

## 現代中国都市家族のオトナ親子関係におけるジェンダー差

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## 要約

本研究は、中国全体をカバーする中国家族パネル研究(CFPS)の2016年の調査データを用いて、都市部における成人子とその親との世代間関係におけるジェンダー差を分析するものである。従来の同分野の研究が異なった世帯に属する男女の比較を行うものであったのに対して、本研究では世帯単位の調査であるCFPSを用いることで、直接に同一世帯に属する夫婦間の差を用いて検証することができる。分析の結果、夫方の親との同居割合は、妻方の同居割合の5倍以上であることがわかった。さらに、世代間関係のジェンダー差は関係の内容に応じて異なることがわかった。家事援助やケアは夫方に、接触頻度は妻方に偏っている。夫婦の学歴差は世代間関係に独特な影響を持つことが示された。すなわち、妻の相対的な高学歴は世代間関係のジェンダー差をより平等にしており、妻の資源へのアクセスが夫婦間の均等な世代間関係に寄与していることが示唆された。

キーワード：中国，ジェンダー，世代間関係

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## Gender Differences in Intergenerational Relationships in Contemporary Urban China

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## Abstract

Using nationwide survey data from the China Family Panel Studies (2016), we examined gender differences in intergenerational relationships between adult children and their parents in urban Chinese families. This survey collected information on a household basis, which enabled us to explore the gender gap within individual couples instead of the general gender gap between men and women, as in previous studies. The results show that husbands co-reside with their parents five times more as compared to wives. Furthermore, gender differences differ according to various aspects of intergenerational relationships. In terms of household chores and personal care, husbands are more likely to maintain a mutually supportive relationship with their own parents compared to wives; nonetheless, wives are more likely to have more frequent contact with their parents compared to husbands. Regression models show that education can arguably be an important parameter that influences gender differences in intergenerational relations. Higher education—especially that of the wife—significantly contributes to gender equality in intergenerational relations, indicating that women's access to resources is an essential stimulus for a gender-neutral intergenerational relationship.

Key words: China, gender, intergenerational relations

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**I. Issues Around Intergenerational Relationships**

Intergenerational relationships, including living arrangements and mutual financial, instrumental, and mental support between young adults and their elderly parents, are key issues when considering the adjustment and improvement of the welfare system. To-date, empirical evidence has demonstrated that intergenerational relationships are a multidetermined subject, not only regulated by structural factors such as economic and demographic transitions but also dependent on personal factors such as the needs and opportunities of each individual. Moreover, traditional customs are indispensable elements of all kinds of human activities, and intergenerational relations are naturally included. Contemporary societies in a globalized world are becoming extremely complicated, and this ongoing trend is becoming ever more critical with the 2019 Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. Therefore, it is extremely important to clarify the current status and the labyrinth of correlations among various factors. Only through a comprehensive grasp of reality can we guide ourselves to effective solutions or at least avoid upsetting the status quo.

Classical family modernization theories suggest that industrialization resulted in large-scale employment, and wage labor enabled young adults to be more independent from their parents, thus undermining the kinship network. Parsons (1943) identified the “structural prominence of the conjugal family and its peculiar isolation” in the United States. Nevertheless, subsequent investigations have shown that intergenerational support never ceases to play an important role in family life. Numerous studies on intergenerational relations in Europe have verified that, despite individualism, there is active multi-generational support among family members, especially assistance from resourceful parents to their adult children (Wong et al. 2020). In comparison, Asian countries have different cultural heri-

tages, and Confucianism and the patriarchal system keep this area more preserved with close intergenerational ties. Even developed countries like Japan still have a high rate of co-residence of adult children with elderly parents compared to their Western counterparts (Nishioka 2000), while developing countries such as China maintain even closer intergenerational ties.

This study focuses on the gender gap in intergenerational relationships among contemporary Chinese urban families. China became an aging society in 2002, with the aging population over 65 years old exceeding 7% of the total population, and the GDP per capita in that year was only USD 1,150. However, developed countries typically enter the aging phase of their populations with a GDP of over USD 10,000 (Guo 2010). This indicates that the changes and dynamics of family behaviors in contemporary Chinese society are different from those in any other nation. At present, Chinese families can be considered as overburdened, as an inadequate welfare system places most of the family responsibilities on the shoulders of the family members. Using an intergenerational solidarity framework, empirical evidence has shown intensive mutual support among multi-generational family members in Chinese society (Yang and Li 2009; Guo et al. 2012; Cui and Jin 2015; Ma 2016). On the one hand, traditional Chinese society values male offspring, and intergenerational relations are centered on the paternal line. On the other hand, the one-child policy since the 1980s has resulted in many single-daughter families, and the high living costs of modern times require family members to mobilize all available resources. Consequently, the former patrilineal-centered intergenerational relationship shifts to a dual-lineage pattern. However, there is a lack of investigation on the underlying causes of the gender gaps in this changing trend.

