare. This model emphasized the role of central planning and socialist control for organizing the provision of goods and services. After the reform, which incorporated the promulgation of policies for opening up the country, the role of the market has become of great importance. In order to gain a comprehensive understanding of policy changes in Beijing it is necessary to review policies which have been important in the history of China.

As in other countries in pre-modern periods until the late 1950s welfare services for citizens were limited. The family was believed to be the basic social institution and this was expected to provide protection and welfare for its members. The role of the State, on the other hand, was more concerned with economic development, ensuring a supporting environment as well as maintaining social stability. This kind of environment engendered and emphasized loyalty to the family rather than to the State (Yang, 1959). However after the communist party took control over China in 1949 there came a shift from individual loyalty centered towards family and kinship groups to loyalty directed towards the State. Under communism both individuals and family members were required to put the State above the family and sacrifice individual interests for the national goals of social and economic development (Yang, 1959; Leung, 1997). In return the State and alternative social organizations should take up many of the social and economic functions formerly carried out by the



traditional Chinese family.

Thus in cities, in addition to the nationalization and collectivism of private business, the government introduced comprehensive social welfare coverage for urban employees (Leung, 1997). Once a person was employed by a state-owned or collectively-owned enterprise he or she was entitled to corresponding benefits and certain welfare protections such as a pension, housing, and medical care. As members of an enterprise employees received almost free education, low rent for housing, free medication, and other welfare benefits. The pension paid by an enterprise following retirement was guaranteed to be a certain percentage of pre-retirement wages. This policy of lifelong employment ensured job stability and also permitted a worker replacement system, thus enabling young people to work in the same work unit as their parents after the latter had retired. Consequently both work life and family life could remain relatively stable since the greatly extended employment-based social security system together with lifelong employment ensured that most urban employees could become financially independent of family.

Generally speaking generous medical, educational, and pension plans for all state employees reduced the roles previously taken by family in provision of protection and welfare support for members. Accordingly the need for kin-based networks and the influence of the family on the employment, marriage, and education of members declined. However the heavy increase in welfare expenditures, coupled with the rapid population growth increased the financial burden on the central government and most state enterprises. In addition political movements, in particular the Cultural Revolution from 1965 to 1976, created a disorganizing influence which had long-lasting effects on social and economic development. In an attempt to reduce welfare expenditures and relieve the burden on work units the government re-emphasized the traditional role played by family in economic support, medical care, education, housing, and protection.

In December 1978 at the third plenary session of the Eleventh Party Central Committee official policy changed dramatically. Emphasis moved away from the role of the state in allocation of social resources towards recognition that the market could play a leading role in the economy. This change in policy direction has led to a series of structural social and economic changes. These changes include transitions in social security and welfare policies that have had a great impact on the welfare of individual families. Reform of the social welfare system began in 1984, focusing on enlarging and improving the overall level of social security coverage so as to allow more families to gain basic protections. The reformed social security system covers the areas of poverty relief, social insurance (i.e. old-age insurance, unemployment insurance, work-related injury insurance and maternity insurance) and various social welfare programs (i.e. education, housing and medical care). Reforms concerning four of the major social welfare programs directly related to family, the old-age insurance scheme, housing, education and the health care system, are closely examined below.

The reform of old-age insurance began in the mid-1990s after the initial phase of economic transition from the 1980s to the early 1990s. Basing change on a model proposed by the World Bank in 1994 the government reformed the basic pension scheme for urban residents and expanded this to cover employees in the private sector by implementing a social-pool-plus-personal-accounts scheme. Employees who have reached retirement age, normally 60 for men, 55 for female cadres and 50 for female workers, and who have paid their share of premiums for 15 years or more, are entitled to a monthly basic pension. In Beijing the pension reform included two phases. The first phase, lasting from 1994-97, prepared for transition from a work unit oriented scheme to a socially organized pension system while the second phase, which began in 1998 and continues to the present time, has established the social-pool-plus-personal-accounts scheme (Tang, 2006). Reform has expanded the overall coverage of the basic pension scheme to cover not only employees of state agencies and government officials but those employed in all economic sectors. In

2008 about 7.57 million people were covered by the basic pension scheme, accounting for 64.5% of total employees (Beijing Municipal Bureau of Statistics, 2009). In addition to the pension scheme there are also cash subsidies for the oldest of aged people, those who have reached 90 or above, and a welfare allowance scheme to improve the quality of life for elderly people who have never worked.

Since 1986 the government has implemented a 9-year compulsory education system in both urban and rural areas which includes six years in primary school and three years in junior secondary school. Beijing has seen a dramatic improvement in the educational attainment of the population and also in the quality of education. In 1990 the average years of schooling year attained by people aged six and above in Beijing reached 8.6 years. This increased to 10 years in 2000 and 10.5 years in 2004 (Pang, 2006). By the end of 2009 the average years of education attained by Beijing residents reached 11.1 years while the gross involvement rate reached 99% for secondary education, and 60% for tertiary education (People's Daily Online, 2010). In recent years, to improve the equality of education, the Beijing municipal government has made several changes with regard to educational problems facing the children of migrant workers. Under the household registration system used in former years there was a gap in educational conditions affecting local and non-local residents. Families of non-local residents had to bear expensive tuition fees as well as additional education costs. One condition affecting migrant workers specifically was that their children were not accepted in local public schools. In many cases a lack of resources and the high cost of education led to delays in educational parity for many children of migrants. The government has adopted many strategies to improve this situation. Since 2010 children of migrant workers in Beijing fall under the compulsory education regulations and attend local public schools regardless of whether their parents are registered as permanent residents in the district. Moreover, to make education more affordable, financial support is provided for students from poor families. So far, except for a few children who have special family situations, almost all school-age children have been able to enroll in primary and junior

secondary schools.

The housing reform came in 1988 when the government proclaimed a gradual cessation of the distribution system and moved responsibility for housing construction and management to an open market. After a ten-year pilot study in several selected provinces, in 1998 the government officially formulated a housing policy which removed urban housing as a sector within the social welfare system and turned it into a commodity to be bought or sold according to market mechanisms (Li, 2009; Jiao & Lang, 2005). Since then the government has moved away from the private housing market and the period in which housing was allocated at a low-rent and through distribution based on work units has ended. Before the housing reform cooperative and private housing in Beijing was strictly controlled and accounted for only a minor proportion of residences. Under the low-rent policy urban housing was affordable for almost all urban citizens. According to Sit's (1995) study, in 1979 the average monthly rental in Beijing was approximately equivalent to 3.6—4% of average income. The average living space for a household was quite low however because of the growth in urban population and relatively little investment in housing construction. Sometimes even married adult children had to live with their parents before becoming eligible for a house distributed through their work unit. The housing reform of 1988 brought two major changes: (1) an increase in the rent charged for publicly owned houses; (2) the gradual commercialization of urban housing through the use of accumulated funds to build housing. In addition, since 1998, the poorest families can rent or buy a government subsidized apartment and relatively low prices are charged in the case of lower-to-middle income households. The real estate industry developed rapidly between 1988 and 1997 while the per capita living area in Beijing increased from 7.17 sq m to 14.4 sq m. In 2007 this figure increased further to 20.3 sq m, almost three times that of 1998 (Li, 2009).

Other important policies affecting family welfare relate to reform of the medical and health care systems. As with transformations in the housing and pension systems, the

reformed basic medical care insurance system involved change from a system which emphasized the responsibility of the work unit and the State to one based on collaborative contributions from each individual, from family members, from private and public agencies, and from the State. From the mid-1990s the Beijing government began to conduct pilot projects in selected districts to investigate market-oriented medical reform. After about five years of preparatory work 2008 saw the establishment of the basic medical care insurance system covering employees in diverse economic sectors. By the end of that year a total of 8.71 million Beijing citizens were participating in the basic medical care insurance system, accounting for about 89% of total employees (Beijing Municipal Bureau of Statistics, 2009).

In addition to the four major social welfare programs discussed above there are also other security schemes for disadvantaged groups such as minimum living allowances for families under the poverty line and unemployment insurance for laid-off workers and unemployed people. In sum the basic framework of the social welfare system has already taken shape and covers poverty relief, pensions, medical care, education, housing, and employment. In addition, since 1987, a Community Service System has been initiated in most urban areas (Fung et al. 2003). Under the community-based service system in Beijing many public and community services are provided for different groups of people specifically elderly people, the disabled, the unemployed, and the handicapped. Support and assistance is available and covers areas as wide as daily care, domestic chores, job searches, and social and recreational activities. The objective of service provision is to make available convenient services as well as various types of response in support of community needs as a whole (Fung et al., 2003; Zhang, 2010). However as there is as yet no uniform pattern the types and amount of community-based welfare service differ widely among differing communities. The services in some poor neighborhoods are limited due to lack of economic support and resources. In addition there is evidence that some service providers fail to serve the most needy as the result of the trend toward an emphasis on for-profit services in accordance with the self-financing principle (Fung et al.,

2003). In consequence community service provisions are not meeting the needs of individuals and groups successfully and because of this the functions which can be fulfilled by family in order to care for members still remain important.

Population control is another important public policy with great influence on family and individual life despite a whole series of reforms concerning social welfare and protection programs. At the end of the 1970s the Chinese government realized the importance of controlling population so as to slow down the rapid population growth and facilitate modernization goals. In most urban areas a one-child-per-couple policy was formulated and put into effect leading to a dramatic drop in the fertility rate (Gu, Wang, Guo, et al, 2007; Zhai, 2007). At the same time, as mortality gradually declined, these two factors combined obviously contributed to a reduction in family size causing changes in kinship structure both at macro and micro levels (Wang, 2006; Tang, 2005). Beijing first enacted a one-child-per-couple rule in the early 1980s, following this by several modifications and revisions in accordance with local conditions and with the approval of local government. It is not the case that the one-child rule has not been strictly enforced but rather that it has shifted to more realistic and less forceful ways of implementation. A number of conditions apply but if these are satisfied the local birth control policy in Beijing allows more couples to have a second child. Up until 1999 a total of nine exemption factors allowing a couple in selected districts a second birth had been identified. These included, for example, couples where both parents are single children, remarried couples, or couples whose first child has been medically diagnosed as handicapped. (Gu, Wang, Guo, et al, 2007).

Over the past thirty years the vigorous birth control policy has led directly to a rapidly declining birth rate and a change in Beijing's demographic structure. During the 1950s and the early 1960s the natural growth rate remained 20% above present rates and the annual growth in population reached about 260,000. However, since the mid-1990s, the natural growth rate has dropped to about 2%. The fertility rate for

each woman has declined from about 5 in the 1970s to 1.7 children now (Li, 1987). As a consequence there is a dramatic reduction in average family size and a prevalence of one-child families in the urban areas of Beijing.

### **7.3 The Changing Family Structure and Support of Elderly in**

#### **Beijing**

During recent decades there has been a dramatic change in the size of the family and also in household composition. There has been a rapid increase in the total number of family households, especially since 1949, resulting from structural changes in modes of production and rapid growth of the urban population in particular. Accordingly, average family size has also changed a great deal.

From 1949 to 1979 the number of family households in Beijing almost quadrupled, rising from 4.42 to 21 million, while the average size remained about 4.6 members, with a peak to 4.96 in 1960 (See Table 7.4). Since the late 1960s there has been a continuous decline in family size and a slowdown in the increase in the number of families. The reasons for this during the period from the late 1960s to the 1970s were the occurrence of natural calamities as well as economic disruption caused by the spread of the Cultural Revolution. However from the late 1970s onward average family size decreased even more dramatically. There is a consensus that the reduction of family size in Beijing is the consequence of an extraordinarily rapid decline in fertility interacting with socioeconomic change. In consequence the average family size for permanent residents in Beijing has shown a continuous decrease from 3.69 in 1982, to 3.59 in 1987(Guo, Du & Liu, 1992), to only 2.56 by the end of 2008.

Year	Number of households(10,000)	Average household size	Year	Number of households(10,000)	Average household size
1949	44.2	4.6	1963	153.1	4.80
1950	44.4	4.59	1967	158.0	4.91
1953	54.3	4.84	1970	168.3	4.57
1957	80.4	4.71	1976	190.4	4.34
1959	136.9	4.81	1977	195.7	4.26
1960	142.8	4.96	1979	210.0	4.10

Table 7.4 Number of Family Households and Their Average Size in Beijing from 1949- 1979

Source: 李慕真編 (1987)。中國人口 (北京分冊)。北京：中國財政經濟出版社, 317。

In addition to the reduction in family size and the increase in the number of family households great changes have been seen in family composition. According to official statistics released by the government for 2008, two and three-person households accounted for about 70% of households in Beijing. Comparing this figure with statistics from selected years, see Table 7.5, there has been an obvious rise in the percentage of one, two, and three-person households. This clearly indicates that the distribution of various sized families has changed from families concentrated in three, four, and five person households and above toward families comprised of two and three-persons.

Year	Percentage of Various Sized Family (%)				
	One person	Two Persons	Three Persons	Four Persons	Five Persons and above
1982	10.18	15.03	23.19	22.29	29.32
1986	9.6	15.1	31.1	23.2	21.0
1987	6.51	13.59	32.72	24.8	22.38
1990	12.12	18.74	32.34	21.54	15.27
1997	7.91	18.36	44.6	17.52	11.59
2001	11.4	24.0	40.3	14.0	10.3
2008	16.5	32.7	34.8	10.1	5.9

Table 7.5 Percentage of Various Sized Families in 1982, 1987, and 1990

Source: 郭志剛, 杜鵬, 劉小嵐 (1992)。北京市家庭規模結構變動情況分析, *中國人口科學*, 2 (29) ; Beijing Statistical Yearbooks for 1986, 1997, 2001, 2009



Studies in recent years have shown that family structure in Beijing has changed substantially with changes brought about by socio-economic development coupled with demographic transitions such as late marriage, a high divorce rate, and a low birth rate. According to the 2005 survey sampling of 1% of the population in Beijing the proportion of one generation families was 39.1% in 2005, an increase of 8.2% as compared with figures for 2000, while two and three generation families decreased from 54.7% to 14.4% and 48.8% to 12.1% in these years respectively (Beijing Municipal Bureau of Statistics, 2005). Other family forms, such as the single person family, the step-parent family, the empty-nest family, and the family without children, are springing up to occupy larger proportions in the total of families.

In addition in-migration has become a great influence on family change during the late 1990s and into the 2000s. According to Guo's study (2004), immigrants accounted for only 1.98% of the total persons in family households in 1990, even though some people belong within collective households. This percentage had increased to 11.65% by 2000. In another words, immigrants have been an important component in Beijing's population growth. As the result of changing attitudes and marriage patterns most households of immigrants consisted of single or conjugal families and rarely included more than three generations despite the changing patterns of family listed above. There have also been signs of change in other family forms such as the single-child family, the empty-nest family, the family without children, and also the step-parent family. Due to the lack of statistics the number of these families is still unknown as are the trends over recent years. However some studies have indicated that as families in Beijing became diverse new family forms became more acceptable.

#### The changing function of the family in Beijing: support for elderly

Patterns of care provision by adult children are changing as Beijing emerges as a modern city. However children are still regarded as the major source of support in old age, especially in times of need or emergency (Lee, Ruan, & Lai, 2005). It is

generally believed that, among other support resources, assistance provided by close kin such as spouse, children and siblings forms the most important resource, followed by aid from other non-kin groups such as friends, neighbors, and social institutions. Findings from several studies in Beijing have revealed that neither the willingness to assist nor the practical help provided by children have declined (Lee, Ruan, & Lai, 2005). On the contrary, the role of informal support networks, in particular those developed among family members, forms a major support in care for elderly people.

In the field investigation it has been found that taking care of parents is still believed to be a symptom of respect and is representative of filial piety. Nearly all respondents, both elderly people and adult children, indicated that support from family, especially from children, should be seen as a moral requirement although in practice provision of support depends on a series of external and internal factors. The perspectives of children indicate that they are willing to provide help for their parents as a kind of “feedback” for the love and care received from childhood. In comparison, some elderly parents do not regard the provision of care as either an obligation or a requirement. Rather, they tend to be more concerned about their children’s well-being and career development. Here are two examples:

[Case BJE09] Mrs. Wu, who is living with one of her sons, stated: “I don’t think that children should take care of me. I told them ‘whether to be filial or not is your own business, and I do not require (help from you all)’. To tell you the truth, I don’t want to be their burden... My children work very hard...”

[Case BJA02] Mr. Fu’s mother lives alone since her husband passed away. When talking about opinions about care provision by children, he said: “taking care of parents is required in both laws and Chinese ethics. I don’t think it is ‘a task’, which sounds a bit belittling. I would rather call it ‘a duty’, which is more reasonable.”

To analyze care provision by children three major types of support have been examined namely, economic, instrumental, and emotional support. In the past, most elderly people had no retirement protection, all economic support came from families,

especially adult children. Due to relatively low living conditions, economic assistance from children was represented by material support such as money, food, and clothing. In an interview Mrs. Zhang A said:

[Case BJE05] “At that time (in the 1970s), my monthly income was 37 yuan, and my husband had about 40 yuan. The money could only allow you to maintain a basic living.....because most elderly people had no work many families had to give them money every month. Our family was lucky that my parents had their own salary, so we just bought them food.....”

With improvement in the system for social security, and as a result of changing patterns of work and employment, economic conditions for elderly people have indeed improved significantly. Obviously the economic independence of elderly people relieved the financial responsibilities of family members. According to the 2005 survey which sampled 1% of the population in Beijing pensions form the primary source of income for 69.3% of elderly people (Beijing Research Center on Aging, 2006). Most retired elderly people have sufficient pension to maintain a basic standard of living. The government takes partial responsibility for old people without any alternative source of economic protection. In consequence economic support which adult children might provide for elderly parents becomes less important (Wang & Zhao, 2007; Mu, 2000). Financial assistance is not given on a regular basis but in times of need, such as by paying medical bills. Mrs. Song indicated the economic support she gives to her parents:

[Case BJA04] “I don’t give them money regularly. They have enough pensions to support their daily life... I just give them something on New Year’s Day or at other festivals, at least 500 yuan every time. Besides, we buy nearly all the clothes. Other needs would be satisfied, if they ask,...”

[Case BJE10] Mrs. Jiao, who is widowed, lives apart from her children. She explained economic support from her four daughters. “I have pensions (about 1000 yuan) every month. It’s enough for my daily life, considering I neither smoke nor drink. My children also provide monetary assistance when there is a need. The main expense is for medical care... paying for medicine and drugs.”

Obviously changing patterns of employment and separate living arrangements between children and parents have had a great effect on the availability of practical and emotional support for the aged in the family. For example most elderly people lived with their adult children in the past because of limited social services and underdeveloped communication and transportation systems. Practical care and assistance provided by family members was common. However the prevalence of separate living quarters with the increase in the number of elderly people living alone causes change in the ways adult children provide physical support. It seems that in Beijing adult children are willing to pay regular visits and provide practical help when there is a real need. At the same time elderly parents also tend to ask their children for help in times of need but rely on other sources of support, from spouses, neighbors, friends, and informal institutions (including social, professional institutions and domestic helpers), when such alternatives are available. However this does not mean that the role of adult children in instrumental support for parents is weakening but that the help provided reflects more important issues. Here is a case:

[Case BJE02] Mrs. Du expressed her concerns and choices when she needs help. She said: “my two children are too busy... the best choice is to make friends who can help each other. I often turn to ask friends when I need help. Normally I can manage my own things and ask my children only when I can’t handle something.”

Similar findings have been found as regards emotional support. When more and more elderly people live apart from their children this leads to geographic separation between family members and this may be associated with feelings of emptiness, loneliness or loss (Wang & Zhao, 2007; Lee, Ruan, & Lai, 2005). In the past, when most elderly people were accustomed to living with at least one of their children, there was less demand for emotional care. However the increase in living apart tends to reduce opportunities for face-to-face communication between generations. Rather, developments in transportation and communication technology have brought about long distance communication and exchange of ideas. This investigation found that

children, especially adult daughters, and also siblings, are important providers of emotional comfort and companionship for old people. In addition to paying visits and having family gatherings on weekends or at festivals children and their parents often talk on the phone. Mr. Qiu described his emotional connection with his two children.

[Case BJE07] “I add my children’s phone number into my ‘special list’, which means we can get special discounts for the calls between us... we often talk on the phone with our children, in particular my wife... she always talks with daughter, nearly every day. Our children live far away but they come to see us sometimes”

Despite the general patterns of care provision described above micro individual factors also affect the support received, particularly factors concerning living arrangements and household income (Lee, Ruan, & Lai, 2005; Wang & Zhao, 2007). In general elderly people who are living with their children appear to receive more practical and emotional support than those living apart from their children. Also, in some families, when elderly people are still healthy spousal care becomes more and more important. In some instances economically well-off families hire domestic helpers to undertake daily work such as cooking, laundry, and shopping. As against this there still remain elderly people with little income or in poor health who have difficulty in meeting their needs for help.

The findings described above indicate that adult children in Beijing sustain a supportive role for their parents even as society is now changing rapidly. Geographic distance (i.e. separate generations living apart) and changes in labor force participation and marriage are not always associated with an undermining of family ties and a decline in contact between family members. The value of filial piety still exists and especially in times of needs and illness family is also the most important source of support for elderly members. In general forms and patterns of practical assistance for elderly people, especially daily economic and emotional support and care, have been modified and become increasingly diverse. From one perspective care provision and the adequacy of support for elderly people greatly depends on

needs as well as availability of resources. On the other hand support is also influenced by individual factors arising in the lives of people such as the socio-economic situations which affect their children.

## CHAPTER 8

### PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS: MODERNITY AND FAMILY CHANGE IN HONG KONG

#### **8.1 Hong Kong: a Brief Introduction**

Hong Kong is located on the southeastern coast of China, 60 kilometers east of Macau on the opposite side of the Pearl River Delta and bordered to the north by Shenzhen in Guangdong province. Geographically it consists largely of steep hilly mountains and is surrounded by 260 smaller islands. From historical perspectives Hong Kong can be divided into three parts, Hong Kong Island, Kowloon, and the New Territories. These regions together occupy an area of 1104.38 square kilometers (425 square miles). Statistics from the Hong Kong SAR government show that the population in mid-2009 was 8.70037 million. This represents about 6,480 people per square kilometer making Hong Kong one of the most densely populated areas in the world.

The climate in Hong Kong is sub-tropical with four distinctive seasons. There is a cool and dry winter which lasts from around December to early March and a hot, humid summer from late May to mid-September. Spring and autumn are usually warm, sunny and dry. The highest temperature in summertime never reaches 37 degrees and in winter temperatures remain around 10 degrees. Although there are occasional tropical cyclones in the summer and early autumn due to alternating wind directions and climatic changes the pleasant weather with plenty of sunshine lasts for half the year, or even longer in some years.

As a special administrative region (SAR) in China, Hong Kong maintains a separate

political system characterized by a high degree of freedom and autonomy. It was once a colony of the United Kingdom and not until July 1st 1997 was sovereignty returned to China. Now under the policy of “one country, two systems” responsibility for defense and foreign affairs in the territory rests with the Central People’s Government (CPG) while the Hong Kong government holds executive, legislative and independent judicial power (Basic Law, Article 2).

With its distinct history and advantageous geographical location Hong Kong has served as a bridge connecting east and west. People from various races work in Hong Kong, these people include South Asians, Asians, and Europeans. Of these Filipinos, Indonesians and White people constitute the largest non-Chinese ethnic groups. In addition people in Hong Kong fall within a variety of religious groupings such as Christian, Buddhist, and Confucian, and all of these groups co-exist in harmony. Cantonese is the most commonly used language but a large proportion of the population speak English, either as their mother tongue or as a second language.

Hong Kong has a highly developed capitalist economy and has played an important role in international finance and trade since the late 1970s, a time which saw a rapid transition from an economy dominated by manufacturing to a service-based economy. Free market policies, low taxation, and government non-intervention have often been cited as characteristics of Hong Kong’s economy and have given it an international reputation for economic freedom. Geographical and economic factors together have made contributions to the emergence of Hong Kong as a modern city and a major centre of commerce within Asia.



## **8.2 The Impact of Modernity in Hong Kong**

### **8.2.1 The development of industrialization**

Industrial development in Hong Kong began more than a century ago when major processes towards modernization were initiated. The very beginnings of Hong Kong's industrialization can, it is believed, be traced back to the turn of the twentieth century (Ngo, 2003). Prior to that time Hong Kong was an undeveloped area where the small population lived by working in fisheries, in agriculture, in a salt industry, and through pearl fishing. In 1841 when Hong Kong passed under British control there was a population of 7,450 residents (including 2,000 boat people) on Hong Kong Island while Stanley Village to the south had become a market town with 2,000 people (Liu, 2009:9).

Hong Kong is described as having a pre-industrial society with an entrepot economy in the period from 1841 to World War II (Szczepanik, 1958; Youngson, 1982). Many immigrants arrived from surrounding areas such as mainland China, South East Asia, and also America and Europe. They brought in saleable goods and began setting up businesses. By the end of the 19th century Hong Kong rapidly emerged as a Far Eastern trading port re-exporting large volumes of goods. These developments came about due to policies from the British government which supported commercial activity, and also the well-located geographical position. Processes took place which increased commercialization and urbanization and Hong Kong expanded into a commercial center providing various services directly related with trade and serving a market network which encompassed China, South East Asia, and Europe. Expansion of international trade also created abundant opportunities for development in a wide range of manufacturing industries such as construction and shipbuilding. Modern banking and insurance became established and processing industries, such as sugar refining and wine making came in the initial phase of development. However

much early industry was scattered and on a small scale and so played a minor role in the economy as a whole (Chiu et al. 1997). Most small industry concentrated on handicraft production and provided work in newly built factories for only a small proportion of people. Agriculture and fishing were still the main resources for living for most people in the countryside nearby.

Triggered by rapid developments in technology and with an abundance of capital coming from the mainland and overseas industrialization in Hong Kong experienced rapid growth during the early and middle 20th century. In this period the number of factories grew steadily after the early 1890s and peaked during the early 1930s. Subsequent to this Hong Kong's economy experienced tremendous ups and downs since it was profoundly affected by several wars and interruptions such as the Great Depression, the Sino-Japanese War of 1937, and the civil war between the Kuomintang (KMT) and Chinese Communist Party. During such times Hong Kong suffered from the slowdown in world trade which affected in particular trade with China. Yet the problems on the mainland also provided new opportunities for the development of Hong Kong's manufacturing industry and diverted businessman and entrepreneurs from industrial cities such as Shanghai, Guangzhou, and Wuhan to the relatively safe and stable city— Hong Kong. In addition, the 1932 Ottawa Agreement on Imperial Preference allowed free trade with British and Commonwealth markets and, especially after 1935, further promoted industrial development in Hong Kong in addition to export trading. Although Chinese publications and official accounts differ substantially in the number of factories reported, partly for lack of comprehensive surveys and registration of factories and partly owing to differing statistical methods, a number of indicators suggest that a modern industrial system of considerable size with all necessary departments had taken shape before the Japanese occupation in 1941<sup>32</sup>.

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<sup>32</sup> For more detailed information, see Frank Leeming (1975), The Early Industrialization of Hong Kong, *Modern Asian Studies*, 9(3); and a more recent article by Ngo, Tak-Wing (2003). Industrial History and the Artifice of Laissez-faire Colonialism. In Faure, D (Ed.) (2003). *Hong Kong : A Reader in Social History*. Oxford university press.

