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Gender and Intergenerational Exchange in Vietnam

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Abstract

Although both women and the elderly are assumed to be disadvantaged in much of the world, systematic empirically based studies of interactions between gender and aging are rare. We examine the gender dimensions of elderly support and economic well-being in Vietnam based on data from the 1999 3% census sample and two regional surveys of the elderly conducted in 1996 and 1997. The study incorporates both descriptive and multivariate analysis of sources of support including work, non-familial support, and especially familial support through intergenerational exchange, the most important source for most elderly Vietnamese. We consider the gender of both the recipient and provider of support. Vietnam provides a particularly interesting context for the study given substantial regional cultural differences in the extent of the patriarchal/patrilineal family systems. These differences are most readily apparent in the wide regional variation in preferences of elderly to reside with married sons rather than married daughters. The receipt of intergenerational transfers, the most important form of elderly support in Vietnam shows little significant variation across gender once the mediating effect of marital status differences is taken into account. In addition, gender differences in economic well-being, as measured by an index of household wealth and through self-perceptions of economic satisfaction, are very modest once other factors, most notably marital status and age, that are correlated both with gender and the receipt of familial and non-familial support are taken into account.

In recent years, both population aging and gender have become prominent issues in international and national forums concerning population as well as important areas of social demographic inquiry. Interest in gender often focuses on inequalities that disadvantage women while much of aging research focuses on economic and social vulnerability of older persons. Thus, not surprisingly, it is commonly argued that older women are in “double jeopardy” (Chappell and Havens 1980). As a result it is frequently assumed that older women are more vulnerable to social, economic, and health disadvantages than their male counterparts (e.g., Afzal 1996; Mehta 1997; HelpAge International 2000). This is particularly evident in the recently issued Plan of Action emanating from the 2nd World Assembly on Aging held in Madrid in April 2002, which explicitly advocates recognizing the differential impact of aging on women and men and ensuring that a gender perspective is integrated into all policies, programmes and legislation dealing with aging (United Nations 2002, p3).

A contrary argument, however, has also been made. Sometimes referred to as the “age-as-leveler” hypothesis, gender inequality is seen as declining in old age since all elderly are subject to physical decline and other forces that cut across gender (Markides and Black 1995). Although rarely mentioned, there also are factors that could work to women’s advantage in old age. Mothers may command greater emotional loyalty from their adult children than fathers (e.g. Wolf 1972). Women may experience greater continuity in their major roles as they enter old age compared to men who commonly experience role disruption associated with exit from paid work (Gibson 1996). Older women may also be more valued members within multigenerational households than non-working elderly men because of the greater contribution women make to domestic chores (Lopata 2002).

Actual systematic empirical investigations of how gender relates to formal and informal old age support systems are still relatively rare, especially for settings outside the US (see, however, Ofstedal et al. 1999; Rudkin 1993). Moreover, much of the limited research that has taken place has been focused only on women and has generally ignored the possibility that the direction of gender inequalities or its absence may vary for different dimensions of support or well-being (e.g., Lopata 1987; Mehta 1997 ; United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women 1993). Given wide variation in cultural, political and socio-economic contexts that condition both gender relations and old-age support, their inter-relationships likely differ across the settings within which they play out. There is thus a need for both broad comparative and context-specific studies of gender and aging.

The present study examines gender dimensions of intergenerational exchanges of social and economic support in Vietnam, a country that provides a particularly interesting context for such a study. Forms of formal support for elders are conditioned by a recent legacy of a country divided by alternative political systems, reunited under socialism, and subsequently subject to a continuing series of economic reforms. In addition, the informal support is conditioned by considerable regional variation in the extent that patriarchal/patrilineal systems dominate family relations (Belanger 2000; Bryant 2002). Our analysis examines gender dimensions as related to both older and younger generations involved in exchanges of support. The primary focus, however, is on outcomes for the well-being of older persons.

Background

Social, economic and political context

The majority ethnic group in Vietnam, the Kinh, has traditionally maintained a patrilineal, patrilocal family system (Bryant 2002; Do Thai Dong 1991; Hirschman and Vu 1996). In this system a married son and his family typically provide the lion’s share of support to his coresident elderly parents. However Vietnam has undergone profound social changes in recent decades as a consequence of tumultuous historical events that involved the political partition of the country and subsequent reunification. These changes in turn are linked to rather different levels of importance of formal and

informal support for older Vietnamese in areas that were formerly divided into North and South Vietnam and may well condition any linkages between gender and well-being (e.g. Goodkind et al., 1999). The previous centrally planned economy was first implemented in the northern half of Vietnam beginning in the late 1950s and, following national reunification in 1975, in the southern region. Under this system, the government emphasized the role of the state in assuring the social welfare of its citizens and in so doing de-emphasized the role of the family including the family's responsibility for elderly members. Since the mid-1980s, however, Vietnam has undertaken a series of free market reforms, collectively known as Doi Moi (literally "New Change"). These reforms have, once again, rendered the family as the primary unit responsible for economic decision making and individual welfare (Dollar et al. 1998; Bui et al. 2000). Of particular relevance for the present study is the extent to which these reforms affected gender relations as well as the social security and living standards of elderly Vietnamese (Rama 2001).

Both gender equality and respect for the elderly have been explicit principles that have been taken into account in the social policies and the legal framework of the socialist Vietnamese state since its establishment in 1945 (Bui et al. 2000; Tran et al. 1999; Mitchell and Khuat 2000; Tran and Le Ngoc, 1997). From its establishment the socialist government recognized that gender inequality existed along many dimensions of social and economic life and has promulgated numerous policies to promote women's advancement. Both national policies on aging and gender relations were reformulated in the 1990s to take account of the context of Doi Moi. Despite this considerable concern about gender equity, gender inequality in various dimensions remains. For example, regulations continue to dictate different mandatory ages of retirement for state sector employees, with women required to retire at age 55 and men at 60. The National Assembly is currently considering extending the retirement age for women to 60. Some argue, however, that the lower retirement age benefits women rather than discriminates against them. So far there is no systematic investigation as to whether most women see this as an advantage or disadvantage.