This study explores the gender gaps in intergenerational relationships in contemporary urban Chinese families, with the aim to achieve solid insights on this

issue through the analysis of a large-scale representative data.

## II. Conceptual Framework and Existing Literature

### 1. Cultural Context

Many outstanding studies have documented patriarchal traditions of Asia. Academics are familiar with the notion that traditional Chinese society has practiced a patriarchal system, within which social relations are centered on the paternal line, and women are socially subordinate to their fathers or husbands. The inheritance of family property and family production, reproduction, and daily interactions is centered on the husband's side. Thus, the son is obligated to take care of his parents as they age, and the daughter's life is entirely enmeshed with the husband's family. Therefore, the daughter barely has substantial interactions with her natal family after marriage, and is obligated to serve her parents-in-law (Fei 1999).

Research on intergenerational relationships in mainland China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong shows that this tradition has had a profound impact on contemporary families. Using a survey data collected in 1996, Zhang's study (2004) showed that among urban mainland Chinese families, there remained high levels of living together with elderly parents, and the gender differences among sons and daughters remained significant. Other studies (Lin et al. 2003) also found that in the 1980s, in Taiwanese families, sons were obligated to support the elderly and provide financial and material assistance to them. When the sons could not fulfill their obligations, the daughters took on the role of the sons. Furthermore, a study (Ting and Chiu 2002) among Hong Kong families in the 1990s showed that despite high levels of urbanization and modernization, the families still maintained the tradition of living with their parents, and a higher proportion of men than women lived with their parents after marriage.

### 2. Socialist Reform and Economic Reform

The patriarchal tradition, however, was once completely subverted during the socialist revolution. In the planned economy period from the 1950s to the 1980s in China, the unified state administration crushed patriarchal authority, and the lineage lost its economic significance under the socialist regime (Fei 1982). In the cities, state-owned enterprises and institutions provided full welfare packages, covering housing, medical care, childcare services, and so on. (Yang 1994; Liu and Yang 2000). Meanwhile, a high female employment rate and equal pay for equal work combined to promote gender equality, which jointly created the possibility for daughters to establish close ties with their natal families. Based on a 1994 survey, Whyte and Hong (2005) showed that among the Chinese families of the 1990s, as compared to their brothers, married daughters provided as much help (or more) to their parents. The first choice for caring for the elderly was the partner, followed by the daughter; notably, the daughter-in-law was only half as likely as the daughter. Other studies have also shown that in the 1990s, there was no significant gender difference in the frequency of daily contact and mutual assistance across generations among urban Chinese families (Bian and Logan 2001; Xie and Zhu 2009). Furthermore, this was the case if any daughters were likely to provide greater monetary support (Xu 2001; Xie and Zhu 2009) and instrumental help (Xu 2001) to their parents compared to sons.

Since the 1990s, rapid marketization under the deepening of domestic market-oriented reforms caused an increase in living expenses, and the underdeveloped welfare system in the private sector exposed people to overwhelming pressures regarding both family and career. Ji (2017) proposed a mosaic familism theory which argues that in the current social environment, family members are required to mobilize every available resource to build a bilateral, intergeneration-

al, and symbiotic unit to form a safety net in which the family members are interdependent. Subsequently, a growing body of research has examined the importance of daughters in intergenerational relationships. Research based on the 2006 Chinese General Social Survey (CGSS) shows that there were no significant differences between daughters and sons in terms of financial support to parents, while daughters provide greater practical and emotional support than sons (Lei 2013). Another study based on the same data further demonstrated that the greater the decision-making power of the wife, the less financial support there will be for the paternal (husband's) parents (Zheng and Di 2017). Research based on the China Family Panel Studies 2010 (Xu 2015) and the China Longitudinal Aging Social Survey 2012 (Hu 2017) both indicate that in urban Chinese families, daughters offer more assistance to their parents financially, emotionally and in terms of daily routines.