Industrial advancement resumed after the Second World War and the period until the end of the 1960s is regarded as the era of early industrialization. The establishment of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949 halted entrepot trade in China and Hong Kong became vital for connecting the mainland with the outside world. Immigration from the mainland remained relatively stable even when trade with the PRC came under embargo, first by the United States and then in 1951 by the United Nations. However there was a sharp drop in re-exports and a business recession leading to laissez-faire policies to help maintain a rapid growth in the manufacturing industry. In the 1950s and 1960s in Hong Kong the economy transformed from reliance on trade and re-exports to an economy founded in local manufacturing industries. A substantial number of factories produced various kinds of products and operations modernized. In 1947 there were 998 factories employing about 51000 workers but in 1959 the number of factories had increased to 4860 and they employed more than 180 thousand workers. In 1959 the proportion of local products exported accelerated to 70% of the export trade, for the first time exceeding transit goods from other countries (Liu, 2009:325). Since then Hong Kong's exports have gradually diversified from their foundations in the textile sector to clothing, plastics, electronics, enamels and other goods produced using intensive labor. At the end of the 1960s industrialization in Hong Kong had achieved tremendous success and the manufacturing industry became the most important sector in the entire economy. Accordingly, the population of the city increased rapidly and a large number of employment opportunities were offered for people at all levels of skill.

The Hong Kong economy took off in the 1970s. Growth averaged 8.9%<sup>33</sup> and finance, trade and service greatly enlarged their share of GDP. It was evident that the economy of Hong Kong had transformed and was heading toward a more advanced phase of industrialization. For example there was considerable expansion in export-oriented industries and an increase in the variety of manufactured products.

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<sup>33</sup> Census and Statistics Department of HKSAR (2011a). *Economic Development of Hong Kong over the Past 40 Years*. Retrieved from [http://www.censtatd.gov.hk/FileManager/EN/Content\\_1064/A2\\_E.pdf](http://www.censtatd.gov.hk/FileManager/EN/Content_1064/A2_E.pdf)

Apart from textiles and garments—the two traditional product groups, other important export-oriented industries gained an increased share of GDP including electronics, plastic toys, watches, cameras, and electronic devices. In addition growth in the manufacturing industry brought along prosperity and expansion of related service sectors such as banking, real estate, construction, and transportation (Ho, 1986; Chui, et al. 1997). In consequence, though manufacturing still occupied a significant part in the economy, through successful diversification of production, its importance and status in the whole industrial structure had relatively declined.

As society prospered due to rapid and sustained economic growth demand for an improvement in quality of life increased. From 1971 to 1980 per capital GDP in Hong Kong increased about 6.2 times, from HK\$5162 to HK\$32080 (Ho, 1986). More better paid white-collar jobs were created providing opportunities for upward mobility as a result of the increasing importance of tertiary sectors and the relative decline in the secondary manufacturing sector.

After 1980, to take advantage of cheaper labor, there was a continuous outflow of production capital and relocation of manufacturing industries to mainland China thus causing steady shrinkage in industrial sectors. This process was assisted by trade and economic cooperation with the mainland and accelerated structural transitions in Hong Kong's economy. Commerce and financial services, tourism and retail trade gradually replaced the manufacturing industries and became the most prominent sectors in the economy. Figure 8.1 shows that the added-value of manufacturing peaked in early the 1990s before entering a continuous decline while commercial and financial services soared rapidly from the 1980s onwards.

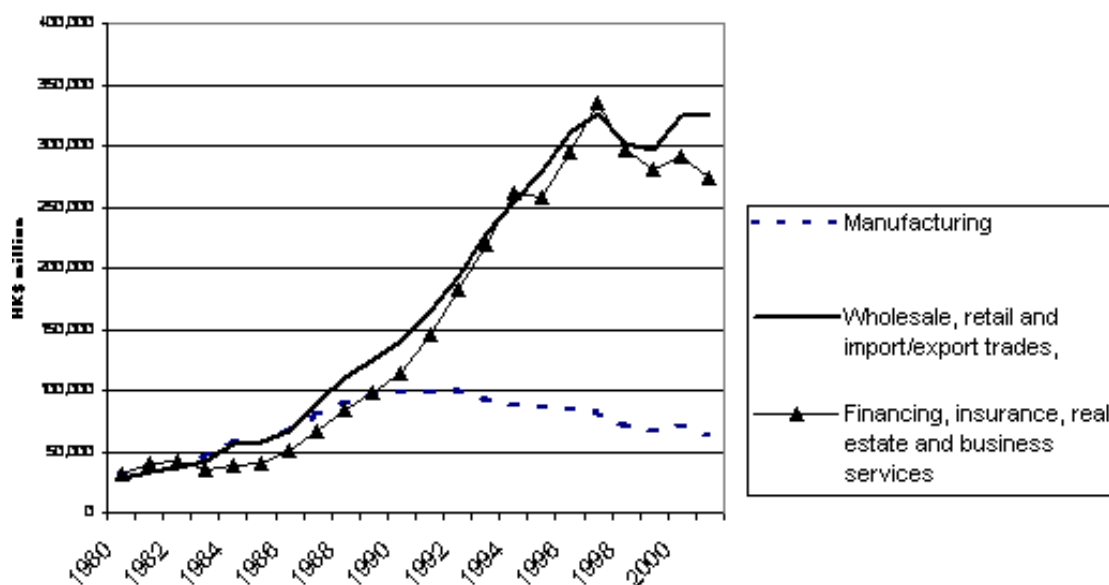


Figure 8.1 Contributions of the Various Economic Sectors in Hong Kong (from 1980 to 2004).  
Source: Census and Statistical Department. 2006

As Hong Kong's economy has become increasingly service-oriented primary production (including agriculture, fisheries, mining and quarrying) and secondary production (including manufacturing, construction, and supply of electricity, gas and water) has fallen to insignificance. From 1988 to 2008 the value-added contribution of primary industry to GDP declined from 0.4% to only 0.1%. Meanwhile, secondary industry, which contributed greatly to the GDP in the early 1980s, has shrunk from 26.6% in 1988 to only 8% in 2008. As a result, the share of the tertiary sector in GDP has risen dramatically from 73% in 1988 to 92% in 2008 (see Chart 8.1). Since then Hong Kong's economy has become highly reliant on service-oriented production (comprising mostly trading and tourism; finance and business services; community, social and personal services) and there is less emphasis on traditional production sectors.

In 2009 Hong Kong was the world's eleventh largest trading entity, the world's fifteenth largest banking centre, and the sixth largest foreign exchange trading centre (HKSAR, 2009). The wholesale, retail and import/export trades, restaurants and hotels sector, and also the finance, insurance, real estate and business services sector remain the two largest service sectors and accounted for 28% and 26.7% of the GDP

respectively in 2008 (Chart 8.1). Aiming to set Hong Kong on a path towards a diversified knowledge-based economy a policy address from the Hong Kong government in October 2009 specifically emphasized the development of six high value-added industries: medical services, environmental industries, testing and certification, educational services, innovation and technology, and cultural and creative industries, (The Policy Address 2009-10, paragraph 21-43).

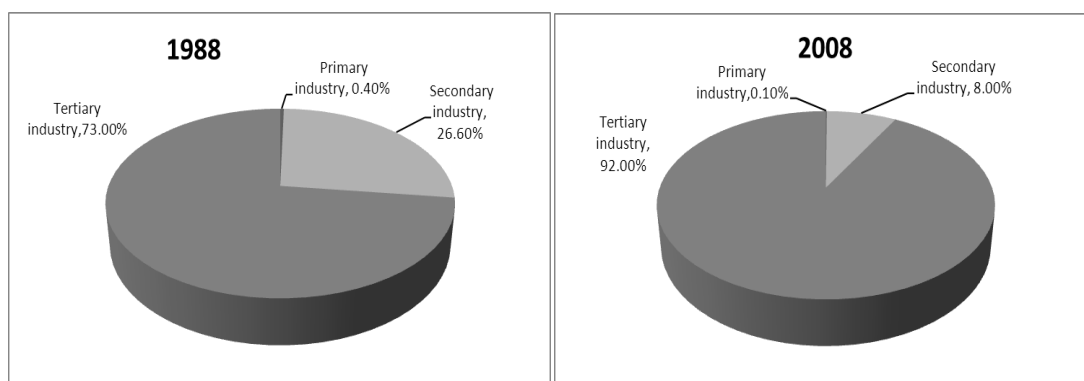


Chart 8.1: Gross Domestic Product by Broad Economic Sector in Hong Kong (1988, 2008)  
Source: HKSAR. (2009). *Hong Kong 2009*. Hong Kong: Government Printer.

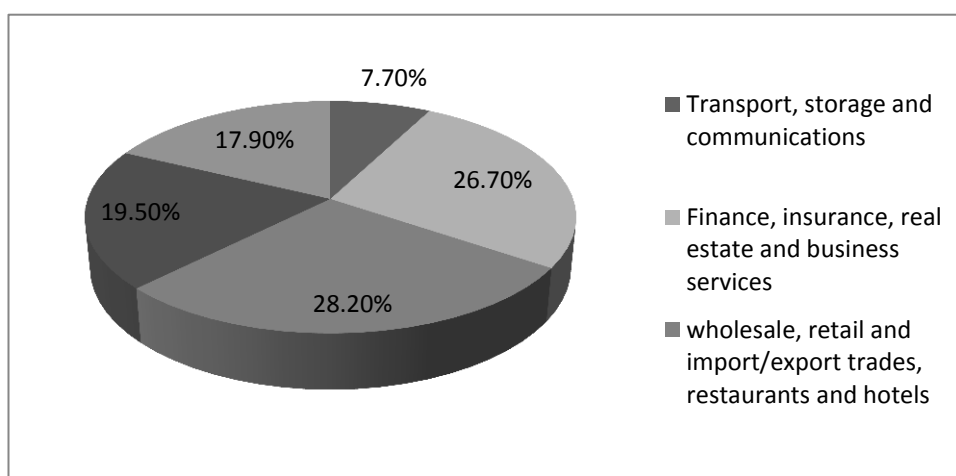


Chart 8.2 Gross Domestic Product by Major Service Sector in Hong Kong (2008)  
Source: HKSAR. (2009). *Hong Kong 2009*. Hong Kong: Government Printer.

Obviously, over the past one and half decades Hong Kong's economy has been moving towards a more mature industrial structure. Along with economic development came an increased standard of living and improved living conditions. However behind the economic affluence inequalities remained and the gap between rich and poor widened. In particular reconstruction of the economy had led to social

polarization and a rise in unemployment and underemployment (Xie, 2002) which greatly affected both individuals and families. In addition, the Hong Kong economy was affected negatively by the financial crisis of 1997 and the worldwide economic recession created significant social problems. In consequence while the economy continued to develop at a moderate pace controversies arose regarding the development of welfare and other issues concerned with people's livelihoods.

### **8.2.2 Wage labor and employment change**

Capitalization in Hong Kong remained underdeveloped until industrialization taking place. Economic change began in the late 19th century with the onset of structural transformation (i.e. from agrarian-based to industrial- and knowledge-based systems leading the economy). Wage labor and changing patterns of employment emerged and proceeded along similar paths stimulating major changes in capitalization. Prior to Hong Kong being ceded to the British under the Treaty of Nanking in 1842 few people were employed as wage laborers. In the area that is today Hong Kong there were already several villages of some size, hamlets, and a few larger coastal villages. The villagers were essentially farmers and fishermen relying on agriculture and fishing. There was also a permanent population of boat people and visiting craftsmen who sold their goods in local markets. However farming was the principal occupation (Hayes, 2003).

Starting in the late 19th century, when Hong Kong emerged as a Far Eastern entrepot, trading was regarded as having become Hong Kong's significant industry. Although agriculture and fishing still provided direct employment for those involved and those who worked in allied industries such as animal husbandry, it was believed that the vast majority of the workforce became waged labor employed in trading, shipping and other related services. There were not only local inhabitants, but also traders and financiers from other places of the world. Subsequently as early as the 1930s, with

the arrival of capital, skill, and entrepreneurs from the mainland, the manufacturing industry gradually became a significant economic activity and absorbed a large proportion of. According to the 1931 census more than 100,000 workers, nearly one-quarter of the laborers working population and one-seventh of the total population, were employed in Chinese factories (see Table 8.1).

Total population	849751	
Working population	470794	(100%)
Number engaged in manufacturing	111156	(23.6%)
Number engaged in commerce and finance	97026	(20.6%)
Number engaged in transport and communications	71264	(15.1%)
Number engaged in fishing and agriculture	64420	(13.7%)

Table 8.1 Working Population in Hong Kong According to the 1931 Census

Source: Ngo, Tak-Wing (2003). *Industrial History and the Artifice of Laissez-faire Colonialism*. In Faure, D. (ed.). *Hong Kong: A Reader in Social History*. Oxford University Press

The growth of employment in manufacturing was accompanied by the expansion of local production and created a large demand for labor. Many people from nearby towns and villages on the mainland came to Hong Kong to find economic opportunities created by the development of industry in the city. Most were male adults employed in rapidly developing industries such as shipbuilding and ship repairing. After Japan extended its invasion of China in 1937, the fall of Guangzhou in 1938 unleashed a large number of refugees who came to Hong Kong seeking a relatively stable environment and better business and job opportunities. The economy in Hong Kong benefited from this abundant supply of labor from the mainland and attracted entrepreneurs with capital and strong business networks to move to Hong Kong from nearby provinces. In particular textile and clothing entrepreneurs from Shanghai and other cities started to invest heavily in Hong Kong and build factories which created a large demand for industrial labor.

The Japanese occupation of Hong Kong during the Second World War brought industrial development a halt, and saw a dramatic decrease in both number of



factories and laborers employed. When Hong Kong returned to British control in 1945 the population had shrunk to only 600,000, less than half the pre-war population of 1.6 million (Gu, 2002). Just as had the Japanese occupation before the war, so the Communist takeover of mainland China in 1949 brought about a huge wave of thousands of refugees who emigrated from mainland China to Hong Kong. The relatively stable environment, together with the enlarged supply of cheap labor, contributed to the recovery and development of manufacturing.

Subsequently numerous job opportunities were offered in the newly built factories when manufacturing became the most important industry in Hong Kong's economy during the 1950s and 1960s. During early post-war industrial development employment opportunities originated predominantly in the manufacturing sector, in textiles, clothing, plastics, and electronics factories. By the end of the 1950s full employment had been reached. "There were few men and women looking for a full-time job and unable to find one, and in a number of sectors employers were finding it hard to attract and retain the labor force they required." (Brown, 1971:3) According to Chau's (1988) estimation, between 1961 and 1971 some 61% of Hong Kong's overall employment growth was provided by five rapidly growing export-orientated manufacturing industries. The industries which experienced rapid growth, such as clothing, electronics, toys and dolls had absorbed a growing proportion of the manufacturing labor force. As Table 8.2 shows, from 1947 to 1965, more than 90% of workers in the private sector were employed by a manufacturing industry. By comparison other economic sectors, such as mining and quarrying, commerce, and services, are of less importance in the distribution of employment.

<b>Industry division/group</b>	<b>1947</b>	<b>1953</b>	<b>1959</b>	<b>1965</b>
Mining and quarrying		2320 (2.3%)	2069 (1.1%)	2355 (0.7%)
Manufacturing	47356 (92.2%)	92178 (91.4%)	177271 (93.8%)	329214 (92.1%)
Electricity, water and sanitary services	1719 (3.3%)	1286 (1.3%)	1716 (0.9%)	3704 (1.0%)
Commerce	644 (1.3%)	416 (0.4%)	612 (0.3%)	763 (0.2%)
Transport, storage and communication	1593 (3.1%)	3180 (3.2%)	4660 (2.5%)	17804 (5.0%)
Services	26 (0.1%)	1475 (1.5%)	2708 (1.4%)	3657 (1.0%)
Total number of workers	51338	100855	189036	357497

Table 8.2 Total Numbers for the Working Population by Major Economic Sector Showing Percentages, Hong Kong (1947-1965)

Source: Hong Kong Census and Statistics Department. (1969). *Hong Kong Statistics (1947-1967)*. Hong Kong: Government Printer.

The high concentration of employment in manufacturing industries changed in the late 1960s when an economic transition occurred and the share of GDP represented by manufacturing showed a gradual decline. As fewer jobs were required in the manufacturing industry many workers became unemployed and some took up employment in newly developed industries such as services and the financial sector. In 1971 the proportion of labor employed in manufacturing was 75%. This figure dropped to 51.8% in 1976 and 50.1% in 1980. While the employment opportunities provided by service sectors, including finance, insurance, real estate, business services, and also community, social and personal services continued to increase, from 12.3% in 1971 to 13.2% in 1976 and to 15.6% in 1980 respectively<sup>34</sup>. Following this period Hong Kong began to integrate more closely with the mainland and at the end of 1978 the Mainland Open Door Policy had the effect of accelerating a shift in Hong Kong's economy. Beginning in the 1980s the economy in Hong Kong began relinquishing its base within the manufacturing industry, becoming more reliant on service and business sectors. This resulted in a substantial loss of

<sup>34</sup> Figures calculated from Hong Kong Census and Statistics Department. (1981). *Hong Kong Annual Digest of Statistics*. Hong Kong: Government Printer. Table 3.10, 42.

manufacturing jobs and a profound structural change in the composition of employment. This trend continued through the 1990s into the 2000s. Most labor-intensive industry moved to the mainland and increased investment was made in service sectors such as finance, tourism and retail trade.

However as Hong Kong had been a highly industrialized economy from 1990 onwards its service sector was able to develop as the dominant driving force behind overall economic growth. The service-oriented tertiary sector provides employment for the majority of people in Hong Kong. Its share in total employment went from 59.7% in 1989 to 88% in 2009 (see Chart 8.2). Specifically, import/export, wholesale and retail trade, and accommodation and food services accounted for 33% of total employment in 2009, followed by public administration, social and personal services (25%), finance and insurance, real estate, and professional and business services (18%), and transportation, storage, postal and courier services, and information and communications (23%) (see Table 8.3).

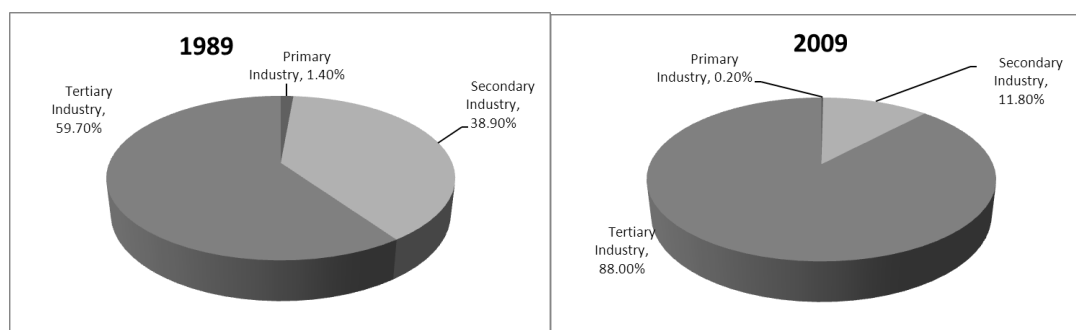


Chart 8.3 Employment by Broad Economic Sector in Hong Kong (1989, 2009)

Source: HKSAR. (2009). *Hong Kong 2009*. Hong Kong: Government Printer

Major employment sectors	Number of employees and percentage
Import/export, wholesale and retail trades, and accommodation and food services	1,149,000 33% of total employment
Public administration, social and personal services	879,000 25% of total employment

Financing and insurance, real estate, and professional and business services	638,700 18% of total employment
Transportation, storage, postal and courier services, and information and communications	414,500 12% of total employment
Construction	266,700 8% of total employment
Manufacturing	133,300 4% of total employment

Table 8.3 Major employment sectors in Hong Kong (2009)

Source: HKSAR. (2009). *Hong Kong 2009*. Hong Kong: Government Printer

Compared with manufacturing, which tends to be labor-intensive and demands numerous semi-skilled and unskilled workers, the service sector is relatively skill-intensive and employs a high proportion of skilled or technical workers. Financial and business services in particular need workers with specialized knowledge. Yet at the same time, when there is an ever-greater specialization in services, a diversified workforce is required and workers need higher levels of educational attainment. In order to fulfill the specific qualifications people require for many occupations they usually have to go through a rather long and hard training.

Although traditional service sectors employ a number of workers some fast growing services have higher employment multipliers, for example design, digital entertainment, educational services, and cultural and creative industries. Like other advanced modern cities Hong Kong attracts significant numbers of highly skilled workers from the mainland and overseas who fill the demand for employees in Hong Kong's knowledge-intensive activities. However there are now fewer jobs available for lower-skilled workers and they are more likely to receive a lower income. As a consequence the gap between the poor and the rich has widened. For example between 1996 and 2006 the median monthly income of highest earners has risen steadily while the median income of lowest earners has remained unchanged (Social Welfare Advisory Committee, 2010). Accordingly there has been an increase in the number of low-income family households with monthly incomes below \$4000 (from

6.7% in 1996 to 9.2 % in 2006) and also an increase in the number of high-income family households with monthly income at \$40,000 and above (from 15.0% in 1996 to 17.0% in 2006) (Hong Kong Census and Statistics Department, 2006b).

### **8.2.3 Urbanization and mobility**

Hong Kong differed from other major cities on the Chinese mainland in that the process of urbanization began in the late 19th century and high degree of mobility took place in a “borrowed place, on borrowed time”<sup>35</sup>. In 1841 there had been a population of 7,450 of whom 5600 were Chinese (Gu, 2002). Most people were villagers who relied on agriculture and fishing. There were already local markets but the social structure remained rural. As early as 1843, two years after the British occupied Hong Kong Island, a Hong Kong government was established in Victoria city between Sheung Wan and Wan Chai and the northern shore of Hong Kong Island promptly became a core area for military, political, economic and commercial activities (Ho, 2004).

As a colony under British authority in the wake of the Opium Wars, Hong Kong took on the features of an immigrant society. The population grew, mainly by an increase in immigrants coming from elsewhere. After the second half of the 19th century Hong Kong’s foreign trade developed rapidly and the increase in population led to the enlargement of Victoria City and the establishment of a new town on the southern coast of Kowloon peninsula. In 1871 the number of people living around Victoria City had reached nearly 80,000, accounting for 88% of the total population in Hong Kong (Liu, 2009:90). Development of the economy and expansion of employment and business opportunities brought a large number of Chinese people from surrounding areas on the Mainland as well as thousands of European and other Asian

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<sup>35</sup> See Richard Hughes (1976). *Borrowed Place, Borrowed Time: Hong Kong and Its Many Faces* (2nd, ed.). London: Andre Deutsch

nationals. These people left their home countries and neighboring towns and villages and became residents of Hong Kong to gain economic reward and business opportunities. However Hong Kong was not a permanent place to live for many of them but rather a temporary settlement. Some immigrants, especially the Chinese, were for the most part young men who still kept close contact with family members left in their home villages.

The population increased dramatically as Hong Kong emerged as a transport hub in addition to having been an important Far Eastern entrepot in the late 19th century. The annual population growth rate had been 2.59% from 1871 to 1881, and 3.28% from 1881 to 1891. By 1901 the residents in Hong Kong Island and Kowloon in Victoria City and Kowloon numbered about 283,975. With a further 85,000 in the New Territories the total population had reached nearly 370,000. The New Territories were ceded to the British in 1898 and accounted for 91.8% of all administrative areas in Hong Kong yet the population accounted for only 23% of residents and nearly all of these were engaged in agriculture (Liu, 2009:200). Because commercial activities and enterprises were mostly concentrated in Hong Kong Island the increased population largely lived in Victoria City and newly established towns in southern Kowloon. From the late 19th century onward, because of the scarcity of land in these areas, the Hong Kong government undertook several reclamation and road construction projects so as to solve the problem of a shortage of land in the urban centre.

The first half of 20th century saw fast economic growth and rapid expansion of manufacturing creating an employment demand for laborers for the factories. Many people were attracted to the newly established towns and cities, leaving their family members in rural areas. During this time a long period of endless war increased the flow of migrants from mainland China to Hong Kong and by 1931 the population of Hong Kong had risen to 840,473. Over the next decade there was a swelling of refugees from the mainland. These people began to move into Hong Kong at the end

of the 1930s and the 1940s because of the Sino-Japanese war which began in 1937. The situation became even worse in 1938 when the Japanese attacked Guangzhou, the capital of Guangdong province. The Hong Kong government estimated that there were 275,000 refugees in the colony by the end of 1937, 450,000 by the end of 1938, and 700,000 by the end of 1939 (Podmore, 1971). In consequence, from 1931 to 1941, the population in Hong Kong nearly doubled, rising from 840,473 to 1,639,000 with annual growth rate of 6.91% (Liu, 2009:200). Later the population in Hong Kong was greatly affected by the Japanese invasion in 1941 and the subsequent occupation which lasted until 1945.

The figures cited by the Building Reconstruction Advisory Committee in 1941 indicated that within the total population of 1.64 million the urban population accounted for 1.29 million, with nearly all urban residents living in Victoria City and Kowloon (Dwyer, 1971:33). Population shifts were frequent because of influences from the wars, the dense highly urban population and shortage of land in core areas of the city, especially the City of Victoria. There was a need to develop new areas to meet the high level of demand for land for both housing and industry. Reclamation provided land with considerable potential for the construction of new structures such as housing, hospitals, schools and modern transportation and it was sufficient to accommodate a fast growing urban population. At that time many people were without housing and had to sleep in the streets or in slum areas.

This rapid growth and expansion of the urban area was taking place during post-war periods when a large number of refugees came to Hong Kong to escape war on the mainland. After the Second World War, to meet demands of the rising population, the Hong Kong government began to develop northern parts of Kowloon for urban use. Statistics show that by 1957 the population of Hong Kong had reached 2.7 million, Hong Kong Island and Kowloon Peninsula each accounting for 40% (Liu, 2009:205). Most people were urban residents. Commercial activities in the city also gradually expanded from Hong Kong Island to the Kowloon Peninsula.

If the expansion of urban areas in the first half of the 20th century placed an emphasis on Hong Kong Island and southern parts of Kowloon, from the middle of the 1950s, the process of urbanization affecting the New Territories extended gradually. Rapid development of manufacturing in the 1950s and 1960s and the sharp increase in immigrants from the mainland made it necessary for the Hong Kong government to solve the problems of a critical shortage of land and a high population density in urban areas. Development of new towns in the New Territories became imperative because they could provide more space for urban growth than could Hong Kong Island and the Kowloon Peninsula. In 1957 the Hong Kong government sketched a blue print for future development and initiated engineering feasibility investigations for future development of new towns at sites including Tsuen Wan, Kwai Chung, Shatin and Castle Peak. In 1959 Tsuen Wan, situated on the southwest coast of the New Territories, was selected as the first area in which to disperse industrial and commercial activities and also open up residential development in the countryside (Wigglesworth, 1978). The following brief summary of development in Tsuen Wan provides an important source of reference for understanding urbanization processes in the New Territories and the expansion of urban areas in the 1960s and 1970s.

Until 1930 Tsuen Wan district in the New Territories was a predominantly rural area containing some thirteen villages. In 1930 the population of the district was about 5,000, most of whom were engaged in farming and fishing (Wigglesworth, 1978:55). As industry developed in the early 1930s a number of factories began to be established in the area and the following years saw continuous expansion of manufacturing industries. As government plans for development progressed, by the mid-1970s the former rice-growing area with its considerable amount of fertile agricultural lands had become an important industrial centre. In this process a large number of agricultural lands had been sacrificed to build factories, government housing estates, and other public facilities. A large proportion of residents were employed in manufacturing and farming had been pushed to the higher levels north



of the town. The continued expansion of urban areas was accompanied by a rapid increase in population which grew from 84,823 in 1961 to a projected figure of 500,000 in 1976 (Wong, 1978).

