

Family Ties and Its Impacts in Later Life in Thailand

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1. Introduction

After 5 decades of socio-economic development, Thailand experienced a decline in fertility rates and increase in life expectancy. With the proportion of population aged 60 years and over is larger than 10% since 2005, Thailand has entered an aging society. The demographic transition and socioeconomic development affects family and household structures. These changes shape the living arrangements of both the elderly parents and their adult children or the family ties, which in turn will influence the availability of familial support or resource transfer among family members. It is unclear how the nature and patterns of intergenerational transfers may be affected by the changes in living arrangement patterns and family structures.

The importance of the relationship between family ties and family transfer can be explored through several demographic models. In the well-being model of an aging society, Albert Hermalin (2002) suggested family transfer system as one of the factors associated with the well-being of the aging population, besides personal characteristics (e.g. sex, marital status, etc.) and macro socioeconomic and cultural factors. In the intergenerational solidarity model, Bengtson and colleagues indicated functional (exchange of assistance) and structural (co-residence or geographic proximity) solidarity as two of six dimensions of intergenerational solidarity. The other dimensions of this family cohesion comprises affective (emotional closeness), consensual (shared opinion), normative (value pertaining to obligation), associational (frequency of contact) solidarity (Bengtson and Robert, 1991; Siverstein and Bengtson, 1997; Bengtson 2001).

With the ultimate objective to understand the well-being of the aging population in Thailand at the family level so that proper policies can be suggested, the paper is focused on the intergenerational solidarity of the Thai family in providing family support to the aging members. In other words, the key issue of interests is the impacts of family ties on the resource transfer between the elderly parents and their adult children. The specific purposes are to examine the levels and patterns of receiving and giving support between elderly parents and adult children and to explore their family and household structures in order to understand the interplay between family structure (structural solidarity) and resource transfer between elderly parents and their adult children (functional solidarity). The paper is organized into 3 parts: following the introduction, study methods is explained in part two. In part 3, the results of the study are presented and discuss, and conclusion in the final part.

2. Study Methods

2.1 The intergenerational solidarity model

The solidarity model was employed as a theoretical framework for familial support, especially between elderly parents and their adult children. The functional (exchange of

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assistance) and structural (co-residence or geographic proximity) solidarity were chosen as the main dimensions for the study on the type and levels of resource transfer and the interplay between the family structure and resource transfer.

2.2 Data

The data are drawn from the 2009 pilot survey and the study on Health, Aging, and Retirement in Thailand (HART)³. Since the data included Thai individuals aged 45 or over years old, the present study is restricted to the individuals who are over 60 years old and have at least one living child older than 18 years old, which gives a sample of 657 elderly persons. Our analysis examines family resource transfers from the elderly parents' perspective.

2.3 Measures

(1) Intergenerational Transfer

The dependent variable, intergenerational transfer, was measured by responses to the question asking a respondent (father or mother) in a sampled household whether in the year prior to the interview he/she received money, materials, or services (other than for shared housing and food) from or gives such support to each individual living child. From this information, the variable is categorized into four groups as follows: (1) no transfer, (2) transfer from children to parents, (3) transfer from parents to children, and (4) two-way transfer.

(2) Family Structure

Five independent variables were chosen to capture the extent of family and the household structure of the elderly parents: number of children, family status, whether parents cohabit with adult children, family type, and number of generations in the household. Elderly parents (respondents) were asked about their status in the household. The answer categories were 1 = head of household, 2 = not head of household, but own the dwelling, and 3 = others. Co-residence with adult children was classified as 1 = yes and 0 = no. Family type and number of generations living in the elderly parents' household were constructed by using information from household rosters. Family type is represented by four categories: 1 = fragmentary/no conjugal unit, 2 = one conjugal unit, 3 = two or more conjugal units, and 4 = one conjugal with others (not respondents' children) co-residing with family unit. Finally, the measure of number of generations is coded as 1 = one generation, 2 = two generations, and 3 = three or more generations.