### 3. One-Child Policy and Low Birthrate

Another important element that shapes intergenerational relationships is demographic features. China implemented its one-child policy at the beginning of the 1980s and completely abolished it in 2016. The nearly four decades long policy has led to numerous single-child families, which suggests that the total number of single-child mothers under the age of 60 in China is likely to reach approximately 150 million in 2020 (Wang 2009). As the only child generation moves into middle age, daughters become increasingly important—possibly irreplaceable—in intergenerational relationships as their elderly parents have no one else to depend on (Wang 2016). Empirical evidence has indicated that only children are closer to their parents than non-only children; moreover, only daughters tend to be more supportive than only sons. Hao's study (2011), based on a survey in Wuhan, China, shows that compared to non-only children, only children value their parents' opinions more in choosing a spouse and

receive more wedding financial support from their parents. Shi's (2012) cross-national study shows that in both China and Japan, only daughters are more likely to live with their parents than non-only daughters. Using a survey data collected in 2009, Song and Huang (2011) also found that only children are more likely to live with their parents and receive more financial help from them. Hao's (2017) analysis using a five-provinces survey data conducted in 2015 found that only daughters provide more support to their parents than only sons financially and emotionally as well as in terms of assistance in performing household chores.

In addition, the dramatic aging of the population and low birth rate among Asians are distinctive demographic features. Ochiai (2019) proposed a bilateral hypothesis, suggesting that the decline in the absolute number of children leaves many families without sons, and that the long-term intergenerational relationships resulting from longevity will inevitably place higher demands on the daughter's role in intergenerational relationships. Shi's study (2012) also found that in both China and Japan, daughters without male siblings are more likely to co-reside with their parents.

In summary, studies of intergenerational relations have been conducted from three main perspectives: cultural, institutional (China's socialist system and dual-earner family model), and demographic. The intersection of these three perspectives is the lifting level of female educational attainment and the current state of the gender division of labor. The departure of intergenerational relations from patriarchal traditions is reflected not only in the decline of family norms across multiple generations, but also in the power relations between intra-generational husbands and wives. This raises the question of whether the power gap within spouses affects intergenerational relationships, and by what mechanism. Developed market economies and labor participation result in each individual taking on diverse social roles, and when a couple's time and en-

ergy are heavily occupied by work, there is a deficit in the performance of family roles. To meet various familial needs, young couples are required to mobilize intergenerational resources and develop a mutually supportive network with their parents, and a decreasing birthrate offers the possibility for such close intergenerational ties to develop among most people. In a competitive social environment, adult intergenerational relationships may depart from patriarchal norms and instead follow the needs-based principle. If this statement holds true, then the relative resource advantage of highly educated couples would grant them a wider range of options, thus enhancing this unconventional and practical intergenerational relationship.

As discussed above, the educational gap between couples, as a reflection of the spousal strength gap, is closely related to personal contributions to family needs. Whether this strength gap affects the changes in the dynamics of intergenerational relationships and whether unconventional patterns of needs-first intergenerational relationships are observed among highly educated couples is a crucial topic. However, there were few robust investigations of these ideas in previous studies. Therefore, in this study, we used large-scale data to examine gender differences in intergenerational relationships along with an exploration of its mechanisms.

Our study extends the existing research findings in three ways. First, unique to Xie's (2009) study on the effect of education on gender differences in intergenerational relationships based on a three-city survey (see II. 2.), we take advantage of a nationwide representative data and pinpoint the impact of educational disparity within identical couples, namely between a husband and his wife. Second, our couple-based analysis differs from all of the individual-based prior studies, which is particularly significant because it provides us with a more delicate scrutiny of the gender gaps within certain couples. Through this procedure, we are able to

achieve more robust findings on gender differences rather than the general gender gap from a broad viewpoint, as demonstrated in prior studies. Third, using this reliable data, we accomplished the analysis of the effect of education level on gender gaps in intergenerational relationships.

