

# UGC FDS11 H10 23

*by* Dr. FUNG Ka Yi

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<sup>1</sup> The building and operation of transnational elder care network: a case study of left-behind elderly in Hong Kong

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<sup>1</sup> 跨國護老網絡的建立和運作，以香港為例

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<sup>1</sup> This project addresses the issue of elder care in Hong Kong. In the past few years, more than two hundred and twenty-two thousand people have migrated to other societies. Many emigrants were adults with young children, leaving behind their elderly parents. The parents were left behind because their adult children did not plan to bring them along or they refused to emigrate. Among these parents, some are staying in Hong Kong without physical and emotional support from their younger generation. Elder care for these left-behind parents provokes discussions in the academia, government, and social service providers. Studies of migration find that migrants would establish a transnational elder care network to look after left-behind parents. However, the existing literature lacks holistic evidence on how different parties deal with the situations they face. First, in cases that there is someone from the family to shoulder the responsibility of a primary caregiver, questions such as how family members negotiated with each other in the caring duties allocation process, how the designated caregiver responded to this new role, why would he or she shoulder these duties are rarely asked. Second, there were very few studies that targeted the left-behind older people who have inadequate or no kin support at home, thus providing limited evidence on what they and their migrant adult children would do, who could support them, and what their coping strategies would be in the face of their new living style and change of caregivers. Third, while giving emotional care to their left-behind parents, how would the migrant adult children abroad handle family crises at home, for example, in the face of parental health decline? What were the outcomes? They might have to work with different people to seek support for their parents and might harbor worry, anxiety, and stress. How had these emotions influence the crisis-solving process, as well as their transnational emotional caregiving to their left-behind parents?

To fill the above gaps, the research team attempts to establish how kin and non-kin ties constitute the transnational elder care network. Using “transnational kinscription” and “economies of recognition” as fundamental concepts underlying the research framework, this study focuses on the negotiation process among migrant children, siblings, other family members and the care recipients in the transnational context, the structure and the operation of the transnational elder care network and network members’ views and recognitions on members’ contributions in the caring process. Data will be collected by in-depth interviews. This project includes two groups of respondents. The first are migrant adult children who have migrated to the UK. Before they left Hong Kong, they were involved in the caring of their parents. The second group are the care recipients (parents of the migrant adult children). In the cases that there are other members in Hong Kong who are involved in the caring of the parents, like siblings of the migrant adult children, or close kin, they will be invited to be interviewed as well.

The findings of this study will add to the empirical evidence in migrant studies, ageing studies, and studies in social network analysis. In terms of contribution to practice, the findings can be a reference for social workers to identify which types of family will be more likely to have very limited family members to look after the left-behind elders. Furthermore, the findings may help the Hong Kong SAR Government and local NGOs design an evidence-based human service delivery model for the left-behind older people.

<sup>2</sup>  
(a) Provision of Research Experience for Undergraduate Student

<sup>1</sup> Yes  No

## <sup>1</sup> **PART II DETAILS OF THE RESEARCH PROPOSAL**

### **RESEARCH DETAILS**

#### **1. Project Objectives**

*(maximum of two A4 pages in standard RGC format)*

The proposed study aims to fill the research gaps in the scholarship of social network analysis and ageing studies through an investigation of the transnational elder care network formation process among migrated adult children in the UK who have siblings (or other relatives) to look after their parents in Hong Kong, and those who have no siblings (or other relatives) to take up the caring duties. This proposed project has the following objectives:

- i. To delineate the structures of different types of transnational elder care network.
- ii. To explore how network members respond to each other's needs, wants, and desires and the factors account for these responses.
- iii. To investigate the impact of various types of recognition styles on the structure and the operation of the care network, and the quality of the caring.

#### **2. Pathways to Impact Statement**

*(maximum of two A4 pages in standard RGC format)*

As showed in the table below, this proposed study can bring different short-, medium-, and long-term impacts to the society in four ways. First, it will delineate the structures of different types of transnational elder care network. The findings can be a reference for social workers to identify which types of family will be more likely to have very limited family members to look after the elderly at home. Thus, the social workers can plan their services for these families, including left-behind parents, and those who are very likely to involve in the caring process. It can also help

aspirational migrants to rethink the situations they might face in the future, and actual migrants to plan or adjust their elder care plan.