The state and the communist party have supported the establishment and continued development of organizations that provide national representation for women and the elderly, namely the Women's Union (1930), the National Committee for Advancement of Women (1993), and the Association of the Elderly (1995). A National Action Plan for Women's Advancement was approved by the Prime Minister in 1997 while the Ordinance for the Elderly was established by the parliament in 1999. Despite substantial state concern about issues bearing on both gender and aging, the two have been only rarely linked together in policies or programs. Older women have been marginal in the policies related to gender and also not targeted in the aging policy although very recently they have been singled out as a particularly vulnerable group in the government strategy to reduce poverty (Vietnam, Office of Prime Minister 2002). Activities of the two major organizations concerned with women focus primarily on issues relevant to women in the productive or childhood ages.¹ Similarly, activities of the Association of the Elderly in practice do not treat older women as a group for specific concern.

Demographic context

During the last several decades Vietnam has experienced relatively rapid fertility decline and improvements in life expectancy. According to United Nations estimates, the total fertility rate has fallen from over six just three decades ago to close to replacement level by the turn of the 21st century while life expectancy increased by almost 20 to close to 70 years (United Nations 2001a). At the same time, gender differences in life expectancy have widened so that currently a five-year gap exists between men and women compared to only a 2-year difference in the early 1960s. The declines in fertility and mortality will inevitably lead to substantial growth in the numbers of the older persons as well as to their representing an increasing share of the overall population.

According to the 1999 Vietnamese census, approximately 8 percent of the total population was aged 60 or over and among them a fourth are aged 75 and over. The extent of population aging differs, however, by gender. The share of older persons in the total population is greater among women (9.3% of the female populations is age 60 or over vs. 6.7% of the male population), as is the share of the older

population that is aged 75 and over (27.5 vs. 21.3%), reflecting their lower mortality throughout the life span. In addition, older women outnumber older men with the imbalance increasing with age. Among persons 75 and older, women outnumber men by almost 2 to 1.

UN projections indicate that very substantial population aging will take place over the next half-century (United Nations 2001b). The proportion aged over 60 is expected to triple by 2050. This rapid aging will occur approximately at the same pace for men and women and the imbalance between men and women in older ages is projected to persist.

Data and Methods

Our study draws on original tabulations from the 3% sample of the 1999 Vietnamese census and two regional surveys of older persons. The census sample consists of approximately 75,000 men and 106,000 women aged 60 and over and includes information on basic demographic and socio-economic characteristics of the older population, housing conditions and living arrangements. The regional surveys were done in 1996 in the Red River Delta (including Hanoi) in the north and in early 1997 in Ho Chi Minh City (hereafter referred to as HCM City) and six adjacent provinces in the south. Each of the surveys interviewed probability samples of 800-900 persons aged 60 and over. The surveys used similar questionnaires on a range of topics. Although the two regional surveys are specific to the areas in which they were conducted (the Red River Delta and the vicinity around and including HCM city in southeastern Vietnam), they enable us to look at the gender dimensions of intergenerational support in a much more detailed manner than with the census. They provide detailed information for each respondent with respect to living arrangements; location of each living child; exchanges in both directions between parents and each individual child in financial, material, and social support; forms of state and other non-familial support received; self-support; relative importance of different forms of support; care-giving arrangements; and perceived income adequacy and financial satisfaction.

The two areas covered by the surveys differ in a number of ways that are of interest for our analysis of gender and aging including a considerable contrast in the patrilocal/patrilineal emphasis of their prevailing family systems. The area covered by the southern sample is also more economically developed than the area covered by the northern sample. Furthermore, due to differences in the sizes of Hanoi and HCM City and their locations within the regions being studied, the rural-urban distributions of the samples differ substantially with the Red River Delta being proportionately a far more rural area than HCM City and environs. Although not nationally representative, the surveys still represent two very important clusters of provinces, including the most prominent urban centers in Vietnam, and include considerable rural and urban diversity. Sampling procedures differed between the two regions but, after weighting, the results are representative of each. All results presented in the following analysis are weighted, although when the number of cases is indicated, the unweighted number is shown. In our analysis, children of the respondents include step and adopted as well as biological children.

As the results presented below show, there are major differences in the distribution of men and women with respect to marital status, particularly with respect to the extent of widowhood. Given that such differences in marital status likely have an important bearing on material and emotional well-being, we give particular attention in our analysis to the potential role that marital status differences play in mediating observed gender differences in the dimensions of well-being we examine. Moreover, because many aspects of living conditions and support received by older persons are typically shared by both parties in a married couple, for many analyses gender differences are more easily interpretable for non-married elders (typically widows and widowers). For example, if the gender of a parent has an important influence on receipt of care or support from adult children, this is likely to be more apparent, and easier to interpret, among non-married older persons than for those who are currently married.² We use logistic and linear regression to statistically control and adjust results as seen appropriate.

Results

Socio-demographic Characteristics at the national level

As table 1 indicates, results from the 1999 census indicate that among older persons (defined as 60 years of age and above) women are clearly disadvantaged compared to men in education as measured by either the amount of schooling or literacy. Overall almost half of older Vietnamese women are illiterate and fully three-fourths of women aged 80 and over can not read or write. In contrast, less than 15% of men aged 60 and over and less than a third who are aged 80 and over are illiterate. The fact that the percent of both men and women who are illiterate exceeds the percentage who had no schooling indicates that some have lost their ability to read and write over time.

[Table 1 about here]

Women are less likely to be economically active, particularly among those in their 60s. Labor force participation decreases steadily with age for both men and women but the gender gap in participation persists at all ages. There is virtually no difference in the likelihood of older men and women to live in urban areas, thus indicating that urban/rural location is unlikely to account for gender differences among Vietnamese elderly.

Gender differences in marital status among Vietnamese elderly are quite pronounced, with older men almost twice as likely as older women to be currently married. This is attributable to several factors. As higher male than female mortality persists through the older ages, the risk of widowhood for women increases and hence gender differences in marital status increase. In addition, older men who experience the loss of a spouse are more likely to remarry than are older women. For example, based on the combined results of the two regional surveys, 53 percent of men 60 years of age and over compared to only 6 percent of women of the same age who were widowed or divorced some time in the past have married for a second time (results not in table).

Housing and living arrangements at the national level

The census also contains information on housing characteristics such as permanency of the dwelling unit, the type of toilet, access to electricity, and the type of water supply as well as whether or not the household had a television or radio. As seen in table 2, older women score slightly lower than older men on a summary measure of housing quality based on all items taken together.³ However this is a function of the fact that both unmarried men and women score lower than their married counterparts and a higher proportion of older women than men are not currently married. Only a minimal gender difference is apparent within marital status groupings.