### III. Method and Analysis

#### 1. Data, Variables, and Analysis Procedure

In this study, we used recent data from the China Family Panel Studies 2016 (CFPS), a nearly nationwide longitudinal survey launched by Peking University every two years since 2010. The CFPS covers 25 provinces or their administrative equivalents in China, using a multistage probability proportional method for size sampling. In the 2010 baseline survey, 14,960 households were successfully interviewed; among 57,155 identified eligible family members, interviews with 42,590 were completed. The CFPS data is mainly collected through computer-assisted face-to-face interviews (Xie and Hu 2014). The 2016 survey was conducted from July to November 2016, with a response rate of 82% at the individual level, which comprised 14,318 households and 36,892 individuals.<sup>(1)</sup>

The CFPS questionnaire contains detailed information about respondents' intergenerational relationships with their elderly parents as well as their spouses. Our study concentrated on the residential status, relationships, and instrumental support between adult children and their parents. The items we used included the following: living arrangements, relationships with father/mother, frequency of providing or receiving housework help and personal care assistance, and how often a respondent meets with or contacts parents. Relationship with parents was measured by the following question: "In the past six months, how was your relationship with your parents?" The response options were divided into two categories for this item—"Very close/Close" was regarded as close to their parents and "Fair/Not very

close/Not close at all” was regarded as distant from parents. Mutual support was gauged by the following two questions: “In the past six months, how often did you help your father/mother with housework or taking care of his/her diet and daily life?” and “In the past six months, how often did your father/mother help you with housework or taking care of children?” Contact and meeting frequency were measured by the following two questions: “In the past six months, how often did you contact with your father/mother through phone-calls, text messages, letters, or emails?” and “In the past six months, how often did you see your father/mother?” The responses for the above four questions were also divided into two categories in our analysis: “Almost everyday/Three or four times a week/One or two times a week” was considered as being close to their parents, “Two or three times a month/One time a month/One time several months/Never” was seen as being distance to their parents.

We limited the sample by utilizing several considerations. First, it is well known that there exists a huge urban-rural duality in contemporary China; therefore, an analysis of the whole nation regardless of the urban-rural heterogeneity would lead to confusing results. Therefore, our first step was to restrict the study to urban areas. Second, in contrast to previous research, the primary goal of our study was to investigate the gender gap within individual couples—specifically, between the husband and the wife from the same union. Considering that cohabitation is relatively less prevalent in China, it is usually considered to be informal and does not involve frequent intergenerational interactions. Therefore, we narrowed the sample to married females, specifically, wives who were aged between 20 and 49 years and who lived in the same household with her husband. Finally, the analysis of the relationships between adult children and their elderly parents should be done only if at least one parent is living. The descriptive statistics of the explanatory variables and resi-

dential statuses are shown in Tables 1 and 2.<sup>(2)</sup>

From Table 2, we can clearly recognize that the proportion of men living with their parents is much higher than that of women, indicating that elderly parents living with adult sons is still dominant in urban Chinese society.

To achieve our goal of exploring the gender gap within certain couples, we paired the spouses into four groups for each item to measure this distinction. For instance, a husband and wife who both frequently help their parents with housework would be categorized as both-close; a husband who helps his parents extensively while the wife helps only a little would be categorized as husband-close wife-distance (indicating the husband is more closely related to his parents than the wife is to hers), and so forth. Through this grouping strategy, we can distinctly capture the differentiation between husbands and wives living in the same household. The descriptive statistics of the independent variables are presented in Table 3.

As shown in Table 3,<sup>(3)</sup> gender differences differ according to the various aspects of intergenerational relationships. In aggregate, husbands are more likely to maintain a mutually supportive relationship with their own parents than wives in terms of household chores and personal care. Conversely, wives are more likely to have a higher contact frequency with their parents than their husbands.<sup>(4)</sup> Notably, the above tendencies hold when we restrict the sample to respondents who live apart from their parents, and this inclination was even reinforced in some items such as providing help to parents.<sup>(5)</sup>

## 2. Results

We implemented two statistical strategies. First, we used co-residence as a dependent variable and modeled the determinants of co-residence by gender. In this procedure, we interacted age and education level to examine the effect of education within a given birth cohort. Other individual characteristics, such as job status and household registration status (*hukou* status),

**Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Explanatory Variables by Sex**

	Wife		Husband	
	N	%	N	%
Age cohort				
20-29	447	21.23	314	14.91
30-39	722	34.28	726	34.47
40-49	937	44.49	872	41.41
50-59			183	8.69
60-69			11	0.52
Highest degree of education				
Senior high & below	1,720	81.67	1,671	79.34
3-year college & above	382	18.14	424	20.13
Missing	4	0.19	11	0.52
Huko status				
Agriculture	1,273	60.45	1,206	57.26
Non-agriculture	828	39.32	889	42.21
Missing	5	0.24	11	0.52
Job status				
Employed	1,459	69.28	1,771	84.09
Unemployed	42	1.99	26	1.23
Out of labor market	405	19.23	94	4.46
Other or missing	200	9.50	215	10.21

Note: Target respondents are married couples with wives aged from 20 to 49. Therefore, husbands' age range is not restricted to 20 to 49.

