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# Challenges to Comparative Research on Intergenerational Transfers

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COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE ELDERLY IN ASIA

## RESEARCH REPORTS

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This series of research reports deals with the status of the elderly in several Asian countries. It presents research that is being conducted under a broad project sponsored by the U.S. National Institute on Aging, the Comparative Study of the Elderly in Four Asian Countries (Grant No. AG07637). The goal is to measure the social, economic, and health characteristics of the older population (age 60 and above), to predict what changes may occur over the next decades and to suggest implications for public policy. The original countries involved in the study are the Philippines, Singapore, Taiwan, and Thailand. Reports on the elderly in other countries in Asia and on methods developed through the project using data from various countries may also be included in this report series.

Organizations collaborating in this research include: Population Studies and Training Center, Brown University; Population Institute, University of the Philippines; Department of Social Work and Psychology, National University of Singapore; Taiwan Provincial Institute of Family Planning; and Institute of Population Studies, Chulalongkorn University. For additional information about the comparative project, please contact the Principal Investigator: Albert I. Hermalin, Population Studies Center, University of Michigan, PO Box 1248, Ann Arbor MI 48106-1248 USA.

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## Challenges to Comparative Research on Intergenerational Transfers

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## Abstract

Intergenerational transfers are complex processes involving a potentially large number of participants and a range of content, often subsumed as space, time, or money. Identifying the matrix of providers and recipients associated with each “currency” and distinguishing past from current flows and direct from indirect transfers, pose considerable challenge to any survey instrument. This paper proposes an organizational framework for this multidimensionality and then reviews some of the strategies that have been employed by several surveys in East and Southeast Asia to measure key elements of the process.

**Datasets Used:** Survey of Health and Living Status of the Elderly in Taiwan: Taiwan, 1989, 1996 // Philippine Elderly Survey: Philippines, 1996 // Survey of the Elderly in Thailand: Thailand, 1995 // National Survey of Senior Citizens: Singapore, 1994/5

## I. Introduction

Intergenerational support arrangements are basic components of the social fabric in each culture. They arise in the first instance from the physiological aspect of the human condition in which there is vulnerability among the very young and very old and hence dependence on others for vital support. As expressed in economic terms by Lee (1994) in Figure 1, at the two extremes of age, humans cannot produce from their labor enough to sustain their needed consumption. To insure their survival, various institutional arrangements have arisen to provide the needed assistance. The condition of infants is quite clear and there is relatively little variation in the types of support they need or in the mechanisms for their provision.

Among the elderly there is much greater variation in the needs that may arise and in the means for satisfying them. Each society develops a set of mechanisms, including formal and informal elements, which define the timing and content of support, the appropriate participants, and their mutual obligations. In periods of relative stability these arrangements are maintained by a well-developed normative and value structure, but rapid change of a demographic, social, or economic nature may produce strains that lead to alteration in these arrangements or a greater or lesser degree.

Much of the interest in the elderly in East and Southeast Asia stems from awareness that the sharp drops in fertility and mortality, coupled with rapid economic development have the potential to alter the long-standing cultural bases of support for the elderly within these societies. The growing number and proportion of elderly, coupled with smaller numbers of children who are increasingly involved with more urban and modern pursuits, give rise to concerns that the familial basis of support, which characterizes these regions, may be greatly weakened.

The empirical challenge associated with these perceptions is to devise adequate representations of the current support systems, and analyze their differentials across groups and countries as a basis of establishing benchmarks both to anticipate and measure future changes. Since so much of the support for the elderly in these regions resides within the family, much of the challenge will be directed to capturing the intergenerational support system, while not overlooking important elements of the formal system. The depth and complexity of these systems allow for wide variation in the facets that are measured and in the methods employed. As example, in economic terms alone, an older person no longer in the labor force may have income because of accumulated wealth and savings, income from a government or private pension, and/or income or material support from one or more children or other relatives. To capture these flows requires attention to several dimensions, among them: the source of the income, the amount, the nature of the provider (amount of assets, type of pension or social security arrangement, characteristics of the children.) To complicate matters, it is also possible that the older person in question will be extending material support to others (e.g., to a parent or to a child) necessitating similar detail on economic supports provided. When this potentially complex matrix of exchanges and their characteristics is multiplied by other important types of support--the provision of physical assistance or assistance with household duties, emotional support and companionship--the limits of questionnaire subtlety and reasonable length of interview are quickly approached. It is probably not too much of an exaggeration to say that

there are as many approaches to appraising intergenerational transfers as there are questionnaires, as each team achieves a unique compromise among the constraints and challenges inherent in the situation.

Although variation in the length and content of questionnaires devoted to this topic is not surprising, these differences do limit the range and depth of comparative analyses that can be carried out. As an initial step to identifying strategies that might gain wide appeal, the goal of this article is to review the multiple dimensions of intergenerational transfers and to provide examples from actual questionnaires of the various approaches that have been employed to measure some of them. These lead to a series of recommendations that, if adopted, can contribute to greater standardization in future questionnaire content, and thus enhanced comparative analyses.

To define the scope of this inquiry, we will follow Soldo and Hill (1993) and define intergenerational transfers as a generic term used to describe the redistribution of resources within an extended family structure, incorporating both interhousehold and intrahousehold exchanges. The focus on the family does not diminish, of course, the need to collect detailed information on the supports received from the community, the state, and friends and neighbors. Not only are these sources major providers of certain types of support in some countries (such as pension and social security income in industrialized nations), but the existence of these sources can have an effect on the likelihood and amount of support forthcoming from family members (Schoeni, 1992).