In reviewing the path to development taken by Tsuen Wan the urbanization process from 1960s onwards can be seen clearly. Apart from the development of Tsuen Wan, Kwai Chung, Shatin and Castle Peak in the 1960s and 1970s, in the 1980s the Hong Kong government proposed a new development strategy for the 21st century to include West Kowloon, the Western District, the northwestern New Territories (including Yuen Long, Tuen Mun, and Tin Shui Wai), and the southwestern New Territories (Ho, 2008:101). The establishment of new towns brought about ever faster urbanization from the 1970s to the 1990s, with a gradual reduction of rural land and an increasingly urban population in the newly developed areas. Starting from the 1990s the population in the New territories increased rapidly, from 2.37 million in 1990 to 3.34 million (49.8%) in 2001, as compared with 30.2% for Kowloon and 19.9% for Hong Kong Island (Hong Kong Census and Statistical Department, 2001). Today Hong Kong is highly urbanized. Of the total population of 7.00 million residents in mid-2009 some 99.8% were engaged in non-agricultural activities, indicating that most people live and work in an urban area (HKSAR, 2009).

Starting from the necessity of meeting the urgent needs of society to comprehensive planning of urban expansion, urbanization in Hong Kong has endured a long course. In the late 19th century and the first half of the 20th century, faced with relentless growth in population, large-scale reclamation expanded the developable urban area on Hong Kong Island and the southern Kowloon Peninsula. Only in the mid-1950s did the Hong Kong government begin to consider the development of new towns in the New Territories. The rapid expansion of urban districts has extended the boundaries of the city and urbanization has gradually expanded from twin cities on Hong Kong Island and Kowloon Island to occupy whole districts in Hong Kong.

Hong Kong is now an international metropolis with a predominantly urban population. Urbanization has altered the city as well as the lives of its people, and still continues to do so.

#### **8.2.4 Policy related to family**

Hong Kong, in acquiring the social welfare programs which play an important role in the well-being of individuals and families such as social security, medical and health services, education, housing and other services, experienced a route of development based on principles of “laissez-faire” and government non-intervention very unlike that of cities on the mainland such as Beijing. To some extent today’s policies and social welfare services in Hong Kong are built on the past and formed by its distinct historical setting. Thus, when we analyze policies relating to the family in today’s Hong Kong, it is necessary first to review the history of social service and family policy.

Before the 20th century there was no welfare system nor were there any social institutions established or sponsored by government. Taking care of and providing support for family members was seen as the sole responsibility of the family. A government policy paper from 1965 argued that traditional values and obligations, for example care for the aged or infirm, must be preserved (Hong Kong Government, 1965). In consequence, in those early days, the sole welfare agencies in the colony were set up by religious groups to help abandoned children and other groups in need (Boldrick, 1954). A series of measures aiming at improving livelihoods and providing an organized system of social services for the population were carried out shortly after the Second World War when there was an increasing demand to relieve the stress brought about by rapid population growth. In 1948 a Social Welfare Office was established by the Hong Kong Government as a sub-department of the Secretariat for Chinese affairs. It became an independent department known as the

Social Welfare Department in 1958. A Housing Authority was also established in 1954.

In order to facilitate rapid industrial development and serve the needs of a modern society in the course of the 1960s and 1970s the government undertook responsibility for promoting a series of policies aimed at improving people's livelihoods while reinforcing social solidarity. In the 1970s Sir Murray MacLehose announced a major development plan covering housing, education, and social welfare. The major policies announced included a "Ten-Year Housing Construction Plan", a "Home Ownership Scheme", and the institution of free primary education through "9-Years Education". A series of plans also supported the development of social welfare and enlarged the coverage of social security programs (Scott, 1989, Chan, 2002). Many welfare programs designed for elderly people were carried out almost simultaneously. "Care in the community" was proposed as the guiding principle for care provision by government. This promotion and expansion of social welfare services indicated that both government and society were taking more responsibility for providing protection for target groups through replacing some of the functions once performed by individual families and, in addition, reinforcing the role of government by providing universal services for families in various income groups.

The development of social policy and services for citizens in the 1970s laid the foundation for the policy reforms of the next decade. From 1980 onward the dominant feature of welfare development became "marketization". Although there has been a certain degree of development the fact remains that growth has been limited while market values and market practices have been introduced (Chan, 2002). As a result the governmental role in providing services and welfare for people, especially vulnerable groups, is not adequate to meet the needs of a rapid developing society. Families and communities still have to take an active role in providing protection and care for members. Given the extremely broad range of social welfare policies the following paragraphs highlight and examine closely four policy areas

directly related to the welfare of the family: social security, housing, health, and education policies.

The development of social security in Hong Kong can be traced back to 1965 when the first white paper on social welfare was published. After 46 years of development three major social assistance schemes have been implemented in Hong Kong: Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA), Social Security Allowances (SSA), and the Mandatory Provident Fund (MPF). CSSA is a means-tested scheme which aims to “bring the income of needy individuals and families up to a prescribed level to meet their basic and special needs” (Social Welfare Department, 1998:12). As the most comprehensive and basic protection for the poor, CSSA is regarded as the mainstay of the social security system in Hong Kong. At the end of 2009, there was a total of 289,139 CSSA cases. Of these the categories “old age” (53.1%), “single parent” (12.5%), and “unemployed” (11.5%) made up the majority (Hong Kong Census and Statistics Department, 2010a:5).

The Social Security Allowance (SSA) is a non-means-tested and non-contributory scheme comprised of Disability Allowance (for severely disabled people) and Old Age Allowance (for those aged 65 or above). These allowances were both introduced in 1973 to meet special income needs arising from old age or disability. In 2008-2009, the SSA scheme paid out a total of HK\$8,796 million, taking up 22.43% of total expenditures on social welfare (Social Welfare Department, 2009). As the first contributory and mandated pension scheme the Mandatory Provident Fund (MPF) was implemented in 2000 and aimed to provide income security in retirement for the working population. It is an employment-related pension scheme and the amount paid out from accrued benefits relates directly to contributions made together with investment returns. Prior to the implementation of MPF only about one-third of the working population, about 3.4 million including civil servants, judicial officers, and teachers in subsidized or grant schools, had been covered by some form of retirement protection (HKSAR, 2010). The new MPF system was designed to cover all

employees and self-employed persons aged from 18 to 65. At the end of October 2009, 99.9% of employers, 98.9 % of employees and 76.3 % of self-employed persons were enrolled in the MPF scheme (HKSAR, 2010).

The social security developed in Hong Kong provides basic selective protection for citizens and benefits all individuals and families to some extent. The overall living standard and quality of life have improved substantially. However the current social security system is, in general, neither sufficient nor efficient for meeting rising demands in Hong Kong. For example, MPF does not provide universal protection. A large number of people are excluded from the system including existing cohorts of elderly persons aged 65 or above and people who have never worked. (Tsoi, 2002). As a defined-contributory scheme MPF has offered only limited retirement protection and the accrued benefits are quite low (Gillion, et al., 2000; Tsoi, 2002). CSSA and SSA provide assistance for disadvantaged groups only, such as the disabled, elderly people, single-parent families, and families with low income, and cannot relieve all the problems leading to poverty. Under the “residual model of social policy”, the governmental role in welfare provision is limited and temporary. On the other hand the Hong Kong government does encourage individuals and families to be self-reliant and work for their own well-being (HKSAR, 1998).

In addition to social security the government in Hong Kong provides a wide range of welfare services and programs for the general public. There are programs in respect of housing, education and medical care, and programs for specific groups such as family, the elderly, children and youth. In particular, public housing policies first aimed to provide rental housing for low-income families who could not afford the costs of renting in the private market and have expanded to address the needs of lower-middle and middle income families by helping them acquire suitable and affordable housing. More recently several schemes have been introduced for “sandwich class” families to enable them to purchase their own flats on the private market. According to the 2006 census, out of a total of 6.6 million people in Hong

Kong, 49.3% live in private permanent housing, 31.0% in public rental housing, and 17.8% in government subsidized sale flats (Hong Kong Census and Statistics Department, 2011b).

In regard to medical care Hong Kong has developed a mixed medical system containing both private and public sectors. Free or low cost medical and personal health services are offered by public sectors and cover large sections of the community while additional expensive health care provisions can be purchased through the private sector. All Hong Kong residents are eligible to receive high quality health and medical care from public hospitals and the general and specialized out-patient clinics managed by the Hospital authority (HA) at a heavily subsidized rate (Harvard Team, 1999). As health insurance and medical savings programs are not compulsory in Hong Kong the public health sector currently accounts for the greatest part of secondary and tertiary care (Harvard Team, 1999; Health and Welfare Bureau, 2000). Health indicators such as crude death rate, infant mortality rate, and life expectancy have all improved but despite the introduction of several reforms in recent years medical expenses are increasing rapidly and are under pressure. Hong Kong's health care system, in particular the public health system, has served as a strong safety net for its residents yet there is a need for financial sustainability for the future (Chan, 2002).

Over the past two decades there have been significant developments in education. The main achievements include expansion of subsidized schools and the tertiary sector, and extension of free education for people in relevant age groups. Additional government and government-subsidized schools have been built and several higher educational institutes created to allow more people from various family backgrounds access to high quality education at an affordable price. The government has extended the 9-year free and compulsory education plan to twelve years of free education, including six years in primary school, three years in junior secondary school and three years in senior secondary school. In addition the government offers many grant

and loan programs for post-secondary education to help students finance education without depending on family support. In consequence the education attainment of people in Hong Kong has improved. In 2010 a total 77.7% of young people aged 15 and above received secondary education while 25% were in post-secondary education programs (Education Bureau, 2011).

When compared with universal policies regarding housing, medical care, and education the various welfare services for specific groups in Hong Kong offered by the government and by NGOs are rather selective and supplementary. Many of the prevailing services offered are remedial and mainly for those facing imminent needs and hardship (Social Welfare Advisory Committee, 2010). Also, since the 1990s, there has been a deep concern about the current and future state of public finances and services have increasingly concentrated on the pursuit of privatization and marketization (Chan, 2002). More services have been transferred from government to NGOs and other private sectors. The provision of services is increasingly based on ability to pay rather than on need-based distribution. In consequence many services are insufficient to meet the various welfare needs of the individual or of families. For example, the waiting time for a government subsidized place in a residential care service for the elderly varies from about 22 months in a Home for the Aged to 40 months in a Nursing Home (HKU Research Team, 2009).

Family planning has played an important role in reducing family size and has led to low fertility. Although formerly there was no compulsory fertility policy in Hong Kong, in the 1950s a Family Planning Association (FPA) was initiated to provide birth control services and offer the public information on family planning. This has contributed to a dramatic decline in the birth rate. For instance, many studies point out that the delivery of family planning information and services by the FPA has led to a large number of acceptors and users of birth control methods. In particular many pointed out that the availability of an intra-uterine contraceptive device (IUD) through the FPA was related to the sharp decline in fertility after 1965 (Freedman,

1970; Wat &Hodge, 1972; Wu, 1985). In fact the crude birth rate declined dramatically in the middle and late 1960s. It was 30.7‰ in 1964, but fell to 21.4‰ in 1969 and 16.9‰ in 1981 (Wu, 1985). Although the dramatic decline in the birth rate during this period has been associated with the age structure, in particular the number of women of child-bearing age, there is evidence that it is the consequence of modernization as well as the work of the Family Planning Association (FPA) (Wu, 1985; Podmore, 1971; Wat &Hodge, 1972; Go, 2002).

The development of social welfare in Hong Kong has followed in step with the process of modernization. In general the social welfare system in Hong Kong has provided a wide range of support and formal services for individuals and families which cover many policy areas including social security, education, housing, and health. Diversified services are offered for different social groups, for example children, youth, the elderly and people with disabilities, aiming to meet their special needs and enable them to integrate better within the community. Expansion and improvement of services and support from public institutions show the extent to which government has come to take more responsibility for providing basic protection and services for citizens. However the relatively narrow coverage, where some schemes are rather selective and on a means-tested basis, and the low standard for assistance through welfare service provisions (i.e. the MPF), indicate that the role of government in social protection is still limited. Furthermore, under the pressure of rising demand and declining resources, it is unlikely that there will be a dramatic expansion in public welfare services. Instead Confucian values which stress familial responsibility, especially care for the aged, have been repeatedly emphasized. To meet the challenges of change and promote shared responsibilities by individuals, families and the community the government encourages self-reliance and independence in a free market.



## 8.3 The Changing Family Structure and Support of Eldery in

### Hong Kong

As in other societies, under the impact of modernity family structure and size in Hong Kong have undergone rapid and drastic changes. There is little statistical evidence prior to the 1960s to show the accurate size of the average family size in Hong Kong but the data from the 1966 population census shows that about 85% of households consisted of seven or fewer people (Podmore, 1971). Since the 1970s there has been a transition in population growth to a low fertility rate and an increasingly longer life expectancy. Changes in living arrangements and socioeconomic conditions in Hong Kong have given rise to a reduction in household size. From 1971 to 2006 the average household size declined from 4.5 in 1971 to only 3.0 in 2006 (see Table 8.4).

Year	Percentage of Various Sized Families (%)					Average Household Size
	One person	Two Persons	Three Persons	Four Persons	Five Persons and above	
1971	14.7	12.9	12.1	12.8	47.5	4.5
1976	14.7	14.1	13.5	14.7	43	4.2
1981	15.2	15.4	15.4	17.2	36.8	3.9
1986	14.8	16.3	17.3	20.6	31	3.7
1991	14.3	18.4	19.4	22.7	25.2	3.4
1996	14.9	19.2	20.1	24	21.8	3.3
2001	15.7	21.8	21.3	23.4	17.8	3.1
2006	16.5	24.1	23.2	22.7	13.5	3

Table 8.4 Percentage of Various Sized Families and Household Size in Selected Years, from 1971 to 2006

Source: Hong Kong Census and Statistics Department. (1995). *Hong Kong Annual Digest of Statistics*. Hong Kong: Government Printer; Hong Kong Census and Statistic Department (2001). *2001 Population Census Main Report*. Hong Kong: Government Printer; Hong Kong Census and Statistic Department (2006a). *2006 Population By-census Main Report*. Hong Kong: Government Printer.

Analysis of changes in household composition during recent decades reveals similar

trends. As the forms of society advance family systems can be seen to undergo changes in structure so as to adapt to the changing environment. For instance, in a survey conducted by Hong Kong University in 1968 found that the percentage of family households containing three generations—grandparents, parents and children, was relatively high (Podmore, 1971). The survey pointed out that there were large disparities between families who lived in government housing and those in private housing, and also between families of immigrants and those made up of local residents. Further it showed the relatively large proportion of stem and extended families and other forms of household in the 1950s and 1960s.

The availability of data since 1970 has made possible longitudinal comparison of household composition. In line with the trend towards smaller households illustrated in the previous section the past two decades have seen an increasing number of nuclear families (Table 8.5). The proportion of extended nuclear families, both vertical and horizontal, decreased tremendously and only accounted for 7.4% and 0.7% respectively in 2006.

Household Composition	Year						
	1976	1981	1986	1991	1996	2001	2006
Single Person Family	14.8	15.2	12.9	14.8	14.9	15.6	16.5
Nuclear Family	60.1	54.4	59.2	61.6	63.6	66.2	67
Vertically Extended Nuclear Family	9.4	13.6	11.9	10.7	9.9	8.5	7.4
Horizontally Extended Nuclear Family	2	2.4	2.1	1.8	1.2	0.9	0.7
Others	13.7	14.4	13.9	11.1	10.3	8.8	8.4

Table 8.5 Households by Household Composition in Selected Years in Hong Kong (from 1976 to 2006)

Source: Census and Statistics Department, 1981, 1996, 2006

Notes: according to the classification of family households by Census and Statistics Department, vertically extended family refers to one that include different generations living with the family nucleus in the household, while the horizontally extended family means members of the same generation as the members of the family nucleus living together.

There is now great diversity in the formation of families. Over the past three decades family types such as the single-parent family, the family without a child and

step-parent families have become common and accepted by people. For example, an increase in the number of divorces, from 9,500 in 1996 to 178,000 in 2008, caused a rapid increase in the number of single parent families, a number which grew from 42,000 in 1996 to 72,000 in 2006 when the single parent family accounted for nearly 3.3% of all households (Social Welfare Advisory Committee, 2010). There is also an increase in the number of “cross-boundary” families because of frequent contacts with the mainland and with other countries (Hong Kong Census and Statistics Department, 2006c). As the population aged rapidly, out of total households in Hong Kong, the percentage of households with one or more elderly people increased from 23.2% in 1991 to 26.7% in 2006 (Hong Kong Census and Statistics Department, 2006d). In addition a relatively high proportion of elderly people in Hong Kong live in various kinds of institution. In 1996 the percentage was only 5.5 % rising to 10% in 2006 (Hong Kong Census and Statistics Department, 2006d).

#### The changing function of the family in Hong Kong: support for elderly

In Hong Kong, family is believed to be the primary source of support and strength in the care of elderly members. It is generally considered “a virtue to honor and respect the elderly....and a family responsibility to look after the older members as far as possible” (White paper, 1991:30). In a study in the mid-1970s, Rosen (1976) examined middle-class families in Mei Foo Estate. The findings indicated that frequent communication and contact allowed transfer of economic assistance and help among family members, usually characterized as providing financial assistance to relatives in case of need and regularly giving money to parents (Rosen, 1976). A study by Lau (1981) also found that the traditional norm of performing obligations in respect of elderly parents is still widely shared by people in Hong Kong. In particular, the majority of respondents (73.3%) reported that they had provided financial and other assistance to their parents and other relatives. Other researchers, such as Lau & Kuan (1988), also reached similar conclusions.

However as society became modernized major changes in social and family structure

invariably altered the capacity of families to provide care for elderly members. Geographic separation of family members, changes in living arrangements and changes of attitude also affect the type and amount of support provided by family members, especially adult children. Yet there is great disparity among elderly people as regards their socio-economic conditions, informal support resources and family ties, so that the demands for care vary accordingly. Consequently the traditional pattern of family support has been changed and new patterns fitting the needs of a modern society emerge (Chan, 1997).

Changes brought about by macro modernization processes affect the general mode of care provision. Geographic separation of family members obviously influences provision of practical help to their parents which can be given by adult children. In addition, since a modern socio-economic system requires relatively free mobility and mostly full-time employment, family members remain at home for less of the time. Even though a large proportion of elderly people (53.4% in 2006) still live with children, and even supposing all are willing to provide care for their parents, the spare time they are able to spend is limited. This circumstance causes adult children in some better-off families to employ domestic labor to help with household chores instead of physically providing support themselves while a number of elderly people may rely more on their spouses or ask other relatives for help. In the following, Mr. Li and Mrs. Zheng talked about these differences:

[Case HKE04] “In the past, caring for the family was the children’s undeniable responsibility.....now my children (one son and two daughters) all work full-time and they couldn’t quit their jobs to care for us. My wife can’t walk long (due to some leg problems), so they pay a Philippino to take care for us and do some housework.”

[Case HKE01] “In that time, my parents were not in good health, so our children helped to take care of them. In their generation there were seldom dual-earner families. Fathers were usually the bread winners. When they didn’t work or were in bad health, all the care responsibilities needed to be borne by children.”

To reconcile the unavailability of practical (physical) support for their parents many

adult children appear to provide more financial aid instead of becoming directly involved. In interviews some respondents indicated that it is a tradition for working children to give money to their parents regularly (usually every month), though the nature and form of this aid varies considerably. For example Mrs. Wu, who lives separately from parents, explained:

[Case HKA04] “In tradition, when daughters get married, they only need to provide some pocket money for their parents. But now there are no differences between sons and daughters. Like our family, we (children) all give the same amount of money to our parents every month. We have also employed a domestic helper to take care of them.”

In addition, as more elderly people have become economically independent, financial support from adult children seems less important. For some children, however, giving money to parents is regarded more as a kind of respect, the symbol of filial piety, but less as an important source of income. For others economic support still plays an important role because of the lack of retirement protection for their parents. It is in this light that the money given by adult children differs significantly in different families.

It is evident that there are still strong connections between elderly people and their adult children for provision of emotional support. Living separately does not necessarily weaken emotional bonds between parents and children (Chow, 1983; Li, 1991). Although most elderly respondents live apart from their children they still maintain regular contact. Most respondents stated that they talk on the phone with their children at least weekly. Influenced by traditional custom it is common for Hong Kong people to drink tea and have breakfast with adult children, especially at weekends or on public holidays. Here are two examples:

[Case HKA03] Mrs. Xie, who is 38 years old, talked about emotional connections between her and her parents. She said: “we live separately, but I often talk with them on the phone, at least once a week. Usually we also go out together for morning tea at every weekend.”

[Case HKA01] Mrs. Tang said: “I often pay visits with my parents two or three times a week.

If I haven't seen them for a short period they would ask me for the reasons. My parents are in their 80s, but they often quarrel like children. At such times, they would call me and complain about each other... When they have something in mind, especially something sad or sorrowful, they also talk to me, seeking for comfort.”

However, quality and quantity of support by adult children varies at the level of individual differences, such as living arrangements, socio-economic conditions, and family relationships. Mutual help between parents and children seems rather active in Hong Kong. In some instances the flow of financial aid is usually not unidirectional from adult children to their parents but also from parents to children. Some elderly respondents said that they give assistance to their children when they have financial difficulties, such as when buying an apartment. By contrast, financial aid from adult children to their parents seems rather important for old people who are income poor, especially as there is limited retirement protection in Hong Kong for most elderly in the current cohort. In consequence they either depend on financial assistance from government, for example CSSA and OAA, or on provision of financial support from their children.

Differences in the demand for and the supply of care underlie differing living arrangements. Some elderly people living with family members assist in household chores such as cooking and doing laundry and are likely to receive a sufficiency of emotional and practical support from their children. Others who do not live with their children seem to receive relatively less daily care or practical help. Mr. Li, who is 67 years old, talked about the care provided by his children.

[HKE04] “My children give us (he and his wife) a lot of support, especially in terms of economy and emotion. But there are always us staying in home, and the lives are boring. They (children) are too busy that we only have gatherings on weekends... I really hope they could visit us more.”

Analysis of in-depth interviews with both adult children and elderly people in Hong Kong together with research findings from other researchers indicates that family support for the elderly in Hong Kong still persists widely but in modified forms.

Whilst they may remain independent as long as possible elderly people still tend to ask their children for help and regard their children as the important source of support. Influenced by the traditional value of filial piety adult children are still willing to provide many aspects of support for their parents. In practice, although the practical help and emotional support has decreased to a certain degree due to the changes in living arrangements and the availability of care provisions, other aspects of help such as in the manner of financial support have increased. However the type and amount of support differs to a certain degree in respect of individual families according to disparity in their socio-economic conditions, family relationships, and the availability of support from other sources.

## CHAPTER 9

### ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION, AND SYNTHESIS

#### 9.1 Modernity and Family Change in Yunnan, Beijing, and

#### Hong Kong

The theory asserts that there is a causal relationship between change occurring in family structure and function and the processes of socio-economic and political developments in modernity. In brief, at different stages of modernity one would expect contrasting family patterns, regardless of the different historical paths leading to that modernity, regardless of different economic models (i.e. communist, capitalist, or mixed-economy models), and regardless of differences in values and cultural traditions. If corresponding changes are apparent at different stages of development it seems reasonable to assume a connection between structural change and family outcomes. If, on the contrary, it is argued that causal relationships for the theory are un-illuminating, alternative or further explanations need to be proposed.

In this chapter modernity levels in contrasting societies, Yunnan, Beijing, and Hong Kong, are compared based on empirical evidence collected during field expeditions and statistics. There follows an analysis and comparison of the changes taking place in family structure and care support for elderly family members . Further to this follow illustrations and explanations of changing patterns of family composition and elderly care in the three societies and a search for sociological generalization. Finally, a geo-adaptation model of family change is proposed which, it is argued, makes us go further into the causes of change in families and understand comprehensively the mechanisms by which rapid socio-economic development may affect changes in family structure and functions in China.



### **9.1.1 Measurement of modernity in macro-structural level**

In order to discuss and compare levels of macro-structural development in three selected areas effectively, we must develop a set of indicators that cover the above four main dimensions of modernity. However, the selection of appropriate indicators is rather context-dependent, usually based on the research settings, the research problems, and the availability or accessibility of data. To fit the purposes of this study, therefore, only indices that are both important to the concepts of modernity and closely related to family changes have been selected so as to make the findings conceptually comparable and thus theoretically cumulative.

#### **Measuring industrialization**

In the narrowest technical sense, industrialization is often seen as “the process of increasingly shifting the composition of all goods produced by any society in two major respects: firstly, the share of all products resulting from manufacture rather than from agriculture increases markedly and, secondly, there is a major shift in the share of all fabrication that is undertaken not by craft hand-labor but by machine processes.....” (Inkeles, 1998: 311). Based on different research contexts, investigators have selected different indicators to measure the levels or stages of industrialization.

This study aims to measure and compare the stages of industrialization in three selected research settings, so it is preferable to use certain rough indicators to reflect generally contrasting patterns. For this task, regional GDP by broad economic sector is helpful since it provides information on macro-economic structure and economic consequences. Moreover, the relative proportion of agricultural, manufacturing, and service sectors found in the regional GDP helps draw implicit distinctions between different stages of industrialization which attribute or correlate to productive and economic patterns in the three areas under study.

In addition to using regional GDP by broad economic sector as indicator, another set of indices have also been selected and calculated, limited, of course, by accessibility of data. They are regional GDP, regional GDP per capita, and income per capita. One of the most important reasons to investigate these indicators is that they are highly correlated and directly reflect several dimensions of industrialization which, in turn, have supposedly dependent social and economic consequences. First of all, regional GDP, and regional GDP per capita are calculated based on the assumption that a higher level of industrialization is associated with a relatively higher rate of economic growth. In consequence, these would greatly influence families by raising the standard of living and economic conditions. In addition, scholars such as Inkeles (1998) and Chenery (1986) put forward that per capita income is used widely in the world for measuring the developing stages of industrialization. It is assumed that income in more industrialized regions is higher than that of less industrialized regions, leading to differences in quality of life thus affecting families, especially in terms of different lifestyles, physical and material conditions. For easy comparison, this study converts per capita RMB income into U.S. dollars according to the current exchange rate.

### **Measuring urbanization**

Urbanization, another important element in modernity, is generally recognized to be closely associated with industrialization and the two are complementary processes. As with industrialization, measurements for level of urbanization have their own complicated features and differ widely in approaches to calculation. However, to make findings comparable, the most widely used indicator for measuring the level of urbanization is the share of urban population within the whole population (Gibbs, 1958; Kojima, 1995; Henderson, 2002). For example, as Oucho & Gould clarify, “growth of the urban population can be looked at in two ways: on its own, in which it is described as urban growth, and as a proportion of the national population, in which the term urbanization is used (Oucho & Gould, 1993: 275).

This study uses the proportions of urban population within each of the three regions as the indicator for measuring the level of urbanization in the three selected areas. Such a relative measure reflects the current proportion of the population living in urban areas which make the findings comparable. It is noted that the problem confronting comparative study in the three research setting is that for Wenlin village there is no official data. The degree of urbanization is then defined as the proportion of the total population which migrates to urban areas.

However, this conventional measure of level of urbanization reveals only one dimension of urbanization. In fact, the small size of the urban population in Wenlin village (around two thousand) seems arbitrary when compared with Beijing and Hong Kong which have millions of inhabitants. In other words, there is a need to supplement this with other related information to reflect the actual changes in urbanization. Hence, population mobility is also considered. This is because (1) mobility is closely related to the process of urbanization and is often seen as the driving force of the latter, (2) mobility, especially rural-urban migration, is considered to have great impacts on family by changing geographic distance between family members.

The limitations of official statistics and the inaccessibility of data make the comparison of mobility rather difficult to compute. Under such circumstance related studies describe mobility as it occurs in selected settings literally rather than giving accurate numbers for comparison.

### **Measuring capitalization**

In a broad economic sense there is no universally accepted definition of capitalization. In this case, although capitalism as a modern economic system has been frequently mentioned, there are no indicators or measurements to calculate degree or scale of capitalization in a specific society. However, even though specific indicators for capitalization are scarce, or even non-existent, the level of

capitalization as a concept should not be abandoned. Rather, it must be allowed that capitalization is a complex process which is, of course, difficult to measure. Because of the nature of its complexity researchers prefer to focus solely on certain aspects of capitalization such as the competitive market and economic freedom rather than treating the concept as a whole.