**Table 2. Frequency and Percentage of Respondents' Living Arrangements by Sex**

	Father				Mother			
	Husband		Wife		Husband		Wife	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Co-residence	563	26.73	103	4.89	687	32.62	126	5.98
Living apart	670	31.81	1,024	48.62	766	36.37	1,135	53.89
Alive but missing	130	6.17	298	14.15	138	6.55	385	18.28
Dead	743	35.28	681	32.34	515	24.45	460	21.84
Total	2,106 (100.00)							

were controlled for. The multinomial logistic regression results are presented in Table 4. The main entries are relative risk ratios, which refers to the ratio of the risk of co-residence for those with high education to those with low education.

The model was estimated separately for both men and women.<sup>(6)</sup> Based on the analysis, we found that women's education attainment and age cohort had considerable impacts on co-residence practices with

parents. To be specific, women in their 30s were more likely to live with their parents than women in their 40s, regardless of their education level. A possible explanation is that women in their 30s are in the throes of the childrearing phase and have a greater need for childcare support from their parents, thus promoting co-residential behavior. Meanwhile, analysis of educational effects among the same age cohort showed that only the high-education group of women in their 30s



**Table 3. Descriptive Statistics of Dependent Variables**

		Both Close		Husband: Close Wife: Distant		Husband: Distant Wife: Close		Both Distant		Total
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Relationships	Father	458	67.85	79	11.70	95	14.07	43	6.37	100.00
	Mother	678	74.75	89	9.81	103	11.36	37	4.08	100.00
Help toward parents	Father	42	6.22	120	17.78	68	10.07	445	65.93	100.00
	Mother	59	6.52	192	21.22	95	10.50	559	61.77	100.00
Help from parents	Father	53	7.85	217	32.15	45	6.67	360	53.33	100.00
	Mother	86	9.48	321	35.39	67	7.39	433	47.74	100.00
Meet with parents	Father	217	32.15	211	31.26	75	11.11	172	25.48	100.00
	Mother	336	37.05	298	32.86	100	11.03	173	19.07	100.00
Contact parents	Father	259	38.37	116	17.19	147	21.78	153	22.67	100.00
	Mother	373	41.12	121	13.34	229	25.25	184	20.29	100.00

**Table 4. Multinomial Logistic Regression of Co-residence for Husbands and Wives**

	Living with Father		Living with Mother	
	Husband	Wife	Husband	Wife
	B	B	B	B
<i>Age × Education</i>				
20–29 × Senior high & below	5.885***	5.653***	4.714***	4.642***
20–29 × 3-year college & above	6.048***	2.673	5.455***	3.435**
30–39 × Senior high & below	2.050***	2.033*	1.956***	1.838*
30–39 × 3-year college & above	1.815**	4.667***	1.481	3.640***
40–49 × Senior high & below (Baseline)				
40–49 × 3-year college & above	0.427*	1.285	0.543*	1.984
<i>Job status</i>				
Out of labor market (Baseline)				
Employed	0.803	0.839	0.819	0.859
Unemployed	1.240	1.906	0.975	1.957
<i>Hukou status</i>				
Agriculture (Baseline)				
Non-agriculture	0.706	1.150	0.896	1.295
Constant	0.706	0.048***	0.739	0.056***
N	1,891	1,905	1,891	1,905

Note: Estimates are relative risk ratio of “co-residence” compared to “living apart.” For other categories of the living arrangements (namely “alive but missing” or “dead”), and for men aged 50 years old or above, estimates are not shown in the Table but available on request. \*\*\* $p < 0.01$ , \*\* $p < 0.05$ , and \* $p < 0.1$ .

were more likely to cohabit with their parents than the low-education group. This confirms the idea of life-stage implications of childrearing in the 30s, and reflects the greater career challenges faced by highly educated women in the dual-earner model in China,

which results in a heightened need for childcare support from their parents.