In setting out a framework for intergenerational transfers, one can proceed logically to enumerate the major dimensions and sub-categories and discuss the strategies for measuring each, or one can start from major theoretical perspectives and spell out the dimensions most salient to each. We emphasize the first perspective but point up elements that might be particularly important for testing certain hypotheses. (Soldo and Hill (1993), review the relevant theories from an economic, demographic and social-psychological perspective, and Lillard and Willis (1997) provide a more detailed discussion of the economic hypotheses.) Ideally, of course, the goals of a survey should govern the content, and these may vary from the desire for broad description, to specific fact-finding for policy purposes, to hypothesis-testing. In practice, the costs and efforts associated with large-scale surveys lead to fairly broad undertakings that serve multiple purposes, although the adequacy of the fit between content and primary objectives should not be taken for granted.

For the most part, the examples presented are taken from the project, "Rapid Demographic Change and the Welfare of the Elderly," a collaborative project of the University of Michigan with the Philippines, Taiwan, Thailand, and Singapore. The research reports published from this project can be viewed and/or ordered on <http://www.psc.isr.umich.edu/pubs/series.html>. Draft and actual questionnaires used in a recent round of surveys are utilized to illustrate various strategies. In the next section, we introduce the major dimensions of intergenerational transfers and the challenges they pose for data collection.

## **II. Outlining an Intergenerational Support System**

If we conceive of intergenerational transfers as a series of exchanges between an indexed elderly person or couple (i.e., the focal point of the investigation) and his and/or her family network, the major components of this exchange system include: who is involved; what is exchanged (and sometimes, where); the quantity of the items exchanged; and when the exchange takes place. In addition, one often wishes to know how important the exchange is to the recipient and how much of a burden it represents to the provider, as well as the motivations for the exchange. Though this listing is straightforward, operationalizing these dimensions can be complex and presents the analyst with a number of difficult options. Table 1 outlines the components of a support system in more detail as a starting point for identifying their questionnaire implications.

The top panel of Table 1 speaks to the need of properly identifying the focal elderly unit and the kin network with which they carry out exchanges, and identifies the three major "currencies" of transfer, following Soldo and Hill (1993), as space, money, and time.

The second panel lists the salient dimensions of each exchange, providing a partial checklist of attributes that might be measured either for individual transfers or classes of transfer. These include such basic characteristics as the parties to the exchange, the purpose of the transfer, and the magnitudes involved, to less obvious dimensions such as the form, timing and impact of the transfer.

Each of these broad components of an intergenerational support system will be addressed below, and in many instances examples of how these have been measured will be provided.

## **III. Mapping the Kin Network**

The starting point in describing an intergenerational support system is defining the kin network of reference and measuring its characteristics. Though technically this stage may not involve actual exchanges, it is vital in several respects. Mapping the number, location, and characteristics of kin serves as the denominator against which the frequency and nature of exchanges can be judged. Certain types of assistance, such as physical assistance, are difficult to provide at a distance and it is important to be able to distinguish among the elderly who do not receive certain types of assistance because of the lack of potential caregivers from other reasons. In addition, knowledge of the kin network is essential for testing competing hypotheses about the motivations and social dynamics of exchanges, such as the differences in assistance provided or received from sons and daughters. (See, for example, Lee *et al.*, 1994; Ofstedal *et al.*, 1999.) From a practical standpoint, identifying the kin network in detail often makes it easier to record the exchanges that take place with specific members, and serves to remind the respondent of the relevant set of possible providers and beneficiaries.

The definition of the kin network is not straightforward, as the relationships likely to be salient may vary across societies and over time within societies. Another key decision is the

amount of detail to collect about each member and whether this should vary with the nature of the relationship. Current practice ranges from recording summary numbers of each type, perhaps within broad location, to establishing a detailed matrix which enumerates each member and his or her characteristics separately. As indicated below, we recommend that reasonably detailed information be collected about parents and children of the respondent. Whether siblings and other kin should be treated in the same fashion will depend on the culture, and the degree to which contact and exchanges are customary. It should be noted that for elderly respondents who are currently married and co-residing with their spouse, information will often be needed about key relatives of each, as well as about children that may not be jointly theirs.

A major decision is how to treat members within the household versus those residing outside. We recommend that detailed information be collected about each member of the household, regardless of his or her relation to the elderly respondent. Figure 2 illustrates a grid for recording detailed characteristics of all household members. The columns on the grid identify the characteristics to be recorded from carefully worded questions. Several points are worth noting: Since there can be more than one married child co-residing, each with children, it is useful to distinguish, through the use of a line number (Column B14 or a similar device), who is the parent of each grandchild in the household. Also, since elderly parents may be co-residing with the indexed respondent, one will usually wish to ascertain the state of their health as well as other characteristics common to all household members, as this speaks to ongoing or potential caregiving burdens, and provision for recording this information is indicated in the last column.

An attractive feature of the household grid is that it facilitates the collection of adjunct data important for understanding transfers. As example, column B8 records how long each member has lived in the current household which together with information about the elderly respondent's own moves can reveal whether the respondent joined an existing household or when others joined a household established by the respondent. Similarly, discussion of household dynamics can lead to questions on who is the head of the household in economic as well as nominal terms, and questions on ownership of the home (and land), all important for understanding the nature of the transfers concerning "space". (Questions on home ownership are also sometimes included in a separate section on "Assets".)