(3) Control Variables

The control variables are the personal characteristics of elderly parents, which are age, sex, marital status, health status, education, and work status. These characteristics were

³ A pilot HART project is an alternative attempt to conduct a panel survey and a longitudinal study on aging in Thailand like the Health and Retirement Study (HRS) of the Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan. It is a multidisciplinary survey on 7 dimensions, i.e., population characteristics, family structure and transfer, health, employment, income, assets and debts, and life expectation. A stratified random sampling of 1,500 households was selected from Bangkok and its vicinity and KhonKhaen province and one member aged 45 or older was interviewed. Details of sampling and interview procedures of this survey are available in Anantanasuwong and colleagues (2011). Two pilot HART projects were conducted in 2009 and 2011 with funding from the Higher Education Commission and the National Research Commission of Thailand, respectively.

measured as follows: age in years; sex dichotomized as 1 = male, 0 = female; marital status trichotomized as health status measured on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 = very poor to 5 = very good; education measured by highest level attained: 1 = no formal education, 2 = primary, 3 = secondary, 4 = higher; and work status measured by two categories of 1 = working, 0 = not working.

3. Results

3.1 The levels and patterns of giving and receiving support

(1) **Transfer direction, area of residence, and type of support:** The levels and patterns of giving and receiving support between elderly parents and their adult children in Thailand is shown in Table 1. From the frequency and percentage distribution of different types of transfer directions classified by the parents' area of residency, almost 60% of parents report a one-way transfer from their children, whereas about 6% of parents report a one-way transfer from parents to adult children. About 20% of elderly are involved in reciprocal exchange with their children while about 14% neither give nor receive. When there is family support, it is predominantly monetary transfer (Table 2). With respect to the area of residency, family intergenerational transfers are common in both urban and rural areas and follow the overall pattern. This shows a largely upward financial flow from adult children to elderly parents. It should be noted that in urban areas, the proportion of parents making no exchanges at all with children is higher than in the rural areas. Moreover, twice as many elderly rural residents give money to children compared with the urban elderly. Therefore, urban elderly parents interchange resources with adult children slightly less often than their rural counterparts.

Table 1. Percent of respondents by intergenerational transfer direction and area of residence

Transfer direction	Total (n=657)	Urban (n=316)	Rural (n=341)
One-way transfer	66.2	64.8	67.5
1. Children to parents	59.4	60.1	58.7
2. Parents to children	6.8	4.7	8.8
Two-way transfer	19.5	18.7	20.2
No transfer	14.3	16.5	12.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 2 shows that urban and rural Thai adult children provided financial support more often than nonmonetary support. Similarly, Sun (2002) studied intergenerational transfers to the elderly among urban Chinese families and found that adult children focus more on financial and material support than on helping with household chores. These findings obviously suggest that unless economic needs are met, the elderly's nonfinancial and nonmaterial demands such as time and emotional support are rarely considered. Results from the HART data confirm this contention. This evidence suggests that the psychological well-being of the Asian elderly, including Thai elderly, is almost totally ignored by their adult children.

Table 2. Percent distribution of respondents by type of support, intergenerational transferdirection, and area of residence

Type of support	Children to parents	Parents to children
Total (N=660)		
Financial only	62.7	20.5
Non-Financial only	4.8	5.2
Both	11.4	0.8
No transfer	21.1	73.5
Total	100.0	100.0
Urban (N=317)		
Financial only	61.5	17.5
Non-Financial only	6.0	5.5
Both	11.4	0.3
No transfer	21.1	76.7
Total	100.0	100.0
Rural (N=343)		
Financial only	63.8	23.0
Non-Financial only	3.8	5.0
Both	11.4	1.5
No transfer	21.0	70.6
Total	100.0	100.0

(2)Type of support, number of living children and birth order, and area of residence:Regarding the dominant resource transfer from children to their elderly parents, Table 3 shows details of such upward flow, especially the contribution of each individual child. There is no question of which child participating in the transfers for a one-child family. For the elderly with two to four living adult children, it is noticeable that the participation pattern of the upward transfers is quite similar regardless of the child's birth order. However, the elderly with five or more children tend to receive regular allowances or living expenses from the higher parity children, i.e. 4 and 5 (for five living children) than from the lower counterparts. It should also be added that the elderly are more likely to receive non-regular

financial support than regular support from their adult children, except the elderly with the only living child.