[Table 2 about here]

Several measures of living arrangements can be calculated or estimated based on the 3% sample of the 1999 census and they are also presented in table 2. These include living alone, living with a spouse only, and coresidence with adult children (the latter being based on information on relationship of household members to the head of household).⁴ The results indicate that older women are more likely than men to be living alone (8 versus 3 percent) and older men are more likely than older women to be living with only their spouse in a two-person household (15 versus 9 percent). Both of these gender differences, however, are almost entirely due to the differences in marital status. Thus among non-married elders, the percent living alone is the same (14 percent) for older men and older women while among married elders, 17 percent of men and 20 percent of women live with only their spouse. That married women are modestly more likely than married men to live just with a spouse is partly due to the

fact that, because women marry at earlier ages than men, at any given age within the elderly age span, their children are older on average and thus more likely to have left the home.

These results illustrate one path through which elderly women may be more disadvantaged than elderly men, i.e., their greater longevity puts them at greater risk of widowhood and solitary living, which in some cases may be associated with destitution. Coresidence with a spouse and a married child is the social norm in Vietnam for older persons whose children are adults and is considered to be an important part of the intergenerational support system in which older Vietnamese are embedded (Truong et al. 1997; Hoi nguoi cao tuoi Viet Nam 1997; Vien xa hoi hoc 1994). Thus some elderly who live alone could be among the most vulnerable within the older aged population. For example, persons who live in solitary households score substantially lower on the index of housing quality and this is even more so the case for older women than older men (results not shown). Elders who live only with a spouse score higher than those who live alone but still below average. Also among those who live only with a spouse, the gender difference is more modest but again favors men (results not shown). At the same time, some elders who live alone or only with a spouse may do so out of a preference for privacy. Their ability to do so may reflect greater physical and financial ability to live independently (Hermalin 1997). Moreover, many may have adult children living nearby.

The census also indicates that roughly 75% of both elderly men and elderly women coreside with an adult child. Coresidence with an adult child is slightly more common among the non-married of both sexes than among the currently married. When consideration is limited to coresidence with a married child, women are noticeably more likely to be in this arrangement. However this is largely a function of the difference in marital status distributions among men and women. Both non-married men and women are considerably more likely to live with a married child than are their currently married counterparts. The much higher proportion of women who are not currently married raises the share of women overall who live with a married child compared to men. The higher levels of coresidence with a married child among the non-married compared to currently married men and women is likely in part a function of age differences among married and non-married elders. Widowhood, the main source of being non-married, increases with age as does the probability that the older person's children will all be married.

Although nationally three-quarters of elderly Vietnamese coreside with any adult child and more than half with any married child, coresidence levels vary considerably by region and modestly by rural-urban residence. Analysis of the 1999 census, shown in table 3, indicates that coresidence levels are lowest in the northern regions of Vietnam, especially the Red River Delta where only two-thirds of elderly coreside with adult children and 46% with married children. The southern regions in general exhibit the highest levels of coresidence, especially the southern-most region, the Mekong delta, where elderly coresidence with a married child stands at 60%. (Coresidence is also high in the remote northern uplands.) Coresidence is higher in urban than rural areas, a common pattern found in a number of Asian countries, perhaps in part reflecting differential costs of housing (Hashimoto et al., 1992).

[Table 3 about here]

Coresidence levels by gender of child are shown through summary ratios of coresidence with sons to coresidence with daughters. Specifically, table 3 records the ratio of the elderly living with single sons to the elderly living with single daughters, and the ratio of those living with married sons to those living with married daughters.⁵ The summary ratios relating coresidence with single sons to single daughters exhibit little gender preference on the part of the elderly parent. In contrast, Vietnamese elderly are almost 4 times as likely to live with a married son than with a married daughter, suggesting a distinct son preference with respect to coresidence with a married child. The traditional Vietnamese patrilineal practices are clear in this regard. Regional variation in this respect, however, is substantial. The preference for coresidence with a married son rather than a married daughter is much greater in the northern than in the southern regions. Rural-urban differences in the predominance of coresidence with married sons and daughters are pronounced. This regional variation in married son coresidence is consistent

with evidence on postnuptial residence indicating a greater prevalence of patriarchal and patrilocal practices in the north of Vietnam than in the more southern regions (Belanger 2000).

Non-familial support in the regional surveys

Although this study focuses on the gender dimensions of intergenerational support, the most prevalent source of support for Vietnamese elderly, non-familial sources can also be an integral component of overall support and thus need to be explored. Of particular importance in Vietnam are the elderly's own work activities and state transfer programs such as formal pensions (for retired state sector workers) or specific programs targeted for elderly sub-populations (such as the surviving mothers of North Vietnamese soldiers killed in the war for reunification). Table 4 presents the incidence of these forms of support for our two regional samples of elderly.

[Table 4 about here]

A substantial minority of both male and female elderly in the Red River Delta report being economically active—approximately 42% of men and 41% of women. The relative equality of work rates in the north is not mirrored in the southern survey, where elderly men are substantially more likely to be working than elderly women (46% of men versus 28% of women).⁶ One contributing factor to this regional difference is the relatively longer exposure of households in the north to central economic planning and the concomitant economic culture of equal labor force participation across genders (see Friedman et al. (2001) for a summary). Another factor may be the larger share of agriculture in total employment in the Red River Delta than in the region of the southern survey. When we look separately at married and non-married elders, the overall work rates are lower for the non-married group, no doubt in part due to the comparatively advanced ages of this group. However the differentials in work rates associated with each marital status are much greater for men than women. This disproportional reduction in the percent working for men associated with being unmarried remains even when we restrict our attention to non-coresident elderly, i.e. those elderly who may be relatively more pressured by their living arrangements to remain in the labor force. Partly again this difference is due to the fact that among non-married elders, men are on average older than women.⁷ However it may also reflect other pertinent gender related differences in elderly support, differences that are made more clear when we focus on the non-married. One such possibility is that non-married elderly men are more likely to receive other forms of support than non-married elderly women which in turn enable them to exit the labor force. This theme is investigated below.