When moving beyond the household, the number of decisions concerning the kin to include and the information to collect multiply. We recommend the more detailed strategy for the closest kin, with more summary measures reserved for distant relations. Figure 3 shows the strategy, employed in the 1989 Survey of Health and Living Status of the Elderly in Taiwan. There are two elements in the data collected worth noting. One is the geographical location of each of the children and any surviving parents, and the other is the characteristics of these network members. The columns X2 to X5 reflect the minimal characteristics that should be obtained about each son and daughter, though some additional information about stage of family building, like number of children and age of oldest child, and the occupation of the spouse are desirable to further identify the ability of this unit to provide assistance or to require help from others.



The geographic dimension of the “mapping” exercise is reflected in column X6, which locates the non co-resident child *vis a vis* the elderly respondent. The categories will vary with the particular study, but at a minimum one should ascertain which children live close by, sometimes distinguishing between those in the same extended compound although in a different dwelling, and those elsewhere in the village or city, those elsewhere in the country, and, where appropriate, those outside the country (which can be important for countries like the Philippines where there are many overseas contract workers who make remittances). In some cases it may be desirable to obtain even more detail, such as the distance or time to reach each child and the usual means of transportation.

Information on the spatial network of children forms the backdrop for understanding the frequency of contact between the elderly respondent and his or her non co-resident children, indicated in columns X7 and X8 of Figure 3. The frequency and nature of contacts reflect in part the intergenerational exchange of time, another important “currency” in measuring transfers. As before, the amount of detail will vary with the particular situation. In the first round of the Taiwan study we sought to measure the frequency of personal visits (ranging from “every day” to “have not seen for a long time”) and the frequency of contacts by phone and letters. In other instances, one may also want to distinguish whether the visit takes place in the home of the elderly or in the home of the child (i.e. who visits whom).

In addition to this range of information about non co-resident children, the health, location, and frequency of contact should be obtained about non co-resident parents of the indexed respondent (and spouse). These can be collected as a subset of the questions asked of non co-resident children, as suggested by Figure 3, or as part of a separate grid about parents, including important information about deceased parents (including age at death, cause of death, and where living when died).

For other relatives, beyond children and parents, it is often necessary in the interests of time to obtain summary information, which can still provide insights into the size and strength of the kin network. In developing the Taiwan questionnaire, there was the expectation that siblings might be a strong source of support. Consequently, as Figure 4 illustrates, the location of and contact with siblings was mapped in some detail but still in a summary fashion, while information about other relations was curtailed even further. In the Health and Retirement Survey (HRS), by contrast, detailed information was obtained about four siblings of the respondents with at least one living biological parent, a sample selection table being employed when there were five or more siblings (Soldo and Hill, 1995).

In addition to mapping the kin network, represented by the right hand box in Table 1, attention should be given to carefully defining the elderly “unit” in question. If the elderly respondent is single, widowed or divorced, little confusion is likely to arise about the referent in question in tracing the exchanges between the respondent and his or her network. When the respondent is currently married, however, care must be exercised whether the questions are intended to cover the couple or the particular respondent. Although visits, and transfers of money or goods are likely to be for the benefit of the couple, this will not always be the case and if the intent is to measure exchanges in which the couple is involved this should be made clear

from the structure of the questionnaire. In practice, one will usually seek a mixture of "respondent" vs. "couple" responses. In asking about the receipt of physical assistance or assistance with household duties or specific forms of companionship or emotional support, the focus is almost always on the respondent. But questions about financial support or more general patterns of visiting often have the couple in mind. Similar caution is needed in tracing what the elderly unit does for others. Should the focus be on what the couple does in terms of financial assistance, taking care of grandchildren, or assisting children, or on the particular respondent?

#### **IV. Measuring and Recording Exchanges**

In this section we focus on measuring and recording the different types of exchanges and their characteristics, described in Table 1. As noted, the potential amount of detail of interest is considerable and confronts the analyst with many challenges. In the previous section we have indicated how the transfer of space via living arrangements can be obtained in the course of obtaining details about household structure, so the emphasis here will be on exchange of money (or equivalent) and time.

Broadly speaking, there are two strategies: one is person centered and asks if exchanges of certain types have occurred with named individuals or classes of individuals; the other is exchange centered, and asks if exchanges of specific types occurred, and if so, obtains the names or classes of individuals involved in the transfer, as well as other information. Few questionnaires are entirely of one type or another, so both strategies are likely to be found in the same protocol. Another decision facing the analyst is whether to concentrate the exchange questions in one section or to decentralize them by topic, pursuing for example questions on physical assistance in the health section and questions on financial assistance in the income section. Again, these strategies are often melded, with some exchanges grouped and others diversified.

In the 1996 Philippine Elderly Survey, shown in Figure 5, a grid was used to inquire about exchanges of goods and money with children, questions C4a to C4h exploring assistance to children, and C5a to C5h probing into assistance from children. Note that this structure requires inquiry about exchanges with each co-resident and non co-resident child, even if no exchanges have taken place. As such, it lessens the chance that a given exchange will be overlooked and it provides a convenient way to record the information and to connect it to the characteristics of the children. On the negative side, insofar as there are relatively few exchanges of a given type, it can be time-consuming and tedious to go through a long list of possible participants. In the Philippine survey, a similar grid was used to record exchanges of this type with parents, parents-in-law, grandchildren as a class, siblings as a class, and all other relations.