Second, this proposed study will reveal how network members recognise others' contribution in the caring process and factors account for these recognitions. Elderly caring is always a long-term process. In this process, people involved may have various types of feelings and emotions, which can greatly influence the operation of the elder care network. By investigating the variations among recognition from network members, and why they choose these responses, we can have better understanding on family relations and conflicts and hence help social services providers design appropriate services.

Third, this proposed study can help to extend the transnational elder care network beyond family. By studying the operation of this network, social service provider, such as social workers, can find out what kinds of duties family members have to take up, and difficulties they face. What kinds of duties can be allocated to non-familial members. This can help them plan future services for these older people by involving people beyond the family. The government can also adjust the current elderly policy of "Aging in Place" which requires a strong community network to support the daily life of elderlies.

Last, this proposed study can also contribute to undergraduate education. This study tries to enrich the social network scholarship, migration studies and ageing studies by connecting two lines of areas, namely, network members' recognitions on others' efforts and the structure and operation of elder care network in the transnational context. The findings can also be compared to the existing literature contextualized in the domestic setting. Relevant hypotheses can be formulated to be tested in future large-scale quantitative studies. The findings of this study will be presented in conferences, symposia and journal articles, and will be taught social network, ageing studies and migrant studies courses.

#### Impact Mapping

Key Project Output	Potential Beneficiaries	Activities to generate potential impacts	Impacts	Source and Evidence
Delineate the structures of different types of transnational elder care network	Elderly and NGOs	When NGOs organize their activities, they can take these	Short Term: Inform the NGOs the common features of transnational care for the	Conferences, symposia or sharing with NGOs members

		factors as references	elderly in Hong Kong <i>Medium Term:</i> Discussion on the determinants and the social dynamics affecting the structures of different types of transnational elder care network.	
Reveal how network members recognise other's contribution and factors account for these response	Elderly and NGOs	Activities and services organized by NGOs	<i>Short Term:</i> Decide intervention to improve the emotion exchange in the transnational elderly care. <i>Medium Term:</i> Discussion on the innovative way to facilitate the transnational "emotion caregiving."	Conferences, symposia or sharing with NGOs members
Study the operation of this network, we can find out what kinds of duties family members have to take up, and difficulties they have	Elderly NGOs, government	Activities and services organized by NGOs	<i>Medium Term:</i> Sorting out the challenges of transnational domestic division of caring labour in the social network of the caregivers. <i>Long Term:</i> Stimulate services and policies on extending the transnational elder care network	Conferences, symposia or sharing with NGOs members

			beyond the family	
Educating undergraduate students	Undergraduate students	Including findings in courses like social network, ageing studies	<p><u>Short Term:</u> Provide the latest academic insights on social network and ageing studies</p> <p><u>Long Term:</u> Provide evidence-based discussion for the students to apply the concepts and discussion for their advanced learning experience or their related work opportunities.</p>	Conferences, academic journal articles

### 3. Research Project Statement

*(maximum of ten A4 pages in standard RGC format, including two non-text A4 pages for diagrams, photos, charts and tables, etc.)*

#### Background

##### Ageing in Place research

The framework of elder care policies promoted by the World Health Organisation (WHO) is "Ageing in Place" (WHO 2007). Under this framework, older people are encouraged to live in the community rather than in institutions, like nursing homes or hospitals. The main reason is that it allows older people to maintain their pre-existing social relationship in the community and their routine daily lifestyle and living together with their family members (Tsui 2018). All these can contribute to their social life and mental health (Keating et. al., 2003).

Under this policy framework, older people are expected to be cared by formal caregivers in the community and informal caregivers at home. Formal caregivers refer to paid professionals or workers from institutions to offer care or supports to older people. Informal caregivers are those who provide supports and care to the older people, have personal relationship or kinship with the older people. They are not from any formal organizations, but mostly are older people's friends, neighbours, or family members (Kaufman et. al., 2010; Heaton 1999).

