

GENDER DIFFERENCES IN FAMILY VALUES: THE CASE OF TAIWAN

by

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## ABSTRACT

### GENDER DIFFERENCES IN FAMILY VALUES: THE CASE OF TAIWAN

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Marx claimed that the change of an economic base brings shifts to cultural organizations. Such shifts affect the social relations among different groups such as men and women. In order to ascertain whether gender differences in traditional family values exist in Taiwan, this study used the Taiwan Social Change Survey to identify the relationships associated with gender and traditional family values during periods of economic transition. The logistic regression and OLS regression findings of this study reveal that women are less likely than men to support traditional norms (i.e. coresidence, producing a male heir and gender roles). One very intriguing finding in this study is that younger respondents are more supportive of traditional family values than older ones. These results are defined more extensively in the thesis itself.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Research has documented changes in the family that correspond to demographic transitions in Taiwan. Family formation, familial relationships and decreased fertility rates are the focus of most studies, along with social and economic development (Coombs and Sun 1978, 1981; Thornton et. al 1984; Hirschman 1985; Thornton and Fricke 1987; Weinstein et. al 1990). These studies suggest that demographic changes in Taiwan, such as the decreasing number of large families, greater variety in living arrangements, and an increased female labor force, reflect a shift in people's attitudes about familial values.

One theory underpinning family change studies is modernization. Modernization theories argue that the traditional family type is being replaced by the modern family in Asia, which is compatible with the growth of individualism. William Goode (1963) demonstrated that "modern" values will become mainstream as younger generations accept and incorporate these values. Goldscheider and Lawton (1998) also indicate that "changes in attitudes and preferences are likely to occur as a result of changes in behavior" (p. 624), which posits that there is an association between behaviors and people's attitudes on family issues. Some family changes in Taiwan follow the same, or a similar path as other highly developed countries as modernization

theory predicted. However, researchers in Taiwan have also found that regardless of age, there is significant consensus regarding traditional family values (evidence is present in Family Values in Modern Taiwan Society). Moreover, changes in family structure may not challenge the prevailing culture in Taiwan. People's family behaviors may more likely be the result of adjustment to their particular circumstances, rather than a change in traditional values (Logan and Bian 1999). These changes in behavior can be viewed as a strategy for living, and not an erosion of people's traditional beliefs.

Chinese customs and culture were introduced to Taiwan by Chinese migrants from the 17<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but they were rooted when the Chinese Nationalist regime settled in the year 1949 (Jeng and Mckenry 2000). Traditional familial values in Taiwan are greatly influenced by Confucianism, which is characterized by filial morality (Li 1997). Filial piety, called *Xiao*, therefore, is the key point for studying Chinese culture. Filial piety mainly contains two dimensions: support for living parents and the worship of ancestors. These two traditional ideas resulted in families with a preference for male children and heirs. In ancient times, filial piety occurred in large or extended families, where all siblings lived together and shared the responsibility of supporting the parents. Such a living arrangement would not be broken unless some of the children moved out or the parents divided their property among the children. Even after dividing the property, the parents would still reside with at least one married son and his family, or rotated living with different sons, but not with daughters (Lin et. al 2003). Another Confucian concept that reinforces son preference is the worship of ancestors, and the necessity of continued family lineage. This is the primary purpose of



reproduction in Chinese society because male children are chosen by ancestors to pass family blood and names. Sons also carry the responsibility to have children and display daily rituals to worship ancestors (Yang, Thornton and Fricke 2000). Therefore, producing male offspring is not only a personal decision but also an affair where the whole family is involved. Given these norms, producing male heirs is considered a typical filial behavior and emphasized in cultural context.

However, the trend to have a large family to ensure a male heir has changed, along with the economic transformation from agriculture to industrialization and urbanization. When Marx explained the relationship between economic activity and social organization, he concluded that the change of economic base leads to the transformation of the culture and the dominant institutions of the society (Hughes, Sharrock and Martin 2003). “The extended family appropriate to subsistence agricultural production gives way to the small, independent nuclear family more compatible with individualistic patterns of work and their separation from the home” (Hughes, Sharrock and Martin p. 54). Those who live in the modern cities, such as Taiwan, tend to prefer smaller families and fewer children, which weakens the traditional expectation of many children, particularly sons. The shift in socioeconomic condition in Taiwan forces people to reconsider and adjust traditional customs. As Logan and Bian (1999) suggest, parents “tend to express more traditional values if these meet their needs and otherwise to adopt a more modern outlook” (p. 1256). This rational action, from a Marxian perspective, is “in pursuit of their practical interests, prominently their economic ones,” (Hughes, Sharrock and Martin p. 105). In other

words, if people's economic interests conflict with tradition, people choose what benefits them from the broad cultural context, and may consider an alternative modern approach. This may explain why the observed changes in family in Taiwan or other Chinese societies are consistent with the pattern predicted by modernization theory.

The change of economic pattern brings up another family issue in Taiwan: the conflict between traditional and non-traditional gender roles when women are employed outside the home. Traditional gender-oriented tasks used to be a mechanism for agricultural societies which involved men working in the labor market and women taking care of the family in the home. The increasing female labor force participation in Taiwan began because of a flourishing global economy, and changing government policy. As a result of the progressing industry and technology system, large numbers of unskilled laborers (e.g., women and children) were employed to work with machines in the factories, which at the same time reduced the wage level of skilled male workers. From Marx's point of view, the consequence of reducing the wages of skilled men caused the shortfall in family incomes. A family's income had previously depended on one male's wage, but this was not enough to support the household anymore. In order to attain the former family income level, all potential laborers needed to work or all starved (Goode 1963). Thus, even though women's wages are generally lower than men's, the dual-earner household has become the basic unit in industrial societies, which also affects the traditional gender division of tasks. However, for a majority of women, their work results in a contradiction of traditional gender expectations. Women need to go work outside the home like men, yet still carry the full responsibility of

childcare and home maintenance as a full-time housewife. One common public worry voiced in Taiwan is that women in the workforce will be unable to balance work and family (Mason and Lu 1988; Chuang and Lee 2003; Wang 1997). Even those who manage to conform to expectations both at home and in the workplace are not usually supported by their husbands, as they fear their wives might achieve higher positions than their own or earn more money than they do.

Despite the documentation of decline in traditional gender roles in Taiwan for both men and women, men are still more traditional compared to women (Mason and Lu 1988; Chuang and Lee 2003). Surprisingly, even though women's attitudes are more liberal than men's, women still consider the family as their primary task, and their jobs secondary. Eighty-five percent of women in Taiwan agreed that they would give up their jobs if they interfered with their family duties (Family Values in Modern Taiwan Society 2000). An interesting finding in Chou's study (2001) suggests that wives who do not solely work for fiscal need agree that earning money is the husbands' primary responsibility, thus making it clear that women still consider the husband the main breadwinner even if they work themselves. For those women who work without any economic hardship in the family, their wages provide an additional resource, or "pocket money".

A peculiar phenomenon in studying family issues is that the subjects of prior research were primarily women (see Coombs and Sun 1978, 1981; Thornton et. al 1984; Hirschman 1985; Weinstein et. al 1990 and etc.). The overwhelming focus on women's attitudes and the lack of information regarding men's attitudes may result in incorrect

conclusions. It is not surprising that previous studies put more emphasis on women than on men because of the dramatic shifts in women's social positions and attitudes after World War II. However, Chinese society is patriarchal, and men's views prevail in the family. Neglecting changes in men's attitudes toward family issues in Taiwan is inadvisable, especially when both men and women are influenced by Western ideas, and both are affected by social and economic development. It is important to ascertain whether there is an actual attitudinal difference between men and women toward family in Taiwan.

How gender affects attitudes toward traditional family values is the focus of this study. Traditional family values will be analyzed focusing on these specific areas: attitudes about coresidence with older relatives/parents, attitudes regarding the need for sons, and attitudes about gender roles. Attitudes toward coresidence in this study mainly examine people's supportive attitudes for living with parents and in-laws after marriage. Attitudes toward the need for sons examine people's attitudes about producing at least one son to continue the family lineage. Attitudes toward gender roles in this study are examined by people's agreement with statements such as 'man as a breadwinner' and 'woman as a caretaker' of the family and household.

Taiwan is a good location to examine gender differences toward traditional values. Although Taiwan has experienced rapid socioeconomic change and has been exposed to Western ideas, people in Taiwan still continue to exercise traditional Confucian values.

## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

Coresidence, reproduction, and traditional gender roles are three ways of fulfilling filial obligations in Chinese culture. The two major duties for children, reinforced by the Chinese culture in Taiwan, are parental support and the production of male heirs. Parental support in the form of coresidence (Lee et. al 1994; Lin et. al 2003), producing a male heir and traditional gender roles are three areas which will be explored. Gender differences will also be assessed. Research has seldom explicitly mentioned the relationship between fulfilling filial obligations and traditional gender roles. However, this relationship is evident when examining the substance of specialized gender tasks particularly, men providing economic support and women taking care of family members (including aging parents and children). Thus, traditional gender roles cannot be excluded from the broad definition of filial piety and should be compatible with the other two primary elements of family values in Taiwan, coresidence and reproduction.

It is reasonable to expect that men and women in modern Taiwan may have different opinions about traditional family values. New economic activities and technological developments have changed the role of women in society. A great shift occurs from women being wage earners. Women have the potential means to gain more

resources and power, which could also increase their autonomy and self-esteem. In addition, the competition from women in the workforce decreases men's job opportunities and interests (Hughes, Sharrock and Martin 2003). Women's increasing economic power undermines the importance of men's traditional role of family breadwinner. Since traditional family values tend to constrain women, it is reasonable to expect that gender differences affect attitudes toward traditional family values.

### **2.1 Attitudes toward coresidence after marriage**

Historically, parent-child coresidence in an "extended," or "stem type"<sup>1</sup> of household is considered an ideal living arrangement for both Chinese parents and their children (Weinstein et. al 1994; Lee et. al 1995). Such an arrangement is a legacy traceable back to agrarian times, when it was the means for Chinese people to pool and accumulate resources. Coresidence is also a moral practice since the care of the elders is shared by residing family members. With the rapid social and economic development in Taiwan, the practice of coresidence has drawn researchers' attention.

Recent research (Freedman et. al 1994; Lee et. al 1995; Milagros et. al 1995; Weinstein et. al 1990) states that the majority of elderly parents in Taiwan still reside

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The definitions of different households in this study are referred to the work of Weinstein, Sun, Chang and Freedman's study (1994: 307).

- a. Nuclear. Contains only one married couple, that of the respondent.
- b. Extended. Contains, in addition to the wife and husband, at least one other married couple related to the respondent or her husband or at least one parent or grandparent of the husband or wife.
- c. Stem. In addition to the husband and wife, contains one or more parents of the husband or wife or a grandparent of the husband or wife.
- d. Joint. Contains one or more other married couples related to the respondent or her husband of the same generation as the husband and wife, usually one or more married brothers of the husband.
- e. Joint-stem. Contains both vertical and horizontal linkages, that is, a married couple related to the respondent or her husband of the same generation as the husband and wife and one or more of their parents or grandparents.

with their children. But there has been an observed decline of this practice over time. This trend suggests that the dynamic components of coresidence may not function efficiently in the new environment of urbanization, which is more suited to a Westernized type of household. In order to fit into the new world, the traditional idea of coresidence can only be retained if it is flexible enough to meet people's needs in the modern society. Otherwise, coresidence would be abandoned even though it is a cultural symbol of filial piety.

Coresidence can be acknowledged in both cultural and practical terms. In cultural views, coresidence is a normal action of filial piety which represents the concept of children "repaying the indebtedness" to their parents (Greenhalgh 1985; Lee et. al 1994, 1995; Weinstein et. al 1994; Milagros et. al 1995; Lin et. al 2003). In the patriarchal/patrilineal system characteristic of Chinese culture, married children are expected to reside with their parents to establish a situation that provides all kinds of support and services. This age-old expectation is also predominant in other Eastern and South Asia countries such as China, Japan, Korea, Singapore and the Philippine Islands. Coresidence is considered an exercise of reciprocity by providing support and assistance that satisfies either parents' or children's needs. It is a living strategy that allows people to solve practical difficulties (Thornton and Fricke 1987; Logan and Bian 1999).

### **2.1.1 Determinants of Coresidence: Motivators and Strains**

People's practical interests guide their preferences and actions according to Marx (Hughes, Sharrock and Martin 2003). For Taiwanese elders, coresidence is one

way to obtain support as they age and become more infirmed. Unlike the West, where people are familiar with institutionalized residences such as senior citizens' homes or nursing homes, only a few elders in Taiwan know about such places and services (Lee et. al 1995; Milagros et. al 1995). Meanwhile, a lack of government support and services also reinforces the cultural expectation for family members to carry full responsibility for elder care regardless of their parents' health conditions. It is considered a serious violation of filial obligation for adult children to send their parents to these institutions unless they have any special or medical concerns. Such an action can cause severe social censure. The second consideration for parents toward coresidence is the financial support and assistance provided (Lee et. al 1995; Milagros et. al 1995). For aging parents without any income or pension, living with children not only decreases their living expenses, but the extra money given by children acts as an important source of income.

For adult children, the benefit of coresidence is the parents' contributions in helping with domestic tasks and childcare when younger couples work outside the home. Morgan and Hiroshima (1983), in their study of Japan, demonstrated that living with parents after marriage helps reduce the expense of a household, eases the wives' stress from child care and housework, and also makes female wage employment more attainable. Parent-child coresidence also helps adult children solve housing problems by coresiding in the parents' houses (Milagros et. al 1995). This type of coresidence is especially exhibited in China (Logan and Bian 1999). Coresidence has some intangible benefits in addition to the practical ones mentioned here.



An intangible aspect of coresidence is that it provides a means of socialization and companionship within the family. According to social learning theory, grandchildren are socialized by traditional values and proper treatment for elders directly from their own parents' example (Milagros et. al 1995; Goldscheider and Lawton 1998). Children who experience coresidence with their grandparents during childhood are more likely to practice future coresidence if their parents are in need (Goldscheider and Lawton 1998). In addition, living with the elderly is associated with affection among family members, especially between grandparents and grandchildren. Grandparents are less likely to feel lonely while having their children and grandchildren around. And in return, married couples also feel more secure and grateful for having their parents to look after their children when they are at work. As Whyte (1997) noted, in China, coresidence is “enabling to provide assistance and support for the other, as facilitating respect for the older generation, and as making family life more lively” (p. 8).

The benefits of parent-child coresidence are impressive; however, both elder parents and adult children are aware of the disadvantages. Lack of privacy and in-law conflicts are two main strains brought up in the discussion of coresidence by both parents and children in Taiwan (Milagros et. al 1995, Lee et. al 1995). Disturbance in daily life is an unavoidable issue for each coresident member because there is no extra room for personal privacy. The greatest inconvenience mentioned by young couples is that they “need to avoid intimate contact” in front of their parents (Milagros et. al p.

151). And for elderly people who prefer to live quietly, noise is also a disadvantage of living together with adult children and grandchildren (Lee et. al 1995).

Another major strain of coresidence in Taiwan is in-law conflict, which affects many people, especially including both future parents-in-law and daughters-in-law. In contrast to the United States, where parents are more likely to live with daughters, Chinese parents are expected to live with sons and daughters are expected to live with their parents-in-law after marriage (Freedman et. al 1994; Lee et. al 1995; Milagros et. al 1995; Lin et. al 2003). It is believed that daughters' responsibilities for natal homes are terminated after they get married.

A comparative study of four Asian countries (Fiji, Malaysia, Korea and the Philippines) concluded that conflicts and tensions generally emerge from different values and role expectations between the generations (Milagros et. al 1995). Lee's study (1995) also noted differences in attitudes between younger and older generations concerning roles: "appropriate roles within the family, community, and society at large contribute to potential strains in the interaction between the elder and the coresident daughter-in-law" (p.61). One example is the modern Taiwanese daughter-in-law, who is expected to serve her parents-in-law in the traditional way, while she is also expected to be a wage-earner and contribute to family income like her husband. This new economic role provides young working wives a new perspective of traditional expectations placed on them, and the resources to reconsider their roles within the household. Although in-law conflict also happens to other family members, conflicts between the mother and

daughter-in-law happen more frequently than others due to the contacts of many daily life events, including child-rearing (Milagros et. al 1995; Lee et. al 1995).

In addition to lack of privacy and in-law conflict, another sensitive issue is food preparation, which also causes trouble for both elderly and young couples in Taiwan. Eating together is a special cultural behavior, and involves different eating habits in the same household. As Lee (1995) described, the details, the timing of meals, the cooking, and even the food preference can cause problems between two generations. Moreover, daughters-in-law traditionally prepared meals, but now demands on food preparation become more burdensome and no longer appreciated by young working wives when they struggle in both their new economic roles and traditional expectations (Lee et. al 1995).

