Enhancing Quality of Life:

The Social Support of Elderly Chinese Migrants in New Zealand

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Abstract

This thesis explores the quality of life of elderly Chinese migrants living in New Zealand. Specifically, by taking into consideration types and sources of support, it investigates the relationship between social support and quality of life. The analysis is contextualized within a transnational environment to elucidate how the multi-dimensional social support from family, community/government and transnational social networks contributes to elderly migrants' perception of quality of life.

In this study, both quality of life and social support are viewed as subjective concepts, based on individual perceptions and experiences. Theoretically, the thesis uses a social exchange perspective and the findings are derived primarily from 35 semi-structured in-depth interviews with elderly Chinese migrants who were aged 60 years or over and had lived in New Zealand for three years or more. Secondary data from statistics, government policies and previous research are also employed for the purposes of discussion and comparison.

The findings indicate that the quality of life of elderly Chinese migrants in New Zealand is shaped by the interaction of various types and sources of social support. Providing financial, practical, informational and emotional support, family support is perceived as essential to participants' quality of life in the early stages of

migration. However, while family remains the major source of emotional support, government and ethnic communities, because they engender a sense of independence from family, become over time more important in regard to financial, practical, informational support. Furthermore, maintaining transnational social networks and accessing government support from both China and New Zealand enhances these migrants' quality of life, but the uncertainties of transnational life also impose challenges.

My research argues that enhancing the quality of life of elderly migrants is an ongoing process of optimising the multi-dimensional forms of social support and balancing the benefits and challenges of post-migration life. This study makes both empirical and theoretical contributions to the field of social support for and the quality of life of elderly migrants. Taking my participants' perspective, I move beyond a family-centric approach, enabling participants to express their own perceptions of social support and quality of life. Employing social exchange theory enables me to identify the importance of exchange dynamics to the quality of life of elderly Chinese migrants rather than to simply discuss the degree and content of the support providing to them. As such, the findings of this study contribute to our limited knowledge of elderly Chinese migrants living in New Zealand.

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List of Publications and Presentations Arising from This Study

During the course of my PhD research, various findings were presented at a number of international and national conferences. All the submissions were peer-reviewed before acceptance.

Peer-reviewed Conference Proceedings

Zhang, J. (2011). Productive Ageing and Quality of Life -- Grandparenting or Volunteering: Two Approaches to Being Productive. In *Proceedings of the 4th APRU Research Symposium on Gerontology* (pp. 100-104). Shanghai, China: Fudan University.

Conference Papers

Zhang, J. (2012). Elderly Chinese Migrants, Intergenerational Reciprocity, and Quality of Life. Paper presented at the The 2012 Australian Sociological Association (TASA) Conference Brisbane, Australia.

Zhang, J. (2012). The New Media and Chinese Migrant Netizens: Wellbeing of Elderly Chinese Immigrants. Paper presented at the Pathways to Metropolis in the 21st Century: International Conference on Immigration Issues and Futures, Auckland, New Zealand.

Zhang, J. (2013). Social Support and Quality of life of Aging Chinese immigrants in New Zealand. Paper presented at the 20th IAGG World Congress of Gerontology and Geriatrics, Seoul, Korea.

Zhang, J. (2013). Transnational Support and Quality of life: Internet Use of Elderly Chinese Immigrants. Paper presented at the 2013 Sociological Association of Aotoera New Zealand (SAANZ) Conference, Auckland, New Zealand.

Zhang, J. (2013). Transnational Support Exchange on the Internet. Paper presented at the 2013 Australian Sociological Association (TASA) Conference, Melbourne, Australia.

Chapter One: Introduction

Before I began my studies in New Zealand, I never expected to see so many elderly Chinese migrants in this 'Western' country. On the street, on the bus, in Asian supermarkets, they walk alone or with peers, chatting in different Chinese dialects about their families and community activities, or sharing anecdotes. They barely speak English, but they look independent. They seem quite familiar with the city, but appear out of place in their surroundings. I wondered if they were satisfied with their quality of life in this country. This is the question I was also asked many times by local New Zealanders. It is for these reasons that this question became the rationale for my study of elderly Chinese migrants in New Zealand.

The quality of life of elderly migrants has attracted increasing academic interest due to demographic ageing and transnational population movements. Compared to older people who never migrate or those who choose to return and age in their home country, the quality of life of elderly migrants is a more complex issue. Because they tend to face more difficulties in their daily lives than non-migrants after moving to a new society and/or culture, the research literature highlights the crucial importance of social support to the quality of life of elderly migrants (Bajekal, et al. 2004; Chappell & Kusch, 2007; Mollenkopf & Walker, 2007; Tsang, Liamputtong, & Pierson, 2004). The importance of social support is accentuated by the paradox that elderly migrants face on a daily basis. On the one hand, in order to adjust to the new environment elderly

migrants tend to have a higher need for support than do younger migrants; on the other hand, they may have fewer sources of support due to the relatively short period they have lived in the host country.

The main aim of this research is to explore the quality of life of elderly Chinese migrants living in New Zealand. Specifically, I seek to investigate the relationship between social support and quality of life by exploring the types and sources of support that elderly migrants receive post-migration. I take the perspective of the elderly migrants in order to identify the key components of their quality of life, and to interpret their perceptions of social support and quality of life. Hence, this research not only contributes to the development of a more informed theoretical framework for understanding the quality of life of elderly migrants, but also empirically enriches knowledge about elderly Chinese migrants in New Zealand.

Quality of life is a complex concept and different individuals may have different methods of assessing it. Usually, individuals' quality of life comes from their overall evaluation of both measurable and immeasurable factors. As Fry (2000) suggests, the most direct and effective approach to understand people's quality of life is asking them to tell us about it. Therefore, qualitative interviews are the main form of data collection I used. Secondary data, including statistics, governmental reports and policies, and previous research, are also analysed both to paint a broader picture and to enable deeper analysis.

This thesis illustrates that elderly Chinese migrants take different approaches to optimise social support from various sources in order to enhance their quality of

life. I place the elderly migrants at the centre of their social environment, trying to illustrate how they access, develop and expand various sources of social support, and how they optimise the resources available to them. Social support in this study also serves as a lens through which other factors, such as family, migration policy, and the social welfare system, can be analysed with regard to their relationship to quality of life. By exploring various aspects of elderly Chinese migrants' post-migration life, I intend to provide a comprehensive understanding of their quality of life.

1.1 Background and Context

Over recent decades, there has been a dramatic increase in life expectancy and ageing is a feature of global demographics. The phenomena have generated considerable academic interest in the quality of life of elderly people, while much less has been focused on older individuals from minority migrant groups (Nazroo, Bajekal, Blane, & Grewal, 2004). The implications of this gap have been apparent. In New Zealand, for example, there has been a substantial increase in elderly Chinese migrants who have reunited with their children in order to pursue a better quality of life. However, little research has been conducted on this cohort relating to their post-migrant lived experiences and their perceptions of quality of life. The very limited knowledge we have about elderly Chinese migrants is usually a derivative of studies focusing on migrant families and, more often than not, these studies provide information about the elderly migrants through the perspectives and narratives of the young members of the family.

While many new Chinese migrants move to New Zealand to pursue a relaxed lifestyle and a clean green environment (Ip & Friesen, 2001; Meares, Ho, Peace, & Spoonley, 2010), empirical surveys in the country have revealed a distinct gap between pre-migration expectations and post-migration reality; many migrants find life in New Zealand tougher than in China (Meares et al., 2010). For this reason, the expectation gap experienced by many of those migrants might reduce their perceived quality of life. But we have little idea whether or not elderly Chinese migrants experience the same expectation gap.

The existing literature identifies social support as one of the most crucial determinants of the perceived quality of life of elderly Chinese migrants (Bajekal et al., 2004; Chappell & Kusch, 2007; Mollenkopf & Walker, 2007; Tsang et al., 2004). Numerous studies have addressed the sources of support (e.g. families, ethnic communities and governments) and types of support (e.g. financial and housing, emotional and information support) available to them (Kending, Koyano, Asakawa, & Ando, 1999; Moriarty & Butt, 2004; Wong, Yoo, & Stewart, 2005). However, so far, little research has explored how they utilise social support to enhance their quality of life post-migration.

Migration in older age brings challenges to the individual's long-established social networks (Litwin, 1995). This is because migration from one country to another increases the risk of losing previous social relationships. Moreover, in a new cultural and/or social environment, elderly migrants may face additional challenges

developing new networks. Their lack of education and work experience in the host country, and possible language problems diminish their chances of making new social contacts (Heikkinen & Lumme-Sandt, 2013). For these reasons, elderly Chinese migrants tend to have a small number of actual sources of support which, in turn, poses potential risks to their quality of life (Wong et al., 2005).

Although elderly from minority ethnic groups tend to have weak connections to the host society, especially those who migrated for family reasons, they might receive robust support from their families and ethnic communities (Bajekal et al., 2004; Chappell, 2005; Chappell & Kusch, 2007). The families of elderly migrants are usually considered to be the most reliable source of social support to them, as well as being a crucial element to their quality of life (Lan, 2002; Litwin, 1995). Based on this notion, the existing literature focuses largely on the importance of family support to the post-migration quality of life of elderly Chinese migrants (Baldassar, Baldock, & Wilding, 2007; Dhar, 2011a, 2011b; Lan, 2002; Lo & Russell, 2007).

Empirical studies in many countries, including Canada, Australia and the United States have indicated that elderly Chinese migrants, especially those who co-reside with their adult children, are likely to rely on their adult children for practical support in regard, for example, to help with the English language, with transport, and with accommodation (Edmonston & Lee, 2012; Gee, 2000; Wilmoth, 2001). However, they also have high needs for emotional support and companionship from friends and other relationships outside the family (Wong et al., 2005). Those

who have little social participation have a higher propensity to be isolated in their family and to feel lonely and depressed (Treas & Marcum, 2011; Treas & Mazumdar, 2002). Thus, the perception that quality of life of elderly Chinese migrants is mainly shaped by their migrant families is not always valid. These findings lead to further research questions, such as what kinds of support do elderly Chinese migrants need and from whom, and how do they perceive the importance of such support to their quality of life?

Previous research has confirmed the significance of ethnic communities to the quality of life of Chinese migrants, regardless of their age and migration categories (Meares et al., 2010), but this applies especially to elderly migrants (Bajekal et al., 2004; Chappell, 2003, 2005; Lai, Tsang, Chappell, & Lai, 2007; Remennick, 2003; Tsang et al., 2004; Walker, 2005b). Poor language proficiency and the different cultural values of elderly Chinese migrants often restrict their participation in both formal and informal types of civic engagement in the host society (Ip, Lui, & Chui, 2007). Consequently, elderly migrants are likely to resort to their own ethnic communities for both tangible and emotional support (Wong et al., 2005). Greater participation within ethnic communities compensates for communication problems in the host society.