To facilitate the implementation of this ageing in community framework, relevant measures have been carried out for older people and informal caregivers in the community in different societies. For example, in Hong Kong, qualified informal caregivers receive financial supports from the government. When older adults do not live with their informal caregivers, there are community care services provided for them from the Social Welfare Department to support their daily life, including integrated home care services, enhanced home and community care services and day care centres (Research Office LegCo 2020). Salons were established to perform as community hubs for elderly to meet others and volunteers in small and local communities in Japan. In Germany, there is a “living for help” programme to encourage young people to live with older people so that they can look after each other (Research Office Lego 2021)

Despite the support from the governments in different societies, we can see that family members are in the first line in caring for older people. Due to increased life expectancy, the demands for long-term daily elder care are on the rise. The cares they need every day are mainly daily assistance, such as toileting, grocery shopping, preparing meals or feeding. It is always their family members, usually the spouse, children or siblings who take up this long-term caring responsibility (Allen 2009).

### <sup>1</sup> Transnational Families in Hong Kong

Recently, the number of Hong Kong people migrate to other societies grows rapidly. Due to the political situation, educational stress on children, and introduction of new immigration policies in other countries, a large number of Hong Kong people migrated. In the past three years, more than two hundred and twenty-two thousand people emigrated (HKET 2022). For example, as the UK offers the BNO visa to Hong Kong people in late January 2021 (BBC 2021), which makes it easier for Hong Kong people to get visas for living and working in the UK. 113,742 Hong Kong people have been granted the visa since the launch of this scheme as of February 2022 (Britishfuture 2022).

<sup>1</sup> The large amount of Hong Kong people leaving Hong Kong creates a new social problem, namely left-behind parents. Influenced by the traditional Chinese culture “filial piety”, it is adult children’s responsibilities to look after their parents. Therefore, elder care is always being treated as a familial issue. However, the recent migration wave has transformed this familial issue into a social problem. A survey shows that only 13.2% Hong Kong people who migrated to the UK brought along their old-age parents. In other words, many of their parents remain living in Hong Kong (Standnews 2021; HK01 2021a). These parents are described as left-behind parents. Originally, they are cared by their adult children, but now, their children have migrated, and they are left-behinds. The care of these left-behind parents has become a social problem because other adult children who decided to stay in Hong Kong may not be willing or able to shoulder these sudden caring responsibilities or there is no other children or family members to care for these parents. An increasing number of these families seek help from social services providers (HKEJ

2021). Although some social enterprises offer special services to these left-behind parents, the demands are much higher than the services these enterprises can provide (Headline 2021; HK01 2021).

The above two lines of studies reflect that the migration flow challenges the basic assumption of the “Ageing in Place” framework. Successful implementation of the framework relies heavily on the support of the elderly’s personal network in which the key members are their adult children. With increasing number of adult children migrating to other societies, how older people age in the community becomes an imminent problem which our society needs to solve.

### Transnational Ageing and Elder Care

Migration and caring issues have been investigated for a long time in migration studies. The caring of elderly in migrant families provokes discussions in the academia, government, and social services providers. Early research on transnational care mainly focuses on child caring. Due to the growing number of transnational migration, spatial distance between children and parents generate difficulties in child caring. Building on a classical study among Filipino-US domestic helpers on married women migrating to other countries by Hochschild (2003), Parrenas (2010) further expands the concept “global care chains” as “personal links between people across the globe based on the paid or unpaid work of caring” (Amin and Ingman 2014: 316). Baldassar and Merla (2014) argue that the transnational caring is more like a circle than a chain. This is because a chain only shows the back-and-forth direction, but the transnational caring can be multidirectional. Stack and Burtons (1993) describe this childcaring as kin work, which they define as the labour and tasks that family members need to accomplish to survive from generation to generation. Curling, Menjivar, and Schmalzabur (2012) explicate the concept of “transnational kinscription” which refers to the mechanisms of how cross-border kinship network is constituted. They explain that transnational caring is elusive. Geographical location or biological kinship do not necessarily define who are responsible for caregiving in the transnational context. In other words, membership of the transnational care network is defined by geographical location or biological kinship. Although there are always family members offering supports to the care recipients, family heads and all family members always have to negotiate with each other about the duties allocated to members in accordance with their gender, age, and cultural scripts behind the scenes in order to form the transnational elder care network (Dossa and Coe 2017; Chirinos 2020). This formation process is “transnational kinscription”.