One study found that men are more likely to benefit from coresidence with parents than are their wives due to the parents' contribution to household, which reduces the husband's share in housework (Tsuya and Bumpass 1998). In Martin's (1989) study of four countries, men are more likely than women to support the traditional idea of coresidence, possibly because of their own future desires for coresidence with their children. For women, the gender-specific tasks may decrease women's desires for coresidence since the main responsibility of the married son to his parents is financial support while their spouses are responsible for helping with household chores and are the main caregivers for the sick parents (Lee et. al 1994; Lin et. al 2003). Women are more likely to start their marriage life with unfamiliar family

members resulting in less preference for coresidence (Freedman, Thornton and Yang 1994).

Because of these strains of coresidence, independent living becomes an attractive alternative for elder parents by providing freedom, privacy, less disturbances and in-law conflicts (Lee et. al 1995; Milagros et. al 1995; Logan and Bian 1999). Parents can also arrange their own meals without negotiating with their children's eating habits and timing as well. Nevertheless, even as independent living is idealized; it has certain requirements, such as favorable health and financial conditions for the parents. In addition, their home must be located close to their adult children (Milagros et. al 1995). Parents who prefer to live independently first rely on proper health and economic conditions in order to support themselves. Secondly, independent living does not necessarily mean living far away from their children or other relatives. Having adult children living nearby is more secure and convenient for parents whenever they need children's support. In the Philippines and Thailand, aging parents tend to live next to their children for "sharing and pooling resources" (Milagros et. al p.156). In Taiwan, research also reports that people increasingly approve of living independently from their children, somewhere nearby or next to their children's houses, rather than living together (Coombs and Sun 1981; Hsieh 1997).

According to the idea of reciprocity, children who receive more resources and investments are more willing to repay their parents. Men in Taiwan, who generally receive greater investments from their parents, are more apt than women to view parent-son coresidence as a primary way for repaying their parents. This facilitates their

acceptance of coresidence after marriage (Greenhalgh 1985; Lee et. al 1994; Lin et. al 2003).

Parents' investment in education is critical element of coresidence that can work both for, and against the parents. Sons, in particular, feel more gratitude from receiving more schooling, which increases their willingness and sense of coresidence obligations after they marry; however, education itself loosens parental control on children. It can encourage migration of children to seek better chances in urban cities and, therefore decrease the opportunity for coresidence (Lee et. al 1995).

### **2.1.2 Education**

Education is an important factor in the discussion of family. Prior research suggests that education tends to diminish the influence of traditional norms. The increased schooling in Taiwan reduces the amount of time for children to be with their parents, which also modifies parents' authority. As Thornton et. al (1994) suggest, schooling may create the potential "to impart values and attitudes to children that might be at variance with those of their parents" (p. 89). Education and literacy give young people new ideas, which may portray a very different ideology of individualism and family relationships than Confucianism.

Education also provides a path for children's migration, which decreases the chances of coresidence for both parents and children. Children's migration determines whether coresidence is feasible or not for both sons and parents in Taiwan (Lee et. al 1995). For those parents whose children have migrated, parents are expected to live

with their children in the new homes. However, aging parents generally prefer to stay somewhere familiar instead of living in a new environment without friends. Many of the parents who do move from rural areas to cities to live with their sons describe their daily living as dwelling in a small cage in the cities. Sons who move to cities may also tend to leave their parents in rural areas, and are less likely to move back to the countryside (Lee et. al 1994). Therefore, the relationship between education and coresidence is most often negative.

### **2.1.3 Residence**

The effect of urban or rural residence on people's supportive attitudes toward coresidence varies among research studies. Some have found that urbanization is negatively associated with coresidence. Vanzo and Chan's (1994) study found that coresidence is more prevalent in rural areas, which suggests that "rural residents are more traditional in their attitudes toward parent-child coresidence" (p. 106). Couples in the cities are less likely to support coresidence (Weinstein et. al 1994). However, other studies have suggested an opposite opinion that urban residence may encourage people to coreside together in order to lower living expenses and solve housing shortage problems (Lee et. al 1995; Milagros et. al 1995; Logan and Bain 1999). Finally, some studies find that urbanization was little or no effect on the level of support for coresidence in general (Martin 1989).

#### **2.1.4 Income**

Income is another factor that affects both sons' and parents' attitudes toward coresidence. For adult children, economic power allows them to negotiate living arrangements. Research shows that sons in Taiwan who are better off economically are more likely than poorer brothers to provide financial aid to their parents instead of coresiding (Lee et. al 1994). Consistent with the income effects to adult children, income also increases the motivation for aging parents to live alone if they are financially self-sufficient (Milagros et. al 1995). In Malaysia, unmarried seniors with a good income are less likely to reside with adult children because they can afford to purchase privacy (DaVanzo and Chan 1994).

#### **2.1.5 Age**

Favorable attitudes toward coresidence continue to decline in both the new and older generations in Taiwan. It is acknowledged that younger generations adopt modern values easier than older generations by involving themselves more in non-traditional ideas and activities. Younger women are generally less likely than older respondents to approve of living with their husbands' parents right after marriage (Weinstein et. al 1994). Such negative attitudes of younger generations toward coresidence are not only stated in their present preferences, but also are reflected in their future expectations of living arrangements. The expectation of relying on children in old age for the same population in Weinstein's study appears to be decreasing over time: a decline of about forty percent was reported from 1967 to 1986.

In response to social changes within the younger population, aging parents are slowly accepting the reality that coresidence with married adult children may not be a realistic option (Coombs and Sun 1981). Awareness of the differences in socioeconomic conditions and life experiences among generations causes aging parents more uncertainty as they consider future coresidence (Lee et. al 1995). In some cases, the prospect of helping with adult children's domestic work and childcare makes coresidence less desirable for aging parents (Lee et. al 1995). Despite weakened support for coresidence among older generations in Taiwan, it is still reasonable to expect that parental age is positively related to the preference of coresidence. Therefore, parents who are getting older seem to show more interest in dwelling in the same household with their children (Weinstein et. al 1994).

#### **2.1.6 Marital Status**

Research rarely mentions how marital status would affect attitudes on coresidence after marriage because the marital status of the respondents tends to be pre-selected. Lin et. al (2003) found that marital status does have an influence on children's support to their parents. For ascertaining more accurate effects of gender-based attitudes toward coresidence, the potential effect of marital status is controlled in this study.

### **2.2 Attitudes toward having a male heir**

Having male heirs is another important way of fulfilling filial obligations for adult children in Taiwan. The value of children, especially sons, used to be highly



stressed in Chinese culture. Old age support, continuation of the family line and the fulfillment of the male-role in a household are all crucial mechanisms that lead to son preference (Callan and Kee 1981).

According to Li (1997), sons are the chosen surrogates for ancestors to pass their family names, blood, and life to later generations in order to achieve eternal life. Because the concept of “heaven” does not exist in the cosmic view of Confucianism, immortality can only be achieved by passing down generation to generation through reproduction.

The son preference also reflects the historical efforts to ensure the survival of the offspring from high mortality rates in several historical times (Vos 1985; Thornton and Fricke 1987). Because of the emphasis on the continuation of the family names and extension of kin, the primary goal of marriage is to produce heirs. The evidence is revealed in the toasts as “more children, more happiness”, “bear a son soon” or “have lots of sons” for people to bless the married couple at the wedding (Coombs and Sun 1978; Yang, Thornton and Fricke 2000). It was historically considered a serious violation of filial piety if individuals failed to get married and bear sons (Hsu 1971; Li 1997). In spite of cultural demands, producing more children, especially sons, also has the economic utility of increasing the accumulation of resources, wealth and useful laborers.

The demographic studies in fertility transition and family planning in Taiwan have grown, and gender appears to be an important factor for researchers. One peculiar phenomenon that occurred in fertility studies about developing countries is that

women's voice is predominant, and men's voice appears to be absent. Fertility research in developing countries followed the research method formulated by the West, where men and women are equally powerful in making fertility decisions so that collecting information from only one sex seems to make no difference at all. Although using woman as respondents is an efficient method, it can also create the illusion that women are the ones with a preference for more children and sons.