Compared with Chinese communities in some similar 'settler societies' such as Canada and Australia, Chinese communities in New Zealand are smaller in size and shorter in history (Inglis, 2011; Li & Li, 2011). However, in the past decade, the fast

growing Chinese population in New Zealand contributes to the boom of Chinese communities. Auckland, the largest city in New Zealand, has been the destination of over a half of new Chinese migrants (Friesen, 2008; New Zealand Department of Labour, 2011). According to the Census of 2006, the latest available at the time of my research, the population of overseas-born Chinese in Auckland was approximately 54,000, more than 90 per cent of whom arrived after the late 1980s.

Given the significant proportion of Chinese migrants in Auckland, studies of Chinese communities have occupied an important part of migrant research in New Zealand (Friesen & Ip, 1997; M. Ip, 1996, 2003; M. Ip & Friesen, 2001; M. Ip & Pang, 2005; Sun, 2006). In line with other overseas research, studies in Auckland suggest that the fast developing Chinese communities provide new migrants with "the familiar in a linguistic and cultural sense, as well as in terms of produces, services and food" (Cain, Meares, Spoonley, & Peace, 2011, p. 30; Sales, D'Angelo, & Lin, 2009). As such, *'Chinese community'* in this study is defined in a broad sense: it includes businesses, Chinese-language media, community services, community groups and cultural activities (Bedford & Ho, 2008; Fennema, 2004; Friesen, 2008). However, to what extent ethnic communities contribute to the social adjustment and quality of life of elderly migrants requires further research in the New Zealand context.

The social rights of migrants in New Zealand are generally based on their residence status and needs. Having permanent residency enables migrants to enjoy equal rights as citizens, including public health care services and other civic rights.

Elderly migrants may also be entitled to various age-related forms of domestic and financial support, including superannuation, as long as they meet the residence requirements. Compared to many other countries such as Canada, the New Zealand government has relatively low residence requirements for elderly migrants to eligible for social benefits.[1] The pragmatic advantages of migrating to New Zealand attract elderly Chinese migrants but also trigger heated debate about the possible burden they impose on New Zealand's welfare system (Bennett, 2012; Tan, 2013). So far, in New Zealand, as well as many other countries, limited literature has discussed the importance of government support to elderly migrants. It is therefore imperative to explore whether and to what extent government support contributes to the elderly migrants' quality of life, especially those who arrived recently.

The relationship between family and government support is becoming more complex within an era of transnationalism. For many people, migration is no longer a one-off up-rooting event (Levitt & Glick Schiller, 2004), and migrant life is not necessarily confined to one nation. In New Zealand, transnationalism has been found to be a salient feature of new Chinese migrants (Ip, 2011, p. 31). Young family members, in particular, show strong interest in moving to a third country (usually Australia) or returning to China for better career opportunities (L. S. Liu, 2010). This transnational mobility changes the traditional dynamics within migrant families

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[1] Taking old age pensions for example, in New Zealand, the recipient of the universal superannuation needs to be aged 65 years and over, and have lived in New Zealand for at least ten years, five of which must have been since he/she turned 50. In Canada, to be eligible for a full Old Age Security pension, a person must have resided in Canada for at least 40 years after reaching age 18 years (Chappell, Gee, McDonald, & Stones, 2003, p. 384). Details will be discussed in Chapter Five.

regarding intergenerational support.

'Transnational migrants' is a term usually used to refer to those who travel frequently between two or more places where they have economic, social and cultural linkages (Castles & Miller, 2009). Elderly people are largely overlooked in transnational research based on the assumption that they are less mobile than their younger counterparts (K. Li, 2009, p. 88; Torres, 2013). However, by facilitating travel and electronic communication across national borders, technological developments have enabled all migrants to maintain and/or expand their transnational social networks in both real and virtual spaces (Heisler, 2008, pp. 91-92). Making transnational connections with home countries has become part of the daily life of many migrants, even the elderly (Heikkinen & Lumme-Sandt, 2013; Meares et al., 2010). Therefore, transnational practices should be understood in a broader sense, comprising not only the physical border-crossing activities for economic and social benefits, but also the virtual ties for emotional and informational support.

Based on this broader conception of transnationalism, a growing body of research has focused on the transnational participation of elderly migrants, as well as how transnationalism influences the care they receive. Engaging in transnational practices helps to satisfy the emotional needs of elderly migrants, which subsequently contributes to their life satisfaction (K. Li, 2009). It seems that the current trend of transnationalism has changed the scenario of elderly migrants' post-migration life, as well as of their social support (Baldassar et al., 2007). Transnationalism offers both

challenges and opportunities for families, communities and governments to redefine their obligations to provide ageing care. Therefore, systematic research is required to focus on the transnational participation of elderly migrants and how their quality of life is shaped by the various forms of support in a transnational context.

The studies mentioned above establish the close relationship between social support and quality of life, yet little research has so far been done to explore fully the interaction between social support and the quality of life of elderly Chinese migrants living in New Zealand. Although the size of this cohort has increased steadily in recent years, few systematic studies have been conducted on their need for social support in their daily life.

Such a topic becomes even more complicated in the transnational context. On the one hand, transnationalism enables elderly migrants to establish social networks and access resources in both the home and host countries, enriching their social support and quality of life. On the other hand, living a transnational life may also weaken their ties in both countries, challenging the quality of social support. Given the prominent transnational mobility of Chinese migrants in New Zealand (M. Ip, 2011), this country can be considered as an optimal social laboratory to study the impact of transnationalism on social support and the quality of life of elderly Chinese migrants. By situating the topic within a transnational context, this research is able to push the theoretical boundaries of understanding the social support needs of elderly migrants beyond the "national container" (Wimmer & Glick Schiller, 2002), and

provide a vantage point to examine the relationship between social support and quality of life in a highly mobile and diverse society.

1.2 The History of Chinese Migration to New Zealand

The history of Chinese migrants in New Zealand can be traced back to the 19th century. The earliest of these migrants came to New Zealand in the mid-1860s during the gold rush and left after a relatively short period of time. Since the 1890s, some former gold-miners became shopkeepers or gardeners and took up permanent residence (Ng, 2003). Due to restrictive immigration policies and racial discrimination, the number of Chinese migrants remained stable and small until the Immigration Act 1987 liberalized migration policies (Henderson, 2003; Ng, 1999).

The Immigration Act 1987 enacted a non-discriminatory approach to immigration. Prospective immigrants were to be chosen solely on the basis of individual characteristics measured by educational level, age, occupation, work experience and ability to bring investment capital into the country. The revised immigration policy allowed the immigration of highly educated and skilled young individuals from non-traditional sources countries like China (Bedford et al., 1998; M. Ip, 1996). In addition, New Zealand's green environment, sound educational facilities and relatively generous social welfare system also attracted many Chinese migrants. Compared to the older generations of Chinese settlers in New Zealand, the new Chinese migrants presented different migration patterns and categories, settlement strategies, educational background, and employment status (L. S. Liu, 2010).

Between 1986 and 2013, the number of New Zealand's residents born in China increased from 4,944 to 89,121 (see Table 1.1). In 2006, 1.9 per cent of New Zealand's total population was born in mainland China, a proportion higher than in any other Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) country (Collins, 2011). The latest released results of Census 2013[2] show that China ranks as the second country of origin for immigrants after the United Kingdom which has been the largest stable source country throughout the twentieth century.

Table 1. 1：New Zealand Residents Born in China (PRC)[3], 1986-2013

Year	1986	1991	1996	2001	2006	2013
Born in China	4,944	9,222	19,521	38,949	78,114	89,121
Total Population	3,307,084	3,434,950	3,681,546	3,820,749	4,143,279	4,242,048
%	0.149	0.268	0.530	1.019	1.885	2.101

Source: Statistics New Zealand, 2013 Census QuickStats about National Highlights; 2006 Census of Population and Dwelling; 2001 Census: People Born Overseas; 1996 Census of Population and Dwelling.

Figure 1.1 and Table 1.2 are generated from Census data in 1996, 2001 and 2006, showing the age structure of China-born New Zealand residents. The highest percentage age groups are 15-45, corresponding with the high residence approval for young skilled migrants. The elderly group (aged 60 and over) accounted for 16.69 per cent of the overall Chinese population in New Zealand in 1996, 17.75 per cent in 2001 and 12.30 per cent in 2006. Although the proportion declined from 2001 to 2006,

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[2] The New Zealand census scheduled in 2011 was postponed due to the Christchurch earthquake. The latest census was conducted in 2013, and only some of data were released when this thesis was written.

[3] The population born in mainland China (the People's Republic of China), not the ethnic Chinese population, is cited in order to reflect the accretion of new Chinese migrants.

the actual numbers steadily increased.

Figure 1. 1: New Zealand Residents Born in China (PRC): By Age Group
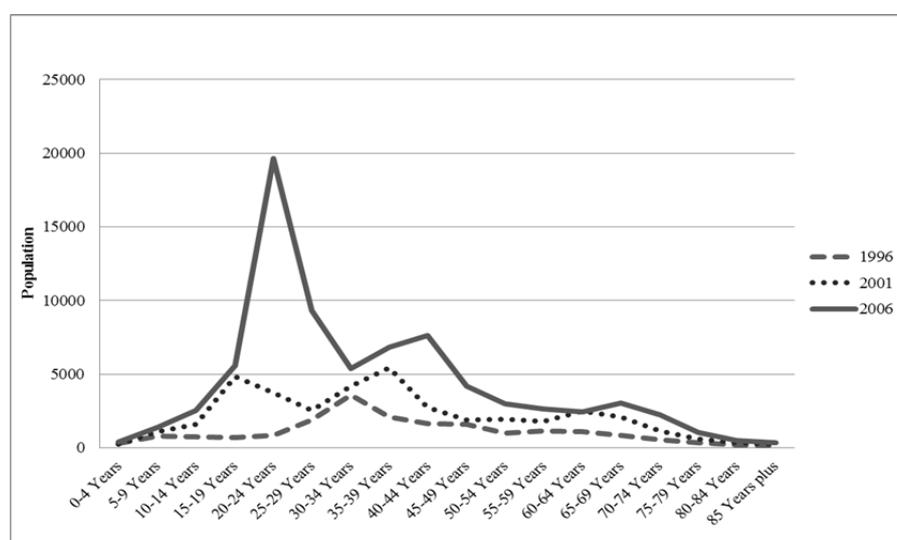
Source: New Zealand Census 1996, 2001, 2006

Table 1. 2: Age Structure of New Zealand Residents Born in China (PRC)

Year	Population number	% aged less than 15	% aged 15-59	% aged 60+
1996	19,521	9.22	74.04	16.69
2001	38,949	7.66	74.59	17.75
2006	78,114	5.54	82.16	12.30

Source: New Zealand Census 1996, 2001, 2006

In this thesis, the term '*elderly Chinese migrants*' refers to those new migrants aged over 60 who migrated from mainland China after the Immigration Act 1987. The vast majority of this cohort are the parents of young skilled migrants who arrived under the "Family Parent" category in the late 1990s and afterwards. New Zealand's "Family Parent" policy allows parents of New Zealand citizens or residents to apply for residency if they have no dependent children and all of their children live outside

the parent's home country. Because of China's 'one-child policy'[4], many young skilled migrants from large cities in mainland China are from 'one-child families', which easily enables their parents to qualify for family reunification under New Zealand's immigration legislation.