More recently, transnational caring refers not only to childcare, but also elder care (Dossa and Coe 2017; Sun 2017; Walsh and Nare 2016). One line of studies in this field focuses on the social network, particularly how migrant adult children provide different resources to support elder care, how they arrange the caring duties, and negotiate with other members when they have problems (Ayalon 2021). Some studies have documented that some of these migrant adult children send remittances to their elderly parents in the home countries, some take the role of



coordinating the caring needs of their parents and work with family members to look after their parents, and some try to accompany their elderly parents virtually via Information and Communication Technology (ICT). These financial, emotional, and social support from migrant adult children and other family members to their elderly parents contradict the assumptions in the gerontology studies that geographical proximity is the key for caregiving by illuminating how migrant adult children, family members and their elderly parents interact to provide support and receive care in the cross-border context (Mazzucato 2007; Ciobanu, Fokkema, and Nedelcu 2017; Baldassar et al. 2016).

#### Negotiation of caring duties in the transnational elder care network

The above transnational elder care practices can be sustained mainly due to the effective operation of the transnational elder care network. Cantor (1999) coins a concept "circle of care" to explain that caring work should be collective in nature. Many studies focus mainly on close kin, but Margoils and colleagues (2016) argue that extended family can also be involved in the elderly caring process and Abel and associates (2012) maintain that friends and neighbours are also members of a caring network. According to the circle-of-care framework, multiple layers of actors provide a spectrum of care to the elderly parents. In the inner circle are those who have the closest relationship with the elderly, including close kin, and good friends. They tend to provide round the clock, intimate, and hands on support to the elderly, such as bathing, feeding, or toileting and so forth. The next layer is the outer layer. Members in this layer are usually those who have less close relationship with the elderly, such as extended kin, friends, or neighbours. They are more likely to help with activities outside the home, like grocery shopping, repairing and so forth. The remaining few layers are people who have no personal relationship with the elderly, and are usually from formal institutions, such as social services providers or volunteers from Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs).

In the context of transnational elder caring process, close kin are always at the the frontline to take care of the elders. However, the kin relationship in this transnational elder care process is understudied. Studies of migrants tend to focus on the circulation of resources between migrant adult children and their parents in the home country (Baldassar 2016, Amin and Ingman 2014). Cultural studies mainly stress the role of culture in the transnational elder care process. For example, influenced by the Confucius culture, the idea "filial piety", it is always the children's responsibility, especially the eldest children to take care of their elderly parents. Gender studies centered on the role of women in the transnational elder care process. In this caring process, it is always the women to take the role as the primary caregivers despite that their career development in the host country, their aspirations and their life planning may crush with the caring duties (Spitzer et. al. 2013, Ahlin and Sen 2020); otherwise, they will not be regarded as a good daughter or a good wife.

Even though migrant adult children would work with other family members and their parents in the caring process, the negotiation among these three parties is being neglected by researchers and social services providers. In the transnational migration process, family members always need to renegotiate the caring roles and duties among family members. This is because the request of caregiving can happen at any life stages of family members (Robison et. al., 2009). When the role of caregivers cannot match with their own life trajectory, family members may refuse to take up this responsibility. Thus, family members have to discuss and negotiate on how to and to whom to shoulder this responsibility (Asato 2014). It is always the female family members, especially, those unmarried and have no job, to be assigned this duty (Li, Mak and Loke 2013).

The negotiation is complicated and not easy because the family member who has shouldered this caring responsibility is always suffering from lack of support in the caring process. It is stressful for the family members who are the primary caregivers to ask for help from other family members in the elder care process. Once family members have decided who will shoulder the caring responsibilities, other family members will not be highly involved in the caring (Posser and Moss 1996; Asado 2010, Cheng et. al., 2013). Also, this low level of involvement made family members think that they are irrelevant in the caring duties. Therefore, even when the informal caregivers voice out for help, some of them may refuse to offer support. This frequent refusal discourages informal caregivers to seek help in the future. On the other hand, some family members will give suggestions on how to care for the parents when they offer support to the informal caregivers. This may be too burdensome and stressful for the informal caregivers (Cheng et. al. 2013; Noddings 2003). Most of these studies are in the national context, it is believed that the transnational elder care is a more complicated issue than the one in the national context. This is because transnational elder care entails intersections of migration, gender, age, and care (Hochschild 2003; Denvea 2021).