This study tries to investigate the development of capitalization in three research settings by focusing on the social consequences of capitalism which relate to the family. Specifically it is argued that the emergence of wage labor as one of the crucial elements of a capitalist system contributes to a change in the mode of production as well as producing certain structuring and patterning of social relationships which influence the family dramatically. For example, the increased specialization of labor promotes an individual's economic independence and changes the power relationships among family members. The allocation of rewards or paid wages in a competitive market is largely related to an individual's technical capabilities and degrees of authority and responsibility, and these may be associated with differentiation of socio-economic conditions and income distribution. It should be understood that this study does not aim to measure the development of capitalization as a whole but rather emphasizes certain specific important characteristics of capitalization. Two specific measures of capitalism are used as indicators: employment patterns and division of labor (or specialization of labor).

It is generally recognized that capitalization promotes economic development, bringing about highly specialized division of labor and transformation of employment patterns (Durkheim, 1984). These in turn are reflected in economic consequences including occupational diversification and differentiation of incomes between individuals. In fact, changing patterns of employment are also associated with industrial development, thus a number of studies put employment patterns into the index of industrialization. In this study it is argued that capitalist production makes wages the most important source of individual income while specialization of

labor and employment promote individual economic independence and reduce the possibilities for reliance on family support. In such situations the investigation of division of labor and occupational patterns helps to reveal capitalization development in the three research settings. This additional information is valuable because it helps to explain the differentiations of individual socio-economic condition and shifts in relative family status which greatly affect family relationships as well as family styles and associated functions.

### **Measuring social policy**

The term social policy has different meanings. According to James Midgley (2000), “public policies that affect the welfare of citizens are known as social policies” (Midgley, 2000: 4). Due to its broad definition and complex nature, there is no universal standard for measuring and comparing social policy in different societies. However, it is generally recognized that central core policies incorporate social insurance, health and welfare services, education, and housing policy.

The study aims to compare the development of social policy in the three research areas and analyze effects on the family in terms of family structure and functions. It does not attempt to cover the full range of social policies but to focus on those that are of relevance to family and give close examination of certain important aspects of social provision. Considering the feasibility of comparison and theory development, indicators pertaining to family welfare and family formation are appropriate. Social welfare and family planning policy form a specific focuses as indicators for this study.

#### **1. Social welfare policies**

Social welfare policy includes a wide range of policies and welfare programs which fall into different categories. This study highlights social security, pensions, education, medical care, and housing policy as examples for analyzing the effects of development of social welfare on family. There are several reasons for selecting these indicators. First, they are major components of social welfare

policy, which can be seen as a variety of government policies and services for individuals and families. Public provision in social care, education, housing, and medical care are seen as replacing some functions of the family and potentially undermining family responsibilities. Second, the development of welfare policies as outlined above reflects the greater role played by government in social protection, justice, and development which has resulted in, for example, higher life expectancy, and an improvement in literacy rates. These consequences greatly affect individuals and families, especially as regards demand for informal support and assistance. Third, as the main social welfare policies, these indicators are seen as necessary for developing a modern economy and are closely linked with socio-economic development. Yet, different ideologies underlying various societies have reflected diversity in the policies and welfare provisions designed for their citizens. Thus by analyzing the development of these policies, a unique perspective through which to see the different roles of government, society, and family can be provided.

## 2. Family planning policies

Family planning policies are generally recognized as contributing to the demographic transition and change of population structure. Especially in China, a strict birth control policy has contributed to a sharp decline of fertility and to changes of family structure (Gu, Wang, Guo, et al, 2007; Wang, 2006). The policies consist of a set of rules and regulations that govern family size and lead to a reduced number of potential care givers within families, thus affecting the care resources available for elderly members. Family planning policy reflects the importance of governmental administrative strategies or intervention through regulating and adjusting individual and family behaviors.

### **9.1.2 Comparisons of modernity in Yunnan, Beijing and Hong Kong**

Modernity, as has been discussed, has different meanings in different contexts and is

made up of a set of elements that express what it means to be modern. Nevertheless, It is a developmental process that is often used to describe socio-economic, political and cultural changes in the development of modern industrial society as compared with traditional agrarian ways of living. In reviewing what is meant by modernity and comparing modernity levels in different society's key characteristics of modernity outlined above serve as the basis for evaluation and analysis. In the following discussions four main aspects of modernity are examined closely in Yunnan, Beijing, and Hong Kong: the level of industrialization, the level of urbanization and mobility, division or specialization of labor, public policy relating to the family.

### Industrialization

Industrialization is the most vital process within modernity. The process occurs in a society transforming from a predominantly agricultural economy to one reliant primarily on manufacturing and later on a service- and knowledge-based economy. It is generally agreed that through industrialization a society becomes affluent and advances at a higher rate of economic growth (Inkeles, 1998). Consequently, the development of modernity brings countries to a high level of wealth and makes possible an ever rising standard of living. In the following the development of industrialization is summarized, in particular regional GDP by broad economic sector. Regional GDP, GDP per capita, and income per capita are compared to illustrate industrial level in the three selected societies, Wenlin, Beijing, and Hong Kong.

Wenlin village is still, on the whole, an agrarian society. There have been no dramatic changes over the past several decades in term of agricultural production and the ways of living. The only differences lie in organization of methods of production which shows a transition from collective production in the form of a people's commune during the period from the 1950s to the late 1970s, to family- or so called household-based agricultural production which has been dominant since the economic reforms of late 1970s. Even in recent decades agriculture and animal

husbandry still account for more than 90% of Wenlin's entire economic income, while the non-farming population forms less than 5% of the total population in the village.

Situated in a mountainous area and isolated from the outer world, Wenlin's economy is still, to a large extent, self-sufficient. Large-scale agricultural machinery is not widely used here as it is in other rural areas of north China where the plains extend for thousands of miles. Commerce and rural industry, which play an important role in the social transformation of other rural areas, are still undeveloped in Wenlin village. Although rural economic reform has emancipated agricultural productive forces, socio-economic development in Wenlin has always been slow owing to its geographical environment. In recent years, influenced by encircling towns and cities, household electrical appliances such as telephones and TV sets have come into general use and these bring some changes in people's daily lives. Development of transportation and construction has been promoted, in comparison with the traditional agricultural society of the past, but there are no widespread changes in economic development and the economy in Wenlin is still dominated by traditional farming methods.

As compared with Hong Kong, industrialized economy emerged in Beijing relatively late. As early as the 1930s and 1940s, the industrial sectors were still insignificant and the city's economy relied mainly on agriculture and family-based and small-scale workshops producing handicrafts. The transition from a traditional agrarian to a modern society began after the establishment, on the Soviet model, of the PRC but this path to development came to a halt in the 1960s and mid-1970s for various reasons including frequent political conflicts and movements (i.e. the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution). Industrial development in such periods was rapid but unbalanced and relatively inefficient, due to the socialist model of production which emphasized the dominant role of central planning in economic development and heavily investment in heavy industry. An important watershed for



industrial development began in the late 1970s, when there were dramatic changes in the economic system as well as adjustments in the structure of industry. While insisting on the role of the state in monitoring and regulating operation of the macro-economy, the role of market became emphasized and greatly promoted economic growth. Industrialization in Beijing developed rapidly from 1978 to 1990, characterized by the fact that the proportion of secondary industry in the national economy (including manufacturing industries and mechanical industries) was increasing and becoming the most important economic sector.

Given dramatic economic growth, the 1990s witnessed the re-adjustment of the industrial structures of Beijing. A market economy allows for competition which accelerates industrial development. As a consequence the share of secondary industry decreased while the proportional share of tertiary industry increased. Labor- and resource-intensive industries were gradually replaced by skill- and knowledge-intensive industries and the proportion of secondary industry contributing to GDP kept on declining. At the beginning of the 21st century Beijing has a knowledge and skill-based economy in which high- and new-tech industries and the electronic information industry form an increasingly important proportion.

As compared with Beijing, the industrialization of Hong Kong began as the consequence of foreign invasion back to the late 19th century under the capitalist system. Before that Hong Kong was an agrarian society with agriculture and fisheries as its main economic sectors. The early stages of development occurred after the Second World War (i.e. the late 1940s and 1950s), during which time industry developed dramatically. The colonial policy which allowed free trade with British and Commonwealth markets and a large amount of capital from the Mainland (i.e. Shanghai and neighboring Guangdong and Fujian) further promoted industrial development. Manufacturing industry began to substitute for the commerce and trade that had traditionally occupied the dominant position in the economy of Hong Kong. At the end of the 1960s, manufacturing had become the most important support for

the economy and affected economic structures.

From the 1970s and 1980s Hong Kong headed towards a more advanced stage of industrialization. Many manufacturing industries were moved to the Mainland to take advantages of cheap labor as well as available land and related services. Given rapid economic development, as industrial structures started to adjust the share of GDP in tertiary industry greatly enlarged exceeding primary and secondary industries as the mainstay of the entire economy. Since then, Hong Kong's economy has become increasingly service-oriented and knowledge-based. At the present time Hong Kong has become a highly advanced industrialized society in which finance, service and business instead of manufacturing industries play an important part in the national economy.

Taking 2008 as a baseline, Table 9.1 shows the degree of industrial development in each of the three regions. Due to lack of data relevant to Wenlin village the main data are calculated in terms of GNP. Since the population of Wenlin is relatively stable, GNP approximately equals GDP. The table shows that tertiary industry shares the largest proportion of regional GDP in Beijing and Hong Kong, while in Wenlin, primary industry has the highest proportion. There are large disparities among these three areas in terms of regional GDP, GDP per capita and income per capita. These three indicators are highest in Hong Kong followed by Beijing. They are lowest for Wenlin.

	<b>Yunnan (Wenlin) village</b>	<b>Beijing</b>	<b>Hong Kong</b>
<b>Economic mode</b>	Agricultural (agrarian) economy	Industrial economy	Highly industrial economy
<b>Regional GDP by primary, secondary, and tertiary industry (percentage)</b>	96% (primary), 4% (secondary and tertiary)	1.1%, 25.7%, and 73.2%	0.1%, 8%, and 92%

<b>Regional GDP</b>	7.16 RMB million (\$1.12 million)	1,048,800 RMB million (\$163,434 million)	1,677,011 HK\$ million (\$214,882 million)
<b>Regional GDP per capita</b>	3228 RMB (\$503)	63,029 RMB (\$9,822)	240,339HK\$ (\$30,796)
<b>Income per capita</b>	1,587 RMB (\$247.2)	24,725/10,747 RMB (urban/rural population) (\$3,851/ \$1,674)	31,420HK\$ (\$4,400)

Table 9.1 Comparison of Industrial Level in Yunnan, Beijing, and Hong Kong

Notes: regional GDP and Regional GDP per capita are exchanged at current market price 1US dollar=6.42 RMB, 1US dollar= 7.81HK\$; per capita income in Beijing and Hong Kong is calculated by Purchasing power parity methodology

Sources: Hong Kong Census and Statistics Department. (2008). *Hong Kong Statistics: Gross Domestic Product (GDP), implicit price deflator of GDP and per capita GDP*. Retrieved from <http://www.censtatd.gov.hk/>; Beijing Municipal Bureau of Statistics. (2008). *Beijing Statistical Information Net*. Retrieved from <http://www.bjstats.gov.cn/>

Word Bank (2008), Database Gross national income per capita, Atlas method and PPP

### Urbanization and mobility

Urbanization and mobility are closely related to industrialization. The process of industrialization in many industrialized countries is punctuated by urbanization and mobility. Urbanization can be defined in both a general and a narrow sense. In a narrow sense it refers to the transition from an agricultural population to a non-agricultural population. In a general sense urbanization includes the constant expansion of the urban population and urban land use, and the process in which an urban society, the economy, and technical change penetrate into rural areas. A simple comparison can be made by comparing the urbanization of the three regions in terms of their share of urban population within the whole population. (As shown in Table 9.2)

	<b>Yunnan (Wenlin village)</b>	<b>Beijing</b>	<b>Hong Kong</b>
<b>Urbanization and mobility</b>	Isolation with low mobility	Rapid urbanization with high mobility	Highly urbanized with high mobility
<b>Urban population (%)</b>	Less than 3% (2008)	84.9% (2008)	99.8% (mid-2009)
<b>Rural</b>	More than 97% (2008)	15.1% (2008)	0.2% (mid-2009)

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**population**  
(%)

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Table 9.2 Comparison of Levels of Urbanization in Yunnan, Beijing, and Hong Kong  
Source: Beijing Municipal Bureau of Statistics. (2009). *Beijing Statistical Yearbook 2009*. Beijing: China Statistics Press; HKSAR. (2009). *Hong Kong 2009*. Hong Kong: Government Printer

Table 9.2 shows that the rural population makes up more than 95% of the entire Wenlin population. In the past, limitations from the geographical environment (which affected transportation especially) and also from the household registration system, confined mobility in this area to visiting neighboring villages. There was little movement from rural areas to urban areas. For example, field investigation shows that many old villagers had never travelled further than the town of Jiulong. In addition, isolated by a mountainous landscape, villagers were less influenced by economic and social development arising from rapid industrialization and modernization in nearby towns and cities. Mobility has become higher in recent years, influenced by encircling cities and more flexible policies, and characterized mainly by young people going out to work in urban areas or going to colleges. But for most middle-aged and elderly people opportunities for movement remain slim.

In recent years Beijing, a newly-industrialized city, has been in the fast lane towards urbanization. It can be noted that to some extent the household registration system of the 1950s and 1960s restricted mobility in rural areas and in certain urban areas. As a consequence Beijing's urbanization was not accompanied by rapid industrialization before the launch of the reform and opening up policy in the 1980s. Because of strict administrative interventions and natural disasters, such as famine in the early 1960s, urbanization processes were at one time stagnated. Moreover political movements from the late 1950s to the 1970s (i.e. the "Shangshan Xiexiang" movement and the Cultural Revolution) brought urbanization nearly to an end. According to official data released by the government between 1963 and 1976, for example, the urban population of Beijing had not increased but rather decreased by 4 per cent, from 57.9% to 54% (Beijing Municipal Bureau of Statistics, 1992).

Increased urbanization and intense mobility resumed in the last two decades. While industrial development in the mid-1980s created a large number of job opportunities, which enlarged the urban scale and population due to relaxation of restrictions concerning rural-urban population migration and constant urban expansion, numerous workers migrated into Beijing. Together with the rapid development of rural and township enterprises, small- and middle-sized towns have been built to accommodate surplus rural laborers and to promote sustainable urban development. Alongside urbanization there has been high population mobility. More recent population statistics show that in 2005 there were 3.6 million people who migrated from other parts of China creating an annual growth rate of 6.9% (Beijing Municipal Bureau of Statistics, 2006). At present migrant workers form an essential part of the Beijing population.

In past decades the urbanization of Hong Kong was more complicated and changeable as compared with that in Beijing. The early urbanization of Hong Kong went hand in hand with industrialization and the large-scale wave of immigration that came to Hong Kong to take advantage of rapid economic growth. In the 1930s and 1940s there was a swelling of refugees from the Mainland to Hong Kong because of the Sino-Japanese war. In consequence the population in Hong Kong nearly doubled, from 840,473 in 1931 to 1,639,000 in 1941 (Liu, 2009). Refugees composed the largest proportion of Hong Kong's population. Another large-scale wave of immigration and intense population mobility came in the wake of the Second World War (the mid-1940s), caused by the establishment of PRC and political movements on the Mainland in the 1960s and 1970s. This period was also accompanied by rapid economic growth and expansion of the manufacturing industry. In consequence Hong Kong's population increased dramatically and urbanization proceeded at a fast pace.

The construction of new towns between the 1970s and 1990s encouraged ever faster urbanization with mass migration from rural areas to the cities and reduction of rural land, in particular in the new territories. By the end of the 1990s Hong Kong was

basically urbanized and after that urbanization gradually slowed down. As can be seen in Table 9.2 by mid-2009 99.8% of Hong Kong's total population was an urban population engaging in non-agricultural activities. There was still frequent work related to migration due to continuing demands for a more flexible workforce and related to the increase in economic links between Hong Kong and the Mainland.

### Capitalization

Capitalism is another far reaching effect of modernity. The process of capitalization makes job opportunities more available as traditional agricultural production is replaced by wage labor. Meanwhile economic entities which aim to pursue profits become established. Comparison of employment patterns and division of labor alone present various contrasting patterns at different levels of modernity.

Wenlin is a traditional rural community where simple division of labor based on sex and age still exists. Most people in the village are engaged in agricultural production. They depend on the land and on subsidiary short-term occupations. Because industry is not yet developed few job opportunities exist in the community but the younger generation, especially men of working age, have access to wage labor in neighboring urban areas. Although limited by low educational status and other factors, when they are not busy with agricultural work villagers now have more opportunities to undertake temporary and casual work but few opportunities for permanent work. However, because of the isolated geographic location and relatively undeveloped transportation, compared with other rural areas in China, the number of people who migrate for work was still few.

When compared with Wenlin, great differences can be seen with regard to conditions in Beijing and Hong Kong. Cities offer many job opportunities. Work opportunities become increasingly complex and specialized as modernization proceeds. Wage labor becomes the main means of making a living for most people but differences exist in the degree of industrialization and urbanization between these two cities so

that employment structure follows different paths of change in the same time period. In general, at an early stage of industrialization, the proportion of employment provided by manufacturing and construction gradually goes up. During the years of rapid industrial growth industry offers the most job opportunities. For instance, the manufacturing industry in Hong Kong offered more than 90% of job opportunities in the 1950s and 1960s, and over 40% in Beijing during the 1980s and 1990s. Later, during the process of industrial transformation, job opportunities offered by the manufacturing industry gradually declined while job opportunities offered by tertiary industry, including finance, services and so on, started to increase.

Economic transformation in Beijing began in the early 1990s while in Hong Kong this had happened in the 1970s and 1980s. In Beijing the increased percentage of job opportunities offered by tertiary industry rose from 41.6% in 1991 to 72.4% in 2008, whereas the percentage of job opportunities offered by secondary industry decreased from 45% in 1991 to 22% in 2008. In Hong Kong, the percentage of job opportunities offered by tertiary industry rose from 12.3% in 1971 to 59.7% in 1989 and 88% in 2009. At the same time, as the social economy developed, occupations became more specialized, complicated, and diversified. Beijing and Hong Kong possess different characteristics because of their different economic structures. For example, the service industry in Beijing employs 40% of total employment, this number being made up from employees in leasing and business services, transport storage and post, wholesale and retail trade, transmission, computer services and software, real estate, and education. The service industry in Hong Kong on the other hand brings together more than 50% of total employment but these are persons working in import/export, wholesale and retail trades, accommodation and food services, public administration, and social and personal services.

### Social policy

Public policy, especially social welfare and family planning policy, is closely related to the transformation of society. It is influenced by additional political and economic

factors. Given the complexity of the socio-economic system and its different formats in different states, it is usually hard to find a universal model to make comparisons between societies. However, as an integrated part of the process in modernity, public policy emerges and develops as a respond to social and economic change. From a macroscopic perspective social policy aligns with all levels of social development. Public policy differs in significance, and influences individuals, families and society differently at different stages of social development. To provide a more convenient comparison a detailed explanation will be given of certain main welfare projects which relate to the family, including education, medical care, social security, housing, and family planning policies.

Social welfare and security in Wenlin village is at a low level. It is available to those in great need of help and assistance, such as the aged and children, but most actions and measures are remedial. This is because the formerly dual rural-urban welfare system was essentially work-based and linked to employment in urban industry or other state sectors. For most people in the rural areas family, relatives, friends and neighbors were presumed to take the main responsibility for social welfare and were the only sources of support (Selden & You, 1997). Welfare support and social resources from communities were only provided when family resources had failed. Recent decades, with the coming of a degree of economic development and reform of social welfare system, have seen some improvements to rural development and the demands of population migration. For example, the government has undertaken responsibility for primary education in the form of the 9-years compulsory education policy and also a portion of medical expenses and pension protection. But for society as a whole the level of social security is still low. An old-age allowance is still in the pilot phase and provides only a small allowance. A rural-cooperative medical system has just been set up but covers only a portion of hospital expenses.

Although Beijing and Hong Kong differ in political system, socialism as against capitalism, the development of social welfare has paralleled economic development



in both systems. The social welfare system in Beijing has been transformed from one that based on the work unit to a national security system. Specifically, from the early 1950s to the late 1970s, the welfare system was essentially established on the basis of a socialist state “model” so as to assist far-reaching industrialization and working class formation (Selden & You, 1997). As illustrated previously it offered generous retirement pensions, free medical care, cheap housing and various supports for all urban employees of state- or collectively- owned enterprises and government offices. In contrast a large number of people in rural areas and people working in private enterprises were excluded (Leung & Nann, 1995; Selden & You, 1997; Selden, 1993). By the late 1970s, the state welfare benefits covered the vast majority of urban employees working in state sectors. Accordingly the role previously taken by family for provision of protection and support gradually declined. However, on the whole, the coverage of social welfare was limited and the “comprehensive and generous” welfare services were costly for the government. In addition, the dual track welfare structure enlarged the urban-rural gap.

In line with the economic reform and opening up policies of the late 1970s and early 1980s, Beijing’s welfare system has been transformed in order to meet the needs of rapidly growing private and non-state enterprises and to facilitate the transition from a centrally planned economy to that mainly based on markets. The coverage has enlarged and additional security programs are now included. The government has devolved certain responsibilities onto individuals and families resulting in a degree of decline in security level. During the process of privatization the old welfare system has been replaced by a new system in which individuals, families, society, and the government share certain responsibilities (Croll, 1999; Dixon, 1981; Davis, 1989). While the new system has extended coverage to include larger groups of people, the benefits and security levels have been reduced. However it can be noted that, during the transitional period from the old system to the new, large differences have come to exist between current and future cohorts. For example, elderly people in the current cohort are eligible for a former state welfare-like pension. Present day

elderly people basically have a sufficiency of support but apart from the basic pension there is little support in the form of community-based services.

In comparison with Beijing, the development of social welfare in Hong Kong has changed direction although following different paths. In the pre-industrial era (i.e. in the late 19th and early 20th century) religious groups provided social welfare mostly in the form of relief to help orphans, widows and those in great need. Based on principles of “laissez-faire” and government non-intervention, taking care of and providing support were seen as the sole responsibility of the family. The colony government took little responsibility. In order to facilitate the development of industrialization and the social economy, a broad comprehensive social welfare system gradually evolved in the mid-1950s. As discussed previously, the major development occurred in the 1970s, when Sir Murray MacLehose announced social welfare plans covering housing, education, and social welfare. The promotion and expansion of welfare and social services had indicated that both government and communities had been taking more responsibility for providing protection for individuals.

However, the development of social welfare and services for citizens from the 1980s is based on “marketization”, within which market values and practices have been introduced. Differences exist in the degree of security offered by various programs. In primary and secondary education and also medical care, the government still bears more of the burden than do individuals. But as regards pensions the government provides little support, pensions are only supplementary. In addition to social security, relatively complete and diversified social services have been created in Hong Kong aimed at serving differing groups of people such as elderly people or children.

Apart from the social welfare programs discussed above, a further important public policy relevant to the family is family planning, or fertility policy. In the path to modern many nations and regions have implemented population policies to match

their level of economic and social development. Generally, when a social economy is under-developed fertility rate is high and the nation's policy focuses on birth control and family planning but when the economy is highly developed many nations and areas encourage childbearing (United Nations, 2003). In Yunnan, Beijing, and Hong Kong various measures were taken to control births during under-developed stages and because of these the fertility rates have declined in the short term. For example, at the late 1970s, the Chinese government practiced a one-child policy in urban areas and a two-child policy in remote rural areas in order to slow down the rapid population growth and facilitate socio-economic development. Although Hong Kong had no compulsory fertility policy, the Family Planning Committee (FPC) in the late 1950s, 1960s and 1970s put out publicity advising that it was desirable to have two children only and launched birth control to achieve a decline in fertility rate.

Table 9.3 shows a comparison of social policy related to family welfare in recent years based on the above analysis of differences between Yunnan, Beijing, and Hong Kong. As discussed in preceding chapters, social welfare and family planning policies differ widely in the three regions as they are under different social systems and have varying socio-economic and political conditions. In Wenlin, because of its self-reliant economy coupled with relatively strong family ties and mutual assistance, there is very limited social welfare and protection for villagers. In contrast Beijing and Hong Kong provide much more comprehensive protection for individuals and families. Yet, due to their different developmental paths and underlying ideologies, disparities are clearly seen in each specific social policy and program.

	<b>Yunnan, Wenlin village</b>	<b>Beijing</b>	<b>Hong Kong</b>
<b>Social welfare policy</b>			
Social security	Limited social security (Five-guarantee system and old-age allowance)	Moderate social security and welfare programs (i.e. old-age insurance), but limited community-based services	Comprehensive social security and services, but insufficient retirement

			protection
Education	9-years compulsory education	9-years compulsory education	12-years compulsory education
Medical care	Rural-cooperative medical system (low security level)	Social-pool-plus-personal-account scheme (moderate security level)	Free or low cost medical care offered by public sectors (high security level)
Housing	None	Privatization of the housing market, but limited protection for low-income families	Privatization of the housing market, public and subsidized housing for low-income families
<b>Family planning policies</b>	Strict two-child policy	Strict one-child policy	None

Table 9.3 Comparison of Public Policies Relating to Family in Yunnan, Beijing, and Hong Kong

#### Overall level of modernity

Based on the analysis above, there is an indication that Wenlin, Beijing, and Hong Kong are at different levels of modernity in terms of the development of industrialization, urbanization, capitalization, and social policy. In general Wenlin today is still in a pre-modern stage although in some aspects it has changed. There has been great progress in many aspects of life. Yet some core characteristics of traditional society still remain. For example, agriculture is still the main and the most important economic sector. There is low population mobility and the rural population makes up the largest proportion of the entire population. Division of labor is simple and mainly based on sex and age. There is very limited social welfare and protection for villagers.

There are no significant structural differences between modernity levels in Beijing and Hong Kong. However the modernity level is relatively higher in Hong Kong as regard to the four aspects discussed above this is reflected in differences in some specific indicators. For instance, Hong Kong is an advanced modern society with

relatively higher GDP per capita and income per capita. Value-added tertiary sectors contribute more than 90% of GDP and the urbanization level is higher than that of Beijing. However the two cities vary significantly in terms of social policy. For medical care, while citizens in Hong Kong enjoy cheap or even free public medical services, people in Beijing have to pay relatively high medical expenses. There is a relatively comprehensive social security and service system in Hong Kong but in Beijing community-based services are still limited. Yet Beijing provides relatively generous pension and retirement protection, particularly for the elderly in the current cohort. By comparison the pension scheme in Hong Kong suffers from low coverage and low protection. Many elderly still have to rely on their family to provide financial support and assistance.

In sum, Wenlin is a pre-modern society, but greatly influenced by circling towns and cities. As a rapidly developing city Beijing is at the cross-roads between modern and advanced modern. Beyond being an old industrialized society in some key aspects, it has the mixed characteristics of modern society yet other characteristics of modern society are still under development. Since industrialization came earlier and lasted longer Hong Kong is an advanced modern society, in every respect development is more complete and stable.

### **9.1.3 Comparison of family structure in Yunnan, Beijing, and Hong Kong**

Based on field study and related statistics, some relationships can be found between change in the family structures of Yunnan, Beijing, and Hong Kong and their socio-economic status during different stages of change. With the development of modernization, the traditional patriarchal family with its hierarchical age and sex characteristics breaks up. New family patterns appear which adapt to the existing socio-economic status. Since the three regions are in different levels of

modernization, family structures show differences in these changes.