In contrast, a very small number of elderly Chinese migrants came to New Zealand for work reasons in the late 1980s in their middle age under the "Skilled Migrant" stream. Clear differences are found between the two groups of elderly migrants with regards to their demographic backgrounds, socio-economic status, and working and living experiences in New Zealand. These factors are also associated with their perceptions of social support and quality of life. In Chapters Four to Six, I make a comparison between the two groups, aiming to generate a holistic understanding of elderly Chinese migrants.

The number of Chinese "Family Parent" migrants in New Zealand has been growing continuously. Statistics derived from Department of Labour show that, over the past few years, China has been the largest source country of residence approvals through the "Family Parent" policy (see Table 1.3). The proportion of approvals to Chinese migrants has increased dramatically from 21 per cent in 2004/05 to 55 per cent in 2011/12.

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[4] The "one-child policy", officially the "family planning policy", was introduced by the Chinese government in 1979 to combat the country's over-population. It decreed that a couple should have only one child. But the policy has many exceptions. Some people, including ethnic minorities and couples who are both only children, are allowed to have more than one child. In November 2013, China further loosened the policy by allowing couples in which one member was an only child to have two children.

Table 1. 3: New Zealand Permanent Residence Approved through Parent Category: 2004/05 to 2011/12

Year	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
In Total	2,776	4,400	4,194	3,723	3,570	3,423	4,036	4,601
China	583	1,232	1,168	940	1,099	1,264	1,843	2,553
%	21%	28%	28%	25%	31%	37%	46%	55%
Ranking	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1

Source: New Zealand Department of Labour, Migration Trends and Outlook 2005/06-2011/12

The growth in the number of elderly Chinese migrants has sparked public debate about the pressure it exerts on the health care and superannuation systems in New Zealand. These concerns led to changes in July 2012 to the Family Parent policy (Immigration New Zealand, 2012b). The new policy increased requirements for financial resources of both young skilled migrants (the sponsors) and their parents. These changes were expected to slow the number of elderly migrants coming to New Zealand, and thus relieve the financial burden on the government.

Along with growing numbers, the diversity of elderly Chinese migrants also increased. This diversity encompassed not only their demographic and socio-economic backgrounds, but also their motivations for migration to New Zealand, which ranged from family obligations, economic considerations, to cultural norms regarding elder care. In many cases, elderly parents migrate to provide domestic support or childcare in their children's households. In addition, migrating for a more satisfying retirement lifestyle also became a common reason. This increased diversity means that the current knowledge of elderly migrants' quality of life needs to be updated in order to provide a more nuanced understanding of their need for support

and their perception of quality of life.

1.3 Key Terms: Quality of Life and Social Support

There is consensus among researchers that quality of life is a multidimensional and amorphous concept (Bowling, 2007; Ferriss, 2004; Walker, 2005a). The World Health Organization (1997) defines quality of life as an:

> individual's perception of their position in life in the context of
>
> the culture and value systems in which they live and in relation
>
> to their goals, expectations, standards and concerns. It is a
>
> broad ranging concept affected in a complex way by the
>
> person's physical health, psychological state, level of
>
> independence, social relationships, personal beliefs and their
>
> relationship to salient features of their environment (World
>
> Health Organization Quality of Life Group, 1997, p. 1).

This definition has largely been accepted by quality of life researchers (Bowling, 2007; Walker, 2005b). However, due to the complexity of the topic, empirical studies usually focus on a specific aspect or level of quality of life.

The current literature shows two clearly defined approaches to the study of quality of life – objective and subjective. The objective approach assesses quality of life by measuring a series of social indicators, including income, housing, health, education and social integration (Erikson, 1989). The overall quality of life, therefore,

is a sum of the scores of each indicator. However, the objective approach is criticized by many qualitative researchers for ignoring the experiences and perceptions of individuals. Many scholars argue that people's subjective well-being is not always positively associated with their objective living conditions (Myers, 2000; Walker, 2005a). In contrast to the objective perspective, the subjective approach asserts that an individual's quality of life should be evaluated by examining directly how a person feels about his or her life (Campbell, 1972; Fry, 2000).

Informed by the two different but interrelated perspectives, *quality of life* in this study refers to people's subjective evaluation of their overall life, as well as its components, such as health, socio-economic conditions, social support, while at the same time acknowledging that people's subjective perceptions are usually a reflection of objective situations. Further discussion about the definitions and theories of quality of life used in this study is provided in Chapter Two, while in Chapter Three I explain the methods adopted in this study to explore the concept of quality of life.

As with quality of life, social support is also a multifaceted concept which can be investigated from different perspectives. Studying *types* of social support is the most common approach adopted in the current literature. In doing so, scholars have identified various types of support which include practical, financial, informational and emotional support (Helgeson, 2003; Moriarty & Butt, 2004; Wong et al., 2005). Studying *social networks* provides another perspective through which to investigate social support (Fiori, Consedine, & Merz, 2011; Litwin, 1995). Social networks

describe the set of people with whom one maintains contact and has some form of bond (Bowling, 1991). Such networks are the source of potential social support. In addition, social support can also be understood as an *exchange* process. As Antonucci (1985, p. 25) points out, "the actual giving, receiving and exchange of support is commonly referred to as the function of social support". Support recipients and providers shift their roles during the support exchange. The support exchange approach highlights the dynamics of how support is provided and received among individuals, as well as people's perceptions of support during the exchange process.

In this study, my exploration of *social support* covers the above three perspectives – types, sources and exchange process. I categorize the social support of elderly Chinese migrants into four types, namely financial, practical, informational and emotional support. Family, community/government and transnational networks are identified as the main sources of their support. Analysing the types and sources of support enables me to chart the social support they receive in terms of its connections with their social networks. Simultaneously, by delving into the exchange process of support, I am able to illustrate the relationship between social support and quality of life and, in doing so, explain how social support influences elderly migrants' quality of life. Details of the existing literature on social support and social exchange theory are discussed in Chapter Two.

1.4 Research Objectives and Approaches

The primary aim of this research is to explore the relationship between social support

and the quality of life of elderly Chinese migrants in the New Zealand context. As defined in the previous section, social support is a multifaceted concept encompassing both the formal and the informal. Investigating social support requires a nuanced perspective which takes into account the types and sources of social support, as well as of the exchange process. What is more, quality of life depends largely on individual subjective perceptions. Therefore, how the perceptions of quality of life are influenced by the multifaceted nature of social support is at the core of this study.

Achieving my research aim and objectives involved a process of refinement. In the early stages of this study, I emphasised the informal social support gained from social networks developed by elderly migrants themselves. The reason for this emphasis arose from empirical findings from Europe, which indicated that migrants rely mainly on informal networks for support and that the use of formal resources or support provided by local government was extremely low (Hernández-Plaza, Alonso-Morillejo, & Pozo-Muñoz, 2006). However, the importance of the formal support provided by the New Zealand government to elderly Chinese migrants emerged during the collection of data. Consequently, I added another research objective to expand my research focus from informal support to both informal and formal support for elderly Chinese migrants in New Zealand.

Therefore, my specific research objectives are as follows:

1. To investigate the types of informal support (from families, ethnic communities and transnational networks) and formal support (from both the New Zealand and Chinese governments) that elderly Chinese migrants receive

in their post-migration life;

2. To analyse how important various types of social support are to the quality of life of elderly Chinese migrants;

3. To illustrate the exchange process, and to explore how support exchange influences perception of quality of life by elderly Chinese migrants.

As pointed out at the outset of this chapter, social support is also a lens through which other salient factors, such as migration policy and the social welfare system, can be analysed with regard to their relationships to quality of life. Migration research is usually location specific. Elderly migrants living in different countries face different challenges, engendering different needs for support. Individual factors – socio-economic status, migration status, gender, motivation and pre-migration expectations – also play important roles in shaping subjective perceptions of quality of life. Therefore, this thesis also seeks to address specific issues encountered by elderly Chinese migrants in the New Zealand context:

4. To understand the reasons and motivations for elderly Chinese to migrate and remain living in New Zealand; and how these reasons and motivations relate to their post-migration perceptions of quality of life;

5. To identify how personal factors, such as gender, socio-economic status and migration categories, shape their needs for support, and how such needs influence the migrants' evaluation of the importance of various types of support vis-à-vis their quality of life;

6. To explore the impact of location-specific situational factors in New Zealand, such as migration policy, social welfare system, and socio-cultural environment, on the availability of and accessibility to various social supports.

Although it is not listed as a research objective, this study also has policy implications for the New Zealand government and social agencies. By exploring the need for support by elderly Chinese migrants, the pattern of their usage of government services, and their perceptions of social support, the findings of this study could inform government interventions with regard to migrant populations.

During October 2011 and May 2012, I conducted 35 semi-structured, in-depth interviews with elderly Chinese migrants living in Auckland, the largest city in New Zealand. Auckland provides an appropriate venue for this research, as the growing Chinese population and the growing number of Chinese businesses have facilitated the establishment of new Chinese communities. Elderly Chinese migrants who live in well-established Chinese communities in Auckland are better able to provide rich information about the social support they receive from communities and the local government. In addition, the large Chinese population in Auckland eased the process of recruiting participants and provided me with more sampling options.

During the interviews, I asked specifically about the participants' migration process, their daily experiences, social relationships, and their perceptions of quality of life in New Zealand. The research design is discussed in detail in Chapter Three. Due to its qualitative nature, this study does not aim to, and neither is it able to, represent

overall the elderly Chinese population in New Zealand. For those who live in other regions of New Zealand, their living experiences and perceptions of social support could be different from my participants in Auckland.

Furthermore, I chose to interview elderly migrants who were living in communities and were healthy enough to participate in face-to-face interviews, rather than those living in residential care. This approach meant that most of my participants played a significant role in providing care to their families, rather than being major receivers of care. Existing research indicates that elderly migrants who live in institutions due to poor health or family circumstances may have different needs and perceptions of care and support (Chow, 2012; Hansen, 2013). Therefore, while my research findings reflect the situation of elderly Chinese migrants living in communities, the applicability of the arguments generated from this research need to be treated with caution when discussing other elderly Chinese migrant groups.