Besides work, the receipt of various government transfers, such as state pensions and other welfare payments constitutes the other major category of non-familial elderly support. These forms of state support are more prevalent in the north, reflecting the longer legacy of state socialism in the north and the greater concentration of state industry there. Men in both the north and the south are much more likely to receive pensions than women, which reflects the disproportionate concentration of men in the state labor force. However both sexes are roughly equally likely to receive other state support. The importance of state payments are highlighted in table 4 by a measure that reports the percent of elderly who claim state support as their most important source of income. This measure is much higher for northern elderly than southern (both men and women), consistent with the fact that the incidence of state support is higher in the north. In both the north and the south, men are more likely to report state support as the most important source. However when conditioned on marital status, this gender difference is partly mitigated. Married men and women in the north and married men in the south are more likely to report these forms of income as the most important source than are non-married elderly. Among the non-married, however, we see that women are more likely to claim state payments as the most important source of income in both the north and the south. This gender difference is especially pronounced for non-coresident non-married elders, indicating the relative reliance of non-married females on these formal payments in relation to non-married men. Since the typical non-pension state payments are comparatively

small, and paid less frequently than state pensions, the relative dependence of non-married elderly women on these payments may be an indication of relative vulnerability.

Gender patterns in intergenerational support

A cursory look at work and formal sources of elderly support suggests there are salient gender differences, especially between non-married men and non-married women. Table 5 begins to explore whether similar gender differences arise with the receipt of informal familial support. Unlike the previous analysis, table 5 does not report summary measures of the incidence of various support measures since many confounding factors may underly any observed differences in the levels of support. Obvious potential influences are age and health status (for example the oldest old or the sick may be more likely to receive support), both of which are likely to be correlated with marital status and/or gender. Other possible factors include education, the receipt of a pension, and household wealth (wealthier elderly, regardless of support, may be more or less likely to receive support depending on the motivation behind such support).⁸ Table 5 reports the mean predicted probabilities of the receipt of various support arrangements for both male and female elders, where the predicted probabilities are estimated from logistic regressions that treat the receipt of a particular type of support as a simple binary dependent variable. The regressions are estimated separately for the northern and the southern samples. The independent variables of interest are gender and marital status but other covariates include elders' age, education, self-reported health status, work status, urban/rural location, receipt of any pension, number of living children and household wealth.

Three general measures of support from adult children are considered: living with or nearby an adult or married child, whether a child is an important contributor to elderly household income, and material transfers of either food and/or clothing and money and/or durable goods. Since table 5 only looks at support from adult children, we condition the results concerning living arrangements on those elderly with at least one adult child.⁹ Furthermore, when we look at material transfers, we only consider transfers from non-coresident children due to difficulties in interpreting the meaning of material transfers reported from children who live in the same household who may also benefit from such transfers.

[Table 5 about here]

The predicted rates of coresidence with an adult or married child are generally higher in the southern survey than in the northern one, consistent with the findings of the 1999 census.¹⁰ Within marital and gender categories there also appear to be regional divergences. In the south, married men and women are roughly equally likely to coreside with an adult child (85% of married men vs. 82% of married women) while in the north married men are somewhat more likely to coreside (73% vs. 63%). However this difference is not significant at conventional levels. The overall levels of coresidence with adult children for the non-married elderly are higher but again any difference in the levels among non-married men and women is not significant. Gender differences in coresidence with a married child, the ultimate expression of the stem family norm common in Vietnam as previously noted, apparently diverge across regions. Married men are more likely to coreside with a married child in the north (significant only at a 10% level). This is not the case in the south. However the regional divergence is even more pronounced among the non-married. Northern males who are not married are significantly more likely to live with a married child than are non-married females (80% vs. 62%). In the south, however, coresidence levels are nearly identical for non-married men and women and not significantly different in any statistical sense.

While the only observable gender difference in coresidence is among non-married northern elderly living with married children, an important determinant of elderly coresidence in general is marital status itself. The final column in table 5 reports the significance of the coefficient on marital status estimated in a separate logit regression with a simple binary marital status variable (and relevant controls). In both the north and the south, marital status is a key explanator of coresidence with an adult or married child and a more powerful predictor than gender alone.

Turning to the importance of children in total household income, southern elderly are more likely to report that children are main contributors to household income than are northern elderly, and non-married elderly are more likely to claim a child as a main contributor than are married elderly. However within regional and married categories there is little gender variation in the importance of children in household support. The one exception to this is among northern non-married elderly, where 84% of men compared to 74% of women report a child as one source of household support, a difference that is statistically significant at the 10% level.

There are also few gender differences in the receipt of material support from non-coresident children. Between 70 and 73 percent of all elderly in the south (male or female, married or not) report the receipt of food or clothing. The incidence of this type of support in the north is higher overall than in the south, yet the lack of gender difference in this support is the same. While southern elderly are less likely to receive food and clothing, they are more likely to receive money and durables than their northern counterparts.¹¹ There is little gender difference within marital categories in the receipt of money/durables with, again, an exception among non-married northern elders. Non-married northern women are significantly more likely to receive money from non-coresident children than are non-married men, perhaps partly in compensation for the lower rates of coresidence observed for this group. Interestingly, while non-married elders are more likely to coreside and to rely on children for household income, marital status does not appear to be a significant factor in determining the receipt of material support from non-coresident children (one notable exception being that non-married southern elders are more likely to receive money or durables than their married southern counterparts).

The results taken in total highlight the absence of clear gender patterns in the receipt of intergenerational support by elderly Vietnamese. Depending on the measure, the region, and at times the marital status of the recipient, either gender may be more likely to receive support. Marital status appears to play a more important determining role than gender. The one exception to this overall assessment is for non-married males in the north. Non-married northern males are more likely to receive almost all types of intergenerational support than their non-married female counterparts (when looking at predicted levels) and are significantly more likely to live with a married child and have a child as a main source of household income. On the other hand, non-married northern women are more likely to receive money and durables than non-married men. These gender differences among the non-married are not found in the south.

Table 6 addresses how the gender of the adult child may relate to the provision of intergenerational support and how child gender may interact with parent gender in support decisions. Thus in contrast to the previous analyses in which the focus is on the elderly parent, table 6 focuses on the child provider of support. Mean predicted probabilities are estimated from logistic regression with the same covariates as in table 5. For measures of support other than coresidence, the unit of analysis is the child rather than the elderly parent. In these cases, a number of adult child characteristics, namely age, education, marital status, and proximity to elderly parent's house, are also included as covariates in the regressions on which the mean predicted probabilities are based.