Regarding men, the analysis showed that whether they had high or low education, the likelihood of living with their parents decreased significantly as their age



cohort went up. This demonstrates that for men, financial competency is possibly the key factor in circumventing living with parents, since in general the financial strength of men increases with age. Especially among men in their 40s, controlling for other variables, the relative risk of co-residence with fathers in the high education group was approximately 0.42 times that of the low education group. This suggests that highly educated men in their 40s were only less than half as likely to live with their parents as the less educated group, which endorses our argument about the inverse correlation between men's economic power and co-residence with parents.

Second, we applied logistic regressions to grouped variables that reflect the gender gap in intergenerational relations within couples. This was done by keeping educational attainment as the main explanatory variable, with controls for age and work status. We grouped educational level in the same way to capture the detailed differentiation within couples. A major goal of this study was to discover the ways in which unconventional patterns of intergenerational relationships were constructed. Therefore, for the dependent variable of intergenerational relationships, we adopted the category of husband-close wife-distance (indicating husbands being closer to their parents than their wives are to their parents), which reflects the patrilineal convention, as the baseline, to examine the divergence of other groups from the reference group. Regarding the explanatory variable of education level, low educational attainment for both husband and wife was the highest frequency group, and was therefore adopted as the reference group. As for the control variables, we choose the age cohort of 20 to 29 years who were out of the labor market as the reference groups for each variable. Accordingly, the regression results are shown in Table 5. The results of the analysis of the other reference groups are also presented as necessary.

Table 5 indicates that a within-couple difference of

educational qualification can arguably be an important parameter influencing gender differences in intergenerational relationships. Our results showed that in terms of relationship with parents, compared to low education of both spouses, the relationship with fathers in the combination of highly educated husbands with low educated wives were less likely to be close on both sides or husband-close wife-distance type. This could be explained as a tendency that highly educated husbands have a certain psychological distance from their own fathers. In terms of assistance from and to parents, compared to low education of both spouses, the combination of a highly educated wife and a low educated husband or high education for both spouses significantly increases the likelihood of appearing as wife-close husband-distant type, and this remained significant when restricting the sample to cases of living apart from parents (not shown in Table 5). This indicates that highly educated women are more likely to receive support from their parents and develop an unconventional style of maintaining close ties with their own parents. This propensity was not observed among highly educated men, which not only shows that the mechanisms by which resources act in intergenerational relationships differ across gender, but also reveals that the increased status of highly educated women motivates them to maintain close ties with their natal families to satisfy household needs. Regarding the frequency of meeting with parents, compared to low education of both spouses, the combination of a highly educated wife and a low educated husband, or high education for both spouses, significantly increased the likelihood of wife-close husband-distance type. This finding also remained significant when the sample was restricted to the case of living separately from parents.

Co-residence with the husband's parents is viewed as a conventional residence pattern, and from the analysis of the living arrangement we found that the factors influencing the emergence of unconventional residen-

**Table 5. Multinomial Logistic Regression Predicting Gender Differences of Intergenerational Relationships within Married Couples**

Education	Help toward Father			Help toward Mother			Help from Father			Help from Mother		
	Both Close	Husband:		Both Close	Husband:		Both Close	Husband:		Both Close	Husband:	
		Distant	Wife: Close		Distant	Wife: Close		Distant	Wife: Close		Distant	Wife: Close
Both Low	Baseline											
Both High	1.209	1.881	1.605	2.394*	2.002	1.811*	1.893	5.692***	1.252	1.489	3.449***	1.156
Husband: high	2.075	1.017	0.782	1.784	1.490	1.202	1.172	0.438	-0.093	1.394	1.425	1.379
Wife: low	1.054	5.073***	2.102	2.330	2.377*	1.100	1.186	4.125***	0.388	3.077**	2.904**	1.520
N		666			891			666			893	

**Table 5. Continued**

Education	Meet with Father			Meet with Mother			Contact Father			Contact Mother		
	Both Close	Husband:		Both Close	Husband:		Both Close	Husband:		Both Close	Husband:	
		Distant	Wife: Close		Distant	Wife: Close		Distant	Wife: Close		Distant	Wife: Close
Both Low	Baseline											
Both High	2.248**	4.137***	1.800	1.988***	4.899***	1.026	2.164*	1.976	0.725	2.006*	1.318	0.350*
Husband: high	0.414	1.504	1.824	1.019	1.735	1.443	0.849	0.915	0.315	1.338	1.689	0.707
Wife: low	0.919*	4.341***	0.610	2.841***	3.155***	0.978	1.077	1.204	0.470	5.223**	3.557	1.631
N		666			891			666			893	