1.5 Overview of Chapters

This thesis consists of seven chapters. Following this introductory chapter, **Chapter Two** includes an extensive review of the current theoretical as well as empirical research on three areas – quality of life, social support and transnationalism. Based on the review, operational definitions of quality of life and social support are detailed with regard to elderly migrants. Specifically, I develop a theoretical framework to illustrate the connection between social support and quality of life in the transnational context.

Chapter Three details the methodological basis, as well as the specific methods, adopted in this research. Informed by the theoretical framework developed in Chapter Two, I discuss why a qualitative methodology was suitable for this study. I then provide a step by step description of how the interviews were designed, developed and conducted, together with an explanation of the rationale behind the procedures. Methodological issues delimiting the validity of qualitative data are then discussed and a reflective account provided.

Chapter Four is the first of the three results chapters. It focuses on the impact of family support on the quality of life of my participants. By tracing the trajectory of their migration and settlement process in New Zealand, I explain their migration motivations and decision-making processes, and argue that elderly migrants under different categories usually experience different processes of settlement, have different demands for support, and play different roles in their families. I also address the dynamics of family support between elderly migrant parents and their adult children, aiming to illustrate how intergenerational reciprocity influences perceptions of social support and quality of life.

Moving from family support, **Chapter Five** takes a broader perspective by discussing government and community support from both China and New Zealand and how my participants utilise this support to enhance their quality of life. The rationale for discussing government and community dimensions of support together in this chapter is to reinforce the argument that social support outside the family has

become increasingly important to the quality of life of elderly Chinese migrants in the transnational context. Formal support from governments and informal support from ethnic communities complement each other to help satisfy the overall needs of elderly migrants. In addition to qualitative interview data, this chapter also draws on statistics and policies relating to pensions, social benefits, and health care in both New Zealand and China in order to establish the connections between social welfare, migration at old age and quality of life.

Taking a transnational perspective, **Chapter Six** discusses the ways in which elderly Chinese migrants maintain their transnational connections and the types of support exchanged transnationally. In addition, I discuss the impact of new technology and the Internet on their transnational participation. This chapter indicates that many elderly Chinese migrants develop transnational lifestyles after they migrate to New Zealand, a process which brings both advantages and challenges to their quality of life.

Chapter Seven concludes the thesis by synthesising the findings from previous chapters and providing a discussion of the theoretical implications. I argue that enhancing the quality of life of elderly Chinese migrants is an ongoing process of optimising the multi-dimensional forms of social support and balancing the benefits and challenges of post-migration life. The chapter also discusses the empirical and theoretical contributions of the study, and provides policy implications and suggestions for future research on the quality of life of elderly migrants.

In the following chapter, I provide a critical review of the existing literature on quality of life and social support with specific focus on studies relating to elderly migrants. Based on the review, I develop the operational definitions and the theoretical framework used in the research.

Chapter Two: Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

As stated in the Introduction chapter, this thesis explores the relationship between social support and the quality of life of elderly Chinese migrants living in New Zealand. The theoretical framework for this research is based on theories from three areas, namely quality of life, social exchange, and transnationalism. Theories from the three areas serve different purposes in this research. By revisiting studies on quality of life, I construct a comprehensive conceptual framework for my study. As this research focuses not only on the content (types and sources) of support, but also the dynamics of how social support is provided and received, social exchange theory lies at the core of my theoretical framework. It is for this reason that theories on social exchange are critically reviewed in order to illustrate the relationship between social support and quality of life. The literature relating to transnationalism is also discussed in order to contextualise the discussion of elderly migrants' quality of life. This review covers both theoretical and empirical studies that have informed my research.

The chapter begins with a conceptual review of quality of life. Two research approaches in this area – objective and subjective – are identified and critically discussed. Given that my research aims to understand elderly migrants' perceptions of quality of life, I highlight the subjective perspective but the objective approach is also discussed whenever appropriate. A large body of empirical and theoretical literature

related to the quality of life of elderly people is reviewed, identifying social support as one of the most important dimensions of quality of life. In addition, the impact of social support on quality of life is not only determined by the quantity and quality of support, but also by the dynamics of the providing and receiving process. Therefore, in Section Two of this chapter, I discuss social exchange theory to illustrate the significance of support exchange in the relationship between social support and the quality of life of elderly migrants. In Section Three, I situate the current study on elderly migrants in the context of transnationalism. Perceived as less mobile than their younger counterparts, elderly migrants are often not conceived as leading transnational lives, but I argue that the quality of life of elderly migrants should be analysed using a transnational perspective. Indeed, putting quality of life theory and social exchange theory in a transnational context helps to provide a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of this topic.

2.1 Quality of Life: A Multidimensional Concept

Interest in 'quality of life' can be traced back to ancient philosophers who debated the nature of happiness, the good life and the good society (Chung, Killingworth, & Nolan, 1997). These early discussions proposed basic ideas for understanding and studying quality of life. These ideas included what a good life should be, and how people could lead it. In recent decades, researchers have increasingly realised that quality of life is both a multidimensional and amorphous concept (Walker, 2005a). Different approaches and focuses have been employed in quality of life research both empirically

and theoretically. In this section, I identify two lines of investigation in the study of quality of life – objective and subjective. Informed by the two different but interrelated perspectives, I establish the conceptual framework for this thesis, which focuses on my participants' subjective perceptions of their quality of life while acknowledging the connections between their objective and the subjective realities.

2.1.1 Objective Approach

The objective approach to studying quality of life originated in the 1960s. The theoretical assumption of this approach is that there are basic needs in society and that "satisfying these basic needs determines people's well-being" (Delhey, Böhnke, Habich, & Zapf, 2002, p. 168). Guided by this notion, scholars identified a series of social indicators to evaluate people's objective circumstances in a given cultural or geographic setting (Diener & Suh, 1997). These social indicators, including income, housing, health, education, employment, social integration and social support, were assumed to be important for a good life. Measuring these indicators was therefore considered to be a "scientific" way to show people's level of quality of life.

Since the 1970s, numerous studies on quality of life were conducted by analysing social indicators (Palys & Little, 1980). This objective approach relied upon quantitative statistics and the measurement of various social indicators; in doing so individuals' subjective experiences of their own lives were rendered irrelevant. As Erikson (1989, p. 77) claimed, "we … try to assess the individual's level of living in a

way which makes it as little influenced as possible by the individual's evaluation of his [*sic*] own situation"

Following this path, a myriad of studies focused on the relationship between several key objective indicators and quality of life. Wealth and income, for example, were considered important to people's quality of life (Campbell, 1981; Diener & Suh, 1997). In their influential study in the 1990s, Diener and Diener (1995) employed a set of indicators, including the number of physicians per capita, income equality and suicide rate, to reflect people's quality of life. Using the quantitative data derived from various indices, they established a correlation between wealth and quality of life, arguing that people living in wealthier countries tend to have higher quality of life. Findings from other comparative studies corroborated this argument, suggesting that being relatively well off predicts higher quality of life, especially in poor countries (Myers, 2000; Ouweneel & Veenhoven, 1991).

As discussed by Diener and Suh (1997), the objective approach to studying quality of life has its strengths. Generally speaking, social indicators can be relatively easily defined and quantified. They are also able to be measured precisely. Given the technical convenience, the objective approach to studying quality of life is widely employed by scholars to make comparisons across countries, regions, population groups, and time. As a result, this research approach contributes to the refinement of social policies and practices.

However, as Daatland (2005) cogently points out, targeting the presupposed

components of a good life is only an indirect approach to studying quality of life. In fact, the approach does not focus on the quality of life *per se*, but only on the components, or some specific aspects of quality of life. As such, the concept of quality of life is sometimes confounded with its determinants. Quality of life research thus tends to slip into a paternalistically imposed framework about what the good life is and should be. Moreover, Higgs et al. (2003) comment that the objective approach leads to another major weakness in this area of research – the absence of any coherent theoretical underpinning, which means that our knowledge of quality of life is fragmented. It is with these shortcomings in mind that some researchers have suggested that more attention should be paid to the subjective aspects of quality of life.

2.1.2 Subjective Approach

In contrast to the objective approach to the study of quality of life, the subjective approach focuses on an individuals' personal experience and perceptions of their own life. The rationale behind this approach is that quality of life can be defined by people's conscious experiences – in terms of feelings or cognitive satisfactions (Diener & Suh, 1997). Thus, it is important to directly examine how a person feels about his or her life as a whole, as well as in specific domains. As Campbell (1972, p. 442) says, "the quality of life must be in the eye of the beholder". The importance of researching subjective quality of life has gained momentum recently as a growing number of countries have focused on issues of quality of life instead of simply on economic survival (Inglehart, 1997). Therefore, some scholars have shifted their focus

from objective social indicators to subjective well-being.

Subjective quality of life is based on the model of subjective well-being defined as individuals' cognitive and affective reactions to their whole life, as well as to specific domains of it (Diener & Suh, 1997). Veenhoven (2008) argues that people evaluate their overall quality of life by drawing on two sources of information: affective appraisal of how one feels most of the time (hedonic level of affect) and cognitive comparison with standards of the good life (contentment).

The above definitions suggest that subjective well-being covers two aspects – affective/emotional appraisal and cognitive/rational evaluation of one's life. The affective aspect refers to the sum of pleasure and pain. A high level of subjective well-being includes both the presence of positive affect and the absence of negative emotions (Diener, Suh, & Oishi, 1997). Some scholars argue that people's affective appraisals play a dominant role in assessing their quality of life (N. Schwarz & Strack, 1991), while others point out that an individual's personality and optimistic/pessimistic perspectives are also stable determinants of a subjective quality of life (Diener & Suh, 1997, p. 202; Sirgy, 2012).

The cognitive aspect refers to rational evaluations of how satisfied one feels with life as a whole or with different domains of life, for instance, family, friends, income and work. The rational evaluations are based on a theoretical conception that quality of life is socially constructed; people share notions about the good life (Veenhoven, 2008). Hence, evaluating quality of life is a result of comparisons

between life-as-it-is and how life-should-be. People compare what they have with what they believe they should have, and what others have. The smaller these discrepancies are, the higher the subjective quality of life is assumed to be (Michalos, 1985). In addition, people's perceptions of their quality of life is also a "reflected appraisal" (Veenhoven, 2008, p. 48). People tend to feel positive about their own life when they are viewed by others as being well off, and negative when they are seen as 'losers' (Veenhoven, 2008).

Numerous empirical studies have demonstrated the impact of social comparisons on people's quality of life. For instance, research shows that due to their comparatively low expectations, elderly people can perceive a higher quality of life than the young who usually expect more from life (Campbell et al., 1976; Tsang et al., 2004). It has also been found that elderly people tend to make downward comparisons between themselves and others who are worse off. Such a 'strategy' helps to maintain their well-being (Bowling, 2005a, p. 217; Ryff, 1999).