Table 3. Percentage distribution of respondents by type of received support from children), number of living children, and birth order

Number of living children/Type of received support	Birth order (of children)							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
One child								
Regular financial help	39.0							
Non-regular financial help	15.6							
Non-financial help	7.8							
No help	37.7							
Two children								
Regular financial help	27.6	27.6						
Non-regular financial help	34.1	30.9						
Non-financial help	8.1	11.4						
No help	30.1	30.1						
Three children								
Regular financial help	30.2	29.6	25.8					
Non-regular financial help	32.1	33.3	32.7					
Non-financial help	7.5	5.7	6.9					
No help	30.2	31.4	34.0					
Four children								
Regular financial help	24.2	23.4	26.6	25.8				
Non-regular financial help	36.3	32.3	33.1	31.5				
Non-financial help	6.5	10.5	8.1	10.5				
No help	33.1	33.9	32.3	32.3				
Five children								
Regular financial help	18.1	20.2	16.0	23.4	24.5			
Non-regular financial help	39.4	38.3	37.2	31.9	37.2			
Non-financial help	6.4	8.5	11.7	7.4	6.4			
No help	36.2	33.0	35.1	37.2	30.9			
More than five children								
Regular financial help	19.0	11.9	19.0	19.0	26.2	26.2	21.1	18.2
Non-regular financial help	42.9	47.6	44.0	41.7	41.7	35.7	47.4	27.3
Non-financial help	6.0	8.3	10.7	10.7	8.3	9.5	5.3	18.2
No help	32.1	32.1	26.2	28.6	23.8	28.6	26.3	36.4

The chance of receiving support for each parent (from their children) is higher than for each adult child receiving support from his/her parents. This is due to the fact that each parent

is involved with at least one child, which increases the chance of receiving support whereas each child is involved with only one parent. Therefore, the results so far indicate that the proportion of one-way resource transfers from children to parents significantly exceeded that from parents to children. As shown in Table 4, almost 55% of elderly parents in the year prior to the interview were supported by all of their children while only 15% of those parents gave support to all of their children. The majority of elderly parents (about 70%) are supported by at least half of their children. Generally, both urban and rural counterparts follow the same pattern with slight differences in the proportions of participating children, especially when the flow of support goes from children to elderly parents.

According to the mean proportions of adult children assisting their own elderly parents, about two-thirds of adult children in a family support their aged parents. Contrarily, the reverse flow from parents to children involves only about one-fifth of adult children in a family. The average proportion of children being supported by elderly parents is 1.7 and 2.3 in every 10 adult children in urban and rural areas, respectively.

Table 4. Percent distribution of respondents by proportion of children who provided support, intergenerational transfer direction, and area of residence

Proportion of children who provided support to their parents	Children to parents	Parents to children
Total (N=660)		
All	54.7	15.0
More than half (0.51 – 0.99)	11.7	3.2
Exact half (0.50)	5.0	2.7
Less than half (0.01 – 0.49)	7.6	5.6
No transfer	21.1	73.5
Mean proportion of children	0.68	0.20
Urban (N=317)		
All	50.2	12.0
More than half (0.51 – 0.99)	14.2	3.2
Exact half (0.50)	6.0	2.8
Less than half (0.01 – 0.49)	8.5	5.4
No transfer	21.1	76.7
Mean proportion of children	0.66	0.17
Rural (N=343)		
All	58.9	17.8
More than half (0.51 – 0.99)	9.3	3.2
Exact half (0.50)	4.1	2.6
Less than half (0.01 – 0.49)	6.7	5.8
No transfer	21.0	70.6
Mean proportion of children	0.70	0.23

(3) Annual median values of support and area of residence: The estimated annual median values of support received by elderly parents are shown in Tables 5–7 for the total, urban, and rural samples, respectively. As shown in Table 5, overall, elderly parents received 22,250 baht (about US\$740) from all of their adult children in the prior year. The magnitude of this upward transfer is slightly above the 2009 country's poverty line, which is 19,032 baht (Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board 2011). Even though the

urban parents are somewhat less likely to receive financial support from their adult children than their rural counterparts, the former receive a substantially larger amount of money than the latter. As shown in Tables 6 and 7, the median money transfer from children to urban parents is 30,000 baht (about US\$1,000), which is almost double compared with 17,500 baht (about US\$583) for the rural parents.