[Table 6 about here]

Consistent with the findings from the 1999 census, table 6 indicates that male and female elders in both the north and the south are likely to coreside with a single son or a single daughter in roughly equal proportions (with a ratio of coresidence close to one). Also consistent with the census, elders are more likely to reside with a married son than married daughter. There also exist distinct regional differences in the degree of dominance of married son coresidence. In the Red River Delta there is an overwhelming preference for coresidence with married sons as indicated by coresidence ratios of married sons to married daughters ranging from 6.8 to 11.6, depending on which group of elderly are considered. In contrast, the same ratios for the Ho Chi Minh City area are far lower, ranging from 1.7 to 4.1. These regional differences again highlight the greater prevalence of patrilocal practices in the north discussed earlier.

When we condition on the marital status of the elderly parent we see that in the north it is the married elderly that are especially likely to coreside with a married son, largely because the rates of married elderly residing with married daughters are very low, being less than 5% each for married men and women.¹² Northern men (both married and non-married) are also significantly more likely to live with a married son than their female counterparts. In the south it is non-married men who are most likely to coreside with a married son. Indeed non-married females in the south are significantly more likely to coreside with a married daughter (28% vs. 13% for non-married men) thus yielding a much lower married child coresidence ratio for this group. Non-married men in the south are also significantly more likely to coreside with a single adult son than are non-married women.

In terms of the receipt of support from non-coresident children, there is some indication of a gender pattern among adult children in the provision of support to elderly in the Red River Delta. Non-coresident sons and daughters give food and clothing with equal incidence, but sons are more likely to give money or durables to either parent, whether or not the parent is still married. In contrast daughters are significantly more likely to give money to their non-married mothers than their non-married fathers, but they are more likely to visit their non-married fathers. The finding that sons in the north more often provide money/durables than do daughters may very well echo the traditional patrilineal/patrilocal culture found in the north and concomitant importance of sons for elderly support.

There are few significant interactions between child gender and parent gender and marital status in the south. For example, non-coresident daughters and sons are roughly equally likely to provide food and/or clothing and money and/or durables or to visit often. One exception to this, however, is non-married elderly men who are significantly more likely to coreside with married sons and significantly less likely with married daughters than either married elderly or non-married women. This finding mirrors the results in the north and suggests that while other important regional differences exist, in both regions non-married elderly males exhibit a significant tendency to coreside with married sons.

In sum, there appear to be few distinctive gender patterns of intergenerational support revealed by the regional surveys beyond the pronounced preference for son coresidence in the north and relative acceptance of married daughter coresidence in the south. Besides gender, another important factor in the determination of support, as we have seen in table 5, is marital status. Among northern elders, the non-married are more likely to coreside with a married son than are married elderly (again this may partly be due to need and partly to availability) and are more likely to receive money from sons and daughters. Southern non-married elderly are also more likely to coreside with a married son and to receive money/durables from sons and daughters. While sons are more likely to give money/durables to non-married parents, they are more likely to give food/clothing to their married parents. Here again marital status of the elderly parent appears to be an important determinant of informal support and typically a more significant determinant than gender per se.

Intergenerational support and elderly economic well-being

The regional surveys measure the incidence of numerous types of support. Unfortunately, however, they do not measure the quantity of support or the relative importance of intergenerational support compared to other income sources in determining elderly well-being. Thus with the available data it is difficult to conclude that the observed greater likelihood of support for a certain sub-group of elderly, non-married men for instance, translates into higher levels of material well-being. Fortunately the data do enable the construction of two measures of elderly economic well-being, one is an objective measure based on household possessions and the other a subjective measure based on respondents' own assessments of economic satisfaction and income adequacy. These two measures allow us to explore, at least in a preliminary fashion, well-being across the gender and marital status categories of the respondents.

The household wealth index takes into account several characteristics indicative of housing quality and several key household possessions (e.g., electric fan and color television). Owing to differences in items included in the two surveys, raw scores for each sample are collapsed into points on a

4-point scale that roughly divides the raw index for each sample into quartiles in order to increase comparability across regions. The second index measures the respondents' level of economic satisfaction based on combined responses to four themes: (1) feelings of income inadequacy, (2) satisfaction with economic status, (3) economic status relative to other elderly, (4) economic status relative to other households generally. The economic satisfaction index was also collapsed into a 4-point scale approximating quartiles on the satisfaction scale. The two measures are fairly well correlated with each other (with an estimated correlation coefficient of .51 for the southern sample and .30 for the northern sample), giving credence to their validity.

Clearly household wealth and perceptions of economic satisfaction are contingent on factors that may vary across both marital status and gender. While some of these factors are quantifiable, such as age or number of children, others are more subjective, such as the implicit reference group of comparison in the case of the satisfaction measures (Chan, Ofstedal and Hermalin 2002). The fact that we observe some of these important factors, which are potentially correlated with gender and marital status, permits the use of a multi-variate framework. Thus alongside the unadjusted levels of these well-being measures, we also report in table 7 their predicted levels. These adjusted levels are derived through simple OLS regression with an array of control variables that includes age, education, health status, urban/rural location, and number of living children. Since in this table we are concerned with the net impact of how gender differences in the major sources of support examined above play out in terms of overall economic welfare, we do not control for familial support or for work status and receipt of pension as we have in previous tables.

[Table 7 about here]

The unadjusted levels for both the household possession and satisfaction measures are significantly greater than for men than women with one exception-the household possession index in the north shows little variation across gender. The finding that men report higher levels of economic welfare in three out of four instances may suggest that these measures are sensitive enough to discern real gender differences in welfare. However once we condition on marital status, many of the gender differences are diminished. Indeed within marital categories there are only two observed significant differences-non-married males in the north and married males in the south report higher levels of economic satisfaction than their female counterparts. The household possession index does not vary across gender in any region or marital category. The story is much the same when we adjust for various socio-demographic controls. The one persistent gender difference is that married men in the south report higher levels of satisfaction than married women. Although future work with alternative measures of well-being may provide a clearer set of findings, the current analysis suggests that most observable gender differences in economic well-being are ascribable to other factors correlated with gender that are also likely to influence the receipt of familial and non-familial support, most notably marital status and age.

Conclusions

Our exploration of the gender patterns in intergenerational familial support and economic well-being in Vietnam based on the 1999 census and the two regional surveys of older persons presents a more complicated picture of gender and aging than is typically portrayed in the dominant discourse of international organizations and much of the academic literature on the subject. The associations among gender and support vary within Vietnam by region, among the elderly by marital status, and across different types of familial support.