In Wenlin village changes in family structure are characterized by shrinkage of family size together with a change in family structure. In spite of lack of accurate data about family conditions before the foundation of the PRC surveys of similar villages of the same age conducted by scholars (i.e. Fei, 1986) suggest that stem families prevailed under the certain conditions of that age. The percentage of broken families and extended families was relatively high. Free from the limitations of a family planning policy some families had more children. But restricted by economic and other factors, death rates were not low despite the high fertility rate. Most families were made up of four to six members. From the 1950s to the early 1970s, village economy grew slowly, but the number of broken families decreased considerably because society stabilized gradually and living and sanitary conditions improved. Especially with the economic reform, socio-economic development and influences from encircling cities family changed to more nuclear type. The launch of family planning in the early 1980s also made family size decrease significantly. In recent years an increase in migrant laborers changed the family with respects to inter-generational relationships and distribution of power within the family. This two caused nuclear families to increase in number but in general stem and large families still account for a relatively high proportion.

Beijing and Hong Kong share many similarities. Before industrialization, especially during the long-lasting wars of the 1930s and 1940s when socio-economic conditions remained underdeveloped, the death rate was as high as the fertility rate and there was a high percentage of broken families. At the same time, influenced by Chinese traditional thought of filial piety, family members helped each other and there were many stem and extended families. As can be seen from certain related literature and field investigations, families at that time were influenced to a large degree by many historical events in addition to socio-economic changes. One such example is that because of wars in the Mainland in the 1940s and 1950s, such as the Sino-Japanese

war and the civil war, masses of refugees took refuge in Hong Kong and made up an important part of Hong Kong's population. Family structure was greatly impacted by these events. After World War II, Hong Kong became a British colony and the two cities followed different developmental paths due to different social and political systems. In Beijing, following the Soviet model of modernization, the great majority of urban residents were employed in State and collectively-owned enterprises. Dual earner households became common. Owing to a shortage of housing, many newly married couples had to live with their parents for some time after marriage and the stem family continued to make up a high percentage of households although the number of nuclear families increased rapidly. In Hong Kong there is evidence that nuclear families have been the most common family pattern since at least the 1960s. According to statistics from the 1970s nuclear families accounted for more than two thirds of total households.

In the 1980s and 1990s the percentage of nuclear families continued to go up in Hong Kong and Beijing while other family patterns, especially extended families continued to decline. From the 1980s the nuclear family became the predominant family type in Beijing while stem and extended families began to decrease constantly. But in recent years changes in family structure cannot be presented by sheer statistics. As socio-economic developments proceed, people's values concerning marriage and family have changed. Such factors as late marriage, a high divorce rate, and cohabitation without marriage have had a great impact on the family. By the 21st century migrant workers from rural areas have come to make up a large proportion of the Beijing population and this causes major effects on family structure. In addition many empty-nest families have appeared due to higher mobility between cities and different provinces. The story of structural change within the family is different from Hong Kong but family patterns also present diverse trends as a result of development. In this city cross-boundary families are on the rise because of a more relaxed immigration policy and a highly mobile, mostly international, population.

#### **9.1.4 Comparison of family support for elderly people in Yunnan, Beijing, and Hong Kong**

Filial piety, a traditional Chinese virtue, is widely accepted and affirmed by most people of Chinese heritage. Family support for the elderly is the most important aspect of this virtue. But patterns of care provision for the elderly have changed greatly with the development of modernization. Field studies conducted in three selected regions found that, for most adult children, care for the elderly is regarded as a kind of responsibility and an obligation although there are many specific differences concerning how care for the elderly should be carried out.

In Wenlin village care for the elderly is a symbol of prestige and respect and sons and daughters shoulder different responsibilities. Home care is closely linked to co-residence. When living with their elderly parents children can render instant help and assistance. To support economic needs children give material assistance in the form of grain food and clothing because often the parents have limited opportunities to spend money. Undoubtedly traditional forms of old-age care have changed to some extent with the socio-economic changes of recent years. It is evident that the pattern of family support for the elderly changes in some families as they achieve better economic conditions. For instance, the division of care responsibilities for elderly parents among sons and daughters is no longer strictly followed because of increasing out-migration for work. However, in compensation, children who migrate for work tend to bring more income and additional benefits to their families.

Beijing and Hong Kong face much more complicated situations. Before the 1940s, due to a lack of social welfare, the responsibility for supporting the elderly was mainly borne by family, and mostly by children providing care for their parents. A majority of old people lived with their children and were offered practical, financial,



and emotional support. In the following decades, in line with socio-economic developments, society and government provided certain levels of support for education, medical care, and retirement security. As employment patterns changed, ways of providing care for the elderly diversified. In general, whether or not to live together is no longer a decisive factor affecting care for the elderly. Spatial distance and separation of family members has failed to cut communication across the family. Rather, many families are intimately bound up. The only differences lie in the manner in which caring is carried out. Filial responsibilities are no longer fixed between sons and daughters as was the case in former tradition, now in most families both provide support and help for their parents.

Taking Beijing as an example children's financial support for parents is mainly embodied in help and assistance in hard times such as when there is a need to see a doctor or buy medicine. But it is noted that financial support from children is mostly complementary since most old people can depend on a pension after retirement. In Hong Kong most old people have insufficient pension and children give money regularly, usually monthly. For many this forms an important source of parental income. From the point of view of daily care, many children cannot provide instant practical help for their parents because of changes in the social division of labor such as full-time employment, and also because of living arrangements. For some families, practical or physical assistance from spouse and friends is common. Families in a good economic situation tend to hire domestic helpers. Similarities and differences can be seen between Beijing and Hong Kong as regards emotional care and communication. One similarity lies in the fact that children tend to communicate with parents via modern communication modalities and the widespread use of telephones especially makes long-distance communication available. An area of difference arises from the fact that possibilities for communication differ when influenced by local custom and culture. In Beijing regular visits and family gatherings are common while in Hong Kong having morning tea together is an important channel for emotional communication and information exchange among

family members.

A comparison of family old-age care in the three regions is shown in Table 9.4. It can be seen that there remain many traditional characteristics and habits in Wenlin with regards to the nature and manner of giving old-age care while in Beijing and Hong Kong, where the social economy is more developed, methods of family old-age care display a growing diversity of characteristics. It is noted that in Wenlin the care and support provided to parents are usually in the form of shared housing, provision of food, clothing and other necessities and less often in the form of direct transfer of income. There are not many differences between Beijing and Hong Kong in terms of family support for the elderly yet level of modernity differs. This is probably because the care and support that are received by elderly are more likely related to the culture and custom in specific areas.

<b>Research Settings</b>	<b>Means of support provision</b>	<b>Characteristics in terms of practical, financial, and emotional support (Normative)</b>
<b>Yunnan (Wenlin)</b>	Simple types	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Different responsibilities between son and daughter</li> <li>• Provision of material assistance (grain food, clothing) rather than cash</li> <li>• Instant help and communication among family members</li> </ul>
<b>Beijing</b>	Various types	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No fixed filial responsibilities between sons and daughters</li> <li>• Giving money occasionally rather than material assistance</li> <li>• Paying visits (i.e. family gatherings), and use of long-distance communication methods (i.e. telephone), as a way of providing emotional support</li> </ul>
<b>Hong Kong</b>	Various types	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No fixed filial responsibilities between sons and daughters</li> <li>• Giving money regularly rather than material assistance</li> <li>• A tendency to pay for services rather than provision of personal care</li> <li>• Paying visits through having morning tea on holidays, and using long-distance communication methods (i.e. telephone) as a way of providing emotional support</li> </ul>

## **9.2 An Explanation of Modernity and Changes in Family**

### **Support for the Elderly**

Drawing on field studies in Yunnan, Beijing, and Hong Kong, certain relationships between levels of modernity and the evolution of family structure and care support for elderly people are explored. Based on a combination of theory and empirical evidence key elements relating to family change will be presented in the following section,. The influence of these factors on family change will be analyzed from macro and micro aspects. As a large number of literatures have explained the changes of family formation, the analysis, in specific, will focus on the changes of family support for old people.

#### **9.2.1 Macro factors associated with family support for the elderly**

There are many macro factors associated with support for old people and they are inseparable, interrelated and interactive. To provide a more comprehensive view of the impacts of modernity on family, it is possible to base analysis on the four processes of modernity: industrialization, capitalization, urbanization, together with changes in public policy. Moreover, since a society's cultural traditions have a powerful influence on the composition and development of the family, certain cultural factors will be included in the analysis. In particular, attitudinal changes towards living arrangements and the role of family in caring for the elderly will be given emphasis.

##### **Industrialization**

In a traditional agricultural society the family is a basic self-reliant economic unit. Family members are the main laborers in agricultural production and make an

important contribution to household income. There is an old saying “the more children the more blessing” indicating that a large family is able to ensure the proper distribution of labor, thus improving agricultural productivity. As seen in field investigation of Wenlin, when there is limited welfare protection family members and extended kin play an important role in helping support family members in need, in particular in old age. In addition, living together benefits both the elderly and adult children. Wang’s comments also reinforce this conclusion that living together is the most economical way to live for families in rural societies. He further explained “*in rural society, family members live together or at least live in proximity to each other in order to get mutual assistance*”<sup>36</sup>. The division of labor among family members makes it easier for young people to take a part-time job in non-agricultural activities and increase family income. In turn, children also provide necessary support for their parents’ old age. Economic cooperation and interdependence reinforce harmony between the generations. The evidence in Wenlin village shows that it has retained some elements of traditional family life, but as more and more adults move out to work the authority of the elderly has declined to some extent. This is possibly because when adult children migrate the degree of direct economic control especially that of parents over their children, declines gradually.

In the process of industrialization, modern modes of production replace traditional agricultural production and become major economic activities. The family becomes a unit of consumption and linkages between family members to enable production activities gradually disappear (Goode, 1963; Hareven, 1976). Instead, wages become the major source of family income and all family members share a common family budget. Elderly who have pensions are evidently more financially independent. More likely, by contributing to the overall family budget, they many still have authority in family matters. In contrast, rural elderly often have to depend on their adult children to provide economic support. Financial dependency implies their influence on family

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<sup>36</sup> Expert Interview YNZ02

decisions is declining.

Another consequence of industrialization is social prosperity and the improvement of people's living standards. For example, in the 1960s and 1970s, when there was rapid growth in the Hong Kong economy, GDP per capita rose dramatically from 5,162 HK dollars in 1971 to 32,080 HK dollars in 1981. In addition family income increased dramatically. This finding is also noted by Chen and Liang (2002). An improvement in economic conditions leads to an upgrading of living standards and changes in living styles. For example, Improved housing conditions and increases in income enable people, especially the younger generation, to afford the purchase of housing in the market, thus the probability of living alone increases. Prof. Yao remarked "*in Beijing, for example, it is the common practice that family give support for the children's marriage. Usually parents give financial assistance to buy an apartment, a car, and expenses on the weddings*<sup>37</sup>." In consequences, the opportunities to live together decrease and with this goes declined availability of providing support for the aged parents. In addition, younger and older generations may become increasingly separated socially, morally, and intellectually (Hooyman & Kiyak, 2008).

There is widespread awareness that adoption of technology is also an important characteristic of industrialization. Science and technology in particular are highly valued. There are many manifestations which emphasize this and one of them is the development of transportation and communications. "*With the development of information technology, telephone, postal services, email, and real-time communication are widely used and people are more tightly linked. This makes communication between parents and children more convenient and allows long distance contact to be available*<sup>38</sup>. Consequently, even though people are more likely to live separately, or even live in different cities or countries, their contacts and

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<sup>37</sup> Expert Interview BJZ01

<sup>38</sup> Expert Interview BJZ02

emotional interactions might not decline. In addition, modern methods of communication and transportation have transformed traditional patterns of interaction in which the vast majority of individuals are able to know and have contact with only a small circle of people. The convenience of transportation makes it easier for family members to get in touch with each other. Even when they live apart, close contact can be maintained if people so wish. Convenient transportation makes instant help available for relatives, especially in times of difficulty or illness and, in addition to this, the wide use of communication tools make them important channels for information exchange and emotional communication between family members. These findings are also supported by scholars such as Kendig (1987) who reported that in the West, such as in Australia, older couples maintain close contacts with their children through the widespread use of modern means of communication such as the telephone, road and air transport.

### **Urbanization**

Two major consequences of urbanization are the presence of a large number of immigrants and extensive population mobility. While the reasons for these factors may be complex, and due in some instances to historical events, the fact remains that they are associated with the rise of industrialization and urbanization. Since more economic opportunities with higher rates of pay are found in modern cities many immigrants enter to seek new job opportunities. In the process of rapid urbanization immigrants become an essential part of the whole urban population. For example, in the 1960s and 1970s most families in Hong Kong were immigrant families and most couples were from towns and villages along the southeastern coasts of China or certain areas in the north. Only approximately one fifth were born in Hong Kong (Wong, 1974). Below follows a discussion of two aspects of the way in which immigration and population mobility impact heavily on support of the elderly.

1. Due to geographical limitations immigrant families tend to be small in size and simple in structure, and sometimes incomplete. Certain expenses are essential for

urban life, such as food, housing, and medical care, and this fact restrains family extension. In the 1950s and 1960s many immigrants from the Mainland came to Hong Kong for job opportunities, leaving their parents in their hometown. As families achieved better economic conditions to a certain degree patterns of work and life experiences changed their lifestyles and values. Differences in lifestyle and custom tend to widen the intergenerational gap and emotional distance, thus affecting family composition and support for the parents. For instance, dispersal of families may lead to changes in the distribution of support network. The need for formal professional services will increase.

2. Geographical separation of family members has a great influence on provision of support for elderly members. On the one hand a rise in income levels caused by immigration is likely to strengthen economic support for parents from children and also improve the state of welfare for the elderly. On the other hand, intergenerational separation is also likely to lead to a decline in care-giving from family members and this is especially reflected in a decline in the availability of physical support. Working outside to supplement household income is becoming an increasingly important pattern for Wenlin villagers. In recent years an increasing number of adult children leave the village and become migrant workers in neighboring towns and cities.

Another notable characteristic of urbanization is that there is a great deal of occupational mobility. People change their jobs freely from city to city and from one part of the country to another. Their places of residence are flexibly and freely chosen. Work-related mobility leads to residential segregation between family members and tends to weaken extended family ties. For example, the city of Beijing is attractive and, relative to other parts of the country, offers opportunities for well-paid jobs so that the vast majority of graduates choose to remain in the city. Although some elderly people move elsewhere to live with their children large numbers remain scattered throughout different areas. Thus, smaller, simpler

households are often observed to be families composed of young couples. The traditional view of “父母在，不遠遊”， which means one should not travel to distant places when one’s parents are alive, is no longer applicable in a modern world. The increasing number of nuclear and empty-nest families is a direct consequence of geographic separation.

### **Capitalization**

One of the fundamental changes occurring as a result of capitalization is the shift in the economy from family production to wage earning. Paid work becomes the main source of family income in a modern industrial society. In Beijing more than 90% of people are employed in non-agricultural industry while in Hong Kong this percentage increases to nearly 100%. In this process of change the younger generation tends to have more opportunities for productive work than do the elderly. Hence, young people are more likely to become economically and socially independent which leads to a decline in paternal authority (Xu, 2002; Chen, 2010). In addition, as labor becomes increasingly specialized, people must take quite a long time and undergo difficult training to respond to the changing demands of society. As a result, adult children as the potential family carers are less available to provide care to dependent older people.

To take up a specialized high level occupation higher educational requirements and lengthy training must be attained. Thus the age for marriage and childbearing are greatly affected and this leads to changes in both attitudes and patterning of families (Chang, 1992). Since each occupation has its own requirements, such as working hours, job responsibilities, and demands for geographical mobility, individuals and families have to adopt a pattern suitable to meet these requirements. Accordingly, under such circumstances families tend to be small and simple because a small family is more flexible and can better satisfy occupational demands. In another respect, as when wages becomes the main source for sustaining life, an individual’s status in the family is more and more decided by his or her economic contribution



rather than by age and sex (Wong, 1981).

Work becomes more competitive and unstable when high-value-added services become the dominant driving force behind overall economic growth, as in “service-based” economies in advanced industrialized societies. While many low- and semi-skilled workers may still be needed in certain traditional industries, more flexible and highly skilled knowledge workers are required in new knowledge-based industries. These changes have brought many social and economic consequences. For instance, new scientific technology creates new jobs primarily for the young, while older workers are more likely to remain in traditional occupations that become obsolete. It may have contributed to the disadvantage of elderly in job market. This trend has also led to the widening gap in income between people who are relatively more educated and specialized and those who are less educated and low-skilled. Given that fact, large disparities in income level and economic condition may arise between family members which may greatly affect their capabilities to provide financial support for their older parents.

Another change brought about by capitalization is a change in patterns of women’s labor participation and employment. Traditionally women seldom took paid jobs in societies based on sexual division of labor. The role of a woman in traditional Chinese society was to be subservient and mostly domestic. Regardless of whether a woman undertook unpaid housework within the family or a paid job outside the family, her work role was seen as supplementary (Li, 1998; Lu & Yi, 1998). In industrial societies, with rising educational attainment and an increase in training opportunities, a large number of women have taken up paid jobs outside the family and make an important contribution to household income. During the first decade after World War II for example, the labor participation rate of women above school age in Hong Kong was on a constant steep rise and they became the major labor force for the manufacturing industry in Hong Kong. From 1951 to 1971, with the number of factories increasing from 1780 to 26,149, about 43% of employees in

manufacturing were women (Gu, 2002). In this circumstance, reliance on women for informal care of older family members, therefore, become less possible than in the past.

Although some are still treated unequally in opportunities for waged work and wages, women's increased participation in the labor force has enhanced their financial independence and hence their status within the family. This has contributed to an advancement of women's economic rights within the family, their persuasive power in decision-making, and also a more equal distribution of housework. Furthermore they have obtained much more freedom in marriage, family issues and careers. Many studies in Hong Kong in the 1970s and 1980s showed that working women had achieved more freedom to make friends, in choice of marriage, and other family issues (Salaff, 1981). Given increasing job and educational opportunities many unmarried young women devote themselves to a career and marry at a later age. When married women have more job opportunities they are more likely to delay childbearing or have fewer children. That might result in significant changes in family structure with fewer potential caregivers in their old age.

Another consequence of women's increased occupational participation is the decrease in the number of potential care givers and a shortening of time available for giving care (Chang, 1992; Mason, 1992). Traditional Chinese families are patriarchal and emphasize the role of the man as breadwinner and the role of a woman as homemaker. Women are mostly regarded as the main care givers. However, women's employment leads to an increasing number of dual-income families and an increase of time spent in working inevitably affects ability to care for family members such as elderly parents. Middle-aged adult children, particularly daughters and daughters-in-law, are the most likely to face competing demands between paid employment and caring for children and old people. The support and the assistance of community members and society are desperately needed. But from an alternative perspective it can be seen that the need for care is not unilateral and the aged are

often able to give some help and support to their adult children, such as taking care of grandchildren.

### **Public policies relating to the family**

The emergence and development of public policy, particularly welfare policy, follows the processes of socio-economic development. Social policies relating to the family have a great effect on both family welfare and change in family structure and support functions for elder adults. In the following the influence on family of four major welfare policies will be given special weight: education, pension schemes, medical care, housing, and family planning.

### **Social Welfare Programs**

Social welfare is the product of social development. As can be seen from the studies in Yunnan, Beijing, and Hong Kong, the nation and the government undertook little responsibility for social welfare provision in the early stages of social development. Individuals had to depend mostly on family, relatives, and a number of charities for basic support and protection. As modernity has developed social welfare has become a responsibility of government and many functions once carried out by the family have been gradually delegated to other social agencies and institutions such as schools, hospitals, and social service agencies (Mason, 1992).

### **Education**

Modern education is a series of learning processes and involves the acquisition of scientific and technological knowledge and the learning skills demanded by a modern society. The development of educational policy and an educational system is often believed to correlate with the rise of modernity. In service- and knowledge-oriented societies especially education must be appropriate for the needs of industrialization and urbanization. The introduction of compulsory education has contributed to promoting equality in educational opportunity and improved the overall level of educational attainment, both of which lead to many socioeconomic

consequences such as higher life expectancy, improved access to contraceptive knowledge and a stronger inclination towards upward social mobility. In Hong Kong women achieving higher educational levels tend to have fewer children than their counterparts with a lower level of education, even when age factors are controlled (Wu, 1985). In Beijing it has also been suggested that the fertility rate is inversely correlated with educational level (Tang, 2005).

A further consequence of improving levels of education is that the relationship between couples becomes more equal. It is well known that traditional Chinese families were patriarchal in character. Only a small minority of men were privileged to receive much education while women were often kept out of the educational system completely. There was little formal education for the masses until industrialization was well under way. Women gained equal rights to education with the establishment of modern educational systems and the generalization of primary education and this gave them increased opportunities for participating in the labor force. Yet the increasing number of people staying in education for longer periods caused tendencies towards later marriage, postponement of childbearing and increased possibilities that a woman would remain single. In Hong Kong the median age at marriage for women rose from 24.7 in 1981 to 29.4 in 2006 while for men the median age at first marriage was 33.1 in 2006, an increase from 28.1 in 1981 (Hong Kong Census and Statistic Department, 2010b). This in turn might lower the number of potential family caregivers in the young generation (Mason, 1992).

### Pension schemes

As long as socio-economic development remained at a low level the State was unable to provide universal protection for old people. Responsibilities for supporting the elderly were borne mostly by individuals and families, particularly adult children. The government provided material and economic assistance only for those who were disadvantaged such as the childless and the poor. When a modern society establishes a pension scheme increasing numbers of old people receive monetary support from

the government (Ikels, 1990; Friedmann, 1985). Pension schemes may differ significantly in nature and format due to differing cultural and historical traditions but in modernized societies the state takes on some extent of responsibility for old-age support formerly undertaken by families and this lightens the burden on individuals and the family (Perkins, 1986).

A pension system undoubtedly has a powerful impact on individuals and families. Sufficient retirement benefits from a pension or insurance scheme results in the demands for family provision of assistance being reduced. Otherwise elderly persons might have to work to an advanced age and depend upon family support during their later years (Chang, 1992; Mason, 1992). Our findings support this phenomenon. For example, in Beijing as coverage grows, pensions become an essential part of income for many old people and their economic independence improves greatly. Economic support from children comes to play a supplementary role. The 2001 survey of 1% of the population in Beijing indicated that pensions were the main source of livelihood for most old people. About 69.3% of old people regarded their pension as their chief source of livelihood while support from family members was reported as important by 23.4% and only 7.3% were reliant on other sources of support such as income from wages (Research Center on Aging in Beijing, 2006). In contrast in Hong Kong, because there is no universal pension scheme and the work-related insurance scheme provides insufficient retirement protection, economic support from children is also important.

### Health

Development of health and medical care services has led to a decrease in mortality rate with the greatest improvement being amongst infants. When life expectancy increases there are more people living longer. In Hong Kong, in 1981 life expectancy was 72.3 years for males and 78.5 years for females. By 2006, the corresponding figures showed an increase to 79.4 years for males and 85.5 years for females (Hong Kong Census and Statistics Department, 20010b). The development of public health

services in Beijing after the foundation of the PRC led to a sharp drop in mortality rates. Life expectancy in 1950 was as low as 52.84 years. This had increased to 73.62 years in 1982 (Li,1987), and further to 76.7 years by 2000. The universal health care system brought about extensive improvements in people's health, which resulted in a longer life-span into old age. A survey of 1% of the Beijing population in 2005 found that most old people were healthy. About 85% of people reported good health, but there were about 14% of old people who reported being unable to work or take care of themselves, suggesting poor health (Beijing Research Center on Aging, 2006). When they experience improvement in health status a majority of people maintain a vigorous life and suffer a very short period of ill health. However, this also means there will be a higher proportion of very old people and because of disability or illness in the last years of life some old people require long-term medical and intensive care from others. In addition the high probability of elderly people suffering from dementia and other chronic diseases results in increased medical expenses which may lead to economic pressure on family members (Chang, 1992).

### Housing

Housing policies have a significant impact on family composition. To some extent improved housing conditions speed up the growth of small-sized families, especially nuclear families. As Zhang said, "*improved housing conditions and increases in income have enabled more people to live apart from their parents.*"<sup>39</sup> But the style and size of housing available varies from one place to another due to differences in social conditions and the geographical environment. In Hong Kong, for example, many public and private flats are small in size and people cannot live together yet many newly married couples would choose to move out if only economic conditions permitted (Li, 1991; Chan, 1997). However, before the housing reform in Beijing, the distribution of housing depended on one's work unit. Because of a shortage of housing few couples were allocated housing immediately after marriage and had to

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<sup>39</sup> Expert Interview BJZ03

live with their parents for quite a long period. The privatization of housing led to rapid growth in housing construction while rocketing prices became a major burden on most families. Some newly married couples could afford only an apartment far from the downtown area while some had to rent a house (Li, 2009). However, separate housing does not necessarily result in destruction of family ties. In our findings it is also noted that some families still live in close proximity and provide help and assistance to one another.

### Family planning policy

Family planning policy has had a significant influence on family structure. When birth rates were still high and the mortality rate dropping family planning policy aimed at playing a major role in bringing about a sharp drop in population growth. This led to a reduction in average family size. For instance, from the 1950s to the 1970s, families with several children accounted for the majority of households in Beijing. After the 1980s compulsory family planning policy brought about a steep decline in birth rate since most couples were allowed only one child. Of women of childbearing age surveyed between November 1st, 1999 and October 31st, 2000, 87.4% had only one child while 11.9% had two children and only 0.7% had more than three children (Tang, 2005). Even though Hong Kong had no compulsory family planning policies the government encouraged fewer and healthier births. In the 1950s and 1960s the Family Planning Association (FPA) contributed to a great decrease in birth rate and a consequent shrinkage in family size (Wu, 1985; Go, 2002).

Another potential consequence of family planning will be a future decrease in the number of children and thus of care giving resources available for elderly people. Since family planning policy came into practice in the early 1980s there has been massive growth in the number of one-child families in Beijing. When children grow to the age of marriage 4-2-1<sup>40</sup> family style will be on the rise and care resources in

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<sup>40</sup> 4-2-1 family style means four elderly, two adult children, and one child.

such families will decrease dramatically.

Based on the analysis above, Table 9.5 summarizes the influence of macro factors of modernity on family changes.

<b>Modernization</b>	<b>Key transformations and the changes of family as regards elderly care</b>
<b>Industrialization</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Modern modes of production → social prosperity and the improvement of living standards; changes in living arrangement and availabilities of providing support for the elderly (i.e. the preference for and affordability of separate housing)</li> <li>● Adoption of technology → easier information exchange and communication between adult children and their elder parents</li> </ul>
<b>Urbanization</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Immigration → an increasing proportion of immigrant families; changes in the distribution of support network</li> <li>● Population mobility → geographic separation of family members and constraints on family support resources</li> <li>● Occupational mobility → residential segregation between family members, probably leading to weakened extended family ties</li> </ul>
<b>Capitalization</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Wage labor → occupational demands, leading to late marriage and childbearing; less potential carers in old age</li> <li>● Highly specialized division of labor → large disparities in income level and economic conditions, influencing family welfare and capabilities of financial support</li> <li>● Changes in women's labor participation and employment → more equality in job and educational opportunities, decrease in potential care givers and shortening of time available for giving care</li> </ul>
<b>Social Policy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Social welfare programs  <u>Education</u> → equality in educational and occupational opportunities, leading to more equal family relationships  <u>Pension schemes</u> → increased economic independence of individuals and wellbeing of the elderly  <u>Health and medical care</u> → decreased in mortality rate, longer life expectancy, but may lead to increase of intensive care for some people in very old age.  <u>Housing</u> → improved housing conditions but may lead to separate living and changes in support patterns for elderly</li> <li>● Family planning policy → shrinkage in family size and care giving resources</li> </ul>

Table 9.5 The Influence of Macro Factors of Modernity on Family Support for Elderly People

It can be seen from Table 9.5 that the macro factors which influence the family are



diverse and complex. While these cause changes in family formation and bring constraints on family support resources, increased possibilities are created. For example, although population mobility may lead to separation of family members causing changes in living arrangements, the development of communication and transportation makes for easier information exchange and communication among family members. A parallel case is that when there is an increase in women's participation and employment in labor, which may result in decrease in potential care givers and shortening of the time available for giving care, there is a counterbalancing increase in women's economic ability to support their parents. Thus, an important point to note is that when we consider the effects of modernity on family, a more comprehensive perspective and systematic analysis should be adopted.