These two different but related aspects – affective/emotional appraisal and cognitive/rational evaluation – explain how people assess their quality of life. Different from using the objective indicators to measure quality of life, the subjective approach denotes not only "*how* one feels about *what*", but also "*why* one feels so" (Veenhoven, 2008, p. 46). Hence, an individual's quality of life is not only a reflection of his/her objective living circumstances, but is also determined by his/her social participation and interpersonal interactions.

2.1.3 The Subjective Critique

Studies taking a subjective research approach have increasingly challenged the strictly objective angle. The subjective approach argues that quality of life is not a direct reflection of income (Diener, Sandvik, Seidlitz, & Diener, 1993), physician-related health (Okun & George, 1984), and intelligence (Campbell et al., 1976). A qualitative study conducted in Bangladesh, for instance, shows that people can subjectively perceive that their quality of life as high even though the objective/material living conditions in the country are generally low (Camfield, Choudhury, & Devine, 2009). When people perceive their socio-economic status as equal with or better than others in the same community, they report a high level of quality of life. Therefore, the relationship between quality of life and objective indicators such as income is not as straightforward as it might seem to be. The main point here is not to suggest that income is irrelevant to quality of life, but to emphasise the salience of people's subjective evaluation, which can be more helpful in understanding quality of life than objective measurements. A Canadian study shows that over 75 per cent of elderly people report having at least one chronic condition, and approximately one-third suffer from some functional disabilities. However, their subjective perceptions of their physical health, as well as their overall quality of life, do not decline with age. They even report a higher level of feeling meaningful than do young people (Chappell et al., 2003, pp. 252-254).

Other scholars have also pointed out that one major limitation of studying

quality of life using social indicators is that these indicators may not accurately reflect people's experience of well-being (Andrews & Withey, 1976; Campbell et al., 1976). Although there is widespread agreement about the meaning and value of social indicators, it is difficult to determine to what extent an indicator impacts the quality of life of an individual. As discussed earlier, being rich or poor can be a relative and subjective concept depending on people's living circumstances and surroundings, and how people evaluate them. People who are very rich are not much happier than people with average, or even low incomes (Myers, 2000). Based on his studies on the quality of life of elderly people, Walker (2005a, p. 4) points out an "apparent paradox" between the positive subjective evaluations expressed by so many older people and their objectively adverse living conditions including poverty and poor housing. Therefore, adopting an objective approach makes it difficult to illustrate comprehensively the interactions between indicators and how these interactions influence people's quality of life.

The objective approach also overlooks the continuum of quality of life. Using selected indicators, the objective approach assesses each aspect of quality of life at a certain period of time. These scores are then totalled to present an overall quality of life. However, as Veenhoven (2000, 2007) argues, people's overall quality of life is not a simple mathematical calculation. Their satisfaction with each component of life does not necessarily tally with overall happiness. The linear sum-score method fails to chart the functional relationships between the different aspects of quality of life. On the contrary, the subjective approach usually uses qualitative methods targeting the

ongoing experience of one's life as a whole. Although people may specifically evaluate each aspect of their life, these aspects are relatively consistent across time and interrelated with each other (Argyle, Martin, & Crossland, 1989; Chappell, 2007). Therefore, the subjective approach inherently enables a better understanding of quality of life as a whole, as well as of the interrelationships between the different aspects of quality of life.

Finally, the subjective approach is primarily concerned with the respondents' own internal judgement of their quality of life, rather than what policy makers, academics, or others consider important (Daatland, 2005; Diener & Suh, 1997). In recent years, some international projects have been conducted to find out what quality of life means to older people themselves, and what factors are related to their perception of quality of life (Mollenkopf & Walker, 2007; Ring, Gross, & McColl, 2010; Walker, 2005c). The importance of avoiding such 'professional centrism' in research will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Three.

Although there has been considerable critique of the objective approach, it is important to point out that focusing on people's perceptions and experiences of their own life does not mean that quality of life can be regarded as a purely subjective matter (Walker, 2005a). Based on this notion, this research focuses on the subjective approach but I acknowledge that subjective perceptions of quality of life are usually a reflection of objective situations.

2.1.4 What Is Important to Whom in the Evaluation of Quality of Life?

As explained in the previous section, the objective approach to studying quality of life mainly uses social indicators (e.g. income, health, education, employment, etc.) to measure people's living conditions and life quality without considering the individual's own experience. However, as some scholars have argued, the evaluation of quality of life only makes sense via people's own experience and perceptions. The individual's voice should be added to the process of exploring the factors that are important to their quality of life, and how they evaluate and perceive those factors. As Delhey et al. (2002) state, objective living conditions and subjective evaluations of personal life circumstances are just two sides of the same coin.

Many researchers now argue that any comprehensive investigation of quality of life must comprise both societal/objective and personal/subjective elements, as well as the interactions between the two (Bowling, 2005a; Cummins, 2005; Walker, 2005b). The former includes health, income, housing, social support, and other living and environmental circumstances, and the later includes an individual's experiences and values in regard to these aspects, and their perceptions of overall quality of life. Each component of quality of life can also influence the others (Bowling, 2005b). Based on these notions, quality of life in this study refers to people's subjective evaluation of their overall life, as well as its societal/objective components, such as health, socio-economic conditions and social support.

Given the complexity of the concept of quality of life, it is impossible to study the topic exhaustively. Therefore, most empirical studies choose to focus on one or several major aspects, contributing in this way to an overall understanding of quality of life. Studying the key components of quality of life is thus believed to be the most feasible approach to understand this multifaceted topic (Cummins, 2005; Schalock, 1996).

However, some scholars point out that the various components impact the overall quality of life in different ways, at different levels, and to different degrees (Brown, Renwick, & Nagler, 1996; Cummins, 2005). Brown, et al. (1996, pp. 10-11) argue that:

> Quality of life is a multidimensional construct… The basic
> components of quality of life are those things that are common
> to all people and that constitute the human condition…
> [However], the meaning attached to quality will differ to
> varying degrees from one person to another, because
> individuals attach differing relative importance to the basic
> components of quality of life and have differing opportunities
> and constraints within their lives.

Cummins (2005) proposes that the components of quality of life range from the general to the specific. According to him, the general components are core, essential, and fundamental build-blocks of the overall quality of life that are common to all

individuals irrespective of their culture and socio-economic status, such as individual health. In contrast, specific components, such as friendships, may only be important to the quality of life of some people. Many empirical studies have supported Cummins' (2005) argument that people evaluate the components of quality of life differently. Certain factors are found to be more crucial or to have more meaning to some people than to others. For instance, many elderly people find social contacts are important to their quality of life (Farquhar, 1995), and they tend to view health as more important than wealth (Higgs et al., 2005). Other studies also reveal that family and community support is more important to ethnic minorities than to majorities (Bajekal et al., 2004; Chappell, 2007; Remennick, 2003). These studies suggest that the same components are assigned different meanings and values by different groups of people. This notion shows that evaluation and perception play an important role in quality of life, thus establishing the significance of studying quality of life through the subjective approach.

A variety of reasons contribute to the differences in peoples' evaluation of specific components of the quality of life. For instance, people's perceptions are largely shaped by culture and circumstance. Uchida et al. (2004) compared the empirical findings from a Western cultural context (i.e. European, American) and from the context of East Asia, and found that people from different cultural backgrounds have different perceptions of what is important to their quality of life. In the European-American context, perceptions of happiness and quality of life are associated with personal achievement, while in the East Asian context, people's

happiness depends much more on the realisation of positive social relationships "of which the self is part" (Uchida et al., 2004, p. 226). Therefore, it is impossible and unreasonable to design a universally applicable framework to measure the quality of life of people from different cultural and social contexts.

Based on the above analysis, I argue that the quality of life of elderly Chinese migrants ought to be investigated within the migration context. The change of cultural and societal living circumstances caused by migration could have a critical impact on elderly migrants' perception of their quality of life. Using the subjective approach to studying the quality of life helps to establish the connection between migration experiences and migrants' evaluation of their overall quality of life. In addition, by taking cultural and societal circumstances into consideration, I am able to provide a nuanced understanding of why some components, such as social support, are perceived as more important than others. As such, the following section focuses on the relationship between social support and quality of life.

2.2 Social Support and Exchange Theory

This section reviews both empirical and theoretical literature related to social support. In order to establish the significance of social support as a key component in the quality of life of elderly migrants, the first part focuses on the relationship between social support and quality of life. Social support is a multifaceted concept which can be investigated from a variety of angles and perspectives. By synthesising the existing definitions, my study treats social support as not only a static resource but also a

dynamic exchange process. Therefore, support exchange – also known as reciprocal support – is discussed in detail (Antonucci, 1985; Gouldner, 1960; Uehara, 1995). By employing social exchange theory, the dynamics of support exchange are discussed and their importance to an individuals' quality of life highlighted. The support exchange of elderly people in the migration context is given specific attention. Exchange theory is also revisited at a macro level, suggesting that social exchanges can also occur between migrant individuals and the host country, including the government, communities and other social agencies.

2.2.1 Social Support: A Key Component of Quality of Life

The literature about elderly people's social support has dealt with both the strength and size of their social networks, as well as with the complexity of the establishment and maintenance of relationships (e.g. Finch, 1989; Finch & Mason, 1993; Wenger, 1984). The close connection between social support and quality of life has long been established in the existing literature (Furnham & Shiekh, 1993; Gallicchio, Hoffman, & Helzlsouer, 2007; Helgeson, 2003). Moriarty and Butt (2004) summarize the two main arguments in regard to how social support contributes to quality of life. The first takes a psychological perspective, suggesting that social support only contributes to quality of life by alleviating negative impacts on people during stressful experiences (Cohen & Willis, 1985; Gottlieb, 1985). The second argument proposes that social support has a direct effect on quality of life by increasing the sense of well-being and reducing vulnerability, so that the more social support individuals have, the better

their quality of life (Helgeson, 2003).

More recently, empirical studies on elderly people suggest that social support is one of the most influential factors in their quality of life. Bowling and her colleagues conduced a project in the United Kingdom, exploring elderly people's subjective perception of quality of life (Bowling, 2005a; Gabriel & Bowling, 2004). They found that having good relationships with children, family, friends and neighbours, and having well-defined social roles and activities were the most frequently mentioned by the elderly participants as key factors to a good quality of life. Studies conducted in other places, such as Australia, Japan and Canada, also corroborate the argument that social support is a key component of elderly people's quality of life (Chappell, 2003; Gallicchio et al., 2007; Tsang et al., 2004; Walker, 2005a).