Taiwan is a typical example (see Coombs and Sun 1978, 1981; Hirschman 1985; Freedman et. al 1994). However, there is no agreement among fertility researchers in deciding whether men or women have greater desire for more children (or sons) in developing countries. One opinion asserts that men rather than women have the desire for wanting more children (or sons). As Bankole and Singh (1998) suggested, the desire for a large family is higher for the husbands than their wives in many developing countries, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa. Meanwhile, men have stronger son preference, which is associated with the tendency for wanting additional children among men relative to women (Mason and Taj 1987). Others argue that macro circumstances, such as a strong patriarchal system, premodern economic conditions, and other demographic conditions (e.g., lineage-oriented kinship) are more likely to encourage men's, while limiting women's, desires to have more children (Mason and Taj 1987). This theoretical approach mainly addresses the disproportionate benefits and costs of rearing children for men and women.

In a highly patriarchal society, for instance, men's desires for more children or sons may be a result of receiving more so-called "situation advantages" (e.g., respect

and intergenerational wealth flow) than women (Caldwell 1981). In spite of benefit-cost of rearing children, another reason for men to demand numerous children and sons than women is for the sake of “maintaining the patriarchal system itself” (Mason and Taj 1987). Patriarchy is generally the social system in developing countries, and is used to devalue women and classify them as dependents on the family. In such a society, the demands on women to have and care for large families inevitably require them devote most of their time in childbearing and domestic tasks. In such a society, women would not have time to strive for equal rights with men, or be encouraged to achieve their own autonomy. Men, therefore, can maintain their privileges in the patriarchal society (Mason and Taj 1987).

In contrast to the assumption that a patriarchal system encourages men to prefer more children than women, other research claims a reverse theory that women in highly patriarchal societies may want to bear more children (especially sons) as insurance against the potential risks of poor financial condition, divorce, widowhood or abandonment (Wolf 1972; Cain 1982; Coombs and Chang 1981; Vos 1985). As mentioned in Mason’s work (1987), bearing more children and sons would increase husbands’ loyalties and support of their wives, and give no reason for husbands to file for divorce or to marry additional woman. In the ancient time of China, children, especially sons, secured women’s status in the family. The main task of married women was to produce male descendants in order to continue the family line.

Women who failed this mission were either divorced or replaced with concubines by their husbands or his family members (Wolf 1972; Yang, Thornton and

Fricke 2000). Meanwhile, women also gain greater respect, power and status within the family by producing more males. Another incentive for women to prefer sons is old age support, because women in the patriarchal society tend to be economically dependent on men. A study of Taiwan by Coombs and Chang (1981) suggested that even though both men and women expect old age support from their children, women are more likely to rely on the children's economic support rather than a pension or other types of savings. Therefore, the personal importance of producing sons for women in Taiwan exceeds that of men.

Rapid social and economic development, family planning, education and mass media expansion all have had profound effects on fertility in Taiwan. The desire for large number of children has declined, and more people practice birth control methods to limit unwanted children (Freedman, Chang and Sun 1994; Freedman et. al 1994). One potential explanation for fertility decline in Taiwan is the decreasing values and increasing costs of rearing more children, particularly sons. Schooling has expanded in Taiwan, increasing the direct cost of rearing children. As long as the children attend the school, the parents' investment in schooling increases, while at the same time children's contribution to the family economy decreases by the delay of their entrance to the work force (Thornton and Fricke 1987; Thornton et. al 1994).

The decline fertility rates in Taiwan can also be attributed to positive family planning messages from government programs and mass media that now advocate small to medium-sized family as ideal (Hermalin, Liu and Freedman 1994; Thornton et. al 1994). From the cultural perspective, the importance of continuation of the family line

may have declined as economic growth expanded. Such shifts also affect the preference for sons, and the desired number of children in Taiwan. In Thornton, Yang and Fricke's survey of the value of children (1994), younger people are less likely to place importance on producing male heirs to continue the family line.

Women's desires for sons have declined, however, culturally, the value of a son still exceeds the value of a daughter. This may explain why many female infants are unwanted in Mainland China where families are permitted to have only one child. By careful consideration of these cultural factors and based on previous research, it is predicted that Taiwanese men and women may have different attitudes toward the importance of producing a male heir.

### **2.2.1 The Demography of Gender Preference**

School attendance allows young people to become familiar with activities and ideas outside the family, and also loosens the cultural constraint of producing children (sons) (Thornton et. al 1994; Coombs and Freedman 1979). Hsieh (1997) claimed that the value of children as the continuation of life lessens for individuals who attain a higher education. For women in Taiwan, the expansion of education also gives them the resources to support themselves, while it decreases the need for rearing children to be a future source of economic support. Therefore, education negatively affects attitudes toward the importance of producing sons in Taiwan.

Urban/rural residency affects people's childbearing preferences (Coombs and Freedman 1979; Coombs and Sun 1981). People in urban areas are more likely to have

fewer children; Coombs and Sun (1981) found that wives in large cities are almost three times more likely to prefer a small family than those living in rural areas. Although the ideal number of children has declined, the desire for sons still persists (Freedman et. al 1994). Most studies found little effect of urban versus rural residence on the preference for a male heir.

Research suggests that higher incomes tend to have a negative, if any, effect on the preference for sons (Coombs and Freedman 1979; Thornton et. al 1994). MacDonald and Mueller (1975) found that increased incomes were positively associated with contraceptive use. People with higher incomes are more likely to practice birth control. Higher income also reduces the need for economic assistance from sons, particularly for women (Thornton et. al 1994). Although the preferred number of children and preference for sons over daughters have declined over time, the concept of son preference has not completely disappeared (Freedman, Chang and Sun 1994; Sun, Lin and Freedman 1978).

Belief in perpetuation of the family lineage as the major motivation for reproduction has declined in Taiwan. Younger married cohorts are less likely than older ones to stress the importance of continuation of family name (Thornton et. al 1994; Hsieh 1997). However, Coombs and Sun (1981) suggested that the desire for sons did not vary for younger and older cohorts.

Very little fertility research has referred to the effects of marital status, particularly since the respondents in recent studies were pre-selected for specific purposes. Respondents to the studies cited here were married. The results intend to

examine people's supportive attitudes in producing a male heir to continue the family line.

### **2.3 Attitudes toward traditional gender roles**

Social norms in the form of traditional gender roles used to dominate different tasks in the household for both men and women (Greenstein 1995). Prior research (Diamond 1973; Lu 2000) documented that gender role identification prevails in both agricultural and modern Taiwan and shapes family life. "In both the line and the *chia* there was a strict sexual division of labor in which men were responsible for productive tasks outside the household, while women controlled reproductive activities within the household" (Greenhalgh p.268). According to Lu's study (2000), gender differences persist in that the husbands are more committed to the worker role, whereas wives are more committed to the parental role. Lu's study confirmed that gender-related role identification still dominates family life in modern Taiwan.

Women's employment outside of the home, which clashes with most traditional gender roles, has become a crucial issue of the family both in the West and the East. People's attitudes toward traditional gender roles have changed; however, the changes are greater for women than men (Mason and Lu 1988; Chuang and Lee 2003). Mason and Lu (1988) revealed that in spite of a decrease in support of traditional roles for wives and a decline in the belief that maternal employment harms children or the mother-child relationship, men still believe that children are deprived by maternal employment.

It is not a surprise that men still hold more traditional gender roles than women. Gender role stratification is the mechanism for a patriarchal society to control all productive means. Women's labor in household tasks and childrearing is generally regarded as meaningless or unimportant, which leads to a secondary economic status for women. Since traditional gender roles emphasize the division of tasks in the household, women's employment outside the home is considered secondary and less important than "men's" work (Greenhalgh 1985). Therefore, working women need to balance both the family and the job demands in order to fulfill the requirements of traditional gender roles. A common situation for women in Taiwan is to have at least one work interruption (Chuang and Lee 2003). Women, rather than men, usually consider giving up their work first if there is a conflict between family and their job.

According to the 2000 report in Family Value in Modern Taiwan Society, 90.4 percent of the male respondents felt that women should always consider family as their primary task, as compared with 85.3 percent of female respondents. Prior research showed that even men who hold more positive perspectives toward women's work outside the family still support the idea that taking care of the family is women's priority work. Women can have an outside job on the conditions that they can take good care of both their family and their work (Wang 1997).

Women working outside the home can be disadvantageous to men. Men may feel stress if their spouses earn "too much" money, which may decrease their power (Wang 1997). Men's concerns about potential marital disruption can also cause them to disapprove of women working outside the home. Because most women are still more



committed to their family roles rather than work roles, the attitudes of their husbands or other family members are important to working wives. According to Chuang and Lee (2003), a husband's negative attitude affects his wife's desire for employment outside the family, and the influence is even stronger in a family with young children. Furthermore, women's own interests do not show any significant effects on their commitment to the labor market.