When compared with other Asian countries, except Hong Kong (US\$2,460), the transfer from Thai children to their parents is relatively large. For example, they were US\$496 in Malaysia in 1988, US\$286 in Indonesia in 1993, and US\$120 in China in 1987 (Lillard and Willis 1997, 2002; Logan and Bian2003; Chou 2008). Nevertheless, if there is no other source of income or personal saving, it is difficult for the Thai elderly, particularly those in poor health, to have a decent quality of life on only about 60 baht (US\$2) per day.

The amount of money transfer to elderly parents and the adult child's order of birth are associated positively to some extent. In the urban area, the first two children provide more to their elderly parents than their younger siblings do whereas in the rural area, only the eldest child contributes the largest amount of money. This finding suggests that the eldest child, particularly, feels more responsibility for supporting their parents than the younger siblings. In addition, it may be that the older child is in a more advanced stage in their life and has more income than their younger siblings.

Table 5. Median amount of money (baht) elderly parents received from adult children per year by number of living children and adult child's birth order: overall

Birth order	Number of living adult children					Total	Number of children
	1	2	3	4	5 and over		
1	27,500	7,950	12,500	7,500	5,000	7,500 ^a	324 ^a
2		12,500	8,750	6,000	2,500	7,500	313
3			7,500	6,000	2,500	6,000	241
4				7,500	2,500	6,000	156
5					2,500	2,500	96
6					2,500	2,500	38
7 and over					2,500	2,500	25
Total	27,500	20,500	22,500	24,250	19,500	22,250	
Minimum	1,000	2,000	2,000	1,400	400	400	
Maximum	66,000	84,000	292,000	480,000	1,093,000	1,093,000	
Number of parents	39	79	112	86	132	448	
Proportion of parents	0.51	0.65	0.70	0.68	0.74	0.68	
Number of children providing money	0.51	1.12	1.65	2.08	2.99	1.87	

Note: 1 US dollar is equivalent to about 30 Baht.

^aNot include number of living adult children = 1

Table 6. Median amount of money (baht) elderly parents received from adult children per year by number of living children and adult child's birth order: urban

Birth order	Number of living children					Total	Number of children
	1	2	3	4	5 and over		
1	30,000	18,000	17,500	7,500	7,500	12,000 ^a	149 ^a
2		15,000	18,000	12,500	6,000	12,500	141
3			12,000	7,500	6,000	7,500	101
4				12,500	7,500	7,500	62
5					6,000	6,000	39
6					2,500	2,500	14
7 and over					2,500	2,500	12
Total	30,000	27,500	31,250	33,500	30,000	30,000	
Minimum	2,500	2,500	2,000	2,500	400	400	
Maximum	66,000	84,000	292,000	480,000	1,093,000	1,093,000	
Number of parents	25	45	54	36	56	216	
Proportion received	0.59	0.67	0.70	0.65	0.74	0.68	
Number of children providing money	0.59	1.12	1.53	1.82	2.96	1.71	

Note: 1 US dollars is equivalent to about 30 baht.

^aNot include number of living adult children = 1

Table 7. Median amount of money (baht) elderly parents received from adult children per year by number of living children and adult child's birth order: rural

Birth order	Number of living children					Total	Number of children
	1	2	3	4	5 and over		
1	18,000	6,000	7,500	6,500	2,500	6,000 ^a	175 ^a
2		7,500	7,500	2,500	2,500	2,500	172
3			7,500	6,000	2,500	3,250	140
4				7,500	2,500	4,000	94
5					2,500	2,500	57
6					2,500	2,500	24
7 and over					2,500	2,500	13
Total	18,000	12,000	18,000	21,250	17,500	17,500	
Minimum	1,000	2,000	2,500	1,400	2000	1000	
Maximum	66,000	84,000	258,000	216,000	186,000	258,000	
Number of parents	14	34	58	50	76	232	
Proportion received	0.41	0.63	0.71	0.70	0.74	0.68	
Number of children providing money	0.41	1.11	1.77	2.28	3.01	2.01	

Note: 1 US dollars is equivalent to about 30 baht.