Scholars have developed different conceptual frameworks for studying recognition and management of caregivers and care recipients' feelings. One framework is management of emotion (Hochschild 2003). Bladassar (2008) constructs an analytical framework consisting of four types of management. The first type is virtual co-presence. It means the virtual participation through Information and Communication Technology (ICT). For example, in a study of Taiwanese unmarried women living in Australia, these women would keep frequent contacts with their parents who are living in Taiwan via ICT, such as text, voice message or face time. They talk about their everyday life, frustration, worries or excitement and so forth. This creates a feeling for their parents that their daughters are around them. Hsu (2019) describes these ICT as filial technology. The second one is co-presence by proxy. It means the sense of closeness is maintained through objects and people whose physical presence that can represent the spirit of the migrated person. The third one is physical co-presence, like regular visits. And the fourth type is creating a feeling of co-existence by imagination, such as prayers or thoughts. All these are ways to manage members' emotion, including that of the elderly. More recently, building upon concepts of "economy of gratitude" (Hochschild 2003), and "economy of dignity" (Ough 2009), Sun and Kibra

(2021) develops a concept called “economies of recognition”. It refers to the “moral criteria that caregivers mobilise to construct a sense of empowering or disempowering in relation to other people who are involved in the caring process” (Sun and Kibra 2021:4). On the one hand, without the recognition from the care recipients and other siblings, the migrated children will feel frustrated. On the other hand, when the contributions and efforts of the caregivers are not recognized, they would feel redundant, invisible, or even nothing. These bad feelings in turn can greatly hurt the formation and operation of the transnational elder care network (Lim and Yang 2015; Peal and Trickett 1988; Yang and Horak 2019). This concept helps us focus on evaluation and assessment of members’ contributions, and membership of the caring network, and how the evaluation and assessment shape the duties allocation process and how members respond to the request.

#### Conceptual framework and research question

[Insert Figure 1 here]

Considering the features of transnational elder caring, the conceptual framework of this study is built upon two concepts, namely transnational kinscription, and economies of recognition (Figure 1). First, as Sun (2014) reminds readers that how heads of family and family members work together to assign caring duties remains understudied, this study uses the concept transnational kinscription to fill in this lacuna in the context of transnational elder care. This concept guides us to focus on exploring the strategies that migrant families used for duties allocation, management of connections, and to depict the structure and operation of the transnational elder care network.

Second, recognition plays an important role during the network formation process. In the transnational kinscription process, members who are in the transnational elder care network have to negotiate with each other. We argue that in this negotiation process, evaluation and assessment of members’ contribution and efforts were involved. This concept serves as a guidepost for investigating how people in the transnational elder care network recognize others’ dedication, types of recognitions, how the carers respond to requests for support, and, factors contributing to this recognition, and impacts of recognition on the caring in the transnational elder care context.

Building on the above conceptual framework, this study focuses first on how cross-border kinship and non-kin negotiate the caring duties, recruit caregivers and establish the transnational elder care network. Secondly, this study particularly directs attention to the recognitions given by care recipients and caregivers, as well as factors leading to various types of recognitions.

<sup>1</sup> Unlike Sun and Kibria (2021), this study will include more types of families. Sun and Kibria (2021) mainly target families whose adult children have migrated, and other siblings remain in the home country. Apart from this type of family, this study also targets families whose adult

children have migrated and there are no other adult children living in the home country. Including this type of families is important because it can show us the diversity in the types of negotiation among migrant adult children, close kin, extended kin, non-kin and their parents. Furthermore, including different types of families will enable us to explore variations in strategies connecting different types of members in the network building process (Ayalon 2021).