### **2.3.1 Demographics and Gender Role Attitudes**

Education, as researchers claim, tends to decrease people's support for traditional gender roles regardless of their sex (Chang and Lee 2000; Diamond 1973; Hsieh 1997; Yang 1997). The more education people achieve, the more liberal their attitudes about gender roles become.

It is a general belief that people who live in the city are less likely to support traditional gender roles since the dual-earner household is common among city dwellers. Both men and women in urban areas need to work outside of home in order to maintain a certain standard of living, which reduces their support for traditional attitudes toward gender roles (Diamond 1973; Hsieh 1997).

Yang (1997) asserted that husbands in Taiwan with a higher socioeconomic status and income show more supportive attitudes in women's outside employment. People who belong to a higher or middle class have more liberal attitudes (Yang 1997; Hsieh 1997). It is also understood that people can use income as a means to determine whether they want to work outside the house or stay at home. For example: people with

a higher income can hire someone to do tasks such as the housework and childcare if the couples both want to work in the labor market. Hsieh (1997) found out that wives in Taiwan who are more economically dependent are more likely to stress traditional gender roles themselves and tend to consider taking care of the family as their primary job.

Previous research suggested that younger people are less likely to support traditional gender roles. Consistent with the 2000 Survey of Family Values in Modern Taiwan, older generations are more likely to agree that the priority for women is to take care of the family, and women's employment outside the house is considered less important. Respondents 50 years and older are about 25 percent more likely than people aged 20 to 29 years old to agree that women should consider family as the priority when there is a conflict between the work and the family (Family Values in Modern Taiwan Society 2000).

Few studies discuss the marital status of respondents, as family researchers tend to preselect only married subjects. In order to ascertain more correct results in examining all people's attitudes toward traditional family values in Taiwan, unmarried as well as married subjects were included in this study so that the effects of marital status could be measured.

## CHAPTER III

### DATA AND METHODS

#### **3.1 Data**

The data used in this study are derived from the Taiwan Social Change Survey, year 5 of cycle 3, 1999, collected by the Survey Research Data Archive (SRDA)<sup>2</sup>. The Taiwan Social Change Survey is a 5-year project, which examines social change every five years in Taiwan. The social change survey of 1999, year 5 of cycle 3, contains data on culture, values and religion. The data set used contains demographic information, measures of value orientation, family values, attitudes and evaluation of various cultures, indicators of morality and social welfare, and attitudes toward technology. The data on familial values and attitudes provide most of the information used in this research.

The sample size is 1,948; 1,029 respondents are male and 919 are female. The range of respondents' age is from 18 to 68 years old. It is a multi-stage cluster sample. The first step in sampling was to gather the total suitable samples whose age ranged from twenty to seventy years old from all the cities and towns by using the demographic data collected by the Ministry of the Interior. Second, all cities and towns in Taiwan were divided into ten categories based on population and city characteristics. The

categories are: 1) new developing counties and towns; 2) village towns; 3) industrial and commercial towns; 4) integrated towns; 5) towns of hillside fields; 6) towns of remote districts; 7) towns of services; 8) Taipei city; 9) Kaohsiung city and 10) other provincial cities, which included 67 districts. The third step was to calculate the total number of 20-70 year-old residents in each district and then draw a proportional sample from each district. Face to face interviews were then conducted with all the respondents.

### **3.1.1 Dependent and Independent Variables**

Attitudes toward coresidence, attitudes toward having a male heir, and attitudes toward traditional gender roles are the three dependent variables of this analysis. The first two variables are measured by a single item each. Attitudes toward coresidence is defined as respondents' attitudes toward living with their parents (or parents-in-law) after marriage. Respondents are asked to rate the importance from not important to important (0 to 1) for the question "How important is it for you to live with your parents/parents-in-law after marriage?" The same measurement is also used in measuring attitudes toward having a male heir. Respondents were asked "How important is it for you to produce at least one son in order to continue the family name?"

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<sup>2</sup> Survey Research Data Archive (SRDA) was funded in November 1995 by the Office of Survey Research (OSR), Academia Sinica.

**Table 1. Variables and Descriptions**

Variable	Description	Measurement
<b>Independent Variable</b> Gender	Sex of the respondent	0= Male 1= Female
<b>Dependent Variable</b> Attitude toward coresidence	Respondent's attitudes toward living with their parents (or parents-in-law) after marriage	0= Not Important 1= Important
Attitude toward having a male heir	The importance for respondent considering producing at least one son (in order to continue the family name)	0= Not Important 1= Important
Attitude toward traditional gender roles	The extent to which respondent agrees with traditional gender roles	0= Quite Disagree 1= Disagree 2= Agree 3= Quite Agree
<b>Demographic information</b> <i>Age</i> 18-30 yd 31-40 yd 41-50 yd 51-highest yd	Age of respondent	Interval-level measure 1=18-30, 0=other 1=31-40, 0=other 1=41-50, 0=other 1=51-highest, 0=other
<b>Marital Status</b> 1. Never married 2. Married 3. Divorced/Separated/Widowed	Marital status of respondent	1=Not married, 0=Other 1=Married, 0=Other 1=D/S/W, 0=Other
<b>Education</b> 1. Below high school 2. High school 3. Junior college 4. University and above	Highest level of schooling completed	1=Less than High school, 0 =Other 1=High school, 0 =Other 1=Junior college, 0 =Other 1=University and above, 0 =Other
Urban <i>Personal income</i> (1000 dollars)	Place of residence Respondents' personal income	0=Rural, 1=Urban Interval-level measure

The last dependent variable in this study is attitudes toward traditional gender roles, which is defined as respondents' agreement with five statements regarding gender roles. Respondents were asked whether they quite agree (3), agree (2), disagree (1), and quite disagree (0) with the following five items: it is unnecessary for women to work unless they need to support the family; the main responsibility of a husband is to bring money home and the main responsibility of a wife is to take care of the family; wives should not work outside of the house if this has a negative effect on their husbands' careers or on taking care of their family; women by nature are more suitable than men to take care of the family; and women are less able to meet the requirements of work than men. Factor analysis revealed that these five questions can be combined to form a single index of traditional gender role attitudes. The value of Chronbach's alpha for the gender role index is .744 showing that the internal consistency among these items is in the acceptable range ( $\alpha > .7$ ).

Since the effect of gender is the main focus of this study, the main independent variable is sex and is coded as a dummy variable with female being 1. Control variables in this study include respondents' demographic information such as age, marital status, educational level, personal income and place of residence. As previous research suggested, these predictors all relate to attitudes toward traditional familial values. In order to ascertain a more accurate relationship between gender and traditional family values, the effects of these factors should be controlled.

Age is a continuous variable coded as the respondents' age as of the year interviewed. Marital status is measured with three dichotomous variables coded 0 and 1:

never married, married, and divorced/separated/widowed. Married is the reference group for marital status. Educational attainment for respondents is measured as the highest level of schooling completed with four dichotomous variables: less than high school, high school, junior college and university and graduate school. The category of less than high school is the reference group for education. Personal income is measured at the interval level and its basic unit is thousand NT dollars. The place of residence is measured as a dummy variable coded with 1= urban and 0= rural. Missing values for independent variables are replaced by mean or mode, respective of the level of measurement.

### **3.2 Hypotheses**

This study assesses gender differences in attitudes toward traditional family values, which focuses on three research questions: Are men more likely than women to support the idea of coresidence after marriage? Are there gender differences regarding support for the traditional idea of the importance of having a male heir? And, are men more likely than women to hold the traditional gender roles? In order to answer these questions, the hypotheses in this study are:

1. **Taiwanese men are more likely than women to approve of the idea of coresidence after marriage.** As previous research suggested, men's supportive attitudes toward coresidence may be the result of feelings of "indebtedness" to their parents. Men also carry higher cultural expectations to coreside with parents after marriage. In addition, men may also receive

more benefits (practical interests) than costs relative to women when they coreside with their parents, as Marx claimed.

2. **Taiwanese men and women have different opinions about the importance of having a male heir.** Prior research is not clear on which gender is more likely to support having a male heir; thus the male heir hypothesis is non-directional.
3. **Taiwanese men are more likely than women to approve of traditional gender roles.** According to prior research, men tend to uphold more traditional attitudes than women. The reason is that men want to maintain their interests and means both in the labor market and the household, therefore, they are more likely to emphasize gender role stratification, which constrains women to stay at home.