^aNot include number of living adult children = 1

(4) Family structure and area of residence: Table 8 presents the distribution of elderly parents by the percentages of their important family characteristics. There are slight differences in the family profile between urban and rural areas. Regarding status in the family, the Thai elderly assume an important role because a large majority of the sample, about four out of five, is either the household head or house owner. About 65% of elderly parents cohabit with at least one child, with a slightly higher proportion of the urban elderly compared with the rural elderly. Regarding family type, 75% of elderly persons live in the fragmentary family type because there is no conjugal unit in the household, whereas the remainder has at least one conjugal unit. Examples of the fragmentary family type are the elderly living alone, an elderly either father or mother living with at least one unmarried child, and an elderly person living with his/her sibling(s) whose marital status is single or divorce or widow. In addition, one conjugal family refers to elderly couples living together or both elderly parents are still alive and living in the same household. The elderly in rural areas are more likely to be in fragmentary family-type dwellings than their urban counterparts are. About 60% of the elderly reside in a two-generation family and 20% have only one generation in the household. The predominance of co-residence with children combined with a fragmentary family type as illustrated above leads us to conclude that such co-residence is with unmarried children.

Table 8. Percent of respondents by important family structures and area of residence

Family characteristics	Total	Urban	Rural
Family status			
Head of household	36.9	40.6	33.5
House owner	41.6	36.1	46.6
Others	21.5	23.3	19.9
Co-residence with children			
Yes	65.9	68.8	63.4
No	34.1	31.3	36.6
Family type			
Fragmentary	75.3	69.4	80.8
One conjugal	17.9	20.2	17.9
Multiple conjugal	2.3	3.5	1.2
Extended	4.5	6.6	2.6
Number of generations			
One generation	20.2	17.4	22.7
Two generations	62.0	62.7	61.2
Three generations or more	17.9	19.9	16.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

(5) Discussion: The analysis of the direction of transfer indicated that a majority of elderly parents reported either a one- or two-way transfer with their children in the prior year. More than half of the elderly match the elderly security norm where children support their parents in later life. Only about 14% of parents reported no exchange with their adult children. Therefore, this study confirms the expectation that the traditional family-based support for the elderly still persists in Thailand, in urban as well as rural areas, despite major changes toward westernization. Children are still a source of old age security in Thailand.

Financial support is more frequently given by adult children to their elderly parents than nonmonetary support such as caregiving or going shopping. Thai elders are likely to rely on

their children for financial support, but not for emotional support. The upward flow of support to parents continues, but the focus shifts from kin- to cash-based support systems. This result raises some questions about the psychological well-being of the elderly, even although about two-thirds of parents live with their adult children. According to the Mental Health Department, Ministry of Public Health, the overall suicide rates of the Thai population have declined substantially over the past 15 years. Contrarily, the percentage of suicide deaths by people aged 60 years and older doubled from 7.3% in 1997 to 15.3% in 2010 (Mental Health Department 2011). This trend is due to the increasing proportion of the elderly in the total population as well as the shifting of family relationships to a cash-based system. Treerutkuarkul (2005) claimed that depression and vulnerability as a result of family negligence are responsible for a high risk of elderly suicide. However, further investigation is recommended for a complete exploration of this issue.

This study found consistency in the direction and type of resource transfers with previous studies done in Thailand using data from national surveys. From the 1994 and 2007 Surveys of Older Persons in Thailand, Knodel and Chayovan (2009) found that 88% and 87% of parents aged 60 years and older received money in the prior year from their children, respectively. This consistency suggests not only the validity of the HART data, but also the persistence of the level and types of family intergenerational transfers. The pervasiveness of financial support to elderly parents is also evident in other eastern and southeastern Asian countries that recently experienced modernization (Lillard and Willis 1997; Knodel et al. 1998; Frankenberg et al. 2002; Logan and Bian 2003; Glaser et al. 2006). Contrarily, family resource transfers are generally in the opposite direction in Western countries, that is, from elderly parents to their children. These findings imply that although westernization and urbanization changed many aspects of family life, especially toward nuclearization, filial obligation is still prevalent in Asia. This may be mainly because there is no secured old-age pension for the elderly, not even from their personal savings, in eastern countries other than from the family. As a result, the Asian elderly, including the Thai elderly, have to rely on family financial support, especially from adult children. Surveys have reported that a large proportion of the Thai elderly cited their children as their main source of income (Knodel and Chayovan 2009). Therefore, the Thai and other Asian elderly are largely supported informally, privately, and voluntarily.