Coresidency with a married child, the normative ideal for most Vietnamese elderly, is fairly common for both older men and women. At the same time, there are distinct patterns of coresidence with respect to the gender of coresident married children – the 1999 census indicates that the elderly throughout Vietnam are more likely to reside with a married son than a married daughter. While this is a reflection of the patrilinearity and patrilocality of traditional Vietnamese culture, the tendency to reside

with a married son is much more pronounced in the northern reaches of Vietnam than in the southern and central areas. This same pattern is also apparent in the two regional surveys. The lower ratios of coresidence with married sons to married daughters in the south is consistent with the south's geographical position that places it between the patrilineal Confucianist cultures of eastern Asia and the more bilateral systems dominant in much of southeast Asia, and particularly in neighboring Cambodia as well as nearby Thailand (Zimmer and Kim 2001; Ofstedal, Knodel and Chayovan 1999).

The ratios of coresidency with married sons and daughters is not the only measure through which regional differences and regional interactions with gender are manifest. Overall levels of pension receipt are higher in the Red River Delta as well as higher for men, which makes northern men the primary beneficiaries of this state transfer program. This, however, is not the case for non-pension state transfers, but these state payments tend to be less regular and smaller in magnitude than pensions.

Gender differences are at times evident in the incidence of informal familial support, the predominant form of support for Vietnamese elderly. However, no consistent gender pattern emerges from our analysis. Indeed among the southern elderly, the incidences for all types of support measured do not significantly vary across married men and women, or across non-married men and women. On the other hand, marital status itself is often a significant factor in predicting elderly receipt of support. The non-married are significantly more likely to coreside with an adult or married child and to have a child as a main or important contributor to household income. Non-married elderly in the south are also more likely to receive money and durables from non-coresident children.

The primary exception to the general conclusion that systematic gender patterns of support are not evident in Vietnam concerns older non-married men in the north. This group is significantly more likely to coreside with a married child (almost always a married son) than are non-married women. Non-married northern males are also more likely to report a child as an important contributor to household income. These findings are possibly a further indication of the relatively strong patriarchal and patrilocal practices in the north, and they also may highlight what perhaps is the most vulnerable group of elderly, namely the non-married northern female elderly, especially those who do not coreside with a married or adult child. On the other hand, northern non-married females are significantly more likely to receive money/durables than non-married men and do not exhibit significantly lower levels of the two welfare measures.

To the extent that widowhood presents unique difficulties (i.e. widows and widowers are more likely to live entirely alone, widows are less likely to receive certain types of support), we would expect these difficulties to be reflected in other measures of well-being. Yet there is no significant variation across gender categories in indices of subjective satisfaction and household possession based on the two regional surveys, once we adjust for age, marital status, and other relevant covariates. These results are indeed preliminary and additional measures of well-being should be explored in this context. However the lack of variation across gender categories is quite consistent with the lack of systemic gender variation observed in the receipt of support (although not with observed variation arising from differences in marital status).

The example of Vietnam does not appear consistent with the commonly held "double jeopardy" view that elderly women are distinctly disadvantaged compared to men at the elderly ages. Nor do the results entirely support the competing "age-as-leveler" hypothesis. The general importance of marital status in determining support provision suggests a key mechanism by which potential gender inequity arises. Elderly women partly appear to be disadvantaged because they are more likely to be widowed, which in part derives from the clear mortality disadvantage of older men. Yet, we have seen that among elderly in the south of Vietnam there are virtually no salient differences in support for non-married men and women. There are some differences among non-married elderly in the north, however, suggesting that cultural and socio-economic contexts, even within a single nation, prevent simple generalizations concerning the relative inequality between older women and men.

Endnotes

¹ Before 1997, a few activities of the National Women's Union at its different levels related to caring for older women including home visits, provision of gifts, money, or savings passbooks. The National Women's Union also sponsored movements named "Kind mother, good daughter-in-law" and "Good daughter-in-law with filial piety." No professional evaluation has been done to explore what, if any, impacts these programs or movements have had. Since 1997, the Women's Union, in collaboration with HelpAge International (an international non-governmental organization), started some small-scale projects focused on older women. They have also jointly initiated a program to train Women Union's staff in the care of older women in the community (Nguyen Thuy 2001).

² We note that comparing married men and married women using the same cut off age (i.e. 60) results in the two different populations (i.e. the two groups do not serve as representative spouses for each other) since men tend to have younger wives and women older husbands.

³ The index of housing quality is constructed by summing scores for type of house (ranging from 0 for temporary to 3 for permanent), access to electricity (0 if no access and 2 for access), water supply (2 for piped water, 0 otherwise), type of toilet (ranging from 0 for no toilet to 2 for flush toilet) and possession of TV/radio (2 if household has a TV, 1 if only radio and 0 if neither).

⁴ Elderly living arrangements were identified from the household size and the recorded relationships of each household member in relation to the household head. An elder was considered to be coresident with an adult child whenever an elder head of household or spouse of head resided with an adult child (aged 18 or above), or when an elder was identified as a parent of an adult head of household. This approach likely yields slightly downwardly biased estimates of the true coresidency rates, since elderly who are neither head nor parent of head are never considered to be coresident even when some actually are.

⁵ Elderly who are living with children of both sexes and the same marital status are counted in both numerator and denominator of the ratio.

⁶ To some extent, this regional difference is confirmed by the 1999 census (results not shown in table). Overall rates of economic activity reported in the census are generally lower, possibly reflecting differences in question wording between the regional surveys and the census. Nevertheless, the census also indicates a more moderate gender gap in male and female economic activity among persons age 60 and over during the prior year in the Red River Delta (26 % of men versus 20 % of women) than in the South East (28 versus 10 %) and the Mekong Delta (44 versus 20 %), the two regions in which the provinces covered by the southern survey are located.

⁷ The difference in ages is slight, however, and thus this is unlikely to be a very important determinant of male declines in labor force participation. In the regional surveys, married men average 69 years of age while married women average 68 years. The same measure for non-married men and women are 73 and 72 years respectively.

⁸ As in the census, there are quite pronounced differences in educational attainment between men and women-22% and 25% of men in the north and south compared with only 3% and 6% of women in the north and south respectively have any secondary education. Likewise, literacy rates are far higher for elderly men than women. While these educational differences represent one dimension in which elder women are disadvantaged in relation to elder men, their implication for intergenerational support, the focus of this study, is not clear. Lillard and Willis (1997) discuss potential motivations for child-parent

transfers and the various roles, both negative and positive, that parents' education may play in this process.