### **3.3 Analytic Method**

Two logistic regressions and one ordinary least squares regression will be used to examine a model with the main predictor of sex and control variables (age, education, marital status, personal income and residence) all included. Logistic regression is used to examine the relationship between gender and attitudes toward coresidence and producing a male heir. Ordinary least squares regression is used to examine the gender effect on the third dependent variable (traditional gender roles) since the data are close to normal distribution. The formula  $(\text{EXP}(b)-1)*100$  is used to interpret the odds ratio in the logistic regression.



## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS

The data analysis in this chapter contains two parts. The first part reports the descriptive statistics for all variables and the mean difference between groups by sex (see Table 2). The second part presents the results from multivariate logistic regression and OLS regression by examining the impact of gender on traditional family values in Taiwan.

Table 2 reports means and standard deviations for variables as well as t-tests for the mean differences between men and women. Two of the three dependent variables in this study show significant gender differences as expected. Compared to men, women have a significantly less traditional view of coresidence and less support for traditional gender roles ( $t=3.47$ ;  $t=6.40$ , respectively). Other independent variables such as marital status, educational attainment and income also show a significant mean difference between men and women. According to the results reported in the Table 2, mean difference by sex appears in the marital categories of “never married” and “divorced/separated/widowed”.

At the time of interview, twenty-nine percent of men are “never married” compared to twenty-one percent of women. And men are about 4 percent less than women in the category of “divorced/separated/widowed”. A possible explanation for

fewer men than women in the category of “divorced/separated/widowed” is that men are more likely to get re-married than women in Taiwan. In fact, remarriage is much easier for men than women. This possibility would be interesting to examine, however the data in this study are not available.

Significant mean differences in educational attainment are present in the two categories of less than high school and high school. A big gap appears between men and women in the less than high school category, which shows that women are more likely than men to have an education of “less than high school.” Although the percentage has decreased for both sexes from less than high school to high school level, more women drop-out (46% to 25%). It is interesting that no significant mean differences have been found in the categories of junior college and university/graduate school. These results demonstrate that women stop their education earlier than men, and that men are more likely to have completed at least high school. The result is not surprising because the average age of all respondents is about forty-seven years old. It was the period during which men’s education is considered more important than women’s. However, for those who continue to attain higher education past high school, there is no significant difference between the two sexes.

Table 2 also reports a significant mean difference between men and women in personal income ( $p \leq .001$ ). Male respondents’ personal incomes are about double that of female respondents’ in this study. This outcome can be the result of both women’s wages being lower than men’s, or of women who report no income at all (e.g., housewives).

**Table 2. Descriptive Statistics (means and standard deviations) and *t* Tests for Differences in Group Means, by Sex**

Variable	Total sample		Male		Female		t
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
<b>Independent variable</b>							
Female	.47	.50					
<b>Dependent variable</b>							
Attitude toward coresidence	.54	.50	.58	.49	.50	.50	3.47***
Attitude toward having a male heir	.43	.50	.44	.50	.41	.49	1.31
Attitude toward traditional gender roles	1.70	.50	1.80	.47	1.64	.53	6.40***
<b>Control Variables</b>							
<u>Age</u>							
18-30 yd	.14	.34	.14	.35	.13	.34	7.96
31-40 yd	.17	.37	.15	.36	.18	.39	-1.91
41-50 yd	.28	.45	.28	.45	.27	.45	4.82
51-highest yd	.42	.49	.43	.50	.42	.49	4.51
<u>Marital status</u>							
Never married	.25	.43	.29	.45	.21	.41	4.04***
Married	.69	.46	.67	.47	.71	.45	-1.76
Divorced/Separated/Widowed	.06	.24	.04	.20	.08	.28	-3.86***
<u>Educational attainment</u>							
Less than high school	.40	.49	.35	.48	.46	.50	-4.86***
High school	.28	.45	.31	.46	.25	.44	2.77**
Junior college	.16	.36	.17	.38	.14	.35	1.93
University /graduate school	.16	.37	.17	.37	.15	.36	1.16
<u>Income</u> (Thousand dollars)	28.00	30.5	38.	33.2	18.5	23.2	14.86***
<u>Urban</u>	.33	.47	.34	.47	.31	.46	1.41
Total numbers of cases	1948		1029		919		

\* $p \leq .05$  \*\*  $p \leq .01$  \*\*\*  $p \leq .001$  (two-tailed test).

#### **4.1 Multivariate Analysis**

Descriptive analysis gives us an overview of all the variables, however, it does not offer an efficient way to understand the relationships between sex and the three dependent variables. Therefore, multivariate logistic regression (see Tables 3 and 4) and

an OLS regression analysis (see Table 5) are used to determine the effects of gender toward attitudes about coresidence, producing a male heir, and traditional gender roles, while controlling for other independent variables such as age, marital status, education, residence and personal income.

Tables 3 and 4 report the logistic regression results of attitudes toward coresidence and producing a male heir. The odds ratios show the proportional change for the odds in the dependent variable for every unit increase in the independent variable. Applying previous research as a guideline, the formula  $(\text{EXP}(b)-1)*100$  is used to interpret the odds ratio.

Sex, which is designed as the main predictor in this study, shows that women are less likely to favor coresidence than are men. They are about 34 percent  $(\text{Exp}(b)-1)*100$  less likely than men to support the idea of living with parents and in-laws after marriage (odds ratio= .66). The outcome corresponds to the hypothesis in this study that men are more supportive of the idea of coresidence than women in Taiwan.

As Greenhalgh (1985) and other studies (e.g., Lee et. al 1994; Lin et. al 2003) suggested, the strong feelings of “indebtedness” and “repaying the gratitude” imbued by traditional filial expectation on sons may affect men’s approval of coresidence. In practical terms, men are also more likely to receive greater benefits than women. For example, the coresident parents’ contribution to housework eases the amount of the husbands’ housework (Tsuya and Bumpass 1998). In addition, the supportive attitude toward coresidence for men may also reflect their desires of future coresidence with their own children. Martin (1989) in her study of four Asian countries (Fiji, Malaysia,

the Philippines and Korea), found that men showed more interests in coresidence with their children in old age than women in three out of these four countries (Fiji, Malaysia and the Philippines). Korean men were the exception.

As prior research suggested, women in Taiwan tend to have a negative attitude toward coresidence right after marriage (Weinstein et. al 1994; Freedman et. al 1994). For women, less preference for coresidence may be the result of receiving fewer practical benefits from their family role as the main caregivers and service providers (Lee et. al 1994; Lin et. al 2003). In addition, in-law conflict is particularly salient for women since in-law conflict is more likely to occur between mothers and daughters-in-law (Milagros et. al 1995; lee et. al 1995). In-law conflict tends to decrease the quality of marriage, and it may result in a serious crisis that potentially leads to marital dissolution.

In addition to gender, factors such as age, education and marital status have a significant influence on the odds of attitudes toward coresidence after marriage. According to the results in Table 3, age has a negative effect on support of coresidence. Contrary to expectations however, it is the young who appear to support it while respondents who are 51 years old or older are 31% less likely than those 18 to 30 years old (reference group) to support the idea of coresidence after marriage. Other age groups do not show a significant difference. The result here corresponds to the finding of Whyte's study of China, where the younger generation has more traditional filial attitudes the older population. As Whyte (1997) described in his study, adult children

“are significantly more likely than their parents to perceive overall benefits and significantly less likely to perceive problems from co-residence” (p.10).

The needs of the younger population in Taiwan may guide their preferences. As previous research suggested, young people who have just started a new family may prefer coresidence for financial support, housing or other help offered by coresident parents (Milagros et. al 1995; Whyte 1997; Logan and Bian 1999). Parental aid in the form of childcare and domestic tasks are especially appreciated by young working couples (Morgan and Hiroshima 1983). Therefore, the younger generation may prefer coresidence by considering the overall benefits and ignoring the disadvantages. In addition, parental age is linked to adult children’s desires of coresidence; younger people are more likely to coreside at an earlier stage of the marriage (Weinstein, Sun, Chang and Freedman 1994). Aging parents may need more care and assistance from coresident children because of declining health. Conversely, younger parents who coreside with their children are likely to need little assistance.

Older parents in Taiwan may perceive less importance and need for coresidence due to their past coresident experiences and their current living conditions. Although previous research tends to suggest that parents’ age is positively related to the desire for coresidence, the results in this study imply that the elders today are more likely to live longer and healthier, which decreases their need for coresidence with married children (Lee et. al 1995; Milagros et. al 1995). Aging parents may also have higher income or savings that afford them the luxury of independent living. In addition, independent living for aging parents does not necessarily mean living far away from their adult

children; it can be as close as living somewhere nearby, or even next door (Milagros et. al 1995).