The amount of money received by elderly parents according to the number of living children suggests an interesting pattern of intergenerational financial transfer between elderly parents and their adult children. According to the median values, overall elderly parents with only one living child received the largest income while those with five or more living children received the smallest income. Furthermore, there are slight differences in the amount of monetary support provided to the elderly with two to four living adult children. These findings allow us to gain some insight into the quality of the relationship between the number of adult children and the number of children currently providing money found in the present study (shown in the last row of Tables 5–7) as well as in previous studies (Knodel et al. 1998; Knodel and Chayovan 2002). Although parents with only one child are noticeably less likely to receive financial support from their adult children than those with more than one child, the amount of money received is surprisingly as large as or even larger than for other groups. There is not much difference in the total amount of money received by elderly parents with different numbers of adult children. This indicates that children tend to coordinate the amount of money transfer so that their parents will be supported to a given level, except in cases of two adult children. Unlike families with three or more children, it is unclear whether the two siblings in a two-child family coordinate to support their parents. If they do, the number of siblings contributing support is too small, which means the total amount of support is not as large as for the elderly with three or more children. An alternative argument is that the two

siblings may assume for any reason that one will or must take a major share of responsibility and the other can be a minor or supplement supporter. However, fertility reduction seems to pose a threat to old-age security because the intensity of support to elderly parents appears not to be linearly related to the number of living adult children.

3.2 The effects of family structure and selected factors on intergenerational transfer:

Another question to address is whether family structure and selected socioeconomic characteristics and the health status of the elderly affect the intergenerational transfers. Because there is no substantial difference in the transfer pattern between urban and rural areas, we investigate only the overall sample. Multinomial logistic regression was conducted to examine the relationship between 10 independent variables and the parent-child resource transfers during the past 12 months. The analysis compares each category of the transfer (children to parents only, parents to children only, and two-way transfer) with the “no transfer” category. The estimated coefficients for the log odds (B) as well as the odds ratio (Exp(B)) are presented.

As expected, the results from Table 9 show that the odds of resource transfer from adult children to elderly parents increase significantly with family size. When compared with the no parent-child transfer category, parents with more children are more likely to be receivers. This confirms the evidence discussed previously that the proportion of the elderly as receivers as well as the mean number of children giving support increase with the number of adult children. In addition, the elderly's level of educational attainment, which indicates economic status, affects the receiving role of the elderly, that is, lower educated elderly parents are more likely to receive monetary support from adult children than no transfer between them. According to family composition, family type and number of generations in the elderly household have a significant effect on support received from adult children when compared with no support between them. In the family with two or more generations, the odds of upward transfer for the elderly living in a fragmentary setting is about twice of those living in a conjugated or extended family. Moreover, life in a one-generation family (fragmentary or conjugal households) tends to decrease the odds of parents receiving support from their adult children from about 20% to 40%.

Work status and co-residence with children are significantly associated with the transfer of support from parents to children. Working elderly parents are 2.4 times more likely than nonworking parents to be in the “parents to children only” than “no-transfer” categories. This suggests that some elderly parents remain economically active not only for themselves, but also for their needy adult children. This notion contrasts with stereotypes of the elderly as being burdensome to the family members. In fact, most of them are owners or heads of their households. According to the Indonesian study, parents assume parenting responsibilities for their children will continue well into adulthood and are extended even to their grandchildren (Schroder-Butterfill 2003).

The HART data on co-residence appears to show that adult children are more likely to live with their parents in their parents' home, not vice versa. A number of adult children return to the parental home when they have a life crisis such as economic or marital problems (Goldscheider and Goldscheider 1994). In Mexico, Gomes (2007) reported that of all adult children who cohabit with their parents, 77% of them have previously left their family and then returned, and most likely with their children. Adult children, especially those who are

Table 9. Multinomial logistic regression on the intergenerational transfer between parents and children: total (with “no transfer” as the reference category) (N = 610)