At the other extreme, the 1989 Taiwan Survey of the Elderly focused on the exchanges, and asked the respondents whether they received assistance of certain types and, if so, to name the persons involved (a separate section probed assistance from governmental and non-governmental organizations). Figure 6 illustrates this line of questioning as it appeared in the questionnaire, and Figure 7 displays the flow in schematic terms. Here the person is not probed

as to each possible provider, but since these questions come after the kin network details, the range of potential providers should be well in mind. Focusing on the exchange puts more pressure on making certain that the persons named as giving and receiving assistance are recorded properly so that the nature of the transfer can be aligned with their personal characteristics. Leaving space in the grid which collected the characteristics, as shown in Figure 3, facilitates entering the transfers for those enumerated and for entering persons not previously covered (such as distant relatives or friends). (Alternatively, one might assign a unique line number to each member of the respondent's extended family in the process of collecting their characteristics, and use these to record who provides and receives assistance at each point in the questionnaire, thereby connecting characteristics and exchanges. Computer assisted interviewing, either in person or by telephone, opens up many possibilities for keeping track of various classes of individuals. For example, a grid of co-resident and non co-resident family members can be "called up" whenever questions on exchanges arise, and the pertinent information recorded. With paper questionnaires, considerable ingenuity has to be employed sometimes to make sure the interviewer has all of the relevant information on hand at each stage.)

In the approaches represented by both Figures 5 and 6, the respondent is asked who provided the most assistance of each type. (In the Philippine survey, although the amount of money received is asked for, this is only in terms of two broad categories so that it will not necessarily distinguish the main provider.) Ascertaining the main provider is important for understanding the operation of the support network. As an example, one can determine if there is a tendency for an elderly respondent to receive different supports from the same person, or whether the provision of multiple forms of support is diffused across the network. (Methods of measuring the degree of concentration or diffusion are illustrated in Hermalin, *et al.*, 1996, tables 7 and 8.)

Figure 7 introduces the dimension of establishing a respondent's need for different types of assistance and the sufficiency of the assistance received. Measuring need is a critical aspect of understanding intergenerational transfers since we expect the existence of need and its degree to be a prime determinant of the provision of support. There are different strategies for establishing need and the approach can vary with the type of support. In Figure 7, the underlying strategy was to assume that those receiving assistance have a need, and the focus was on identifying the suppliers and the sufficiency of the assistance received. (This is not necessarily the best strategy, but was prompted by concern that a "straightforward" question on whether the respondent had certain needs would be met with denials, foreclosing the possibility of obtaining information about transfers. In subsequent Taiwan reinterviews and in the Philippine and Thai questionnaires, assistance with ADLs and some IADLs was obtained as part of a sequence which first established the level of difficulty in carrying out each task, and then whether aids or personal assistance were required, and who the providers, if any, were.)

There are a number of dimensions of the transfer of money or its equivalent in addition to ascertaining recent exchanges as illustrated. Special gifts or loans that occurred in the past for the purpose of helping a child or other relative with educational expenses, open a business, for travel or special needs (like medical expenses), can be important for understanding current

patterns of exchange. They enter into testing various hypotheses about motivations for transfer concerning reciprocity vs. altruism and investment in human capital for old age support which are associated with several economic theories. (See Lillard and Willis, 1997 and Soldo and Hill, 1993.) In the Taiwan survey this information was obtained via a separate set of questions which inquired whether large amounts were given or loaned for special purposes and finding out the recipient, purpose, and characteristics of the transaction. (Obtaining the amount involved is desirable, but not always possible.)

Exchanges within the household of money or time often pose more measurement difficulty than those that are interhousehold since the exchanges can occur in a number of ways. For example, rather than providing money, those living with the elderly respondent may pay the major expenses of the household (also possible, of course, to some degree for those living at a distance). To capture these variations, it is desirable to direct some questions to household financial arrangements. In the 1996 Taiwan Survey follow-up, for example, attention was given to the following aspects of household dynamics:

- Identifying each household member with income
- Determining total household income
- Method of meeting household expenses (i.e., is there pooling of income, or are expenses covered by certain members, amount of contribution toward expenses)
- Identifying non-household members who cover expenses
- Adequacy of income for respondent and spouse in relation to household expenses

These questions were in addition to other questions on the sources of income for the respondent and spouse and the importance of each source. Attention should also be paid to joint ownership of assets, and transfers of assets to children and others, particularly in cultures where some division of property often takes place upon retirement or well in advance of death.

Transfers of time have been discussed in connection with assistance that the respondent might receive with ADLs or IADLs. It is important, of course, to account for time that the elderly respondent gives to others for a wide variety of purposes. Increasingly, for example, older parents provide childcare for their grandchildren to facilitate working couples, and they often provide companionship as well as care to elderly parents. Figure 8 from the 1996 Taiwan Survey follow-up shows a set of questions designed to elicit the major dimensions of time provided by the respondent to others.

Another dimension of time is identifying the nature of emotional support and companionship received by the respondent. In our surveys we have tried to identify such dimensions as satisfaction with willingness of family members to listen to worries and problems, degree to which respondent feels loved and cared for, and the degree to which family members can be counted on for care during illness, and to identify the specific persons for each dimension most likely to provide that type of support. In addition, we have tried to ascertain who accompanies the respondent in activities outside the home, such as going to restaurants, on trips, to movies, etc.