#### Values of this study

Theoretically, the findings can help us understand further the recognition issues in the transnational elder care network. Network analysis have shown that there are many factors influencing the structure and operations of a social network, such as demographic characteristics or socio-economic status. Some studies include emotions in this line of research. By including economies of recognition in the conceptual framework, this study tries to find out not only types of recognitions, but also factors accounting for the types of recognitions, like whether demographic characteristics and socio-economic status would exert impacts on types of recognitions. And more importantly, how these recognitions exert indirect effects on the network structure and operation by shaping network members' emotion.

Empirically, this study may help us to reconsider the implementation of the "Ageing in Place" policies. The policies encourage elderly people to age in the community, but the primary care responsibility is still shouldered by family members and elderly caring is still being described as a family issue. This study attempts to investigate the difficulties encountered by migrant adult children and other family members and their coping strategies, as well as how they manage their emotions, respond to others' emotions and how their emotions impact on the operation of the transnational elder care network. The findings of this study will contribute to re-assessment and re-design of current measures to aptly address the difficulties and needs in elder care for the left behind parents.

#### Data and method

The proposed research will use qualitative in-depth interviews, online or in person, depending on the wish of respondents, as a primary tool to answer our research questions. This study tries to explore how migrated adult children build up and maintain their transnational elder care network, and why, if any, there are variations in the network structure, operation and impacts on the parents among different families. To answer these questions, instead of using questionnaire that is difficult for respondents to explain and express their views and feelings, it is more suitable to use qualitative methods to delve into important points and themes.

[Insert Table 1 here]

Table 1 shows the details of the target respondents of this study. This study will include two groups of respondents. The first group are migrant adult children. These migrant adult children must have been involved in the caring of their parents when they were in Hong Kong. The second

group are migrant adult children's parents and other caregivers, like migrant adult children's sibling, close kin, extended kin or non-kin. The experiences of the second group can shed light on how the migrated adult children work with them to shoulder the caring responsibilities and how they recognise each other's contributions and hardship in elder care. This may help us to probe into the multidimensions and complexity of elder care in the transnational context.

This study aims to reach 50 pairs of respondents. We aim to interview 50 migrant adult children, as well as their parents and sibling, close kin, extended kin and non-kin involved in the caring of the elder parents (if any). The selection criteria of the migrant adult children are that they are recent migrants who have migrated to the host country for no more than five years. Also, they have to be involved in the caring of their parents when they were in Hong Kong. This caring involvement can be emotional caring like chatting or companionship, or daily living assistance to their parents, such as with grocery shopping, preparing meals, toileting, bathing, and feeding (Heaton 1999; Kaufman et. al. 2010). However, it may not be easy to interview the old parents in Hong Kong due to health issues and their unwillingness to talk about conflicts within the family. Then, the research may not be able to have 50 pairs of respondents. If it is the case, the research team would locate other elderly people whose children have migrated recently. Again, they have to fulfil the above selection criteria. The research team will try hard to have 50 pairs of respondents. Since gender, marital status and age can affect one's caring duties, this study tries to reach 25 male and 25 female migrant adult children. The age will range from 20s to 50s. Also, the research team plans to have 50% single migrant adult children, and 50% migrant adult children who have married already.

We plan to conduct the interview in the United Kingdom (UK). Two reasons account for this selection. Firstly, due to the relaxation of the migration policies in UK, the requirement for financial assets for couple or individual is reduced. For example, the requirement for couple is around 3,036.8GBP. Thus, more people from diverse social backgrounds can meet this requirement and migrate to the UK. Due to this relaxation in immigration policy, we may have access to more respondents from various social backgrounds. This can enrich our data. The second reason is geographical proximity. One of the Co-Is is living in the UK. This Co-I will help looking for respondents in the UK and conduct the interviews.

The sampling strategy of this study will be snowball sampling. This study targets migrated adult children whose parents are in Hong Kong. These are two types of migrated adult children, namely, migrated adult children who have siblings in Hong Kong, and those who do not have siblings in Hong Kong, the siblings of the former group will be also interviewed. If there are other people beyond siblings in the transnational elderly caring network, we shall also interview them. The research team will approach these target respondents via personal network, and recommendation by respondents.