⁹ Virtually all of the elderly in both regions have adult children. Nearly as many elderly have married children. Non-married elders are less likely than their married counterparts to have adult or married children, which arises in part from a small number who never married but also the greater likelihood that widowed elderly may have outlived their children (given their more advanced ages and the fact that their marital disruption may be associated with having fewer children to start with).

¹⁰ The unadjusted levels of coresidence for the elderly in the two regional surveys indicate that almost three quarters of elders in the Red River Delta live with an adult child and 85% of elders in HCMC and environs do. These levels are somewhat higher than indicated by the 1999 census, especially for the Red River Delta. As noted, the census results likely yield downward biased estimates which may explain all or some of the difference. However, the regional samples appear to be biased towards elderly who have living children and this could inflate the overall levels of coresidence they yield.

¹¹ Various reasons potentially contribute to the low prevalence of money/durables transfers in the north. These reasons include a greater proportion of rural respondents and a less developed cash economy in rural areas, a greater prevalence of pension recipients in the north, and the possible cultural inappropriateness of cash gifts. Knodel et al. (2000) discuss these issues further.

¹² In both the north and the south, elders are more likely to have a married daughter than a married son due in large part to the earlier age at marriage for Vietnamese women.

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Table 1. Indicators of education, economic activity, marital status, and urban residence for the population aged 60+, by gender and age.

	<u>All aged 60+</u>		<u>Age 60-69</u>		<u>Age 70-79</u>		<u>Age 80+</u>	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
% illiterate	14.2	47.6	8.8	33.8	18.4	58.3	34.6	75.9
% with no formal education	12.9	42.5	8.1	29.4	16.8	52.4	30.8	69.6
% with at least some secondary education (grade 6+)	35.1	8.0	43.4	11.7	25.8	4.5	13.7	1.9
% economically active	34.1	19.0	46.7	29.9	19.1	8.7	4.5	1.4
% in urban areas	22.0	21.5	22.5	21.9	21.5	20.9	20.3	21.4
% currently married	84.8	44.2	90.9	57.9	80.3	35.3	60.2	12.1
% widowed	14.0	53.3	7.9	39.0	18.5	62.8	38.5	86.6

Source: 1999 Census of Vietnam (3 percent sample)

Table 2. Housing quality and living arrangements of Vietnamese population aged 60+ by gender and marital status

	<u>All elders</u>		<u>Currently married</u>		<u>Non-married</u>	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Index of housing quality	5.9	5.7	5.9	5.9	5.5	5.6
% living in single person households	2.7	7.9	N/A	N/A	14.4	13.6
% living in two person households with spouse only	14.9	9.2	17.5	20.9	N/A	N/A
% living with adult child	74.5	76.5	73.8	72.8	78.8	79.6
% living with married child	47.4	58.4	44.8	49.1	62.7	66.3

Source: 1999 Census of Vietnam (3 percent sample)

Note: For description of how the housing quality index is calculated see footnote in text

Table 3. Measures of elder coresidence by region and place of residence

	% of persons age 60+ coresident with		ratio of elderly coresident with	
	any adult child	any married child	single sons to single daughters	married sons to married daughters
Total sample	75.6	53.8	1.07	3.75
<i>Region</i>				
Northern Uplands	80.8	63.8	1.26	8.28
Red River Delta	67.0	46.1	1.03	5.86
North Central	70.8	48.8	1.05	7.41
Central Coast	74.0	46.5	1.09	2.72
Central Highlands	81.3	56.2	1.49	2.68
Southeast	82.4	58.6	1.05	1.75
Mekong Delta	82.1	60.0	0.99	2.67
<i>Place of residence</i>				
Urban	81.3	59.3	1.11	1.98
Rural	74.1	52.3	1.05	4.92

Source: 1999 Census of Vietnam (3 percent sample)

Table 4. Incidence of non-familial support for elderly, by region and marital status

	Men	Women	Married men	Married women	Non-married men	Non-married women
<i>Red River Delta</i>						
All elderly						
% working	42.1	40.5	46.2	48.6	12.9	34.0
% receiving monthly pension	28.2	9.1	28.2	12.4	11.4	6.6
% receiving other monthly state support	16.5	18.2	16.9	9.9	14.0	24.9
% claiming state support as most important source	28.9	24.7	30.3	30.8	18.9	19.8
Among non-coresident elderly						
% working	41.6	36.2	43.9	53.1	14.9	22.1
% receiving monthly pension	30.8	10.8	32.5	15.0	10.7	7.4
% receiving other monthly state support	16.7	16.8	17.5	8.8	8.1	23.4
% claiming state support as most important source	32.7	27.9	34.5	37.0	10.3	20.1
<i>HCMC and Environs</i>						
All elderly						
% working	45.5	27.9	49.6	33.3	24.2	24.8
% receiving monthly pension	13.6	1.4	15.4	2.0	4.1	1.1
% receiving other monthly state support	8.8	8.3	6.9	5.8	18.7	9.8
% claiming state support as most important source	6.2	3.7	7.3	2.6	0.0	4.4
Among non-coresident elderly						
% working	46.4	39.4	53.9	51.7	23.8	34.2
% receiving monthly pension	12.3	0.9	14.4	3.1	6.0	0.0
% receiving other monthly state support	11.3	14.1	3.9	4.1	33.7	18.3
% claiming state support as most important source	6.9	9.3	9.3	1.5	0.0	13.0

Sources: 1996 Survey of Elderly in Red River Delta (Institute of Sociology);
1997 Survey of Elderly in Ho Chi Minh City and Environs (Institute of Economic Research, HCMC)

Table 5. Mean predicted probabilities of elderly living arrangements and receipt of support from adult children, by region and marital status, Red River Delta, 1996 and Ho Chi Minh City and Environs, 1997