Despite the convenience of coresidence, helping their adult children with childcare and housework sometimes becomes a burden for aging parents (Lee et. al 1995). Being aware of the differences in life experiences and not wishing to bother their children also impacts aging parents' attitudes toward coresidence (Lee et. al 1995; Milagros et. al 1995). Therefore, the lack of support for coresidence for older generation in this study is not totally surprising since some studies have found a decline in preference of coresidence for older generations in Taiwan (Lee et. al 1995; Milagros et. al 1995; Coombs and Sun 1981).

Compatible with previous research, education also has a significant influence on attitudes toward coresidence in this study. People who have attained higher levels of education, such as junior college, university or graduate school, are less supportive of coresidence than those with less than a high school education (reference category). People who have completed university and graduate school are 69 percent less likely to support coresidence after marriage than people who have not completed high school. People who have completed junior college are almost half as likely than those who have not completed high school to support coresidence after marriage. These results correspond to the predicted direction. Education may also lead to greater migration of adult children, which makes coresidence less feasible (Thornton et. al 1994; Lee et. al 1995).

The last factor that affects people’s attitudes toward coresidence is marital status. The respondents identified as “divorced/separated/widowed” are 37 percent less likely than married people (reference group) to support coresidence. This result may imply the negative impacts from coresidence after marriage such as in-law conflict and other family conflicts, which might have resulted in the dissolution of the marriage.

As shown in Table 3, income and urban/rural residence are negatively associated with coresidence, as previous research suggested they would be, however, they are not significant in this study. People’s attitudes about coresidence in Taiwan may be determined by other factors rather than income level or urban or rural residence.

**Table 3. Logistic Regression of Attitudes Support for Coresidence (N=1827)**

Independent variable	b	S.E	Odds ratio	% change in Odds
<u>Female</u>	-.41***	.11	.66	-34.0
<u>Age</u>				
31-40 YD	-.19	.18	.83	
41-50 YD	-.28	.17	.76	
51-highest YD	-.38*	.18	.69	-31.0
<u>Education</u>				
High school	-.23	.13	.80	
Junior college	-.60***	.16	.55	-45.0
University /graduate school	-1.16***	.17	.31	-69.0
<u>Marital status</u>				
Never married	.02	.14	1.02	
Divorced/Separated/Widowed	-.47*	.21	.63	-37.0
<u>Income</u> (Thousand dollars)	-.00	.00	1.00	
<u>Urban</u>	-.16	.11	.85	
Constant	1.07***			
-2 Log Likelihood	2407.60			

\* $p \leq .05$ . \*\* $p \leq .01$ . \*\*\* $p \leq .001$  (two-tailed test).



Table 4 reports the logistic regression results of attitudes toward producing a male heir. Sex, age, education, income and urban/rural residence all show significant effects. There are no significant attitude differences among the three marital groups in this study. According to this table, women are 28% less likely than men to think that producing at least one son to continue the family name is important. This result supports the hypothesis that men and women have different levels of support for the idea of producing sons. Men's more supportive attitudes for producing sons may reflect their desire to maintain the patriarchal system. Additionally, cultural obligation of male descendants encourages men to value sons (Callan and Kee 1981; Li 1997; Thornton and Fricke 1987; Mason and Taj 1987).

For Taiwanese women, reproductive decisions may not be reflective of women's own desires (e.g., Coombs and Chang 1978, 1981; Hirschman 1985; Freedman et. al 1994), but come from their husbands, or in response to cultural and other family members' demands (Hsu 1971; Li 1997; Mason and Taj 1987). According to Mason and Taj's study (1987), women in patriarchal, premodern and lineage-oriented kinship societies are less likely than men to support the idea of more sons due to the disproportionate benefits and costs of rearing children.

Women are more vulnerable than men in rearing more children (sons). The increase in costs (time, physical costs and the expense of schooling) and the decreasing value of children (economic utility) lead to a decline in women's desire to produce sons. The decreasing value of children may also be caused by the increase of female participation in the labor force. As women become wage earners, there is less need for

women to rely on children's economic support, or use sons as a means to gain more power and higher status from other family members.

Age also significantly influences attitudes toward producing a male heir. 44 percent to 58 percent of those in the categories of 31-40 years old, 41-50 years old and 51 or older showed less support for producing a male heir than those aged 18-30. These results suggest that younger respondents, who are in the period of childbearing, may perceive more pressure to produce a male heir since they have greater capabilities to produce sons. Older generations are less likely to cite the importance of producing a male heir, possibly because people who are above 40 years old in this study may have borne their desired number of children (sons) already, thus fulfilling this cultural obligation.

Education has a strong effect on attitudes toward producing sons, especially among people who have attained a bachelor's level or higher degree. In Table 4, three educational categories, including high school, junior college and university/graduate school, all have a significantly negative influence. The odds of support for "producing male heirs" falls from 41 to 65 percent compared to the reference category of less than high school. Moreover, respondents in the category of university and graduate school are the least likely to support the idea of producing at least one male heir in order to continue the family lineage (odds ratio= .35). The results correspond to previous research that education tends to be negatively associated to attitudes toward producing male heirs (Thornton et. al 1994; Coombs and Freedman 1979; Hsieh 1997). People

tend to convey more liberal attitudes toward traditional norms as they receive more schooling.

Personal income is also negatively associated with support for producing male heirs. For each additional thousand dollars of income, the odds of support for producing a male heir were 40 percent lower. People who have earned more personal income are less likely to stress the importance of producing at least one son to continue the family name. According to Thornton, Fricke, Yang and Chang (1994), more available money tends to increase consumption aspirations and people's desires to improve their lifestyle. The higher income may loosen budget constraints on childrearing but it does not necessarily to increase people's desires to have children.

Thornton et. al (1994) point out, "tastes in family matters may shift across time, and the additional economic resources could be used to finance the newly acquired tastes," and "aspirations for consumer goods may increase faster than either income or the things essential for family life" (p.104). It is possible that the increased income is more likely to raise material aspirations, which may explain the birth-rate decline in Taiwan. Moreover, income is positively associated with contraceptive use; people with higher income are more likely to use birth control, which results in fewer sons.

Urban residence has a negative effect on support for producing a male heir. Being an urban resident (versus rural) decreases the odds of support for producing a male heir by about 22 percent. This result corresponds to the theory of modernization that people living in rural regions are more likely to uphold the traditional idea of producing at least one son to continue the family name than people in urban areas,

where the nuclear family is more typical. The expense of schooling in the city may also decrease the desire for children (sons) (Thornton and Fricke 1987). For economic reasons, people in rural regions may also need to produce more children, especially sons, for working on farms or other labor-related jobs.

**Table 4. Logistic Regression of Attitudes Support for Producing a Male Heir (N=1865)**

Independent variable	b	S.E	Odds ratio	% change in Odds
<u>Female</u>	-.33**	.11	.72	-27.7
<u>Age</u>				
31-40 YD	-.58***	.18	.56	-44.0
41-50 YD	-.86***	.17	.42	-57.8
51-highest YD	-.82***	.18	.44	-56.1
<u>Education</u>				
High school	-.53***	.13	.59	-41.2
Junior college	-.58***	.16	.56	-44.1
University /graduate school	-1.04***	.18	.35	-64.8
<u>Marital status</u>				
Never married	-.09	.15	.92	
Divorced/Separated/ Widowed	.28	.21	1.33	
<u>Income</u> (Thousand dollars)	-.004*	.002	.996	-0.4
<u>Urban</u>	-.25*	.11	.78	-21.7
Constant	1.14***			
-2 Log Likelihood	2367.84			

\* $p \leq .05$  . \*\* $p \leq .01$  . \*\*\* $p \leq .001$  (two-tailed test).

Table 5 reports the results of OLS regression of attitudes toward traditional gender roles. This regression model meets the assumptions of no autocorrelation of the residuals and no perfect collinearity of the predictor variables by checking the value of Durbin-Watson (which is 1.862, between the acceptable range between 1 and 3); the values of Tolerance scores are all close to 1 except two age groups; none of VIF is

larger than 10 and all condition index values are smaller than 30. The value of  $R^2$  in this regression model is .24, which indicates 24% of the variance in attitudes toward traditional gender roles is accounted by the predictors in Table 5.