Predictors	Children to parents		Parents to children		Two-way transfer	
	B	Exp(B)	B	Exp(B)	B	Exp(B)
Age	-0.005	0.995	-0.004	0.996	0.004	1.004
Number of children	0.165*	1.179	-0.080	0.923	0.014	1.014
Health status	-0.154	0.857	0.217	1.242	0.022	1.022
Sex						
Male	-0.070	0.933	0.277	1.319	-0.203	0.816
Female	-	1.000	-	1.000	-	1.000
Education						
No formal education or primary	0.564*	1.758	-0.143	0.867	0.162	1.176
High school or higher	-	1.000	-	1.000	-	1.000
Marital status						
Currently married	0.141	1.152	0.443	1.558	0.058	1.059
Not currently married	-	1.000	-	1.000	-	1.000
Work status						
Working	0.096	1.101	0.884**	2.422	0.831**	2.295
Not working	-	1.000	-	1.000	-	1.000
Family status						
Head of household	-0.543	0.581	-0.244	0.784	-0.654	0.520
House owner	0.103	1.109	-0.570	0.566	0.035	1.036
Others	-	1.000	-	1.000	-	1.000
Co-residence with children						
Yes	0.080	1.083	1.427***	4.166	0.337	1.400
No	-	1.000	-	1.000	-	1.000
Family type * generation						
Fragmentary & 1 generation	-0.198	0.821	0.763	2.145	-0.444	0.642
Fragmentary & ≥2 generations	0.686**	1.986	0.797	2.219	0.876**	2.402
Conjugal & 1 generation	-0.458	0.633	0.955	2.597	-1.558	0.211
Conjugal/extended & ≥2 generations	-	1.000	-	1.000	-	1.000
Constant	0.186		-1.482		-0.481	
N	366		42		122	
Model chi-square(df)	91.989***(39)					
R ² (Cox and Snell)	0.140					

married, who cannot afford a separate residence, tend to be unsuccessful in work. The results from Table 9 indicate that the odds of support transference to children (and perhaps their children's family) increase slightly over fourfold if the elderly resides with their adult children. This finding is consistent with Agree et al. (2002) who concluded that Taiwanese and Philippine parents are more likely to transfer resources to their cohabiting children than to those of their non-cohabiting children. Although different combinations of family types and number of generations in the elderly household are not significantly associated with the direction of giving support from elderly parents to adult children, elderly parents who are both alive and live in the same household are more likely than other types of households to give support to their adult children.

In the two-way transfer between parents and adult children, elderly parents are significantly differentiated by work status, interaction between family type, and number of generations in the family. Working elderly parents are more likely to reciprocate support with their adult children than to provide no support. The current results show that the parent–children transfer, whether one- or two-way exchanges, is only possible if parents have work income. The question becomes what makes parents givers only or both givers and receivers of support. The answer tends to be related to family living arrangements. While there is no significant difference among various family structure types related to the elderly supporting their adult children, this is not true for reciprocal transfers. The results show that the elderly with fragmentary family types (living without spouse) and having at least two generations in their living arrangement are more than twice as likely to receive and give as to engage in no transfer of support.

Discussion: Results from multinomial logistic regression indicate that controlling for other demographics, health, socioeconomic characteristics, and work status of elderly parents, the family structure variables of number of children, whether cohabiting with adult children and the interaction between family types and number of generations are significantly associated with the direction of intergenerational resource transfer. The number of children is related positively to the likelihood of elderly parents receiving support from children. Among other characteristics of family structures that exert an effect on intergenerational resource transfer patterns, co-residence with adult children remains strongly associated with elderly parents supporting their adult children.

The empirical evidence provides support for the association between the structural and the functional characteristics of intergenerational family relations. The results clearly show that there are important differences in family types and number of generations in the support system. These two characteristics relate to the marital status of aging parents and of their adult children, reflecting the competing needs of individual family members. The relationship for upward transfers (from adult children to elderly parents) is more complex than that for downward transfers (from elderly parents to adult children). The downward transfer of support is more likely to occur in any family structure type, as long as the elderly cohabiting with their children. On the contrary for the upward transfers, the strength of the intergenerational social bond becomes evident when a family structure has changed from a “conjugation” to a “fragmented beanpoles”. In other words, the transition from “marriage” to “widowhood/separation/divorce” roles of elderly parents intensifies the upward resource flows. From the parent's perspective, spouses and children are the main caregivers for the elders. The absence of one's spouse may cause the other, especially a frail parent to shared living arrangement with their children. It can be seen that structural intergenerational solidarity reflects the parental dependency which then stimulate the emergence of functional

solidarity. Despite the eroding role of family in traditional intergenerational support, when in need it is still functioning in Thailand. This clearly indicates the underlying mechanisms of family support to the Thai elderly. In general, these findings suggest that family structures enable an opportunity for exchanging instrumental and financial assistance between adult children and their elderly parents.