**Table 5. Continued**

Education	Relationship with Father			Relationship with Mother		
	Both Close	Husband:		Both Close	Husband:	
		Distant	Wife: Close		Distant	Wife: Close
Both Low	Baseline					
Both High	1.289	0.395	0.629	1.649	0.517	0.327
Husband: high	0.350***	0.290***	-15.400	0.903	0.899	0.247
Wife: low	2.186	0.614	-0.447	2.705	1.931	0.984
N		666			893	

Note: The baseline category for the respondent variables is "Husband: Close Wife: Distant". Standard errors are in parentheses; \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , and \*  $p < 0.1$ . All models controlled for age cohorts and work status. The control variable of hukou status (household registration) is removed here because of the multicollinearity caused by the strong correlation between grouping variables for hukou status and those for education. Full results are available on request.

tial patterns, such as separating from the husband's parents, or living with the wife's parents, differed between men and women. Based on our analysis, socioeconomically advantaged men tend to keep a distance from their parents, which runs counter to convention, while highly educated women tend to use their resources and opinion to keep a close connection with their own parents in order to accommodate family needs. Does this mechanism of effect also apply to other aspects of intergenerational relationships beyond living arrangements? Our analysis showed that, consistent with this argument, in terms of relationship with parents, men with higher socioeconomic status do tend to remain distant from their parents. Regarding helping or receiving help from parents, the higher level of education of women enhanced the wives' connections with their own parents, a tendency that remained observable when limiting the sample to individuals who live separately from their parents. This indicates that higher female education increases the status and opinion of women in the household, and motivates the unconventional pattern of women staying close to their own parents to meet each other's needs. Finally, regarding contact and meeting with parents, which can be easily affected by the residential patterns, we still observed positive effects of the wife's high educational attainment on unconventional behaviors. Among those who lived apart from their parents, the wife's high education level was likely to lead to meeting with the parents as the wife-close husband-distance type. The evidence above confirms our idea that a wife's high education level enhances her status and encourages an unconventional style of the wife keeping a stronger bond with her own parents to satisfy their mutual needs.

#### IV. Discussion

In summary, our study revealed the following points: first, consistent with previous studies, sons live with

their parents at a much higher rate than daughters. Meanwhile, educational attainment has a significant effect on co-residential practices, with the mechanism differing across genders. In agreement with Xie's (2009) findings based on a "Three-City Survey" in China, we discovered that high educational attainment among men was associated with a lower likelihood of living with parents, as opposed to the case for women. In fact, although patrilocalism is still predominant in China, multiple studies have shown the significance of practical needs affecting living arrangements and other family behaviors, suggesting that co-residence is more than simply conceptual issues. Logan and Bian's (2003) study on urban Chinese families indicates that there is no significant causation between people's living preferences and their actual practices, and some of the elderly parents prefer living apart from their married children as long as they can receive sufficient help when necessary. Pimentel and Liu (2004) focused on the non-normative co-residence with wives' parents in urban China, and their results showed that resources and needs are the most crucial determinants. Considering our results, highly educated men are more likely to live apart from their parents, while highly educated women are more likely to live with their parents, both of which are unconventional practices. A high-education degree means, to some extent, a high-income level and a resource advantage, and it appears that individuals with resource advantages are more likely to adopt an anti-traditional residential pattern based on optimal choices.

Next, we found that gender differences differed according to the various aspects of intergenerational relationships. That is, husbands or couples are more likely to maintain a mutually supportive relationship with the husbands' parents than with the wives' parents in terms of household chores and personal care. Conversely, wives are more likely to have a higher frequency of contact with their parents than that of their partners.<sup>(7)</sup> Moreover, the impact of educational attainment