### **Attitudinal and secular change through modernity**

In China family composition and endowment functions are being severely hit by modernity while remaining deeply influenced by Chinese cultural traditions. The attitudes many people have towards marriage is greatly influenced by modern ideas. For example, as in western countries, China now faces increased divorce and cohabitation rates. Data from Beijing and Hong Kong show that the divorce rate is on the rise at the same time as remarriage and cohabitation rates are increasing. Yet many traditional values such as filial piety still exist and have not disappeared. The attitudes of two generations towards living arrangements and the role of family in caring for the elderly will be explored below to cast light on the influence of modernity.

### Who should care for the elderly?

Confucian values concerning family responsibility dictate that individuals are expected to have regard for their parents, cousins, uncles, and grandparents and love their brothers, sisters, and children. In such a context caring for elderly parents is believed to be a ritual behavior and is defined as a personal obligation to be widely

accepted by both children and their parents. Great changes have taken place in rural China since a collapse in the collective economy followed economic reform. Reform exerts certain influences on society, decreasing the status of old people while leaving intact traditional ideas about the role of children in family care giving.

There seems to be a paradox in modern societies such as in Beijing and Hong Kong. Interviews have shown that most elderly people are willing to retain as much independence as possible, even in advanced old age, and do not want to place great pressure upon their children at the same time there is broad agreement among children that they have an obligation to help elderly parents if help is needed. When asked their opinion about “filial responsibility for the elderly” many old people indicated that from a moral perspective children do have an obligation to look after their parents but they do not require them to do so from their own perspective. Some old people showed concern about their children and wished to relieve any perceived burden upon family care givers. Here are three examples:

[CaseBJE02]. Mrs Du said: “I think that children don’t have to take the responsibility for looking after us. Their primary task is to take care of their own family. For us, we need to keep healthy and have our own lives.”

[Case BJE06] Mr. Qiu responded: “We don’t require our child to support us. He is willing, yet unable to provide support in our daily life. He has been under a lot of pressure from his work. He won’t say that he can’t help but the extent to which he can provide help for us is another problem.”

[Case BJE09] Mrs. Wu said: “Chinese tradition asks that children take care of their parents. But from our perspective, we don’t want them to take this responsibility. They have a lot of work to do and we don’t want to add to their work load.”

While elderly respondents agree about filial responsibilities younger interviewees are more likely to identify their obligation to offer help as greater than that of other kin. In a question about the role of adult children in supporting parents, most respondents indicated that it is their responsibility and a duty as well as a commitment that cannot be avoided or shifted. They saw the link between children and parents regarded as a

special category of relationship in which there are mutual liabilities and obligations. In addition several interviews revealed that some respondents are willing to consider care giving by children as an act of returning in kind rather than a requirement.

### **9.2.2 Micro factors associated with family support for the elderly**

Styles and choices made in order to provide for old people are greatly influenced by macro-level social, economic, and political forces. However, at the same time, the potential for and practice of family care for the elderly is related to individual-level factors such as differing personalities, values, social and economic conditions, and personal experiences as well as critical events. The following will focus on five major factors:

- The personal condition of elderly people including their state of health and dependency
- Critical events related to care
- The socio-economic status of adult children
- Family relationships
- Availability of informal support

#### The personal condition of elderly people, state of health and dependency

*“For those elderly under poor economic conditions, what they want most is financial support; for those with a high income, emotional support might be of most importance; and for old people who are physically dependent, practical help is the greatest need”<sup>41</sup>.* No such rules govern the provision of care. The capacity of old people to look after themselves affects the need for care. The following analysis of provision of economic support by children illustrates different strategies adopted in diverse situations.

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<sup>41</sup> Expert interview BJZ02

It is evident from several in-depth interviews that the financial support required by old people varies according to their economic condition. The better-off, those with income from a retirement pension, other allowances, an occupational pension or savings, are more independent than those with a low income which can sustain only a basic level of life. Adult children make corresponding adjustments in the way they take care of their parents. Here is an example:

[Case HKE02] Mr. Huang is 66 years old. Now retired he has only a limited pension and an old age allowance which hardly supports him. Because he is still in good health his children give only limited practical help but to survive he relies mainly on monthly financial support from his three children.

In a different case Mr. Bao discussed his considerations concerning the economic support he provides for his parents. He said:

[Case HKA10] “I think the greatest support I give my parents is money. My parents haven’t any kind of retirement protection and they couldn’t be economically independent. I have to take the responsibility for supporting them financially though I admit that the good relationship between me and my parents is another important factor.”

Adult children may adjust the amount of economic care given to elderly parents at a higher income level. For example, Mr. Fu said:

[Case BJA02] “We don’t give money to my mother regularly (his father had died), because she has had sufficient pensions to support herself. Usually I give her 2000 to 3000 Yuan at every festival and at Chinese New Year. But when she needs money, for example if she gets ill, I definitely would support her economically.”

[Case HKA01] Ms. Tang said “usually I go to visit them (parents) once or twice a week. They don’t need us to support them financially as they have enough savings, as well as other income. I just give them money at festivals and on their birthdays”.

### Critical events relating to care

Most elderly people, especially those below eighty, have a long period of independence. They need only small amounts of practical help such as shopping and

cleaning. However critical events such as sickness or loss of a spouse change situations particularly when problems of disability, personal care, and financial support arise. Adult children respond by adjusting strategies for providing the financial or other formal assistance needed. Such changes are particularly reflected in provision of nursing care. The practical support and nursing care needed differs between those in relatively good healthy and those who need a high level of intensive care. Findings from several field investigations show the limited provision of practical care given by children when parents are healthy. However, when caregiving becomes more demanding, family members may reconsider both the amount and level of care they can provide. Children may involve themselves in direct personal care and practical help or may pay for services provided by formal institutions. For example, Mrs. Song said:

[Case BJA04] “Usually we (the adult children) would take care of parents by ourselves when they get ill. Only when we can’t manage our work and care work at the same time we do pay for helpers to look after them instead.”

It has been shown that adult children are likely to give extra money, other financial aid, emotional support, and assistance with services when events such divorce and loss of spouse occur.

#### The socio-economic status of adult children

Several field investigations indicate that varying socio-economic circumstances greatly affect care provided for older parents. Children have differences in their capabilities for giving care to their parents, for example, a professional person who takes a full-time job and works for ten or more years is in a different situation from a person with a part-time job who just has entered the workforce. Individual earnings, savings, and other factors such as stresses caused by high costs for housing and rearing children, or stress from working long hours influence the strategies that adult children adopt when providing care for parents. General economic conditions may also affect the economic support provided by adult children. As Prof. Xu has pointed

out *“The worst situation might be that when the earnings of children are low, they feel difficulties in providing support and cannot afford to pay for substitute care or give financial support for their elderly parents”*<sup>42</sup>. This became particularly true for some young people in the generation after the 1980s. Here are two examples:

[Case HKA11] Mr. Deng now in his 30s has taken a part-time job. His parents are retired but without any kind of pension. He said “I’ve been under a lot of pressure. I find it difficult to support them financially. The support I give my parents is limited.”

[Case HKA08] Mr. Qian said “my child already graduated from college. But you know, the economic situation is not so good. I see many of my friends’ children who have reached 30 or older, they can’t even support themselves financially, not to mention supporting their parents.”

In fact, adult children adapt the strategy appropriate for different socio-economic conditions. Poor conditions almost invariably restrict the ability of children to support their parents financially and may cause a reduction in practical help and emotional support.

### Family relationships

The family relationship between adult children and their parents is a further important factor influencing care provision within the family. Elderly people seldom admit or complain about bad relationships between them and their children but they are greatly affected when a low quality of care is a consequence of disruption, neglect, or abuse, and separation of family members. Emotional distance often affects interaction between caregiver and care recipient negatively and limits the availability of adult children as potential sources of support in old age. Here is an example:

[Case HKE07] Seventy-year-old Mrs Cao lives with her husband, aged around 80 years. They have two sons and one daughter. Now they live with the youngest son and his family. Because no domestic helpers were available Mrs Cao and her husband help look after the

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<sup>42</sup> Expert interview HKZ02

grandchildren but apparently they do not have a good relationship with their sons. She said: “only our daughter gives us 500 HKD every month, and we have an added old age allowance, so a total of 2000 HKD, a 1000 for each of us every month from government. We have no other sources of income. Our youngest son gets a tax refund because of living with us but he never gives us money back. You know, now the situation is ‘parents rearing children, children rearing grandchildren’.”

From the case described above it is clear that strained family relationships may lead to negative attitudes or behaviors towards aged parents which influence the extent and quality of care they receive. More importantly it may put the elderly at risk of neglect and influence their psychological well-being.

#### Availability of other informal support

The extent of care children provide by is also influenced by the availability of care from a spouse or from relatives. During field investigations some old people indicated that instead of children, their spouses, siblings, and friends become daily primary care givers. Support from extended kin and other informal sources can replace or substitute for that which should be provided by children. This is particularly true as regards practical help. It is evident that many elderly people are more willing to ask siblings, friends, and neighbors before seeking support from their children. Mrs Du said:

[Case BJE02] “My children are too busy and I don’t want to bother them. I ask my friends and neighbors if I need help. We worked in the same enterprises before and live in the same community. We often help each other”.

[Case HKA06] Mrs Cong said “my mother doesn’t require us (she and her husband) to visit her. Since her divorce she has been living with five domestic helpers who were once servants in her family many years ago.”

Older people who never married and who are childless lack a traditional support system. When faced with health problems and in need of instrumental help they are likely to turn to their spouses (if available), siblings, and friends. However they also tend to seek formal assistance.

### **9.3 A Geo-Adaptation Model**

Individual's experiences can become an integrated part of broad social change. Different generations, such as adult children and elderly parents, will have unique life experiences and develop their own ways of thinking about historical periods. Within the family these differences are reflected in the divergent adaptive strategies that adult children and their elderly parents use to organize family life and deal with family issues. The traditional way of interpretation, which emphasizes that macro structural factors may have a basis in reality, in practice lacks a comprehensive analysis of interaction between family members, especially between adult children and their parents. When society has developed to a stage where individuals have access to more opportunities, and when variations between individual people and groups is becoming larger, it is believed that an approach combining macro and micro factors offers a better way of interpreting change in the structure and function of the family.

A comparison of family structure and family support for elderly people in Yunnan, Beijing, and Hong Kong suggests that the consequences of family change should not be evaluated on the basis of either macro or micro factors only. While there is broad agreement that modernity brings many changes to families in general the uniqueness and diversity of each family have usually been neglected. The classical theory of modernity emphasizes the need to understand family change in the light of macro-level social, economic, and political forces, and differently structured social positioning in socio-economic status and family relationships has been devalued, yet these are matters which create lifelong disparities. Hence, evidence from this study does not necessary support the classical viewpoint.

The findings from survey data and from analysis of sixty-two semi-structured interviews about family experiences show that interaction between macro factors of modernity and micro adaptation strategies forms the key to understanding change in



family support for the elderly in all family types. At this point it is necessary to turn to an alternative way of thinking about family change which this study has espoused as the “geo-adaptation” model (See Figure 9.1).

By adopting this approach, we see family change as the outcome of interaction between the level of modernity and specific individual strategies. Although every family exists within a similar economic, political, and socio-cultural context, every family also has its own specialties and strategies for coping with certain changes. The spread of modernity evidently causes general and pervasive psychological and behavioral changes in family members yet individual adaptation strategies are influenced also by personal characteristics, family experiences and occurrence of critical events. In this sense the formation of the family, and decisions of family members in a given society, is not determined solely by external factors such as economic, social and political conditions but also by the complicated interaction of such factors with each individual’s differing psychosocial and behavioral traits.

In various types of society, whether pre-modern such as agrarian, pastoral, hunting and gathering societies, or modern such as industrial and post-industrial groupings, people prefer certain types of family because some forms are helpful for adjustment within that society. In addition, individuals will choose adaptation strategies appropriate for their own traits and conditions. In consequence family structure and certain functions are formed through a process of compromise between macro social-economic factors and micro individual conditions. Such a compromise is also a consequence of interaction between the universal ideal and personal realities.

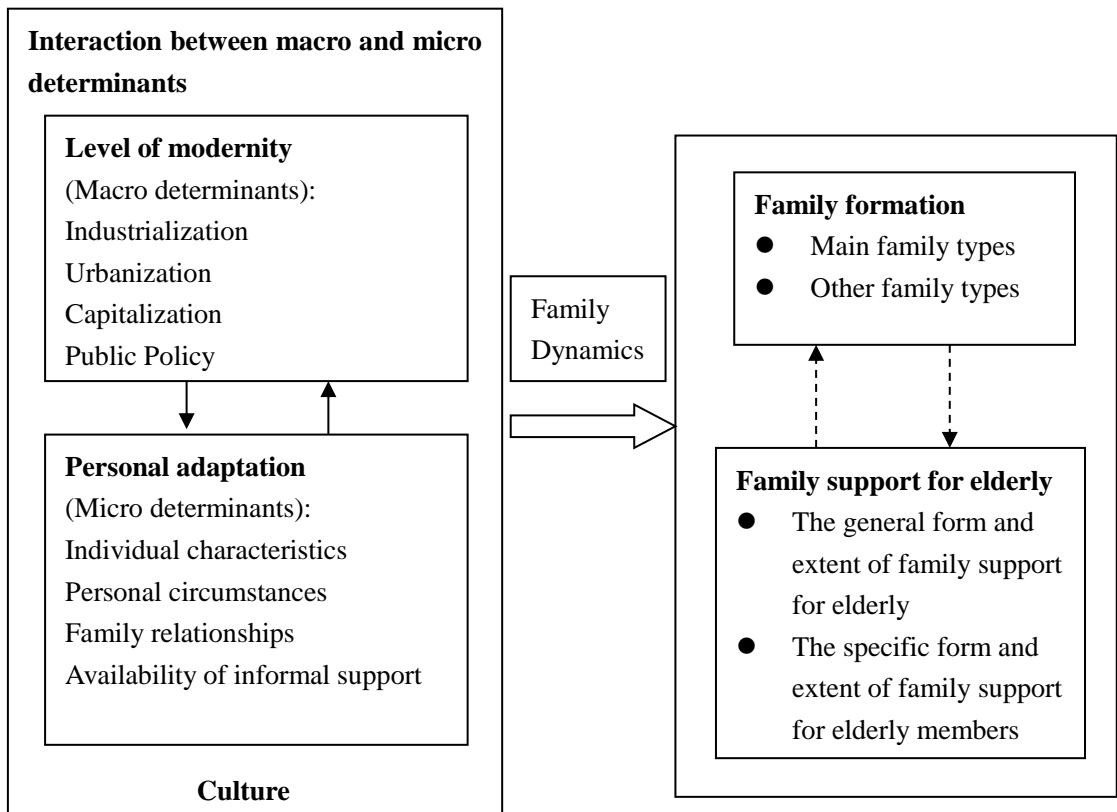


Figure 9.1 The Geo-adaptation Model

## 9.4 Selected Factors and Their Impacts on Family Support for Elderly Members

A general analysis is made above of the basic factors of modernity and their effects on care function into the Geo-adaptation model the following section explores in depth certain major macro factors and the interplay between such macro factors and individual micro adaptation.

Figure 9.2 presents in schematic form how major changes in familial care and support for the elderly stem from selected factors of modernity. In this figure, causal relationships are shown with single-headed arrows. To illustrate these processes, the analysis is divided into two levels. Level 1 represents societal-level analysis and illustrates the effects of social welfare, specialization of labor, migration, and filial

piety on structural transformation of the family. Level 2 displays an individual-level analysis based on interaction of macro and micro factors of modernity and explains how people chose adaptation strategies to face the challenges from both outside and inside perspectives.

#### **9.4.1 General trends and patterns—the effects of macro factors**

The processes linking the four selected macro-economic and social changes to the transformation of family are shown on the left of the Figure 9.2. In the following, the impacts of four selected macro factors of modernity on structural changes of family are illustrated.

##### **Social welfare, specialization of labor, migration, and filial piety**

The development of social welfare has complicated and diverse impacts on living arrangements and availability of formal support. On the whole, as welfare systems develop, individuals receive more support from such areas as society, economy, and culture. Meanwhile, different social welfare programs have different impacts on individuals and families and provide different degrees of support. From an economic viewpoint, a pension scheme improves the economic independence of the elderly, ensuring greater possibilities for independent living (Ikels, 1990; Mason, 1992). However the degree of support differs according to different systems. For example in Hong Kong, MPF, a key component of social security, is far from adequate so that the formal support elderly people acquire is insufficient. By contrast, there is a higher level of retirement security in Beijing. Most elderly people can cover their daily necessities through their pension (See Table 9.6). However, in terms of health care, Beijing provides relatively less security than Hong Kong and in turn there is a higher need for financial support from families and children.

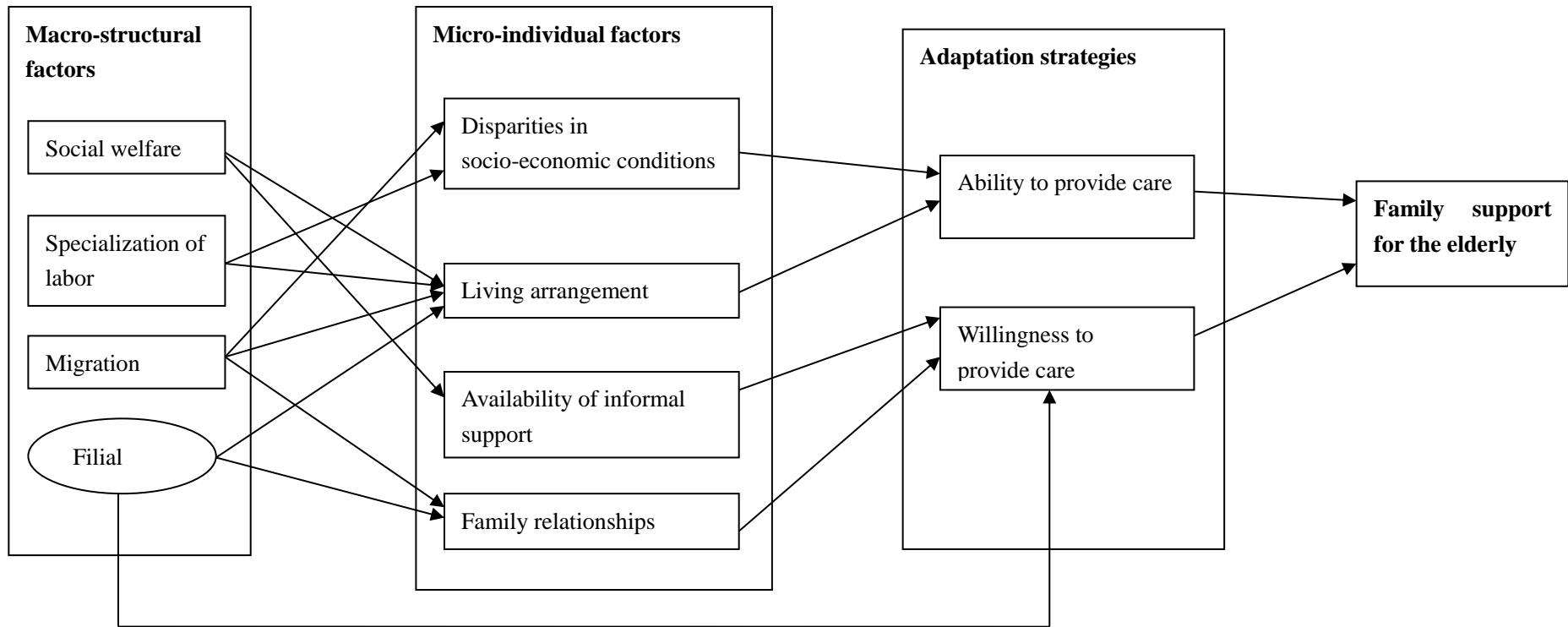


Figure 9.2 Effects of the interplay between migration, specialization of labor, and social welfare on care for the elderly

	Have enough pension			Have pension but not enough			Have no pension		
	Major source of income			Major source of income			Major source of income		
	Pension	Children	Others	Pension	Children	Others	Other social welfare programs	Children	Others
<b>Yunnan</b>	2							8	
<b>Beijing</b>	9							1	
<b>Hong Kong</b>	1			2	1	1	1	2	3
<b>Total</b>	12			2	1	1	1	11	3

Table 9.6 Major sources of income for elderly people in Yunnan, Beijing, and Hong Kong

The housing system of a society affects living arrangements to a great extent. With the advance of urbanization more and more people choose to live in cities. Compared to rural areas living spaces in urban areas are smaller and this fact influences a change in living arrangements. On the one hand, when market supplies expand and living conditions improve, there is a greater probability that generations will live separately. But on the other hand, as accommodation becomes privatized, the market price of housing becomes much higher. In Hong Kong for instance, ordinary people cannot afford large expensive houses but normal houses cannot hold all the members of an extended family. We have found a similar case in our interviews. For example, taking housing into consideration, many citizens in Hong Kong have a preference for a nuclear family and separate living accommodations. Of course this does not exclude the possibility that several generations, elderly parents, adult children and grandchildren, may live together when they enjoy a priority in the process of applying for public housing

[Case HKA1] Ms. Tang said, “In Hong Kong, a house with 600 or 700 square foot is counted big enough. It is not spacious enough for a couple and one or two children, let alone living with parents.....Unless you can afford a big house, the family (of three or more generations) can’t live together.”

To a large extent in modern society specialization of labor contributes to different socio-economic conditions among individuals and families. For instance in their

study Matsui and Postlewaite (1997) found that specialization of labor was the leading cause for income disparities. Our findings support this trend, which is characterized by greater income disparities among people with various occupations. To be specific, in Wenlin, where the division of labor is simple, there are no distinct differences in income among individuals engaged in agricultural production. But in Beijing and Hong Kong income differences are distinct among people with different occupations working in different industrial sectors. The major reason is that high levels of specialization call for diverse skills and responsibilities and there are great disparities among different economic sectors. We find in our research that modern occupations result in substantial differences in the socio-economic conditions of individuals and families. For example, for some occupations that require high levels of professional skill, such as teaching or research in colleges or universities, business men, and doctors, generate higher income levels than those of other industries. Thus people with such skills have more resources and are capable of purchasing services, and thus can provide more economic support for elderly family members.

Certainly occupational division also is associated with differing social systems. For example, before the economic reform salaries in Beijing were established through a centrally planned system and were at similar levels. Later disparities in income level arose among a wide range of specific occupations. Specialization of the labor force tends to affect family housing arrangements. There are jobs which require a high degree of mobility and cause territorial separation between individuals and their families. In interviews in Beijing it was apparent that many people work and live there separate from their parents who live in different cities.

Yao (2001) stated that population mobility has dual effects on familial care for the elderly. One factor is that separation of family members causes reduced resources for care. A second is that supportive dynamics for familial care of elderly people are likely to be improved. However, field research indicates that migration does not necessarily effect positive changes in the socio-economic conditions of families. For

example, in Wenlin families in which children migrate for work have better socio-economic conditions than those with no children migrating. Seen from the perspective of local economic conditions, remittances are mainly used to cover living expenses and also to build new houses. But not all families benefit from members who leave the village for work. There is no improvement in economic condition for some families whose members, especially children, go outside Wenlin to find a job because the income of these migrants does not cover the cost and expense of working and living away, much less seeking the welfare of the family and elderly people. Moreover, migration also results in changes in living style and intergenerational relationships. For some families migration of children results in a higher possibility of people living alone or living with their spouse. But it is also noted that the effects of migration on families are not unidirectional. For other families, migration of one or more children does not affect the way elderly people live. There is also evidence of residential proximity between older parents and their adult children. For instance, the field study in Beijing finds that elderly parents choose to live with children who have not migrated while others of their children are working at a distance. It may be the case that it is not the adult children but elderly people themselves who have a preference for living separately. In addition, migration effects a change in family relationships, especially the relations between children and parents. Geographical separation results in fewer face-to-face communications among family members, and this may widen the gap between them. The study in Wenlin shows that some children working out of the village still remain in contact with their families while others are out of touch year round.

In traditional Confucian culture filial piety has the most substantial impact on familial care for the elderly. Traditionally this requires that children live with their elderly parents and take care of them. However, with the development of modernity and industrialization, while the essence of filial piety remains, it is performed in various forms and patterns (Chan, 1997; Lee, 1994; Chen, 2010). As an example, it is universally acknowledged among children in Wenlin that they can provide adequate

support and help for parents only when they live together whereas in modern societies, such as in Beijing and Hong Kong, many children believe that it doesn't affect their provision of care for parents whether they live with their parents or not. The advancement in communication technology makes it possible to keep in regular touch with parents even if they don't live together. Modern transportation enables children to provide necessary support and help if needed. However, as discussed in previous section that the critical events such as sickness or loss of a spouse may change the living arrangement of the elderly. Therefore, in this sense filial piety in Chinese Confucianism can be seen to have diverse impacts on living arrangements.

In addition the impacts of filial piety on family relationships should not be ignored. In Confucian culture the concept of filial piety lays emphasis on “Xiao” 孝 and “Di” 悌<sup>43</sup>, which contribute to the establishment of good family relationships and intergenerational solidarity. However as society develops people become less bound by traditional thoughts but pursue independence and freedom which have complex effects on family relationships. For most children there is no contradiction between respecting parents and seeking self-independence and self-reliance. As a result they can maintain a harmonious and supportive intergenerational relationship. But other children, in particular those who work away from their family, are more likely to be influenced by modern concepts and ideas such as individual freedom. For them filial piety is declining gradually. For example, one study shows that when migrants work away from their family, while some may remit funds to their parents others do not (Bartlett & Phillips, 1997).

Therefore there are complex and diversified impacts on families from macro factors of modernity. On this macro level these impacts represent the general direction and patterns of family change and as a whole transform the composition and internal interaction of families. But it is also to be noted that family change and development

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<sup>43</sup> “Xiao” 孝 means that children should take good care for parents, and “Ti” 悌 refers love and respect among brothers and sisters



is not unidirectional but a complex and diversified process. Modernity brings about more possibilities giving individuals more choices. When they have to choose the right form of familial care for elderly people individuals often make adaptation strategies fit to their particular individual and situational conditions.

#### **9.4.2 Adaptation—interplay between macro and micro factors**

From this study we find that, although macro factors can explain some similar patterns of family change, they also determine differences in conditions at micro-individual level such as socio- economic status and living environments. The result is that individuals have substantial differences in capability and willingness to care for the elderly. Adaptation strategies of individuals and families reflect the consequence of interplay between macro and micro factors and help to explain why various families have differing abilities and willingness to support their elderly members. These interactive processes are shown on the right of the Figure 9.2. In the following, a detailed explanation is provided.

##### **Ability to provide care**

Disparities in socio-economic conditions affect a person's ability to provide care. From an economic perspective income is directly proportional to the ability to provide economic support for elderly parents. Compared with low income individuals, individuals with a higher income are able to provide more economic support for their older parents. For example in Wenlin, where agriculture is the main source of living, children generally have a low income which determines that they are likely to provide only basic living expenses for their parents. General social living standards improve dramatically with modernity. As income increases, the ability of children to provide financial support and assistance for their parents has increased. However at the same time changing patterns of employment and the specialization of labor have a major influence on care abilities within the family.