As with money, transfers of time for household related activities sometimes require special attention. For example, it is not always easy to distinguish assistance that an older person receives with household chores and related because of some limitations, from assistance provided as a result of customary divisions of labor. To get a sense of the assistance that the elderly respondent provides to others through household activities and the assistance received, it is useful to obtain a picture of the division of labor for major household tasks. Figure 9 shows two approaches toward collecting this information, one from the Survey of the Elderly in Thailand and the other from the National Survey of Senior Citizens in Singapore.

A final dimension meriting attention concerns the potential burden on those providing assistance for the time and resources expended. This is difficult to capture for those providing assistance to the elderly respondent unless they are interviewed as well. (In the Taiwan study and in a study in Baoding, PRC as well, interviews with selected children were carried out and we believe this design is desirable to obtain measures of reliability of transfers as well as valuable adjunct information and attitudes that contribute to understanding the exchange process.) But the elderly respondent can be asked how burdensome the assistance he or she provides is. In the Philippine Survey, for example, after eliciting the degree of assistance provided to others in several areas, the respondent was asked to rate the amount of strain associated with helping others on three dimensions; financial, emotional, and time allocation pressures.

## **V. Conclusions and Recommendations**

In the foregoing sections we have attempted to enumerate the main dimensions of intergenerational transfers and illustrate several approaches to measuring them within the confines of a survey. The goal has not been to develop a model questionnaire, but to suggest several reasonable strategies for obtaining the salient information. Insofar as more attention is given to this topic, it is likely that consensus will emerge as to the most efficient method for pursuing several of the key topics, though local needs and differing study goals will contribute to variation.

Although we have touched on most of the topics listed in Table 1, it should be noted that several important dimensions of intergenerational relations go beyond the confines of a single cross-sectional survey. One of these, the persistence of transfers and patterns of exchange, noted in Table 1, requires panel designs to trace whether given forms of assistance persist over time and in particular whether the specific partners of exchange remain the same or vary as an older person ages. With increasing life expectancies in many parts of the world, it is likely that there will be a series of transitions in the level and manner of support, most obvious in terms of living arrangements perhaps, and methods of measuring these transitions and the durations of various types of exchanges will become of increasing importance. Other dimensions that require alternate data collection strategies include understanding the direct and indirect tradeoffs that occur among those providing support. If one child provides a parent with support with ADLs, for example, is that child in turn receiving any financial or other forms of assistance from his or her sibs. Understanding the tradeoffs that occur among the members of a support network and how

these decisions are made requires going beyond interviews with the elderly recipient and involving members of the network in appropriate data collection efforts.

Given the amount of detail presented, it might be well to conclude with a set of major recommendations for data to be collected on intergenerational transfers. These include:

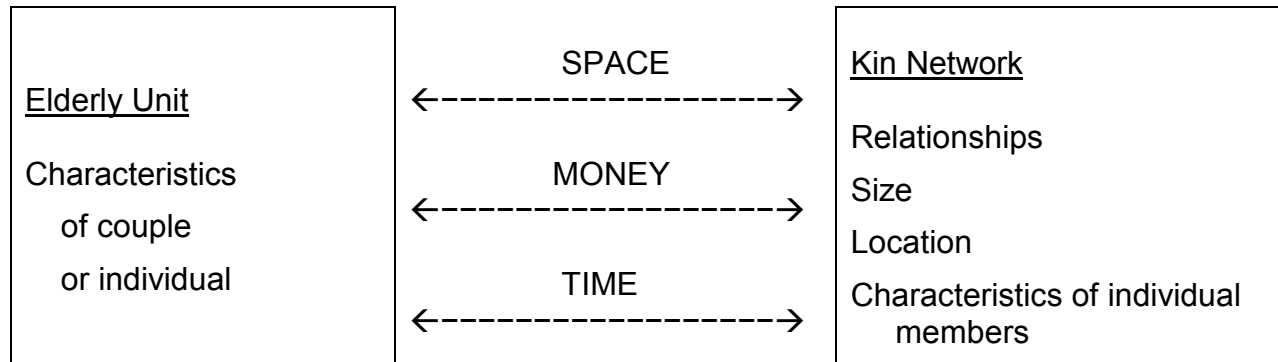
1. Map the relevant kin network both spatially and in terms of obtaining sufficient characteristics of each member.
2. Identify the specific individuals within the kin network who are providing each type of support and record the information so that these individuals can be linked with their characteristics.
3. If the elderly respondent is currently married, make clear whether the supports received or provided apply to the individual or to the couple.
4. For supports that are likely to involve a number of network members, identify the main provider either by measuring the quantity of support where possible or from the elderly recipient's report.
5. For assistance provided by the elderly respondent, record the specific recipients in a fashion that permits linking with their characteristics.
6. For transfers of money, pay special attention to large transfers over the lifetime in addition to current exchanges.
7. Pay special attention to intrahousehold transfers of money and time (in terms of household duties) since these exchanges can take a number of forms, such as paying household expenses.
8. Do not overlook the assistance received and provided in the form of emotional support and companionship since these exchanges can be highly salient.
9. For the major dimensions of support the elderly respondent may receive, try to ascertain the need for that support, and the sufficiency of any support received. This is clearly easier to do for some dimensions than others.

The figures provided above suggest some of the strategies that have been employed in pursuit of these goals. Although it would be desirable to have comparable survey instruments, at this stage it may be more important for analysts to reach agreement on the topics and goals and allow some variation in methods. Surveys that capture a reasonable proportion of the complexities inherent in intergenerational transfers should greatly increase the value of the analysis within each country and greatly enhance the potential of comparative research across countries and cultures.