on gender differences was highly pronounced. A high level of education for the wife, or for both spouses, significantly increases the likelihood of having a gender-neutral intergenerational relation or a relation favoring the wife's side in terms of mutual domestic help and contact/visit frequency. We can conclude that higher education can notably contribute to gender equality in intergenerational relations. Contemporary society is characterized as highly complex; education, health care, and housing are the three major expenditures that wear out most Chinese people at present—and childcare is another priority. The higher the contribution to these costs and family needs, the greater the share of voice. It is obvious that intergenerational relationships are multifaceted, with some aspects strongly influenced by traditional concepts and others through modernization. We have stressed earlier the possibility of intergenerational relations changing from a normative to a needs-based principle under certain circumstances. On an individual level, people with higher education levels are better resourced and have more options. They can accommodate their actions according to their needs and may choose to maintain or abandon traditional patterns. Based on our analysis, socioeconomically advantaged men tend to keep a distance from their parents, which runs counter to convention, while highly educated women tend to use their resources and opinions to develop an unconventional pattern of staying close to their own parents to meet each other's needs. The relatively low-education, low-resource groups are more compatible with conventional behaviors that favor the husband's side; notably, there does not seem to be sufficient incentives or necessities for them to change, at least at this stage. The resurgence of traditional values and the rise of anti-traditional ideas are likely to move in parallel. However, based on our results, an individual's resource advantages evidently contribute to unconventional behaviors, and women's access to resources is undeniably an

essential impetus for the transition to a gender-neutral style of intergenerational relationships.

Although there are some limitations to this study, we explored the contribution of high educational attainment, especially that of the wife, to gender equality in intergenerational relationships. Existing quantitative studies generally show that intergenerational relationships in contemporary Chinese families are predominantly flowing upward, indicating a resource transfer from adult children to their elderly parents. Nevertheless, based on an interview survey, Yang and He (2004) emphasize that parents' devotions to their children are unrequited, and these tangible and intangible dedications are always far greater than the children's rewards. Large-scale data cannot restore a full image of family life. Moreover, different family members may have different perceptions of the contributions made by each person, which may cause bias in the data. For example, family members may overrate their contributions and underrate others. We believe that qualitative investigations are essential for addressing these issues.

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#### **【Notes】**

- (1) There are two reasons for choosing the 2016 data rather than the 2010 baseline data in this paper. First, as mentioned in the article, the sample attrition scale of CFPS is relatively small; second, the subjects of this paper are married couples, and there has been a continuous influx of newly formed couples merged into the sample during the survey after 2010, so the initial wave may not be the perfect choice for this paper. As for our cross-sectional analysis of the panel data, it also serves for the main purpose of this paper, which is to explore the structural mechanisms in the association between spousal attributes, such as education gap and intergenerational

ational relationships. The focus of this paper does not involve time series causality, so there is a relatively modest need to use a panel statistical analysis, which is why single-year data are used for the analysis. However, changes in time series such as whether having children and career changes undoubtedly have a substantial impact on intergenerational relationships. A deeper exploration from the perspective of dynamic changes should be an intriguing topic for future research.

- (2) The siblings variable was not adopted in this study and should be further explored in future studies.
- (3) The analysis targeted married couples with wives in the age range of 20–49, with both spouses having at least one living parent (N=2,106 couples). However, the only data to enter each model in the following analysis were the parents who were alive and the non-missing sample data, so the value of N (sample size) varied according to different variables.
- (4) The father and mother in the analysis refer to the respondent's own parents. For instance, in Table 3, there were 458 couples who had a close relationship with their fathers, this means that husbands and wives each reported having a close relationship with their own fathers at the same time.
- (5) For instance, when we restrict data to those couples who live apart from parents, regarding "help toward mother," the frequency of "husband-close wife-distance" is 249, compared to 34 cases with "husband-distance wife-close" The full set of figures is available on request.
- (6) Due to space limitations, it is infeasible to present tables of all baseline analysis results in the article. The results of baseline analyses other than those shown in Tables 4 and 5 are reported in the text only, and subsequent tables are available on request.
- (7) Theoretically, this questionnaire collects information about the respondent's relationship with his or her own parents, not with his or her in-laws. How-

ever, we could not exclude the possibility of a crossover of relationships in the information. For example, domestic assistance to parents answered by male respondents may actually be done by their wives. Yamato's (2017) study explored couples' individualized tendencies to maintain separate relationships with their own parents. In discussions about spousal individualization, this cross-relationship can be a serious distortion in the analysis. But this crossover does not detract from the main argument of this paper, because our focus is on the extent to which intergenerational relationships deviate from patrilineal traditions, and both husbands themselves providing domestic support for parents and wives doing it for them can be interpreted as favoring the husband's side.

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