Children living under improved socio-economic conditions have additional economic resources with which to support their parents. Even though they might not have enough time and energy to look after parents by themselves they are able to pay somebody to take care of their parents. In contrast adult children from poorer social and economic conditions not only provide their parents with little or no economic support but also they need to seek economic assistance from their parents. Thus, in this regard, disparities in socio-economic conditions determine the degree of children's ability to provide care, and affect the care parents are able to receive. For example, Mr. Bao remarked,

[HKA10] "My parents have not got pension, basically depending on my sister and me (to support). For some time, I gave 40% to 50% of income to my parents every month. Now I have higher income, and I give them about 10,000 HKD per month. This is of course closely related to my income. Nowadays a lot of people do administrative work, so it is rather difficult to give parents 4,000 to 5,000 Yuan a month."

As compared with Mr. Bao, Mr. Deng is in a worse economic condition. He said,

[HKA11] "I am now looking for a job because the former contract has come to an end. My present income is from some part-time jobs. My parents are both retired and they have not got any pension. I feel I am under great pressure in all aspects. I haven't provided much support for them, and what I can do is to save more time to accompany with them."

Additionally, living arrangements are closely associated with the ability of children to take care of their parents, especially to provide practical and physical support. Of course this connection is regarded as relative rather than absolute. In rural areas with a low level of modernity the connection between living arrangements and ability is stronger while in cities it is not so obvious. From the field study we can see that relativity and absolutism is related to practical conditions and the environment. For instance, in rural areas like Wenlin where most elderly people have no pension or adequate economic security, they have to live with their children, who then provide them with daily necessities and instant help. But in many cities, owing to a high percentage of nuclear families, living arrangements are rather different from those of

the past. Living apart from parents indeed brings about many new changes as regards care for elderly people. For example, geographical distance and separation causes restraints in providing daily help and there is less emotional support than when living together. But on the other hand modern transportation and communications enable parents to get help from children in an emergency. In the study we found that many families chose to live near their parents' houses even though they did not live together. For example, Mr. Yuan said,

[HKA12] "When I bought the new flat, I considered living near my parents' house. In this way I can provide support for them conveniently. Actually, almost every evening I will go to my parents' house and have dinner with them, chat with them. Exchange some interesting stories and insights into things with them....."

### **Willingness to provide care**

Apart from the ability to provide support, the willingness to provide care is another factor which affects care for parents. From the above analysis we can see that family relationships have a positive impact on willingness to provide care for parents while the impacts of and the necessity to make formal care available still form a case for discussion. For the latter, under the influence of modernity, government and society provide more formal public support and services, especially through a wide range of welfare programs, and these greatly affect the demand of parents for support from children. For instance, when parents are economically independent there is an obvious decline in demand for support from their children. In other cases, where parents have no pension as an income resource, children need to provide them with more financial assistance. But it is noted that emotional support is an exception in the sense that emotional communications and exchange among family members can hardly be replaced by alternative institutions or informal support. Therefore there is still controversy whether the expansion of welfare is a potential "risk" that might impact upon the willingness of care provision.

As for economically independent parents, the effect on lack of necessity to provide

on children's willingness to provide care seems obvious. In rural areas, Wenlin for example, it is taken for granted that children have to care for the parents when they are getting old. Whether the family relationship is good or not, taking care of parents is regarded as an obligation and a conventional custom as well. That is because individual behaviors are strongly regulated by the traditional culture of filial piety and bound by neighbors and relatives. But in modern societies this binding force gradually declines. In reference to the behavior of family care giving, intergenerational relationships have a direct impact on children's willingness to provide care for parents. For families which enjoy a good and supportive family relationship reciprocity exists between parents and children. As shown in the interviews, many children mentioned that when they were young their parents provided a great deal of support such as education, so that when their parents are getting old, they in turn are willing to provide support in every aspect. However, there are families in which relationships may be troubled where there is conflict between parents and children. In these cases the children might be unwilling to provide care for parents as they grow old. This finding is also supported by scholars such as Friedmann (1991) and Chen (2010), who argue that the amount of economic and emotional investment in the children is correlated with the support and help that the parents have received in old age. The following case can best illustrate an example of a good family relationship.

[HKA08] Mr. Qian said, "Before my brothers, sisters and I started to work, I saw my parents provide us much in terms of affection and money. Now my mother is 81 years old, and my father passed away 17 years ago. It is a natural thing for us to look after parents. For most times, we respect mother's preference. We try to do as she please to do".

### **9.4.3 Explanations of similarities and differences**

From the analysis drawn above we can see that the choice of family care giving is a complex and interactive process. To some extent macro factors of modernity decide the micro differences at an individual-level and thus affect the adaptation strategies

of individuals and families. On a macro level, modernity develops, traditional ways of living have been dramatically changed and families are facing many challenges. In terms of specialization of labor, migration, social welfare, and filial piety, modernity facilitates a wide social structural transformation. This is embodied in widespread changes in the socio-economic conditions of individuals, living arrangements, family relationships, and the availability of formal support for elderly people. However on a micro level these changes are different for each specific family due to the diverse patterns of family formation, living arrangements, and intra and extra family resources. Family support for elderly parents is rather variable because it is often influenced by adaptation strategies made by both individuals and families to fit their particular individual and situational conditions.

Furthermore family support for elderly parents will eventually be decided by ability and willingness to provide support. Especially deserving of note is the evidence that while taking a similar path to that in certain western countries in terms of family structure, the style and rationale for care giving in Chinese families is still “Chinese”. The influence of modernization is embodied mostly in how individuals influence giving care to the elderly. As to the willingness to provide support, the Confucian value of filial piety still plays an important role in deciding how family members, in particular adult children, do provide care. In the development of modernity an increasing ability to provide economic support for parents need not of necessity lead to the consequence that children are willing to provide care. The continuity of family relationships and the availability of resources to provide formal care have, to a large degree, influenced the willingness of children to provide support. Therefore in a sense modernity create challenges for the family but do not change emotional and psychological interactions between family members. Although tremendous changes have been seen in family structure and living arrangements these are not always associated with a decline in support for the elderly. A willingness to maintain family ties still exists and individuals bend this to their purposes.

## CHAPTER 10

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 10.1 Overview

Families mirror our societies and, as individual people adapt, society reflects these adaptations in socio-economic, cultural, and political change. In this study the processes of family evolution in ancient China reviewed in Chapter 5 show the gradual emergence of the independent and self-sufficient family as against one dependent on clan and lineage. Over the course of time, due to great disparities in individual socio-economic and political conditions, differing structural and functional changes have been visible in families from different social groups in different historical periods. Clearly developments throughout the centuries have had great impact on levels of structure in societies where family style and function are reflected in contrasting patterns in different stages of socio-economic and political development. At an individual level there have been great disparities in family experience between different social groups which could be explained by interactive processes between social change and the specific conditions that individuals faced. Close examination of six historical periods of change within the family reveals the significance of understanding family from a comprehensive perspective in which there is an emphasis on the interplay between macro and micro factors of cultural and social development. It provides a historical background for analyzing the Chinese family in modern times.

Since the late 19th and early 20th centuries China has been experiencing a great historical transformation. The rise of modernity, in the form of urbanization, industrialization, capitalization, and political reform, has exerted tremendous influence on Chinese society and family life. As revealed in our findings, in modern

cities such as Beijing and Hong Kong it is clear that as societies move towards modern, stem and extended families have become less widespread while nuclear and diverse family forms such as the single-parent family, the step-family, and the one person household are becoming common. In recent decades population ageing has occurred at an unprecedented pace. It is projected that China will have 171 and 318 million people aged 65 and above in 2020 and 2050, making up 11.9% and 23.2% of the total population respectively (Du, Zhai & Chen, 2005). These are substantial numbers in both absolute and relative terms. Given the profound changes in size of population and diversity of family structures one might ask: what is likely to happen in the future? What are the future implications as regards the family supporting elderly members?

In Chinese culture family has long been viewed as the primary and main source of care and support for family members, especially old people, and change arouses serious concerns about the new forms of family structure and family dynamics which have arisen in recent times. From extended or stem structures to nuclear and diverse forms, changes in family structure reflect the interaction of macro (socio-economic transitions) and micro individual factors (personal adaptations). As is illustrated vividly in the Wenlin pre-industrial society, elderly people usually live in stem or extended families and reside with adult children who care for them. Family obligations are widely reinforced by community. However, as our documented findings for Beijing and Hong Kong show, changes in family structure in modern societies have changed obligations and relationships between family members. Change creates increased choice for individuals who gain in overall prosperity and socio-economic development but, at the same time, brings potential difficulties in caring for elderly members because people now live longer, have fewer children to share care responsibilities, and children and parents live apart.

In 1995, Clarke (1995) demonstrated that short-term prospects for family care of elderly people have not been affected by recent changes in family structure because

the present cohort of elderly people has neither undergone high rates of divorce nor high levels of childlessness. However, changes in marriage patterns and family formation suggest that there will be a relatively higher proportion of childless old people in the future who have never married, or are not currently married. The number of people who have had two or more marriages during their lifetime has increased and these people will, therefore, have complex relationships with their own and their spouses' children (Chang, 1992; Mason, 1992). Such complex relationships will certainly have an influence on care for the old, longer term situations are still uncertain. Obviously, while modernity brings about dramatic changes in our society, increasingly causing nuclear and diverse family structures, it also brings challenges and opportunities. The differences in care giving for elderly people in Beijing and Hong Kong reflect the important role of social policy in forming individual behaviors adapted to meet demands arising from the change which has already happened in families. Policy making has important implications as regards to the availability of government services (including pensions, social security, housing and employment) as well as the specific types of social care needed for specific individuals in the future. Changes in attitudes and beliefs will be needed. Given the changes in family composition, will the younger generation of today be willing to provide care for their elderly parents? And, under the influence of modernity and affected by Western values, will the traditional Chinese ethic requiring family members to care for the elderly still persist?

This research shows that evidence supporting the notion of an absolute deterioration of family function as regards caring for elderly members is lacking. In fact, our findings show that as modernity progresses and when an individual becomes more self-reliant and achieves independence, in some respects the economic support provided to parents also increases rather than decreases. This is because the decisions family members make about informal care, in particular those of adult children, are determined by reasons which range from internal factors, such as individual feelings of obligation and reciprocity, to external factors including socio-economic and



cultural reasons. Thus the main challenges to the family as a source of care come from social, political, and economic changes as well individual circumstances and personal adaptation strategies. In Chapter 9, the effects of the interplay of selected macro and micro factors on family support are clearly illustrated. It is noticed that while great transformations are clearly seen at a macro-structural level, adaptation strategies vary considerably among people under differing socio-economic conditions, living arrangements, family relationships, and availability of formal support. Thus an important point to note is that the care and support received by elderly parents is decided by both ability and willingness of family members to provide care especially in the case of adult children. Willingness to care and the Chinese culture of filial piety still remain even though increasing constraints on the ability of families to care for elderly members by provision of physical or practical care exist, but these characteristics have been transformed in kind. Understanding this fact is of great importance because it points to possible solutions for encouraging and promoting the future direction of caring functions for elderly people.

As basic social units, families perform functions undertaken by no other institution in society. In Chinese culture an important part of family life is the close tie between children and their parents which brings both generations feelings of need and being needed. As Prof. Yao has pointed out “*Chinese old people believe that the value of their life is not only reflected in their success in a job or career, but in the well-being of their family and their children. When they grow old there is no greater happiness than the achievements of their children.*”<sup>44</sup> In such a culture parents are willing to invest time and effort in supporting their children so as to let them to have a better life. As for children, they feel the same. Taking care of their parents when they grow old is seen more as an emotional obligation rather than as a legal responsibility. As can be seen in both Beijing and Hong Kong, geographic separation of adult children and their elderly parents does not entail decreased family interaction. Rather, in most families, provision of mutually reinforcing and reciprocal care comes to be addressed

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<sup>44</sup> Expert Interview BJZ01

in other ways.

Modernity, despite the strains which its processes create for families trying to function as an efficient supporting network, simultaneously creates new possibilities. As shown in this study to a certain extent cultural values of filial piety together with supportive policies can reinforce the ability as well as the willingness of children to provide care for elderly people. Thus given a multi-generation friendly environment together with good public policies and appropriate provision of formal services, informal care givers can face and withstand the stresses and challenges. Such circumstances call for cooperation, and the sharing of responsibilities between individuals, the family, and society. Formal care systems, in particular community-based services, should be improved as a response to increases in the need for care. Policies should supply support for individuals as they compensate for unforeseen stresses encountered by the family. Such policies should not undermine the role of family but rather permit government to assist families in taking up responsibility for functions such as support for elderly members. Society throughout the whole country should emphasize and encourage the Confucian values of filial piety. As Prof. Xu has said, *“improving formal care does not necessarily imply that we don’t need to rely on the family to provide care for their elderly. It’s not a straight choice between A and B, we could do both simultaneously. For example, we could encourage children to live with and provide care for their parents while increasing community care.”*<sup>45</sup>

## **10.2 Re-Assessment of Impacts of Modernity on Family and Examination of Research Assumptions**

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<sup>45</sup> Expert Interview HKZ02

### **10.2.1 Re-assessment of impacts of modernity on family**

As has been illustrated in the study, there is a causal relationship between levels of modernity and changes in the family. The emergence and development of modernity, as a vital attribute, contributes to changes in family structure (i.e. from stem and extended to nuclear and diverse forms) globally. It has been suggested that impacts on family from modernity are universal and, to some extent, changing family patterns are consonant with classical sociological theory in that when society moves towards modern stages the proportion of nuclear families is likely to increase. Patterns of family structure contrast at different modernity level. In addition, many classical sociologists (ie. Goode, 1963; Parsons, 1951; Parsons & Bales, 1955) have pointed out that the nuclear family is the most ideally adapted form for modern society since it forms a good fit with modern industrial systems. In this regard other family forms are regarded as not meeting the demands of an expanding industrial system adequately. However in reality there is considerable variation across cultures in how modernity impacts family structures and in how such structures react. Family structure in the present time depends also on the earlier traditional family system. For example, in many Asian countries today there is a relatively large number of stem families who engage in intergenerational co-residence than occurs in western countries (Du, 1999; Chan, 2005). In addition other family forms continue to exist alongside nuclear families such as step-parent families, single-parents, and cross-generation families. An increase in family diversity has been shown during the past decade in a number of modernized societies.

Classical sociological theory has argued that an increase in popularity of the nuclear family will reduce contact between family members and lead to a weakening of filial responsibility for older people. Hence discussion has focused on the issue of the impacts of modernity on intergenerational family relations and care functions. Scholars such as Parsons and Popenoe have indicated that with changes in family structure the importance of kinship ties is declining and that older people tend to be

isolated from their children and other family relationships (Parsons, 1951, 1955; Popenoe, 1993). Empirical evidence, however, suggests that although most adult children prefer to live apart from their parents after marriage they still maintain close contact with their elderly parents and other close relatives. They provide mutual help, particularly in the form of economic assistance and practical help. Classical theories fail to give an explanation for these behaviors.

By analyzing the situation in China, this study demonstrates that there are some theoretical gaps that could be filled.

Firstly, from a macro point of view it is argued that modernity is associated with an increasing proportion of nuclear families in society. The theory emphasizes that there is a specific correlation between family form and important societal structural changes which are believed to have shaped modernity such as the processes of industrialization and urbanization. From such a macro level classical theory attempts to explain predominant family structure as moving from the extended to the nuclear family, however it fails to explain why other forms of family still exist in a modern society. In this study it has been found that other family forms have not disappeared in the modern era. In some instances large families, and also other family types, have adapted to the demands of a modern society. It is also the case that the classical theory has given special weight to attitudinal and behavioral changes, attributing them to processes of urbanization, industrialization and the development of social policies, while at the same time various socio-cultural traditions have been ignored.

Secondly, many scholars, especially from functionism school, indicate that with the coming of structural differentiation many functions of the family have been taken over by social institutions such as business firms, schools, hospitals, and churches, and that the activities of such institutions lead to a reduction in how the family functions. Thus the family becomes structurally isolated and functions merely in a few specific areas such as for the socialization of children and for providing

emotional comfort for members (Parsons, 1965; Parsons & Bale, 1955). However, as has been shown in the current study, the nuclearization of family structure does not isolate the individual family from members of wider familial groups or from other social institutions. In regard to the function of support for old people, the increase in the number of nuclear and other family forms cannot be linked to a weakening of family care for elderly members. Frequent social contacts are still maintained. Taking Beijing and Hong Kong as examples, changes in living arrangements may have brought about changes in the type and the amount of care provided but has certainly not weakened family ties. Confucian Chinese family values, entailing the spirit of mutual support and filial piety, have changed very little.

Thirdly, classical modernization theory intends to propose a general pattern of family development that covers societies which have incorporated differing cultural and historical traditions. The empirical evidence, however, does not necessarily confirm these assumptions. Although the more recent studies try to address issues relating to the possibility of multiple pathways toward modernity and attempts to describe their impacts on the family in a broader context, the empirical evidence in support of such an argument is still lacking. Furthermore, when the analysis is considered from a theoretical point of view, some important notions are not well explained and cannot be interpreted in the course of analyzing families across various societies as, for example, the dual features of “generalities” and “distinctiveness” found in modernity. It is important to ask questions such as: Do different political systems matter? What are the roles played by social policy in directly accommodating the requirements of social development? How do people respond to various welfare regimes and how do these responses affect family formation and relationships? The theory of modernity does not give appropriate and reasonable answers.

Therefore, as reasoned above, this study identifies and fills gaps in theory and contributes to family sociology by providing a comprehensive perspective which allows for a better understanding of modernity and its impacts on family structure

and support for elderly people.

1. By introducing the geo-adaptation model, this study analyzes the development of Chinese family in different levels of modernity and illustrates reasons why the nuclear family becomes a major type in modern society while other forms of family decrease. A combination of analyses at both the macro-structural and micro-individual levels is created as a framework for understanding the consequences of modernity and social change for changes in the family. Specific emphasis is given at the macro level to the four main processes of modernity that affect the family: industrialization, capitalization, urbanization, and development of social policy. Important factors related to cultural traditions, including attitudinal changes towards marriage and family, are investigated. Interactions between family members, family relationships, and family processes are explored at the micro level from the perspective of personal adaptation and integrated into the analysis.
2. The combined findings of a number of Asian research studies based on empirical evidence show close contact and mutual support between families and family members (i.e. Li, 1991). Their findings coincide with the conclusions of this study. However, the focus of these studies is to give explanations based on socio-cultural factors and their analyses ignore differences between tradition and modernity as these relate to social and cultural development. This study assesses the influences of modernity on family support for elderly members from two different levels: willingness and ability. The conclusion drawn is that while modernity places constraints on the ability of family members to provide such care for their parents as an individual's availability to enable physical support, willingness to undertake care provision has not declined. When compared with availability, willingness appears to be less influenced by the spread of modernity but is greatly affected by distinctive cultural values and historical traditions. The Chinese value of filial piety continues to have a strong effect on Chinese people's

attitudes and behaviors and is represented in modified and diversified forms of care provision.

3. The analysis in this study illustrates how the emergence and development of social policy influences the family to change. Policies initiating family change arise through social welfare development, such as policies on social security, education, medical care, and housing and also through family planning policy which affects the fertility rate. In addition, variations in the environments generating policy across societies are reflected in different welfare regimes. It is argued that the development of modernity is not unchanging and can be changed; public policies can relieve negative effects brought about by modernity. It is in this light that the care function for the aged is not destined to deteriorate. To some extent, public policy is able to strengthen social cohesion by maintaining the core functions once provided by stem and extended families.
4. The study incorporates a comparison of changes in family formation and care for elderly people in two modern societies under different political regimes: socialism and capitalism. The different approaches or pathways to modern in Beijing and Hong Kong illustrate how different social and political systems promote development which brings about broader social changes associated with family. In regard to this there is an oversight on the part of classical modernization theory. Because of restrictions in empirical data the study has not offered in-depth explanation and discussion about this issue yet this study shows that, in the descriptions of family change in Beijing and Hong Kong, differences as well as similarities are evident. Additionally there are reasons to believe that, even given the contrasts in the socio-political sphere between socialism and capitalism, both cities are becoming more alike or converging to some extent.

To be modern does not mean to abandon or negate tradition entirely. Differences in family pattern and diverse types of care provision reflect the various strategies

adopted to meet the requirements of a changing environment. In some cases traditional families have adapted to new conditions while undergoing little structural and functional change. In other cases the demands of a modern society require individuals and families to make major changes and adjustments. Modernity has not made an impact on the willingness to provide care but may cause adult children to limit their care abilities because of certain practical and geographical restrictions. Families in financial or practical difficulties need especial governmental and community help and assistance.

### **10.2.2 Examination of research assumptions**

In the first section of this research five research assumptions were proposed. In the following, these assumptions are examined in the light of the research findings.

1. Under the effects of modernity, basic values, beliefs, and behaviors towards family might be replaced by modern patterns similar to those exhibited in western countries. At the same time, however, the distinctive cultural traditions and historical experiences from Chinese heritage might still persist and influence family life.

This study indicates that the Chinese family experienced similar structural transitions in the process of modernity as did its Western counterparts. In particular, family size has decreased dramatically. The number of extended families declined and the nuclear family has become the most common type. However, cultural differences can also be clearly seen. For instance, even though the proportion of extended families fell gradually their representation is still high compared with other western developed countries. Living with at least one adult child still is the most common form of living arrangement in China. In terms of care for aged parents, certain traditional familial norms are still in practice. In this regard, while family



development shows a similar trend to that seen in western countries, there are distinct cultural and historical heritages. Family composition and family function are influenced greatly by Chinese cultural traditions.

2. The structure and care function of the Chinese family differs under differing socio-economic conditions and at different levels of modernity. It cannot be predicted that the family as found in today's modern areas can be taken as the life pattern which will emerge in the future in currently less developed areas, although it may indicate probabilistic trends.

The patterns of Chinese families contrast when they are in different levels of modernity. A comparison of family structure in three selected areas found a relatively higher percentage of stem and extended families in a pre-modern society, Wenlin, while nuclear families predominated in modern societies as represented by Beijing and Hong Kong. When the provision of care and support for elderly parents is examined there are also contrasting patterns at different levels of modernity. In pre-modern Wenlin the patterns for providing support still follow tradition and are characterized by the co-residence of elderly parents with at least one child, parental support through material assistance, and providing instant physical help and emotional communication. In comparison, both the amount and style of care and support for elderly parents in Beijing and Hong Kong show a variety of forms. However, this finding does not mean that in pre-modern or traditional society family change will follow that exemplified in modern society nor that the two lie on a linear transformation path.

3. Different paths towards modernity might have different outcomes associated with family formation and care provision for the elderly. Social policies regarding marriage and family exert great influence over the family as regards structure and care functions thus making a contribution to the tremendous changes seen in today's Chinese family.

The Beijing-Hong Kong comparison shows distinctive developmental paths to modernity within capitalist and socialist systems. From the start modernity developed in distinctive ways in these two cities. However over time similar trends have evolved and developed yet with distinct institutional and cultural characteristics. Whether in a socialist or capitalist context, in general family structure developed from extended to nuclear and diverse types giving rise to continually changing care provision patterns that constituted different responses to the challenges and possibilities of modernity. At the same time, however, the disparities between these two cities are reflected in social policies relating to family formation and functions. As discussed earlier initially under communism the situation was quite different in socialist Beijing where a variety of social institutions was expected to take on many functions for the family and the government was directly involved in internal family affairs. By comparison, in capitalist Hong Kong the family was believed to bear primary responsibility for caring for and supporting individuals and the government only intervened and provided help when there was urgent demand and when there were issues related to economic development.

Yet it is evident that both Beijing and Hong Kong experienced considerable changes in social policy arising from the demands of development and the needs of a growing elderly population. Although differences are clearly seen, there is agreement that the family as a basic social unit of society is important and must be aided in every way. There is a general belief that the individual, the family, and society share responsibilities together to foster people's quality of life and well-being. As a developmental process social policy, particularly in regard to medical care, education, housing, and social security, has influenced individuals and families to respond and adapt to the new challenges arising from a modern society.

4. Individual characteristics greatly determine the kind of family life a person chooses to have. Individual variations such as in socio-economic conditions, family relationships, life experiences, and income level affect family formation

and care and support for the elderly.

The empirical data analyzed in this study demonstrate that changes within family are manifested at two levels: macro-structural and micro-individual levels. While on the macro level the general trend follows a move from extended to nuclear family with modifications occurring in patterns of family care and support for the elderly, on a micro level differences are evident. These differences reflect the consequences of modernity and the broader social changes associated with individuals and the family. The study suggests that differences in personal characteristics, life experiences, and socio-economic conditions have determined variations in adaptive strategies which, to some extent, affect attitudes and beliefs towards marriage and family, and ultimately choice of family composition. The specific conditions experienced by both elderly people and their caregivers should be given consideration when implementing family support for the elderly.

5. Change in family is a continuous and complex process filled with paradoxes and dilemmas. In theory an individual's behavior is closely associated or connected with beliefs, thoughts, and values but in practice ideas and behaviors may be dissociated to some extent. In terms of care provision for the elderly, it is possible that ability and willingness to provide care might not be consistent.

Influenced by emergence of modernity both young and old regard personal independence and consciousness of individuality as important aspects of daily life. Whether in values or in actual behavior, the family system in China tends to be modern in that patriarchic rules and feudal family values have been abandoned. However, at the same time, people have not entirely given up certain family norms and ideals. In particular Confucian family values and ethics are still widely accepted thus affecting interaction among family members and also intergenerational exchanges. The study suggests that while modernity has placed constraints on people's ability to provide care for their elderly parents, the willingness to take

family responsibility has not changed. However due, for example, to disparities in individual resources for provision of care or to socio-economic conditions there might be some families which cannot give elderly parents adequate support and thus need society to provide assistance.

### **10.3 Recommendations**

As discussed in previous chapters provision of family care by both formal and informal sectors is affected by government acts and policy interventions. This places an emphasis on the fact that good public policy can promote a more supportive environment for elderly people and their family members through help better adapted towards family life in a changing environment. As noted in Chapter 6, the employment-related pension scheme on the mainland helps relieve the economic burden on adult children. Better retirement protection is provided for old people in Beijing than is available to those in Hong Kong where there is relatively limited or insufficient financial aid. On the other hand, comprehensive social services and informal forms of care for elderly people in Hong Kong provide alternative options for adult children who are thus able to handle dual responsibilities for child and elder care while engaging in full-time employment.

Consistent with the geo-adaptation model, the family function of filial support for the elderly need not be destined to weaken within modernity since such a trend could be reversed. Policy interventions could increase the capacity of the family and reduce the strains brought about by modernity by creating a family-friendly environment and increasing the reciprocity of help between generations. Following has identified four scenarios of elderly care which are suggested different policy interventions by government.

		<b>Willingness of providing care for the elderly</b>	
		Yes	No
<b>Ability of providing care for the elderly</b>	Yes	Willingness: Yes	Willingness: No
		Ability: Yes	Ability: Yes
	No	Willingness: Yes	Willingness: No
		Ability: No	Ability: No

Table 10.1 Four scenarios of family support for the elderly

### Willingness and ability

Adult children who have both willingness and ability to take care for their parents usually have higher education attainment and are financially better off. For them, less support from government or other social institutions is required. However, as discussed previously, the support needs of an elderly person depend on the condition of each individual, in particular their health and economic status. For example, there is limited demand from government or social organizations for the economically independent and those elderly with good health. Even when they get ill or experience critical events such as widowhood and declining health, the support received from informal sources is adequate. However, it doesn't mean that there is no need for formal support. Care and services provided by government and other formal institutions form necessary substitutions for family member care. Policy should not only encourage individuals to take responsibility for caring for needy old people but also give assistance and support to care givers through a variety of direct or indirect policy interventions. Policy should focus on:

- Individuals, the family, the community and government should merge as partners rather than competitors in care provision. The focus should not be the issue of who should be the primary care giver but which roles should be taken by specific groups.
- On the one hand the roles taken by individuals and families form perhaps the most important sources for informal support and social interaction for those in

old age and should be emphasized and encouraged by government and society. On the other hand, care and services provided by government and other formal institutions form necessary substitutions for family member care and should be increased.