The results clearly show that there are important differences in family types and number of generations in the support system. These two characteristics mainly reflect the marital status of aging parents and of their adult children who live in the same household. However, the role of the latter seems to be more important in determining the direction of support than the former. The transfer patterns depend largely on the marital status and needs of adult children. Elderly who live in a fragmentary family type with two or more generations in the household, that is, the widowed, separated, or divorced elderly father or mother cohabits with their unmarried children, tend to be involved in either the upward transfer from or the reciprocal transfer of support with their adult children. However, the downward transfer of support from elderly parents to adult children is more likely to occur in any family structure type, but more importantly for the elderly cohabiting with their children. As mentioned previously, this co-residence is a response to the children's need. It is evident that there are two categories of adult children who cohabit with their elderly parents: those who are unmarried and those who are unsuccessful in life.

According to the present study, adult children can either cohabit, not cohabit, or both because the present study examines resource transfers with all children, not only cohabiting children. For the flow of resources from adult children to elderly parents, previous studies done in Asian countries including Thailand found that elderly parents receive support from cohabiting as well as non-cohabiting children (Knodel and Chayovan 2008; Yi and Lin 2009). However, cohabiting children usually have a stronger perception of filial obligations (Yi and Lin 2009). Contrarily, for elderly parents who provide for their adult children, multinomial logistic regression results led us to presume that this type of transaction is mostly with cohabiting children. Yi and Lin (2009) compared intergenerational relations between cohabiting and non-cohabiting children in Taiwan and found that elderly parents engage more actively in resource transfer with cohabiting children than non-cohabiting children.

A closer look at the amounts and types of reciprocal exchanges is probably more complex. Previous studies in Asia indicate that although resource transfer flows in both directions, it is predominantly from children to parents (Knodel et al. 1992; Lillard and Willis 1997; Chen and Silverstein 2000). As mentioned previously, this is largely because parents can receive resources from several children. However, it is unclear whether the reciprocity is an equal or asymmetrical exchange in terms of the dyadic parent-child relationship, especially between parents and cohabiting children. The present study finds that even for a reciprocal exchange of support, elderly parents mainly provide financial support (the provided money derived at least in part, if not all, from the elderly work income) to adult children instead of emotional support or assistance in household daily activities, which is often hypothesized by most theorists. Resource-transfer behavior from elderly parents to adult children has been largely ignored by researchers in this field (Schroder-Butterfill 2003). Nevertheless, HART data show that a significant change in Thai family values is in the importance of money. Because the majority of family resource transfers are cash based, the elderly's role as family providers depends on having a work income. In family economies over the past several decades, there has been shift from the "single male breadwinner" to the

“two-earner” models in general society (Eggebeen 1992). This study suggests that a new phase, the “elderly breadwinner,” may emerge in the near future.

One final note is that we could not tell whether there is a portion of money received by parents from one child (either cohabiting or non-cohabiting), which is transferred to another child (either cohabiting or non-cohabiting) who is currently unsuccessful or in need. Previous studies have shown that parents appear to redistribute resources within the family by giving greater support to the less well-off children (McGarry and Schoeni 1995). However, the data available to this study do not permit us to investigate this interesting issue.

4. Conclusion

The study explores the level and patterns of resource transfer between Thai elderly parents and their adult children and the effects of family structure on the direction of the transfer using a sample of 657 elderly parents from the 2009 baseline panel survey and study on Health, Aging, and Retirement in Thailand (HART).

The main results show that more than half of the elderly match the elderly security norm where children support their parents in later life (about 60% of Thai elderly parents receive financial support from their adult children, only about 14% of Thai elderly parents neither give nor receive financial support to or from their adult children). There is no significant difference in familial intergenerational transfers between urban and rural areas. Thus, children are still a source of old age security in Thailand.

The resource transfer given by adult children to their elderly parents is more in the form of monetary financial support than nonmonetary support such as caregiving or going shopping. The annual median value of support received by elderly parents is 22,250 baht (about US\$740).

The results from the multinomial logistic regression on the intergenerational transfer between parents and children indicate that the direction of upward resource transfer from children to parents is significantly associated with family size, family type and number of generations in the household, and education of the parents. The downward resource transfer from parents to children is significantly associated with working status and co-residence, while the two-way resource transfer is significantly associated with working status of parents and family type and number of generations in the household.

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