**1** This project will recruit respondents via three methods. First, the research team will use their personal network to locate potential respondents. Research team members who are in Hong Kong have personal connections with those migrated to the UK recently. The Co-I living in the UK can reach these potential respondents and recruit other interviewees through personal connections, referrals and posting recruitment messages on social media. Second, team members will also contact Hong Kong organizations in the UK, such as mutual support groups, churches, NGOs, Facebook groups, ethnic business owners and so forth to locate potential respondents. Third, non-governmental organization working with ethnic minority in the UK, such as CIC Trafford, will be contacted to spread the respondent recruitment information. Meanwhile, the research team will review and adjust the interview guide to see what to ask, whom to ask, and where to go.

[Insert Table 2 here]

Data will be collected by semi-structured in-depth interviews. Table 2 presents the concepts and key variables of this study, and sample questions. There are three main concepts in this study, namely, transnational kinscription, economies of recognition, and the dependent variable transnational elder care network. Based on these three concepts, we have some key variables used to indicate the three concepts. These variables include duties, allocations of duties, strategies, types of recognitions, ways to recognize, the structure of the transnational elder care network, operation of the network, and the flow of resources. Questions will be about the structure of the transnational elder care network, changes of this network structure, how they allocate the caring duties, how the adult children build this network, members' feeling about the caring and the contributions from other members, kinds of resources embedded in this network, and strategies to keep people in this network. Some sample questions have been prepared and presented in Table 2. With the respondents' consent, interviews will be audio recorded and transcribed verbatim. Small gifts (supermarket coupon HKD100 or 10GBP) will be given to respondents as a token of gratitude for their kind assistance.

### **1** Data analysis strategies

This qualitative study will adopt the data analysis approach suggested by Charmaz (2006) for discovering new information. First, initial line-by-line coding of transcript will be conducted to identify the theoretical categories (Strauss and Glaser 1967). Based on the conceptual framework proposed in previous parts, a few categories of concepts should be able to be identified, such as kin-keeping strategies, structure of the transnational elder care network, strategies for managing emotions and feelings, negotiation among family members, and impacts on the elderly caring. Then, memo-writing will be used to develop ideas and, more importantly, to fine-tune subsequent in-depth interviews and help to construct analytic notes. Next, theoretical coding on interview transcripts will be conducted to identify main theoretical themes and connections between the themes, such as emotions of network members and the operation of the care network.

#### 4. Work plan and timetable

The Gantt chart shows that this proposed study will last for 24 months, with the following work plan:

- (a) Design of the interview guide (Months 1-2)
- (b) Contact respondents and arrange interview (Months 2-10)
- (c) In-depth interviews (Months 3-16)
- (d) Data transcription (Months 4-19)
- (e) Data analysis (Months 11-21)
- (f) Drafting of research manuscripts (Months 11-22)
- (g) Report writing (Months 21-24)

Table 1: Types of respondents

Types of respondents	Criteria	Location
Migrant adult children	Migrate to UK within five years  Involved in the caring of their parents who are in Hong Kong	UK
Parents of migrant adult children	Their child or children migrated to UK in the past five years  Their child or children have involved in the caring	HK
Other family members and non-family members involved in the caring	These members have involved in the caring of migrant adult children's parents	HK

Table 2: Concepts and variables

Concepts	Key variables	Sample questions
Transnational Kinscription	Duties	What kinds of duties would caregivers take up?
		Among these duties, any difference in the dedication of time and efforts?
		Level of caring your parents need?

	Allocations	How to allocate these duties to different members in the caring network
		Did your parents have any opinion on the allocation
	Strategies	What are the strategies used when members reject to take up the caring duties
Economies of Recognition	Types of recognitions	Any variations in the ways to recognise others in the caring process
		Do you think recognitions from others are important to you in the caring process
		How these recognitions affect the caring process
	ways to recognise	How to communicate with other members in the caring network
		How to recognise members' hardship and contributions
Transnational Elder Care Network	Structure of the network	Who is in charge of the caring issue in this network
	Operation mechanisms	What is or are mechanism(s) to assign duties and discuss problems among you, parents, other family members?
	Resources flow	What are the important resources circulated in this network?
		How to get these resources from others



ORIGINALITY REPORT

**57%**  
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