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**Table 1 Outline of Intergenerational Support System**

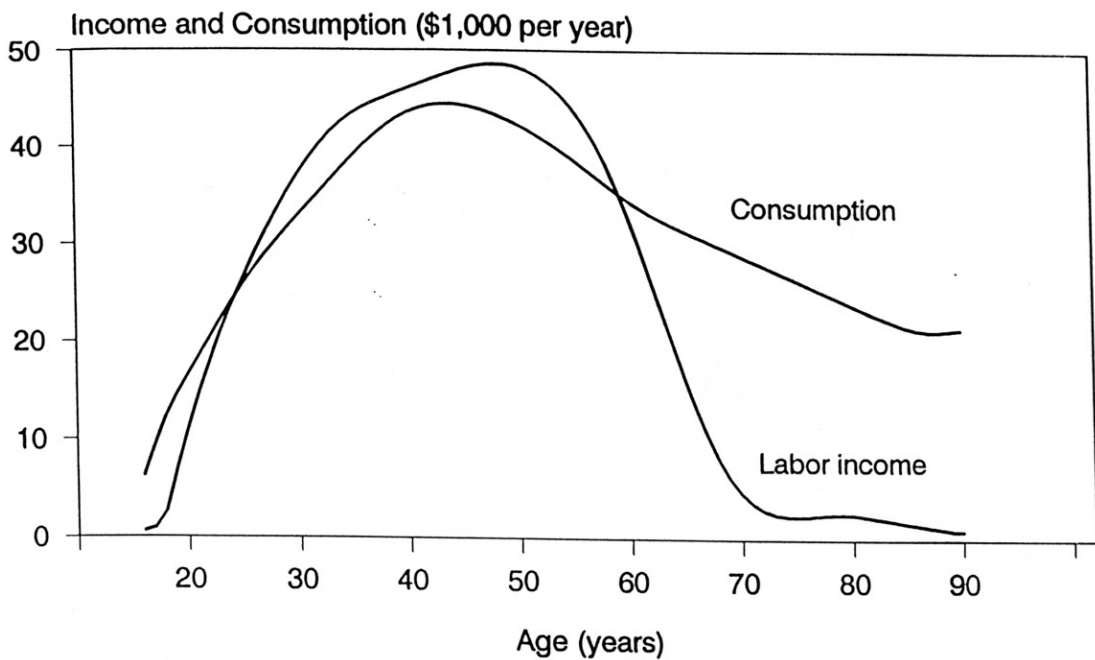


**Dimensions of Intergenerational Transfers**

- Participants: Dyads Involved  
Underlying Network
  
- Direction: Provider and Recipient of Each Exchange
  
- Purpose: Basic or Supplementary Support  
Physical Care; Household Assistance,  
Child Care; Companionship
  
- Magnitude: Amount of Money or Value of Goods  
Amount of Time Exchanged
  
- Timing: Regularity and Frequency of Exchange  
Chronological Time: Current or Past  
Persistence of Exchange Over Time
  
- Form: Direct vs. Indirect  
Gift or Loan
  
- Impact: Needs of Recipient  
Resources of Provider  
Effect on Recipient and Provider



Figure 1



Source: Lee, R. (1994)

Figure 2

**HOUSEHOLD SCHEDULE A**

B4	CHARACTERISTICS											
	B6	B7a	B8	B9a	B11	B12	B13a	B14	B15	B16b	B17	B53b
Relation to Respondent	Sex	Age	Time lived here	Marital Status	Age at marriage	How many children	Age oldest child	Parent of child	Education	What do if not work	Type of work	Parents health
1 RESPONDENT												
2 SPOUSE/PART.												
3 <input type="checkbox"/>												
4 <input type="checkbox"/>												
5 <input type="checkbox"/>												
6 <input type="checkbox"/>												
7 <input type="checkbox"/>												
8 <input type="checkbox"/>												
9 <input type="checkbox"/>												
10 <input type="checkbox"/>												
11 <input type="checkbox"/>												
12 <input type="checkbox"/>												
13 <input type="checkbox"/>												
14 <input type="checkbox"/>												
15 <input type="checkbox"/>												
16 <input type="checkbox"/>												
17 <input type="checkbox"/>												
18 <input type="checkbox"/>												

<sup>a</sup>Details about the respondent and spouse are collected separately and therefore are not shown as part of the grid.

Figure 3. Grid for Recording Characteristics, Contacts and Exchanges with Family Members Not in the Household

☆ X1  Name or Relationship to R	☆ X2  Age	☆ X3  Marital Status	☆ X4  Educa- tion	☆ X5 Work		☆ X6  Residence	☆ X7  Visit Meet	☆ X8  Letters Telephone	☆ Exchange										
				Full/ Part	Type				Who Provided (B11-14)				Who Received (B17-20)						
									Physical Care	Daily Activity	Money	Goods	Physical Care	Daily Activity	Money	Goods			
B3 1 Children Elsewhere	<input type="checkbox"/>																		
2	<input type="checkbox"/>																		
3	<input type="checkbox"/>																		
4	<input type="checkbox"/>																		
5	<input type="checkbox"/>																		
6	<input type="checkbox"/>																		
7	<input type="checkbox"/>																		
8	<input type="checkbox"/>																		
B4 1 Parents Elsewhere	<input type="checkbox"/>																		
2	<input type="checkbox"/>																		
1 Others	<input type="checkbox"/>																		
2	<input type="checkbox"/>																		
3	<input type="checkbox"/>																		
4	<input type="checkbox"/>																		
5	<input type="checkbox"/>																		
6	<input type="checkbox"/>																		

Source: 1989 Survey of Health and Living Status of the Elderly in Taiwan.