For elderly migrants, social support is believed to be even more important to their quality of life. Empirical findings suggest that elderly migrants are more likely to experience disadvantages in terms of socio-economic conditions compared to non-migrants. Hence, strong support is needed from family and communities to compensate for their socio-economic disadvantages and enhance their quality of life (Bajekal et al., 2004; Chappell, 2007; Chappell & Kusch, 2007). Tangible and emotional support provided by family members is important for elderly migrants to cope with language and cultural difficulties after moving to a new environment (Pyke, 2004). Social networks established in ethnic communities also help them to combat

loneliness and adjust more rapidly to new surroundings (Chappell, 2005; Remennick, 2003; Tsang et al., 2004). Informed by these findings, I have chosen social support as the major perspective through which to explore the quality of life of elderly Chinese migrants living in New Zealand.

As with quality of life, social support is also a concept requiring both objective and subjective interpretation. According to Vaux (1988, p. 17), "Social support phenomena involve both objective and inherently subjective elements: both actual events and activities and the participants' perceptions and appraisal of these. Both must be addressed for a complete understanding of social support".

In terms of the objective aspects of social support, many scholars focus on the content of support. Studying types of social support is the most common approach used in the research literature. Finch (1989), for example, identified five types of support in the family context, namely economic support, emotional and moral support, accommodation, practical support, and personal care. Many other scholars (Antonucci & Ajrouch, 2007; Helgeson, 2003; Moriarty & Butt, 2004; Wong et al., 2005) categorize support as emotional (affection from others, sharing feelings and a general sense of belonging), instrumental (tangible and material assistance, such as financial help), and informational (knowledge or advice provided by others).

Apart from the types of support, studying social networks provides another lens through which to explore social support. Lin et al. (1979, p. 109) state that "… social support may be defined as support accessible to an individual through social

ties to other individuals, groups, and the larger community". In other words, social

networks provide the possibility for individuals to receive support when they are in

need. Quantitative measures are usually employed to examine the size of an

individual's social network in his or her social environment. A positive correlation is

then established between network size and the social support available (Fiori et al.,

2011; Litwin, 1995).

The above two aspects – types of social support and sources of potential

support (social networks) – are usually studied as objective indicators to show

individual's accessibility to social support. However, these two perspectives barely

reveal people's subjective perceptions of social support. As Hupcey (1998, p. 1234)

points out, "perceptions… are extremely influential in determining the satisfaction

with and the outcome of the support". Antonucci (1985) also notes that the

circumstances requiring social support, the levels and types of support, and the

satisfaction with the support received are closely related to and influenced by an

individual's subjective perception. "These perceptions are based not only on what the

recipient feels is needed versus what is actually given, but also on what the provider

perceives is needed by the recipient" (Hupcey, 1998, p. 1238). These two sets of

perceptions reveal that social support is a dynamic process relating to the subjective

perceptions of both the support providers and the recipients. As such, some scholars

take a step further in order to explore the dynamic interactions between the two

parties involved in the process. As Antonucci (1985, p. 25) points out, "the actual

giving, receiving and exchange of support is commonly referred to as the function of

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social support". According to this notion, social support is not merely a static resource, but a dynamic process significantly depending on the interaction between individuals.

Based on the above discussion, I propose that the study of the social support of elderly migrants should encompass not only the types and sources of support, but more importantly, the dynamics in the support exchange process as well. Analysing the types and sources of support allows this research to chart the received social support of this cohort in terms of its connections with their social networks. Meanwhile, the dynamics of receiving and providing support helps to illustrate how support exchange contributes to elderly migrants' quality of life. In the following pages, I provide a detailed discussion of social exchange theory, which is a major component of my theoretical framework.

2.2.2 Social Exchange Theory

Both the theoretical and empirical literature on social support incorporates the concepts of exchange and reciprocity. From a theoretical perspective, social support refers not only to the objective resource people receive from others, but also the dynamic exchange process encompassing people's perception about the support provided and received. This section starts with a historical introduction of social exchange theory, and then moves on to a critical review of the main arguments and concepts regarding social exchange. The major discussion focuses on how social relationships are developed during exchange, and simultaneously how these social

relationships re-shape exchange behaviour. By doing so, I develop an explanatory framework to investigate the relationship between social support and quality of life. I argue that people's perception of their quality of life is significantly influenced by social support exchange.

Social exchange theory was introduced by George Homans in 1958, focusing on the behaviour of individuals when interacting with one another. His argument rests upon a belief that individuals are 'economic men' [*sic*] – individuals are dependent on each other for valued resources. Homans (1958) argued that the primary motive for people to engage in exchange is to maximize self-interest, leading them to calculate what has been received and what needs to be given in return. As Mitchell, Cropanzano and Quisenberry (2012) argue, the traditional view of social exchange is embedded in economic rationality, and resources are exchanged for both pleasure and profit.

Homans' (1958) view of exchange has been criticized mainly because it ignores the importance of interpersonal interactions. Individuals are treated "as if they are interacting in a context-free environment, without regard to the larger social and relational meanings of their interactions" (Mitchell et al., 2012, p. 101). In addition, human practices are not always driven by self-interest. Instead, they can be motivated by altruism, especially in close relationships. In this regards, some scholars, such as Gouldner (1960), Blau (1964) and Uehara (1995), further developed social exchange theory by exploring how social relationships are established during exchange, and how these relationships re-shape people's exchange behaviour.

According to Gouldner (1960), reciprocity is one means by which close relationships develop. The norm of reciprocity stipulates that people should help those who had helped them, and that those whom they had helped had an obligation to help them. Gouldner (1960, p. 170) argued that reciprocity was more than "a pattern of exchange", but "a generalized moral norm" which defined certain actions and obligations as repayment for benefits received. In this respect, the norm of reciprocity is a concrete and special mechanism involved in the maintenance of any stable social system.

Gouldner (1960) also argued that the motive for exchange was based on a mutual concern − each party should have a balance of gains and costs. Self-interest was thus viewed as a risky factor which could result in exploitation and imbalanced exchange, and consequently damage the exchange relationship. Therefore, the mutual reciprocity norm leads individuals to establish relations only or primarily with those who have the ability to maintain equivalent exchange. This is why he believed that the norm of reciprocity cannot be fully applied in the context of children or old people, due to their lack of ability to provide reciprocal support. A critique of this argument will be discussed later.

Uehara (1995) points out that Gouldner's (1960) theory, especially the distinction he makes between *reciprocity as a pattern of exchange* and *reciprocity as a general moral norm*, provides valuable insights for the understanding of social support exchange. The two interlocking constructs of reciprocity explain why and

how people establish interpersonal relationships and exchange support.

Blau (1964) extended insight into the connection between social exchange and interpersonal interaction. He identified two different types of exchange relationships – social exchange relationships and economic exchange relationships. The basic and most crucial distinction between the two is that "social exchange entails unspecified obligations" (Blau, 1964, p. 93). Compared with those in economic exchange relationships, individuals engaged in social exchanges usually have stronger interpersonal attachments and trust, and therefore, demand less immediate payback. Mutual and reciprocal exchanges help to strengthen the relationship between the exchange parties, which subsequently produces more beneficial practices.

Informed by Blau's (1964) theory, Molm and her colleagues (Molm, 2003; Molm, Peterson, & Takahashi, 1999; Molm, Schaefer, & Collett, 2009) identified two forms of exchange relationships: negotiated and reciprocal relations. Negotiated exchange relations are based on bargained and binding arrangements, wherein both parties agree upon the terms of a discrete, bilateral transaction. Most economic exchange relationships defined by Blau (1964) fit this category. Some social exchange relationships, such as relationships in a family setting, may also involve negotiated exchange. For example, family members might negotiate the division of domestic tasks or family obligations.

Reciprocal exchanges, in contrast, are non-negotiated and voluntary without specific assigned arrangements in terms of what is exchanged or the time by which

the exchange should occur. Molm and her colleagues (2009, p. 1) points out that "contracts and formal agreements govern transactions in market exchanges; trust and reciprocity norms govern reciprocal exchanges in social embedded relations". At the same time, reciprocal exchanges help to generate "stronger engendered trust and affective commitment among the parties involved" (Molm et al., 2009, p. 1). As such, reciprocal exchanges characterize the vast majority of exchanges among family and friends.

Such a distinction between the two types of exchange relationships – the economic/negotiated and the social/reciprocal – provides a further understanding of how reciprocity or exchange works in different interpersonal relationships and how, in turn, the exchange practices influence those relationships. Blau (1964) and Molm et al.'s (2009) work demonstrates that the dynamics of achieving balanced or equivalent reciprocity vary in different types of relationships and/or circumstances.

The most obvious and typical approach to achieving balanced/equivalent reciprocity is to exchange things that are concretely alike or identical in form under similar circumstances – what is termed "homeomorphic reciprocity" by Gouldner (1960, p. 172). This form of reciprocity usually happens in economic exchange relationships (using Blau's term) or negotiated exchange relationships (using Molm's term), in which people's emotional attachment or trust is not very strong. Thus, they need immediate and direct reciprocity to maintain a sense of balance. Although homeomorphic reciprocity is believed to be rare in strong social relations (Gouldner,

1960), some studies have found that homeomorphic reciprocity can be found in the same generation in a family – for instance, money is borrowed and repaid between siblings, and women family members look after children for each other (Finch & Mason, 1993, p. 40).

Compared with "homeomorphic reciprocity", another form of balanced reciprocity – "heteromorphic reciprocity" – is more commonly found in interpersonal interactions (Gouldner, 1960, p. 172). Heteromorphic reciprocity occurs when the things exchanged are concretely different but 'equal' in value, as defined by the actors in the situation. For example, in a family setting, children would provide practical support in return for the money they receive from their parents, such an exchange can be considered as balanced reciprocity (Finch & Mason, 1993). This reveals that when different types of support are exchanged, the value of support is usually subjectively perceived and assessed depending on circumstances. The value of emotional and practical support, in particular, cannot be measured on a universal scale. The way in which 'balance' is calculated does not rely solely on the material value of the goods and services exchanged. In many cases, symbolic value is more important than material value (Finch & Mason, 1993, pp. 36-37). Hence, the meaning of 'balanced/imbalanced', 'equitable/inequitable' social support exchange is best described as constructed rather than calculated (Berger & Luckmann, 1967; Uehara, 1995).

Another issue relating to balanced reciprocity is whether the exchange occurs

immediately or directly. Gouldner (1960) argued that reciprocity could not apply to children or old people who did not have enough power or ability to return the support they received. However, many studies have found that reciprocity does exist in parent-child relationships (Antonucci & Jackson, 1990). Some have shown that reciprocity in a family context, especially between parent and child, is a long-term, ongoing and two-way process (Antonucci & Jackson, 1990; Finch & Mason, 1993). By using the concept "support bank", Antonucci and Jackson (1990, p. 178) explain that in some relationships individuals take a long-term developmental view of their social exchanges, interactions, and relationships. In other words, they maintain an ongoing account of the amount of support or variety of benefits they have given to and received from others. This suggests that reciprocity is not always accomplished immediately. The high level of trust in some close relationships allows reciprocal exchange to be achieved over a long scale of time.