	Married men	Married women	Test for gender difference among married elderly	Non-married men	Non-married women	Test for gender difference among non-married elderly	Test for marital status difference among all elderly
<u>Red River Delta</u>							
<i>Among elderly with adult children</i>							
% living with adult child	72.7	63.4	--	84.8	80.8	--	**
% living with married child	58.3	41.7	*	79.7	61.7	***	**
% living with or very nearby an adult child	88.3	86.9	--	94.3	89.1	--	--
% for whom child is a main contributor to household income	54.0	47.8	--	74.5	64.9	--	**
% for whom child is a source of household support	68.6	59.5	--	84.2	73.8	*	***
<i>Among elderly with non-coresident children</i>							
% receiving any food or clothes	83.0	87.4	--	94.7	82.0	--	--
% receiving money or durables	24.7	27.9	--	28.4	38.1	**	--
<u>Ho Chi Minh City and Environs</u>							
<i>Among elderly with adult children</i>							
% living with adult child	84.5	82.3	--	84.4	90.2	--	**
% living with married child	57.2	62.5	--	69.6	69.7	--	***
% living with or very nearby an adult child	95.6	94.8	--	95.6	97.4	--	--
% for whom child is a main contributor to household income	57.1	63.4	--	77.4	78.9	--	***
% for whom child is a source of household support	77.7	74.3	--	83.9	86.7	--	***
<i>Among elderly with non-coresident children</i>							
% receiving any food or clothes	71.2	72.5	--	70.3	70.7	--	--
% receiving money or durables	55.9	62.9	--	72.3	68.1	--	**

Note : Predicted probabilities derived from logistic regression that includes elders' age education, health status, urban/rural location, work status, number of living children, receipt of pension, and household wealth

* Significant at $p < .10$, ** $p < .05$, *** $p < .01$

Sources : 1996 Survey of Elderly in Red River Delta (Institute of Sociology); 1997 Survey of Elderly in Ho Chi Minh City and Environs (Institute of Economic Research, HCMC)

Table 6. Mean predicted probability of elderly living arrangements in relation to sex of coresident child and support from non-coresident sons and daughters, by place of residence of respondent, Red River Delta, 1996 and Ho Chi Minh City and Environs 1997

	Married men	Married women	Test for gender difference among married elderly	Non-married men	Non-married women	Test for gender difference among non-married elderly	Test for marital status difference among all elderly
<i>Red River Delta</i>							
Among all elderly							
% living with a single adult son	14.1	19.1	--	19.9	12.5	--	--
% living with a single adult daughter	20.0	17.7	--	24.0	14.2	--	--
% living with an ever married son	53.5	37.1	*	69.5	52.6	*	*
% living with an ever married daughter	4.6	4.6	--	7.7	7.7	--	--
Ratio of coresidence with:							
single sons to daughters	0.7	1.1		0.8	0.9		
ever married sons to daughters	11.6	8.1		9.0	6.8		
Among non-coresident children of elderly							
% of sons who give food or clothes	66.7	57.6	--	50.1	64.2	--	--
% of daughters who give food or clothes	66.8	61.0	--	69.0	68.6	--	--
% of sons who give money or durables	26.7	23.1	--	22.9	35.6	--	*
% of daughters who give money or durables	13.1	17.2	--	14.5	24.0	**	*
% of sons who see parent often	46.6	48.0	--	45.4	46.5	--	--
% of daughters see parent often	41.3	47.8	--	53.8	38.5	*	--
<i>Ho Chi Minh City and Environs</i>							
Among all elderly							
% living with a single adult son	30.7	32.3	--	41.4	27.2	***	--
% living with a single adult daughter	35.2	25.6	**	24.3	25.1	--	*
% living with an ever married son	39.7	43.6	--	52.7	47.7	--	*
% living with an ever married daughter	23.4	26.4	--	12.7	28.1	**	--
Ratio of coresidence with:							
single sons to daughters	0.9	1.3		1.7	1.1		
ever married sons to daughters	1.7	1.7		4.1	1.7		
Among non-coresident children of elderly							
% of sons who give food or clothes	56.0	62.7	*	55.1	49.1	--	**
% of daughters who give food or clothes	62.8	61.4	--	50.6	61.3	--	--
% of sons who give money or durables	41.4	46.9	--	55.9	55.8	--	***
% of daughters who give money or durables	40.7	56.1	***	51.9	55.9	--	**
% of sons who see parent often	40.1	40.2	--	35.8	35.7	--	--
% of daughters see parent often	44.5	37.8	--	41.1	40.7	--	--

Note: Predicted probabilities derived from logistic regression that includes elders' age education, health status, urban/rural location, work status, number of living children, receipt of pension, and household wealth as well as child age, education, marital status, proximity to parents' house, and whether elder parent currently coresides with any child.

* Significant at $p < .10$, ** $p < .05$, *** $p < .01$

Sources: 1996 Survey of Elderly in Red River Delta (Institute of Sociology); 1997 Survey of Elderly in Ho Chi Minh City and Environs (Institute of Economic Research, HCMC)

Table 7. Unadjusted and adjusted levels of economic well-being measures by region and marital status, Red River Delta, 1996 and Ho Chi Minh City and Environs, 1997

	Men	Women	Married men	Married women	Non-married men	Non-married women	Test for marital status difference among all elderly
<u>Red River Delta</u>							
<i>Unadjusted results</i>							
Household possession index	2.2	2.1 --	2.2	2.2 --	2.3	2.0 --	--
Economic satisfaction index	2.9	2.6 ***	2.9	2.8 --	2.8	2.4 *	***
<i>Adjusted results</i>							
Household possession index	2.2	2.2 --	2.1	2.3 --	2.3	2.1 --	--
Economic satisfaction index	2.7	2.7 --	2.7	2.8 --	2.8	2.6 --	--
<u>HCMC and Environs</u>							
<i>Unadjusted results</i>							
Household possession index	2.6	2.3 ***	2.6	2.4 --	2.2	2.2 --	***
Economic satisfaction index	2.9	2.5 ***	2.9	2.5 ***	2.7	2.4 --	***
<i>Adjusted results</i>							
Household possession index	2.4	2.4 --	2.4	2.5 --	2.3	2.3 --	--
Economic satisfaction index	2.7	2.6 **	2.7	2.5 **	2.7	2.6 --	--

Note : Well-being indices vary from 1 to 4 (1=lowest, 4=highest). Adjusted levels derived from OLS regression that includes elders' age education, health status, urban/rural location, and number of living children.

* Female (or married) category significantly different from corresponding male (or non-married) category at $p < .10$, ** $p < .05$, *** $p < .01$

Sources : 1996 Survey of Elderly in Red River Delta (Institute of Sociology); 1997 Survey of Elderly in Ho Chi Minh City and Environs (Institute of Economic Research, HCMC)