## Figure 4

### Questions on Number and Location of Other Kin

B6. How many living brothers and sisters do you have?

\_\_\_ Older brothers                      \_\_\_ Younger brothers

\_\_\_ Older sisters                        \_\_\_ Younger sisters

*(If no living brothers or sisters, skip to B7 or B9, otherwise continue to B6a)*

B6a. How many of your brothers and sisters live close by or in the same city/township?  
(Do not include those living in your household.)

B6b. How many of them do you see or talk to regularly (at least once a week)?  
\_\_\_ Brothers and sisters

B6c. How many brothers and sisters do you have living elsewhere in Taiwan?  
\_\_\_ Siblings elsewhere *(If none, skip to B7, otherwise continue to B6d.)*

B6d. How many of them do you see or talk to regularly (one a month) or keep in close touch with  
by letter or phone?  
\_\_\_ Siblings

*(If respondent is married ask B7, otherwise skip to B9)*

B7. How many living brothers and sisters does your current spouse have?

\_\_\_ Older brothers                      \_\_\_ Younger brothers

\_\_\_ Older sisters                        \_\_\_ Younger sisters

B7a. How many of them do you see or phone or write letters to regularly (one a month)?  
\_\_\_ Spouse's siblings

B8. How many grandchildren do you have living in Taiwan (beside those living in your household)?

\_\_\_ Grandchildren *(If none, skip to B9, otherwise continue to B8a.)*

B8a. How many grandchildren live in the same city/township?  
\_\_\_ Grandchildren in same city/township *(if none, skip to B9, otherwise continue to B8b.)*

B8b. How many of them do you see regularly (once a week)?  
\_\_\_ Grandchildren

B9. Beside the relatives we just talked about (children, parents, siblings, spouses siblings, and grandchildren and others who live with you), how many other relatives do you see and talk to regularly (once a week)?

\_\_\_ Other relatives

Figure 5

Grid for Recording Exchanges with Co-resident and Non Co-resident Children

C4. Now, I would like to ask you about any kind of assistance that you gave your children within the past year.								C5: This time, I would like to talk about any kind of assistance that you received from your children.								
Line No.	C4a	C4b	C4c	C4d	C4e	C4f	C4g	C4h	C5a	C5b	C5c	C5d	C5e	C5f	C5g	C5h
	Outside of small gifts, did you give food, clothing, or any personal belongings to _____ within the past year? 1 - YES 2 - NO (IF "NO" GO TO NEXT CHILD)	IF MORE THAN ONE "YES" IN C4c: Who did you help the most? (CHECK ONE)	Outside of small gifts, did you give money to _____ within the past year? 1 - YES 2 - NO (IF "NO", GO TO NEXT CHILD)	How much is the total value over the course of the year?*	IF MORE THAN ONE "YES" IN C4c: Who did you help the most? (CHECK ONE)	Did you give _____ any large amount within the past year? 1 - YES 2 - NO	Was it a loan or a gift? 1 - loan 2 - gift?	What was/ were the purposes?  (ACCEPT MULTIPLE RESPONSE)	Outside of small gifts, did _____ give you food, clothing, or any personal belongings within the past year? 1 - YES 2 - NO (IF NO, GO TO NEXT CHILD)	IF MORE THAN ONE "YES" IN C5c: Who helped you the most? (CHECK ONE)	Outside of small gifts, did _____ give you money within the past year? 1 - YES 2 - NO (IF NO GO TO NEXT CHILD)	How much is the total value over the course of the year?*	IF MORE THAN ONE "YES" IN C5c: Who helped you the most? (CHECK ONE)	Did _____ give you large amount within the past year? 1 - YES 2 - NO	Was it a loan or a gift? 1 - loan 2 - gift?	What was/ were the purposes?  (ACCEPT MULTIPLE RESPONSE)
N1																
N2																
N3																
N4																
N5																
N6																
N7																
N8																
N9																
N10																
R1																
R2																
R3																
R4																
R5																
R6																
R7																
R8																
R9																
R10																

## Figure 6. Questions on Major Supports Received

### Exchanges

This next set of questions asks about various types of help and support you may be receiving. We would like to know from whom you may be receiving this support. No matter who the supports are from, please indicate all of them.

(NOTE: If R indicates that everyone in the household assists or is assisted with any of B11 thru B14, record by placing a "√" in the appropriate column for each household member on page 9. If persons listed in the living elsewhere schedules are mentioned, record on page 11. Record those not yet listed under "others" in the Table on page 11.)

B11. [If R looks healthy, ask (1) otherwise ask (2)]

- (1) Do you bathe, dress and toilet yourself?  
(2) Is there anybody who helps you with bathing, dressing or maintaining toilet functions?

1. Someone (not self)  0. None (self) [Skip to B11d]

B11a. Who provides this assistance to you? Anyone else? (RECORD EACH PERSON NAMED WITH A "√" IN COLUMN B11 OF THE APPROPRIATE SCHEDULE.)

B11b. In the past year, which person or service was most important in terms of providing physical care assistance to you?