Moreover, reciprocity may involve more than two parties. People can reciprocate with someone other than the original benefactor (Ekeh, 1974; Finch & Mason, 1993). For example, in a family setting, grandparents may 'return' their adult children's practical help by sending gifts or money to their grandchildren. As Uehara (1995, p. 487) argues, the meeting of reciprocal obligations depends upon the specific norms associated with specific social relationships and the networks within which these relationships are embedded. Therefore, analysis should not assume that the timing, focus, or form of reciprocity is the same for all people and all relationships.

Reciprocity is significant not only to the stability of social relationships, but also to people's well-being. Maintaining balanced reciprocity contributes positively to an individual's well-being and quality of life (Antonucci & Ajrouch, 2007; Kim, Hisata, Kai, & Lee, 2000), while imbalanced reciprocity, as Walster et al. (1978) point out, could cause distress, and lower an individual's satisfaction with the relationship. Studies show that when people receive less support than they provide, they tend to feel burdened and frustrated (Davey & Eggebeen, 1998; Rook, 1987). On the other hand, receiving more support than they are able to give back can cause people to feel they are indebted to others. Such feelings will also have a negative impact on their well-being (Buunk & Schaufeli, 1999).

In addition, over the long-term receiving more support than that returned can impact the power relationships between the parties involved in the exchange – the recipient might feel dependent on the support provider, leading to a feeling of being dependent and subordinate (Finch & Mason, 1993, p. 58; Treas & Mazumdar, 2002). Lack of independence and autonomy is found to undermine people's well-being and quality of life (Bowling, 2005a). Empirical findings show that people tend to refuse to accept support when they have difficulty reciprocating the support (Shumaker & Brownell, 1984), or when the support would decrease their independence and autonomy (Kahn, 1994).

In contrast, having the ability to provide reciprocal exchange helps people enhance their well-being. First, providing reciprocal support to others fosters trust and

intimacy in social relationships; second, helping others in need can enhance an individual's psychological well-being by creating a feeling of self-fulfilment and validation; finally, as mentioned above, providing support is seen as an investment for future reciprocity (Kim et al., 2000; Krause, Herzog, & Baker, 1992). Due to these reasons, many scholars have asserted that experiencing reciprocity in exchange relationships is important to the quality of life of elderly people (Kim et al., 2000; B. Schwarz, Trommsdorff, Zheng, & Shi, 2010; Tsai & Dzorgbo, 2012; Walker, 2005c, p. 160).

The above discussion shows that social exchange theory provides a comprehensive framework for explaining how social support is provided, received, and exchanged, and how people perceive their social support and social relationships. The dynamics of exchange vary in different types of social relationships and under different circumstances. Maintaining balanced reciprocity is not only an ideal pattern of social exchange, but also a norm people use to adjust their exchange practices. Balanced reciprocity seems to have a critical impact on people's satisfaction with their social support and social relationships. Based on the critical review, I suggest that the study of the relationship between social support and quality of life should move beyond the level or the content of support by investigating the dynamic process of support exchange. Following this approach, the next section will focus on the social exchange of elderly people. Some migration studies will also be reviewed and discussed in order to establish an analytic framework for support exchange in the context of migration.

2.2.3 Exchange, Ageing and Migration

The literature indicates that social exchange theory has been employed in many recent studies in the sociology of ageing, particularly those focusing on intergenerational social support and transfers. Dowd (1975) developed and extended the social exchange theory specifically to investigate social relationships among the elderly. His notion of exchange was based on resources, power, and prestige. He argued that as people grow older, they start to lose control over their resources and power and eventually become economically and socially dependent. Such loss can be caused by several factors, including declining health and lack of knowledge caused by technological advances (Dowd, 1975). Because of the decreased power in exchange relationships, the elderly are more frequently in the position of receiving support from people, particularly younger people, who are in more powerful positions. As a result, elderly people are likely to experience imbalanced exchange relationships. This imbalance could simply lead to decreased interaction between generations because the exchange is more costly for the younger person. In such an imbalanced exchange, elderly people are more likely to become subordinate to their younger exchange partner, and to feel indebted (Finch & Mason, 1993; Treas & Mazumdar, 2002).

Antonucci and Jackson (1990) argue that the social exchange of elderly people should not be interpreted only in a contemporaneous framework. Instead, a long-term perspective is required to understand the support exchange of elderly people. According to their 'support bank' theory, people can make 'deposits' into their 'bank'

when their resources, power and prestige are at a maximum. As people grow old, the 'support bank' concept can be seen as a mechanism that provides people with resource deposits. Thus, even though elderly people may not later achieve balanced reciprocity, having support reserves will enable them to maintain psychological reciprocity. The life-span perspective of reciprocity seems to be critical to the well-being of elderly people, especially those whose need for support is high.

The 'support bank' concept echoes the filial piety tradition in Confucian culture. Filial piety is a golden rule that regulates the parent-child relationship. Traditionally, adult children, especially the eldest son and his wife, have the duty of caring for the elderly parents in a material, emotional and spiritual way. Taking care of elderly parents is seen as compensation to their parents for having raised, educated, supported, and invested in them (B. Schwarz et al., 2010; Trommsdorff & Kornadt, 2003). To a large extent, the concept of filial piety fits with the social exchange framework. Reciprocity is embedded in the parent-child relationship in Chinese culture.

Nowadays, the ideal of filial piety is still valued in Chinese culture while the practices have been changing in both China and Chinese communities overseas. While living in a society with different mainstream culture values, Chinese migrants have fundamentally reshaped their cultural values, hybridizing Chinese and Western cultures and creating new transnational identities which consist of a blend the two cultures (Chan, 2001; Van Ziegert, 2002). In the context of this thesis, filial piety in

Chinese migrant family mainly refers to caring for the elderly and supporting aged parents as an expression of children's gratitude (Chappell & Kusch, 2007). Social exchange theory is thus a well-suited analytic perspective for studying the social support needs of elderly Chinese migrants.

Both Dowd (1975) and Antonucci et al. (1990) build their theories on the assumption that people lose their power and resources with age. This paradigm of studying ageing from a negative perspective has dominated quality of life research for many decades. Higgs et al. (2003) comment that, similar to other ageing research, studies on the quality of life of the elderly population tend to be problem-oriented. Late life has usually been associated with declining health status and reduction of socio-economic status. However, today in many developed and developing countries, older people can live long and healthy lives. Ageing is just a "natural component" of life, and old age can still provide personal fulfilment (Gabriel & Bowling, 2004, p. 676; O'Boyle, 1997, p. 1871). Therefore, the focus of research needs to be shifted from the negative paradigm towards a more positive view of ageing.

Empirical studies show that in many circumstances, elderly people can offer both material and non-material resources (including money and labour) in exchange relationships. As an increasing number of elderly people enjoy years of leisure in relatively good health after retirement, their time is more flexible than young people's for providing practical help to others (Bowling, 2005a). For example, many participate actively in volunteer work in their communities (S. Gee, 2001) and provide

care for their grandchildren (Clarke & Ceridwen, 2004). The elderly are also more likely to have assets and own property than young people (Perry, 2009). As Finch and Mason (1993) suggest, the resources owned by elderly people sometimes play an important role in exchange support with other family members. Therefore, ageing does not necessarily lead to disadvantages in social exchange.

In recent years, the social support of elderly migrants has attracted increasing academic interest. A significant focus of the literature is on how young migrants provide support to their parents who are left behind in their home country (Baldassar et al., 2007; Dhar, 2011a, 2011b). Some other studies target elderly migrants who follow their children to a new country, discussing the types of support elderly migrants provide to and receive from others (Da, 2003; Pyke, 2004; Wong et al., 2005). On the one hand, elderly migrants need various types of support to overcome the difficulties they encountered in the host society; on the other hand, they also provide significant help to their adult children's households (Baldassar et al., 2007; Da, 2003; Treas, 2008). Therefore, in the migration context, elderly people participate actively in the support exchange process, playing roles as both support providers and receivers.

2.2.4 Moving from a Micro to a Macro Perspective

This review has this far mainly discussed social exchange theory at the individual level, arguing it provides a comprehensive analytic framework to interpret the relationship between social support and quality of life. In addition to this micro focus,

social exchange theory also helps to explain exchanges between groups or social systems at the macro level. The theory asserts that by participating in a social system based on loyalty and sharing, individuals may contribute to and derive benefits from their overall participation in the system (Emerson, 1976).

In regard to migrants, empirical studies clearly show exchange relationships between the host country and those migrants who make economic contributions (Immigration New Zealand, 2012a). Skilled migrants, in particular, provide skills, capital and labour to the host country, expecting in return that they can access better opportunities and living conditions for themselves and/or for their entire family. For instance, New Zealand-based studies reveal that many skilled Chinese migrants move to New Zealand to pursue a more relaxed educational environment for their children (Pang, 2003) and to access the relatively generous social welfare system for their elderly parents (M. Ip, 2006b; Tan, 2011). Other research on Asian migrants also shows that migration decisions take into consideration the well-being of the extended family (Castles & Miller, 2009). The evidence thus reveals two types of exchange relationships between migrants and the host country – direct exchange and indirect exchange. Direct exchange takes place between young skilled migrants and the host country, while indirect exchange, as discussed earlier, involves a third person, for instance, dependent children and elderly parents (Ekeh, 1974).

Previous research has largely overlooked the connections between elderly migrants and the host country, especially those who migrate to reunite with their adult

children. This leads to two major research flaws. First, providing support to elderly migrant parents tends to be considered a family issue, but the host country's responsibility to support elderly migrants is ambiguous. Elderly migrants are largely left out of the process of ageing-related policymaking. Second, the social participation by elderly migrants and the relationship between that participation and their quality of life tends to be omitted from public and academic discourse. Little academic and governmental attention has been directed to the contribution made by elderly migrants to the host country. However, the concept of indirect exchange helps to situate elderly migrants in the host society, exploring the social support they receive from, and provide to, the host country.

The combination of the micro and macro perspectives of social exchange theory provides a comprehensive framework for my analysis of the social support of elderly Chinese migrants in New Zealand. The micro perspective views elderly migrants as individuals, investigating how social support is exchanged in their family relationships and other interpersonal social networks (See Chapter Four). The macro perspective, on the other hand, views elderly migrants as members of migrant families, but situated in an indirect exchange relationship with the host country. This perspective helps to analyse the support they received from the government and other social institutions, and their perceptions of that support (See Chapter Five). In addition, transnationalism helps to situate the discussion of social support and quality of life in the contemporary context of global travel, migration and electronic communication (See Chapter Six).