The results in Table 5 reveal the significant predictors of traditional gender roles are sex, age, education, marital status and personal income. The strongest determinant of traditional gender roles is the educational category of “university/graduate school”, followed by sex, junior college, age group of 51 year-old and older, high school, aged 41-50 year-old, never married, personal income and then the 31-40 year-old age category. These variables all show significant but negative effects on support for traditional gender roles.

Women are less likely to support traditional gender roles than men which supports the third hypothesis in this study. Corresponding to prior research, women’s attitudes toward traditional gender roles tend to be more liberal (Mason and Lu 1988; Chuang and Lee 2003). In a practical way of speaking, while women in modern Taiwan may not renounce their nature as taking care of the family, but extend their social role to include the responsibility of economic support of the family. This economic independence and career achievement may reinforce women’s desires to work outside the home, so that women can gain more autonomy, and respect from their husbands and other family members. Men may have more support for traditional gender roles because of the worry of the potential harm to children caused by maternal employment (Mason and Lu 1988), as well as their concerns about potential marital disruption (Jeng and McKernry 2000). Moreover, women’s employment outside the home also decreases

men's job opportunities and interests, which leads men to discourage women to work (Hughes, Sharrock and Martin 2003).

The finding regarding education corresponds to previous research, which suggests that people who have attained higher education are less likely to support traditional gender roles (Chang and Lee 2000; Diamond 1973; Hsieh 1997 and etc.). According to Table 5, people who have a bachelor's degree or higher have less traditional gender attitudes than people without a high school degree. People who have completed junior college and high school also have less traditional attitudes than people without a high school degree.

One interesting finding in this study is age. Age has negative effects on traditional gender role attitudes. The oldest age group (51 years old and older) is the least supportive of traditional gender roles, and is followed closely by age groups 41 to 50 and 31 to 40 years old. Young people may have more traditional gender role attitudes because they have not yet faced the reality of the need for two earners. Young wives nowadays are expected to play an extra role as economic provider in the household because solely relying on men as the breadwinner is more risky and may be insufficient (Lee et. al 1995; Lin et. al 1995). Meanwhile, older people who have less ability to work or no savings may be less likely to stress traditional gender roles since children's economic support of both sons and daughters is the major economic source of financial support for them (Lin et. al 2003; Lee et. al 1994).

In fact, women's economic role and family roles may not be totally contradictory. Although research (2000 Survey of Family Values in Modern Taiwan)

suggests that the elderly are more supportive of the idea that taking care of the family is the priority for women, they do not really have negative attitudes toward women working outside the home. In addition, parents who have daughters nowadays tend to expect their daughters to be economically independent regardless of marital status, especially due to the increasing risk of divorce in Taiwan.

Marital status in this study also affects attitudes toward traditional gender roles: married people hold more traditional gender role attitudes than never married people. A possible explanation for never married people having lower support for traditional gender roles than married people is that people who are not married have to work on all tasks themselves, while married people may meet more gender-specialized tasks that reinforce their traditional gender attitudes.

As expected, personal income also has a negative effect on traditional gender roles. People who belong to an upper or middle class have more liberal, less traditional, gender role attitudes (Yang 1997; Hsieh 1997). People can also use income as a means to determine whether they want to work outside the house or stay at home.

**Table 5. OLS Regression of Attitudes Support for Traditional Gender Roles  
(N=1582)**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients
	B	Std. Error	Beta
(Constant)	2.21	.03	
<u>Female</u>	-.22***	.02	-.21
<u>Age</u>			
31-40 YD	-.09*	.04	-.07
41-50 YD	-.14***	.04	-.13
51-highest YD	-.21***	.04	-.21
<u>Education</u>			
High school	-.17***	.03	-.15
Junior college	-.30***	.04	-.21
University /graduate school	-.39***	.04	-.29
<u>Marital Status</u>			
Never married	-.12***	.03	-.11
Divorced/Separated/ Widowed	-.05	.05	-.02
<u>Income</u> (Thousand dollars)	-.002***	.00	-.10
<u>Urban</u>	-.010	.02	-.01

\* $p \leq .05$  . \*\* $p \leq .01$  . \*\*\* $p \leq .001$  (two-tailed test).



## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

As Marx theorized, the change of economic base leads to cultural and social change. Along with the economic development in Taiwan, the population has experienced a transition from an agricultural to an industrial lifestyle in recent decades. The result has been a corresponding change in cultural norms and values. This study centered on how gender affects attitudes toward traditional family values in Taiwan, in particular coresidence, producing a male heir and traditional gender roles. All three hypotheses in this study were supported by the data. Men are more likely than women to approve of the idea of coresidence after marriage, to value producing a male heir, and to hold traditional gender role attitudes in Taiwan.

Men's predicted support of coresidence after marriage may indicate they feel more grateful and indebted to their parents for the investments that parents have made in them. There are also social and cultural expectations placed on men to coreside with aging parents after marriage, which men may not be able to disregard. Moreover, research in some Asian countries suggests that men show more interest in coresidence with their own children in their old age (Martin 1989). The lack of support for coresidence on the part of women may be caused by potential in-law conflict, which happens frequently between mothers and daughters-in-law. Sometimes serious in-law

conflict even can cause marital dissolution, which frightens many young women in Taiwan.

The nondirectional hypothesis subject in this study dealt with the reproduction of a male heir. Women did not rate producing at least one male heir to continue the family lineage as more important. Men's more supportive attitudes for producing sons may reflect their desire to maintain the patriarchal system and fulfill the cultural obligation. Women's increasing economic independence may have influenced their attitudes toward producing male heirs as it decreases the risk of divorce, and concern about old age support. Further, women in Taiwan may not consider bearing more sons to continue the family lineage as important.

The third hypothesis in this study concerns gender differences in attitudes toward traditional gender roles in Taiwan. As predicted, women are less likely to support traditional gender roles than men. Financial need has resulted in women working outside the home. For the first time, they recognize their new economic power in the household, which leads to less belief in traditional gender role stratification. Economic independence and job achievements may also be an additional appeal for women to work outside the family as a means to gain more respect and autonomy. These results also correspond to other research that men in Taiwan are more traditional than women on the issue of gender roles (Mason and Lu 1988; Chuang and Lee 2003). Another reason maybe that women's wage employment sometimes threatens men's power and pride as it allows women to earn more money or a more prestigious workplace position.

There are gender differences in traditional family values in Taiwan. This corresponds to Marx's theory that the change of economic base would also lead social relations to change. Cultural and traditional values inherited from Confucianism used to maintain the "balance" between different social groups (including men and women) in the ancient times of China, confront pressure from rapid economic growth and people's desires to change, especially women. Women in Taiwan understandably have more liberal attitudes toward traditional values since such gender roles are more likely to constrain women, and maintain them in lower position in the social order.

The fact that older generations disclose less supportive attitudes toward traditional family values than younger generations is surprising. The elders tend to want to preserve the past while the young are usually the ones to clamor for change. This study found that age has a negative effect on attitude toward coresidence after marriage. Oldest people may prefer to live independently as a means to avoid family conflict or to preserve privacy and space, if their economic and health conditions allow it. Practical interests may be the source of the appeal of traditional norms for young people. For example, the expense of daycare for young couples can be eased by coresiding parents taking care of the children. Therefore, Marx's theory works very well in explaining the change between economic base and social relations in Taiwan. Previous research shows that 88% of married people of five years or less, coresided with their parents in 1967, as compared with 78% in 1973, and 67% in 1986 (Weinstein, Sun, Chang and Freedman 1994).

Coresidence has changed slightly in modern Taiwan. An alternative for aging parents and young couples is to live somewhere nearby or next door to one another. This arrangement provides general daily contacts for both aging parents and the married couple without the potential conflicts caused by coresidence. It may also explain why the older population is less likely to support coresidence with their married children. Age also has a negative effect on attitudes toward producing a male heir and traditional gender roles. According to the results, the young are more likely to rate the importance of producing sons, perhaps in adherence to cultural expectations to continue the family line. Another possible explanation is that the group most likely to support the idea of coresidence is also more likely to favor having sons because they would live with these sons.

Various shortcomings exist in this study. Some of the data, for example, are too general, and do not specify who is remarried, age at marriage and marital duration. Previous research suggests that such factors may have an effect on traditional family values in Taiwan. In addition, mass media is a powerful mechanism to spread new ideas and values, and its influence on the general public should not be ignored, but needs to be included in future studies. This study also uses data from a single year (1999). Future researchers would need to examine changes in attitudes over a long term in order to obtain a better understanding of how gender differences affect traditional values in Taiwan.

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