#### Willingness but inadequate ability

As can be seen in the field study, the people falling into this category might be those who live separately from their parents or those migrate to other cities or go abroad. It could be that the residential separation creates strains on their ability of providing care. Or it could be that competing responsibilities of job and their own families make them having no time and energy to perform care for their parents. There is also evidence that for adult children from poorer social and economic conditions, they are less able to offer economic support and family care at high levels of dependency. Although the situations vary between individual and families, it is obvious that informal care provision is inadequate and demands for formal care and various forms of services are higher. Facing this challenge will require collaborations among individual, family, and government. Specifically attention should be given to the following:

- Promulgation of family policies or programs for different groups: families under economic pressure; families in need of alleviation of emotional and social burdens.
- Plans which ease strain, and minimize the financial loss of caregiving. These would include flexible work-hour policies, increased opportunities for part-time work, job sharing, and financial benefits for care-givers such as an earnings replacement benefit.
- Reducing the cost of the caring which falls on the family by financing services delivered through mandated organizations. Such programs should include respite care and wellness programs aimed at maintaining the care-giver's own well-being.

### No willingness but ability

For this group of adult children, society and government have been placed on a rather complicated position. It is not immediately apparent what the causes of such a result are. The possible reason could be that because of the low level of education attained by adult children, they do not consider filial care as their responsibility even if they have ability to do so. This is reflected in the study where it is found there is a causal relationship between educational level of adult children and the provision of support provided for their parents. In this situation, older people may expect greater support from formal services as the provision of family care is minimal. Although the Chinese government has enforced the law to protect the elderly who could bring legal claims against their children for not providing assistance in their old age, seldom do the parents really prefer to do so. In particular under the context of Chinese culture of filial piety, few older persons are willing to report their nonsupporting adult children. However, government could consider making policies from the following:

- Enlargement and strengthening of state policies which support community-based care, professional services related to health care, and practical assistance with daily living such as day care programs and home care services.
- Provision of financial and other incentives for the establishment of informal care systems such as mutual help networks which could embrace friends, neighbors and other potentially care-giving individuals
- Education helping people recognize the significant roles and contributions to society which elderly people play out through providing care for other family members such as spouses, aged parents, adult children and grandchildren.

### No willingness and inadequate ability

- This might be the worst situation facing by elderly parents who need care. Not only are their adult children not willing to provide family care but also they are not capable to give such support. In this circumstance, reliance on adult children for care of older family members, therefore, will become less possible. As a

result, they may rely more on formal services and network as sources of help. Various factors contribute to this situation. In general, it may be associated with residential separation of family members, adult children's educational level, their occupation, and working status. For instance, evidence from the field survey indicates that geographical spread of family membership will increase emotional distance in some families. The challenge for social policy in the future will be to enhance the understanding of the traditional culture of filial piety through various educational and training programs while give assistance and practical support to adult children encouraging them to take their responsibilities for their parents. Based on these understanding, a variety of direct or indirect policy interventions are suggested:

- Publication and promotion of a series of specific plans through which the family, including the younger generation, can learn to care for elderly members. Plans fostering interaction and close reciprocal relationships between family members could include cross-generational programs, educational promotions, and additional support programs.
- Identifying ways to rebuild the traditional culture of filial piety and promote a family-friendly environment by encouraging intergenerational assistance and increasing contact between young and old generations.
- Bringing the unique cultural tradition of filial piety into state educational planning and teaching young people to respect old people, in particular their grandparents.

In fact, the four scenarios of elderly care identified in the above matrix could not cover all the circumstances. In addition to the willingness and ability of care by the children, dependency level of the elderly, family structures, and availability of formal service provision also have an effect on the patterns of care. For example, in the future changing patterns of marriage, increased life expectancy, and the varying composition of families may lead to higher percentage of unmarried, childless elderly people who have no family members to depend upon. The promulgation of



policies should consider an increasing complexity of need and the possibility of as yet unidentified needs. Multi-level policies and services are required to meet different needs. The aim should not just focus on providing help but on encouraging them to have more independent lifestyle, and participating in communities. From this perspective, the policies should note that:

- Provision of basic social welfare protection for elderly people including pensions, medical care, and other welfare programs is especially important for those who live in rural areas.
- Long-term plans and specific programs are essential for vulnerable and disadvantaged groups such as old people who are income-poor or have financial or physical disabilities.

Last but not the least, policies concerning family support for the elderly should be multi-dimensional and not focus solely on one aspect of care enacted by one government department. As indicated by Prof. Zhang, policies should emphasize improving community services and in addition discuss policy relating to pensions, taxes, housing, education, and employment<sup>46</sup>. In consideration of this the following policy priorities are proposed:

- Reassessment and evaluation of policies regarding the family and intra-familial relationships and implementation of programs to strengthen family in the performance of functions.
- Improved coordination among different government departments during policy formulation, particularly in areas such as social welfare and services so that society creates a friendlier milieu for all families.

## **10.4 Limitations of the Study**

As with other empirical research studies there are a number of practical and methodological limitations that must be recognized in this study.

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<sup>46</sup> Expert Interview BJZ02

### Theoretical limitations

The unit of analysis in this study is the family while data comes from individual people within the family. The study considered perceptions about family form and elder support from the perspectives of adult children and their aged parents only. The perceptions and opinions of younger generations such as grandchildren, and other family members such as more distantly related kin, are not included. Although interview questions were formulated to address the topic of family not the issues of individuals, there could be a risk that distortion could infiltrate the research findings.

The second theoretical limitation concerns generalization of the research findings. In the current study the theoretical model, geo-adaptation, is supported initially by a multiple-case study in Yunnan, Hong Kong, and Beijing. The findings of the study should be considered as exploratory and tentative. To achieve theoretical validity the study needs supporting data from other settings.

### Procedural limitations

Theoretically expert interviews in Yunnan, Beijing, and Hong Kong should have been conducted after completion of all in-depth interviews with respondents so as to triangulate with data collected in the field investigation for further empirical validation. However due to time constraints, and also because the geographic locations for the study were dispersed over three areas, these two kinds of interview were conducted simultaneously. This may influence the validity of the research.

Another procedural limitation of the study concerns selection of cases for in-depth interview in the three settings. In order to provide context-rich information about each case, this study adopted purposeful sampling procedure. The main focus of the study was the forms of family predominating in each research setting. Other family forms, such as step-parent families and single-parent families, have not been analyzed. This leads to a possibility of sample selection bias, and decreases the generalizability of findings.

Practical limitations:

Due to the general unavailability of data, especially data concerning rural families and households, the data collected in Wenlin village is based on field investigation. Understanding of the importance of family structure was lacking in previous years, thus making comparisons with situations from the past difficult. Both Beijing and Hong Kong lack official information concerning families, especially statistics revealing the structure of certain specific family types such as step-parent, single-parent, and empty-nest families.

Geographic separation of family members can make it difficult to interview, at the same time, adult children and elderly parents from the same household. In this study two groups of people were selected for interview: adult children and elderly people. Such a selection may, in practice, lead to selection bias and influence the interpretation of research findings.

**Interview schedule (for adult children)**

**訪談提綱 (成年子女)**

**1 • Basic information:**

**基本資訊**

1.1 Name:

姓名

1.2 Gender:

性別

1.3 Age:

年齡

1.4 Educational attainment: (no schooling/pre-primary, primary school, junior high school, polytechnic school or senior high school, college or above)

受教育程度 (從未受過教育, 小學, 初中, 高中以及職業學校, 大學及以上)

1.5 Nationality:

民族

1.6 Marriage status: (single, married, separated, divorced, divorced, cohabiting)

婚姻狀況 (未婚, 已婚, 分居, 離婚, 喪偶, 同居)

1.7 Occupation:

職業

1.8 Income : (1000 or below, 1001-3000, 3001-5000 , 5001-7000 , 7001-9000 , 9001-11000 , 11001-13000 , 13001-15000 , 15001-20000 , 20001 and above)

收入水準: (1000 或者以下, 1001-3000, 3001-5000, 5001-7000, 7001-9000, 9001-11000, 11001-13000, 13001-15000, 15001-20000, 20001 及以上)

1.9 income sources:

收入來源

固定工資

Salary

資產性收入 (房屋出租的租金等)

Assets income (i.e. house rent)

投資收入 (股票等)

Investment income  
(i.e. stocks)

兼職收入

Incomes from  
part-time work

其它

Others

1.10 Housing type

房屋類型

自置私人住宅

Private-owned

單位福利分房

Rented government  
housing

租住單位房屋

Employer provided  
housing

租住私人房屋

Rented private  
housing

其他

Others

1.11 Living area

居住地區:

**2 • What kind of structures did participants' families belong to?**

2.1 How many people are there in your family? What is the relationship between you and them?

您的家庭成員都包括哪些?他們與您是什麼關係(有幾個子女, 他們的性別以及年齡)?

2.2 Before marriage, who you were living with? (Including family members and others, if any)

結婚之前您與誰居住（包括家庭成員以及同住的家傭，如適用）？

注：這個問題可能會隨著時間有所變化，比如說可能年輕的時候和父母和爺爺奶奶住，後來和父母住，等等。總之，主要是要瞭解它們家庭結構的變化情況。

2.3 After marriage, whether have you built your own family or not? Who are you living with now?

結婚之後，您是否與父母分開居住了？現在您與誰居住？（包括家庭成員及家庭傭工，如適用）

### **3 • What factors did participants perceive influenced their decision to have such kind of family form?**

3.1 Could you describe the factors that you perceive influenced your decision to have such a family form? (For example, why you choose to live/not live with your parents?)

請您談談這樣居住的原因？（例如，您為什麼選擇與/不與父母居住？）

3.2 Whether the living arrangement (living with/living without parents) can affect the support provided for your parents? Why?

您認為目前的居住方式（同住/不同住）是否會影響到對父母的照顧？為什麼？

### **4 • What did participants perceive the role of family in caring for the elderly?**

4.1 What is your opinion about the role of family (adult children) in supporting elderly? (For example, how do you think of the caring for the elderly parents, is it a responsibility, obligation, task, or others?)

您對子女贍養父母是怎麼看的？（比如說，您認為子女照顧父母是一種責、義務還是一項任務，或是其他？）

4.2 Who is the primary care giver in your parents' daily living?

誰是您父母日常生活當中最主要的照顧者？

### **5 • How did participants attempt to take care for their elderly parents?**

5.1 Have you provided supports (including physical, economic, emotional) for your elder parent? (For example, have you had contact with them? Have you provided any financial assistance for your parents? Have you provided any kind of practical help for them?)

您有沒有給父母提供過幫助（包括生活照料，經濟支持，以及精神慰藉）？（比如平時怎麼與父母聯繫（是怎樣聯繫的）？有沒有定期給錢（怎樣給，是定期還是不定期）有沒有給父母提供生活上的照料（怎樣提供））？

### **6 • What are participants' opinions about informal support and services for the elderly?**

6.1 Are there any homes, other institutions, or apartments for the elderly in your residential community? If yes, have you recommended your parents to live? Why?

您所在的社區是否有安老院或其他的養老機構？如果有，您是否建議過您的父母入住？為什麼？

6.2 Are there any services (such as cooking, shopping, home cleaning) for elderly in your community/city? If yes, have you recommended your parents to use some of these? Why?

您所在的社區是否有一些對老年人的服務（例如煮飯、購物、打掃）？如果有，您是否建議過您的父母使用？為什麼？

## **7 • The basic information of the elderly parents**

### **父母的基本資訊**

7.1 The age of your parents

您父母的年齡

7.2 Marital status of your parents at present

您父母目前的婚姻狀況

7.3 Do your parents have pension or other kind of income? If yes, is their income sufficient to afford their daily expenses?

您父母是否有退休金或者其他退休收入？如果有，他們能不能負擔自己的日常開銷？

7.4 How about your parents' health status? (For example, could they take care by themselves?)

您父母的健康狀況如何？（比如他們能不能照顧自己？）

7.5 How many brothers and sisters in your family? Could you describe how they provide support for the parents as far as you know?

您有幾個兄弟姐妹，他們對父母的照料情況是怎樣的？

**Interview schedule (for elderly)**

**訪談提綱 (老年人)**

**1 • Basic information:**

**基本資訊**

1.1 Name:

姓名

1.2 Gender:

性別

1.3 Age:

年齡

1.4 Educational attainment: (no schooling/pre-primary, primary school, junior high school, polytechnic school or senior high school, college or above)

受教育程度(從未受過教育, 小學, 初中, 高中以及職業學校, 大學及以上)

1.5 Nationality:

民族

1.6 Marriage status: (single, married, separated, divorced, divorced, cohabiting)

婚姻狀況(未婚, 已婚, 分居, 離婚, 喪偶, 同居)

1.7 Occupation:

職業

1.8 Income : (1000 or below, 1001-3000, 3001-5000 , 5001-7000 , 7001-9000 , 9001-11000 , 11001-13000 , 13001-15000 , 15001-20000 , 20001 and above)

收入水準: (1000 或者以下, 1001-3000, 3001-5000, 5001-7000, 7001-9000, 9001-11000, 11001-13000, 13001-15000, 15001-20000, 20001 及以上)

1.9 income sources:

收入來源

固定工資或退休金

Salary or pensions

資產性收入(房屋出租的租金等)

Assets income (i.e.house rent)

投資收入(股票等)

Investment income

兼職收入

Incomes from

其它

Others

(i.e. stocks)

part-time work

1.10 Housing type

房屋類型

自置私人住宅

Private-owned

單位福利分房

Rented government

租住單位房屋

Employer provided

housing

housing

租住私人房屋

Rented private

其他

Others

housing

1.11 Living area

居住地區:

**2 • What kind of structures did participants' families belong to?**

2.1 How many people are there in your family? What is the relationship between you and them?

您的家庭成員都包括那些? 他們與您是什麼關係? (有幾個兒子, 女兒, 孫子)

2.2 Before marriage, who you were living with? (Including family members and others, if any)

結婚之前您與誰居住 (包括家庭成員以及其他, 如適用)?

注: 這個問題可能會隨著時間有所變化, 比如說可能年輕的時候和父母和爺爺奶奶住, 後來和父母住, 等等。總之, 主要是要瞭解它們家庭結構的變化情況。

2.3 After marriage, whether have you built your own family or not? Why?

結婚之後, 您是否與父母分開居住了? 為什麼?

2.4 What's the difference when comparing with the family you are having now? (For example, who are you living with?)

那個時候與現在相比有一些什麼變化? (比如, 您現在都與誰一起居住?)

### **3 · What factors did participants perceive influenced their decision to have such kind of family form?**

3.1 Could you describe the factors that you perceive influenced your decision to have such a family form? (For example, why you choose to live/not live with your children? )

請您談談這樣居住的原因? (例如: 您為什麼選擇與/不與子女居住呢? )

3.2 Comparing to the past, do transforms in family form altered your daily life? ( for example, is it easy for you going to the market, park, or other places )

您認為您家庭結構的這些變化有沒有影響到您的日常生活? (比如, 您去市場買菜, 去公園和其他地方是否方便? )

### **4. What did participants perceive the role of family in caring for the elderly?**

4.1 What is your opinion about the role of family/adult children in supporting elderly? (For example, do you think whether adult children should take care of their elder parents?)

您對子女/家庭贍養老年人是怎麼看的? 您認為子女應不應該贍養老人?

4.1 Who is the primary care giver in your daily living?

誰是您日常生活當中最主要的照顧者?

### **5. How did adult children attempt to take care for participants?**

5.1 Have your child(ren) provided any supports (including physical, economic, emotional) for you? (For example, have you had contact with them? Have your children provided any financial assistance for you? Have they provided any kind of practical help for you? )

子女有沒有給您提供過支援(包括照料, 經濟支援和精神支持)? (比如平時他們有沒有與您聯繫, 是怎樣聯繫的)? 有沒有定期給錢(怎樣給, 是定期還是不定期)有沒有給您提供生活上的照料(怎樣提供)?

5.1 Comparing to the past, what's the difference concerning to the support for the elderly parents by the adult children.

與過去相比, 您覺得在子女在照顧父母這個問題上有什麼分別?



## **6 · What are participants' opinions about informal support and services for the elderly?**

6.1 Are there any homes, other institutions, or apartments for the elderly in your residential community? If yes, have you thought about living in one of these? Why?

您所在的社區是否有安老院或者其他的養老機構？如果有，您有沒有想過入住？為什麼？

6.2 If there were special services (such as cooking, shopping, home cleaning) for elderly in your community/city, would you be interested to use some of them?

您所在的社區是否有一些對老年人的服務（比如做飯、購物、打掃）？如果有，您是否使用過？為什麼

## **7 · The basic information of the adult children**

### **子女的基本資訊**

7.1 The age of your child(ren)

您子女的年齡

7.2 The occupations of your child(ren)

您子女的職業

7.3 The marital status of your child(ren)

您子女的婚姻狀況

7.4 The educational level of your child(ren)

您子女的教育程度

7.5 The economic situation of your child(ren) (wealthy, ordinary, or poor?)

您子女的經濟狀況（非常富裕，普通，還是貧困？）

**Expert Interview schedule**

**專家訪談提綱**

**1. Opinions about changes of family structure**

**對家庭結構變遷的看法**

1.1 what do you think are the main reasons for the changes of family structure(s) in this city/locality

您認為本地家庭結構改變的主要原因是什麼？

**2. Opinions about changes in family support for the elderly**

**對家庭養老功能的變遷的看法**

2.1 Comparing with past, what are the changes of people's attitude on family support for the elderly? What do you think are the main reasons for such a change?

與過去相比，您認為人們對家庭養老的看法有什麼改變？形成這種改變的原因是什麼？

2.2 Are there any influences of family structural changes on support for the elderly? If yes, what are they?

您認為本地家庭結構的變遷對家庭的養老功能有影響嗎？如果有的話主要是哪些方面？

2.3 For the elderly in this city/locality, what do you think are the main supporting functions of the family (for example, practical, economic, and emotional support)?

對於本地區的老年人來說，您認為家庭的養老功能主要體現在哪些方面（比如日常照料，經濟幫助，精神慰藉）

**3. Opinions about the contents and types of family support for the elderly**

**對家庭養老的內容和方式的看法**

3.1 Comparing with past, what do you think are the main differences in contents of family support for the elderly

與過去相比，您覺得現在家庭養老的內容上有什麼不同？

3.2 Comparing with past, what do you think are the main differences in types of family support for the elderly

與過去相比，您覺得現在家庭養老的方式上有什麼不同？

**4. Opinions about formal support (social institution and services) in elderly support**

**對正式支援（社會養老機構和服務）的看法**

4.1 Do you think whether the informal supports are helpful to family support for the elderly?

您認為正式支持對於家庭養老是否有幫助？

4.2 In what aspects do you think community and government could provide supports for family in taking care for the elderly?

您認為社區，政府在哪些方面能夠給老年人的家庭養老提供更多的支援？

## Appendix 2

**Profile of the adult children (Yunnan):**

<b>Code</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Sex</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Educational attainment</b>	<b>Nationality</b>	<b>Marriage Status</b>	<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Income sources</b>
YNA01	Zhang F	Male	42	Primary school	Yi	Married	Farmer	Agricultural labor
YNA02	Zhang G	Female	42	Primary school	Yi	Married	Farmer	Agricultural labor
YNA03	Zhang I	Male	30	Polytechnic school	Yi	Married	Teacher	Salary
YNA04	Rao	Male	48	Primary school	Yi	Married	Farmer	Agricultural labor
YNA05	Zhang J	Male	48	Junior high school	Yi	Married	Farmer	Agricultural labor
YNA06	Wang	Female	27	Primary school	Yi	Married	Farmer	Agricultural labor
YNA07	Zhang K	Male	43	Junior high school	Han	Married	Farmer	Agricultural labor
YNA08	Zhang L	Female	33	Junior high school	Yi	Married	Farmer	Agricultural labor
YNA09	Chen L	Male	27	Primary school	Han	Single	Farmer	Agricultural labor & salary from part-time job
YNA10	Yang F	Male	25	Primary school	Yi	Single	Farmer	Agricultural labor & salary from part-time job

### Profile of the adult children (Beijing)

Code	Name	Sex	Age	Educational attainment	Nationality	Marriage Status	Occupation	Income sources	Locations
BJA01	Yu	Female	40	College and above	Han	Married	Public servant	Salary	Fengtai district
BJA02	Fu	Male	39	College and above	Han	Married	Advisement designer	Salary	Shi Jingshan district
BJA03	Yao	Female	35	Polytechnic school	Han	Married	Doctor	Salary	Chaoyang district
BJA04	Song	Female	38	College and above	Han	Married	Teacher	Salary	Shi Jingshan district
BJA05	Meng	Male	45	College and above	Han	Married	Manager	Salary	Fengtai district
BJA06	Hou	Female	57	College and above	Han	Married	Doctor	Salary	Haidian district
BJA07	Liu	Male	59	College and above	Han	Married	Teacher	Salary	Dongcheng district
BJA08	Lin	Male	31	Polytechnic school	Han	Married	Sailor	Salary	Haidian district
BJA09	Wan	Female	58	College and above	Han	Married	Engineer	Salary	Shi Jingshan district
BJA10	Ren	Male	43	Junior high school	Han	Married	Entrepreneur	Business project	Haidian district
BJA11	Su	Female	32	College and above	Bai	Married	Accountant	Salary	Haidian district

### Profile of the adult children (Hong Kong)

Code	Name	Sex	Age	Educational attainment	Marriage Status	Occupation	Income sources	Locations
HKA01	Tang	Female	55	Junior high school	Married	Officer, housewife	Salary, husband's support	New Territories
HKA02	Huang	Male	33	College and above	Single	Engineer	Salary	New Territories
HKA03	Xie	Female	38	Senior high school	Married	Officer	Salary	Kowloon
HKA04	Wu	Female	36	Senior high school	Married	Nurse	Salary	Kowloon
HKA05	Liang	Female	50	Senior high school	Married	Officer	Salary	Hong Kong Island
HKA06	Cong	Female	32	College and above	Married	Engineer	Salary	Kowloon
HKA07	Luo	Male	42	College and above	Married	Engineer	Salary	Kowloon
HKA08	Qian	Male	53	College and above	Married	Manager	Saving, investment income	Kowloon
HKA09	Pan	Male	52	College and above	Married	Manager	Saving, investment income	Kowloon
HKA10	Bao	Male	36	College and above	Single	Teacher	Salary	New Territories
HKA11	Deng	Male	29	Senior high school	Single	Job waiting	Saving	Kowloon
HKA12	Yuan	Male	32	College and above	Married	Senior officer	Salary	Kowloon

**Profile of the elderly interviewees (Yunnan):**

<b>Code</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Educational attainment</b>	<b>Nationality</b>	<b>Marriage Status</b>	<b>Occupation before retirement</b>	<b>Income sources</b>
YNE01	Zhang Z	Male	71	Primary school	Yi	Remarried	Farmer	Children's support
YNE02	Zhang C	Female	81	no schooling	Yi	Widowed	Farmer	Children's support
YNE03	Zhang T	Male	61	Polytechnic school	Yi	Married	Teacher	Pension
YNE04	Bi	Female	72	no schooling	Yi	Married	Farmer	Children's support
YNE05	Zhang E	Female	81	Primary school	Yi	Married	Government officer	Pension
YNE06	Zhang D	Female	65	Primary school	Yi	Married	Farmer	Children's support
YNE07	Zhang H	Female	73	no schooling	Han	Widowed	Farmer	Agricultural labor & Children's support
YNE08	Zhang C	Male	61	Primary school	Yi	Widowed	Farmer	Children's support
YNE09	Chen	Male	60	Primary school	Han	Married	Farmer	Agricultural labor & Children's support
YNE10	Yang	Male	67	Primary school	Yi	Married	Farmer	Agricultural labor & Children's support

**Profile of the elderly interviewees (Beijing):**

<b>Code</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Educational attainment</b>	<b>Marriage Status</b>	<b>Occupation before retirement</b>	<b>Income sources</b>	<b>Locations</b>
BJE01	Tan	Male	73	College and above	Married	Engineer	Pension	Xicheng district
BJE02	Du	Female	64	College and above	Married	Senior officer	Pension	Xicheng district
BJE03	Cui	Female	78	Primary school	Widowed	Farmer	Children's support	Haidian district
BJE04	Liu	Male	76	Senior high school	Married	Security guard	Pension	Haidian district
BJE05	Zhang A	Female	62	Polytechnic school	Married	Worker	Pension	Shi Jingshan district
BJE06	Qiu	Male	71	College and above	Married	Public servant	Pension	Shi Jingshan district
BJE07	Lu	Male	72	College and above	Remarried	Researcher	Pension	Shi Jingshan district
BJE08	He	Male	76	No schooling	Married	Technician	Pension	Shi jingshan district
BJE09	Wu	Female	72	Junior high school	Widowed	Teacher	Pension	Shi Jingshan district
BJE10	Jiao	Female	75	Primary school	Widowed	Teacher	Pension	Shi Jingshan district

**Profile of the elderly interviewees (Hong Kong):**

<b>Code</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Educational attainment</b>	<b>Marriage Status</b>	<b>Occupation before retirement</b>	<b>Income sources</b>	<b>Locations</b>
HKE01	Zheng	Female	62	College and above	Married	Teacher	Pension, saving	Kowloon
HKE02	Huang	Male	66	Primary school	Married	Technician	Saving, children's support	New Territories
HKE03	Tang	Male	66	Junior high school	Married	Officer	House rent, Children's support	New Territories
HKE04	Li	Male	67	Junior high school	Married	Sailor, Senior officer	Saving, children's support	Kowloon
HKE05	Fang	Female	63	Senior high school	Married	Officer, housewife	Husband's support	Kowloon
HKE06	Sun	Female	70	College and above	Married	Private teacher	Salary, saving	Kowloon
HKE07	Cao	Female	72	No schooling	Married	Worker	Saving	Hong Kong Island
HKE08	Lu	Female	82	No schooling	Widowed	Worker	CSSA	Hong Kong Island
HKE09	Peng	Female	67	Senior high school	Married	Housewife	Saving, children's support	Hong Kong Island
HKE10	Deng	Male	74	Primary school	Married	Worker	House rent	New Territories



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**Chronology of the Dynasties in Chinese History**  
中國歷史朝代表

Shang 商	?1577-1046 BC
Zhou 周	?1046-256 BC
Western Zhou 西周	?1046-771 BC
Eastern Zhou 東周	770-256 BC
Spring and Autumn Period 春秋	771-475 BC
Warring States Period 戰國	475-221 BC
Qin 秦	221-207 BC
Han 漢	207-220 BC
Western Han 西漢	206 BC-AD 25
Eastern Han 東漢	25-220
Three Kingdoms (Cao Wei, Shuhan, Sunwu) 三國 (曹魏, 蜀漢, 孫吳)	220-265
Jin 晉	265-420
Western Jin 西晉	265-317
Eastern Jin 東晉	317-420
Southern and Northern Dynasties 南北朝	386-589
Northern Dynasties 北朝	386-581
Northern Wei 北魏	386-534
Eastern Wei 東魏	534-550
Western Wei 西魏	535-556
Northern Qi 北齊	550-577
Northern Zhou 北周	557-581
Southern Dynasties 南朝	420-479
(Liu) Song (遼) 宋	479-502
Southern Qi 南齊	502-557
Liang 梁	557-589
Chen 陳	
Sui 隋	589-618
Tang 唐	618-907
Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms 五代十國	907-960
Liao 遼	916-1125
Song 宋	960-1279
Northern Song 北宋	960-1127
Southern Song 南宋	1127-1279
Jin 金	1115-1234
Yuan 元	1279-1368
Ming 明	1368-1644
Qing 清	1644-1912

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