(If person is mentioned record with "\*" in column B11 of the appropriate schedule.)

B11c. Is the amount of help you receive with physical activities about right, could you use more of this help, or is the amount you are receiving more than you like?

1. Could use more help  
 2. Receiving about the right amount  
 3. Receiving more than would like

[Skip to B12]

B11d. Do you need assistance with these activities?

1. Yes  0. No

B12. Do you currently receive any assistance from any of these sources with daily activities, such as household chores, shopping, meal preparation, transportation, or managing finances?

1. Yes  0. No [Skip to B12d]

B12a. Who provides this assistance to you? Anyone else? (RECORD EACH PERSON NAMED WITH A "√" IN COLUMN B12 OF THE APPROPRIATE SCHEDULE.)

B12b. IN THE PAST YEAR, WHICH PERSON WAS MOST IMPORTANT IN TERMS OF ASSISTING YOU WITH YOUR DAILY ACTIVITIES?

(If person is mentioned record with "\*" in column B12 of the appropriate schedule.)

B12c. Is the amount of help you receive with daily activities about right, could you use more of this help, or is the amount you are receiving more than you like?

1. Could use more help  
 2. Receiving about the right amount  
 3. Receiving more than would like

[Skip to B13]

B12d. Do you need assistance with these activities?

1. Yes  0. No


Figure 7. Format for Questions Regarding Exchanges of Support


1. Is there anyone who helps you with [support X] now?


Yes 

No

Who provides this support to you? Anyone else?  
(Each person mentioned is marked with a check in appropriate column on roster.)

  
(If more than one person):  
In the past year, which person was the most important in providing [support X] to you?  
(Person is marked with a \* in appropriate column on roster.)

  
Is the amount of [support X] you receive about right, could you use more of this support, or is the amount you are receiving more than you like?

  
Do you need support of this type?

---

Types of support included:

- 1) Physical activities of daily living (ADL): bathing, dressing, maintaining toilet functions.
- 2) Instrumental activities of daily living (IADL): household chores, shopping, meal preparation, transportation, managing finances.
- 3) Financial support: money transfers
- 4) Material support: food, clothing, other goods

## Figure 8. Questions on Provision of Time to Others

Now, I would like to ask you something about the assistance you provide to your family or anyone else, and the assistance you receive.

**Investigators: D1-D6 below should have answers entered into table on next page.**

- D1. Do you provide assistance to babysit your grandchildren or others' children?  
[Children: high school or younger]  
1. Yes. 0. No. [Skip to D2.]  
D1a. To whom do you provide this assistance? D\*b. Do you also live together? Or both?  
D1c. How often do you provide this assistance? Often or occasionally?  
1. Often (every day or a few days a week) 2. Occasionally (once a week or less)
- D2. Is your husband/wife or another adult in your family unable to go out to do things like visit a doctor, go shopping, or visit friends without your assistance?  
1. Yes. 0. No. [Skip to D3.]  
D2a. To whom do you provide this assistance? D\*b. Do you also live together? Or both?  
D2c. How often do you provide this assistance? 1. Often 2. Occasionally
- D3. Some people need assistance to get into/out of bed, have a meal, take a bath, get dressed, or to get around inside of the house because of their health problems. Does anyone in your family need assistance in terms of these activities?  
1. Yes. 0. No. [Skip to D4.]  
D3a. To whom do you provide this assistance? D\*b. Do you also live together? Or both?  
D3c. How often do you provide this assistance? 1. Often 2. Occasionally
- D4. Do you have to spend time keeping elderly in your family or other elderly company?  
1. Yes. 0. No. [Skip to D5.]  
D4a. Who do you accompany? D\*b. Do you also live together? Or both?
- D5. Do you provide assistance to other people who do not live with you with household chores apart from those chores you do in your own home? 1. Yes 0. No [Skip to D6.]  
[For example: cooking, laundry, or cleaning.]  
D5a. To whom do you provide this assistance? D\*b. Do you also live together? Or both?  
D5c. How often do you provide this assistance? 1. Often 2. Occasionally



Figure 9. Questions on Allocation of Household Duties

F13. May I ask about the persons who do differ types of housework

Interviewer: read each activity then ask 1 for each at these activities, who does the most; 2) How often do you do that work; 3) [for the one who did not do at all] why did you not do that housework?

Type of Housework	every day	4-6 times a week	1-3/ times a week	not at all	(Only for the type of housework that respondent did not do at all)
					Why you did not do that activity?
a. shop for food.....[   ]	1	2	3	4	.....[ ]
b. prepare meal.....[   ]	1	2	3	4	.....[ ]
c. do the laundry.....[   ]	1	2	3	4	.....[ ]
d. clean (sweep + mop)....[   ]	1	2	3	4	.....[ ]
e. take care of children under 10 years of age.....[   ]	1	2	3	4	.....[ ]
f. watch the house/store..[   ]	1	2	3	4	.....[ ]

Source: *Survey of the Elderly in Thailand, 1995.*

8(a) At present, who usually performs the following? (Check one for each task)

Task	Self	Family/relative staying together	Family/relative not staying together	Full-time maid	Paid Part-time home helper	Neighbour/friend	Other (Specify)
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
(a) Clean the house							
(b) Do your laundry							
(c) Prepare meals							
(d) Shopping/marketing							
(e) Paying bills, rent, etc							
(f) Minor repairs							

Source: *Singapore National Survey of Senior Citizens, 1994/5.*