2.3 Transnationalism: A New Context for Studying Elderly Migrants

Transnationalism is a topic of growing importance within many disciplines, including migration studies, political studies and sociology, but is a relatively new perspective for studying elderly people. A limited number of studies have discussed ageing-related topics using a transnational lens. This section starts with a broad review of both theoretical and empirical studies about ageing and transnationalism. In particular the concept 'transnational social space' is explored in order to further my discussion on social support in a transnational context. By reviewing these studies, I illustrate the significance and rationale for using a transnational perspective to study elderly Chinese migrants in New Zealand.

2.3.1 Elderly Migrants as Transnationals

In the past decade, migration studies have focused on transnationalism, a concept which is associated with globalization and increased international migration. The term 'transnationalism' is often used interchangeably with 'transnational migration', both referring to the emergence of a social process in which migrants establish social relationships that cross geographic, cultural, and political borders (Faist, 2006). During this process, multi-local ties and interactions are established to link people or institutions across national borders (Vertovec, 1999, p. 447).

So far, research on transnationalism has largely been "old-age oblivious"

(Torres, 2013, p. 269), focussing instead on young migrants who are supposed to be highly mobile and have a strong motivation to maintain transnational connections (Chui, 2008; M. Ip, 2011). Little attention has been directed to the transnational life and practices of elderly migrants. This is probably because elderly migrants are believed to be relatively immobile people who only make occasional and fleeting contact between their home and host countries (Li, 2009).

Some empirical studies on migrant families, however, indicate the tendency of elderly migrants to lead a transnational life. In an Australia-based study, Da (2003) explored child care arrangements in Chinese migrant families, finding that elderly people do participate in transnational activities. In the study, some elderly Chinese were identified as 'transnational grandparents', providing child care for their grandchildren. Holding temporary visitor visas, these elderly Chinese travelled frequently between China and Australia. Da's (2003) study provides robust evidence that some elderly migrants are intensively involved in the transnational practices.

Admittedly, many elderly migrants have less physical mobility than their younger counterparts. However, research increasingly points out that transnational activities can happen virtually as well as physically. Facilitated by modern communication technology, these activities can include cultural, political and financial ties with both home and host countries (Faist, 2004). For instance, Vertovec (2004) argues that long-distance phone calls serve as 'social glue' for migrants to maintain transnational ties. Wilding (2006) suggests that new information and

communication technologies have been incorporated into migrants' everyday social life by creating 'virtual' intimacies among family members who are physically separated from each other.

Elderly migrants are also a diverse group. Studies in Europe show that elderly migrants with various individual and migration backgrounds have different perspectives and practices in terms of their transnational lifestyles (Gustafson, 2001; Warnes, Friedrich, Kellaher, & Torres, 2004). Some retired migrants own homes in two countries and travel seasonally into pursuit of a better living environment, while others travel less frequently but maintain intense social connections with people who live in other countries (Gustafson, 2001). Although their transnational participation varies in ways and degrees, the post-migration life of elderly migrants has been significantly influenced by transnationalism. It has therefore become imperative to study the transnational activities of elderly migrants in the current era of globalisation and global ageing. As Torres (2013, p. 279) cogently argues, "the migratory life course in general offers a profuse source of information about how aging and old age is experienced and understood".

2.3.2 Social Support and Transnational Social Space

Transnationalism has changed people's relations to space, particularly by creating 'social fields' or 'social space' that connect and position some actors in more than one country (Glick Schiller, Basch, & Blanc-Szanton, 1992; Goldring, 1998). Space "not

only refers to physical features, but also to larger opportunity structures, the social life

and the subjective images, values and meanings that the specific and limited place

represents to migrants" (Faist, 1998, p. 217). As such, transnationalism moves beyond

physical cross-border activities to a symbolic participation in transnational social

fields.

The concept of "transnational social field" denotes a borderless terrain where

the social practices and relationships of transnational migrants are not bounded by

specific geographic, cultural and political borders (Glick Schiller, 2004, p. 455). At

the core of the concept are "multiple interlocking networks" (Levitt & Glick Schiller,

2004, p. 1009). As Levitt and Glick Schiller (2004, p. 1009) suggest, the concept of a

transnational social field is:

> a powerful tool for conceptualizing the potential array of social
>
> relations linking those who move and those who stay behind. It
>
> takes us beyond the direct experience of migration into
>
> domains of interaction where individuals who do not move
>
> themselves maintain social relations across borders through
>
> various forms of communication.

Similar concepts such as 'transnational social space' also emphasise the multi-local

nature of transnationalism. Faist (2004, p. 3) defines transnational social spaces as ties

which are "stable, lasting and dense…reaching beyond and across the border of

sovereign states". Vertovec (1999) asserts that the high degree of human mobility,

telecommunications, satellite TV, and the Internet have contributed to the emergence of transnational social fields/space.

As established earlier in this chapter, social networks are a major source of social support (Fiori et al., 2011; Fiori, Smith, & Antonucci, 2007). In migration studies, social networks are viewed as social capital facilitating migrants' integration into the host country (Yoo & Zippay, 2012). The social networks of many elderly migrants have long been established in their country of origin. Due to migration, these develop into cross border social networks extending from the country of origin to the country of destination (Boyd, 1989; Faist, 1997; Meares et al., 2010). The cross border networks provide avenues for transnational social support.

At the micro level, maintaining transnational relationships has been found to be a crucial part of the daily lives of elderly migrants (Meares et al., 2010). Heikkinen and Lumme-Sandt (2013, p. 198) argue that transnational connections mean "a concrete source of help, family affiliations, the sharing of emotions, and a larger social network". The transnational family relationships, in particular, play an important role in their post-migration life (Heikkinen & Lumme-Sandt, 2013). Baldassar, Baldock and Wilding (2007) took these insights a step further by conducting research on intergenerational support exchange in a transnational context. They found that by making physical visits and maintaining connections by using communication technologies, various types of support, including financial, emotional and practical support, are exchanged between generations.

In line with many family studies (e.g. Finch, 1989; Finch & Mason, 1993), Baldassar, Baldock and Wilding (2007) demonstrate that even in the transnational context most substantial support, especially economic support, tends to flows from parents to their migrant children rather than the other way round. Other studies also reveal that elderly migrants make a significant contribution to their children's settlement in the host country by providing child care and domestic assistance (Da, 2003; Warnes et al., 2004; Zhou, 2012). These studies suggest that social support can be exchanged in transnational social fields/space.

A few studies have established a positive connection between migrants' quality of life and transnational ties. This is partly because those ties serve as resources for the various types of support which fulfil the needs of elderly migrants (Li, 2009). More importantly, by exchanging social support, elderly migrants are able to keep in touch with their family and friends, which enhances a sense of sharing a social space and being connected (Heikkinen & Lumme-Sandt, 2013; Wilding, 2006). As Faist (2006, p. 5) argues, maintaining social and symbolic ties in transnational social space reinforces "a high degree of intimacy and emotional depth", and thus can be "a strategy of survival and betterment". Therefore, transnational social networks should be taken into consideration when studying the social support and quality of life of elderly migrants.

At the macro level, elderly migrants also maintain transnational connections with their home country by receiving various types of governmental support. Many

elderly migrants move to a new country after having worked for decades in their homeland, and their contributions to the home society over the years enables them to qualify for certain types of social welfare (OECD, 2011). In China, for example, people who retire or have participated in a social insurance programme are allowed to receive retirement incomes from the country regardless of their current place of residence (Dorfman, Wang, O'Keefe, & Cheng, 2013). Other Western countries with contributory pension scheme, such as Canada, also allow their citizens to receive a certain portion of their public pension after migration to another country (Overbye, 1996). Other types of social welfare, such as health care, also contribute to transnational connections at the macro level (Guo, 2005; W. Li, 2011; Meares et al., 2010).

The above evidence suggests that studying elderly migrants' social support requires analysis to be situated within a transnational context. Maintaining transnational ties at both the micro and the macro levels, elderly migrants participate in support exchange in transnational social fields/spaces after they migrate. Therefore, I argue that both local and transnational support exchanges need to be explored in order to provide a nuanced understanding of elderly migrants' quality of life and their support exchange.

2.4 Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed the empirical and theoretical literature in three areas – quality of life, social support and transnationalism. Three sets of theories informed the

current research and helped to establish my theoretical and analytical framework. This chapter starts with a conceptual and theoretical discussion of quality of life, including both objective and subjective approaches. By critically reviewing the advantages and disadvantages of the two approaches, I argue that more focus should be directed on the subjective perceptions of individual life experiences and circumstances. Therefore, quality of life in this study is defined as people's subjective evaluation of their life overall, including components such as socio-economic conditions, family, work, and social support.

Moreover, as suggested by previous research, people's subjective perceptions of their quality of life are largely determined by their cultural background and socio-economic circumstances. Informed by this notion, this study also highlights the importance of the migration experience to the quality of life of elderly Chinese migrants. Their experience of moving to and living in different societal and cultural environments can exert a significant impact on their perceptions of quality of life.

As in the case of quality of life, social support is also a multi-faceted concept. As one of the most important components of quality of life, social support is studied from a variety of angles and perspectives. By reviewing both theoretical and empirical studies, I argue that social support is not only a static resource, but also a dynamic exchange process. People's satisfaction with their social support is not simply determined by the types and amount of support they receive, but also by the process through which the support is provided, received and exchanged. Therefore, social

exchange theory is used to analyse the interactions between support exchange, interpersonal relationships, and the impact of these interactions on subjective quality of life and well-being.

In this chapter, I have reviewed support exchange specifically in the context of elderly migrants. I argue that elderly migrants actively participate in various types of support exchange activities at the micro level with family, friends and other individuals. However, the impact of support exchange needs to be further explored – what types of support are exchanged and to what extent the support exchange has an impact on the quality of life of elderly migrants. Moving from a micro to a macro perspective, social exchange theory is also employed in this study to explain support exchange between migrants and government, social welfare agencies, and community groups in the host country. This theoretical approach not only enables me to develop connections between elderly migrants and the host country, but also helps to reveal elderly migrants' perceptions of governmental support.

Elderly migrants are largely overlooked in transnational studies, viewed as less mobile and more stable than their younger counterparts. However, by reviewing recent studies, I argue that an increasing number of elderly migrants are living in transnational social spaces. The support exchange occurring between elderly migrants and their family and friends living in other countries plays a significant role in enhancing their quality of life. Therefore, transnationalism has to be considered in this study in order to develop a comprehensive understanding of the social support and

quality of life of elderly migrants.

The next chapter outlines the research design and the methodological basis of my study. Informed and guided by the theories discussed in this chapter, the research design will be discussed in detail, and my reasons for using qualitative methods to study elderly migrants' social support and quality of life will be explained.

Chapter Three: Qualitative Research Design and Methods

Based on a critical review of the current literature on quality of life and social support, I established in the previous chapter the theoretical framework of this study. My discussion about the subjective approach to studying quality of life, together with the critique of the objective approach provided the methodological basis for this study. This chapter provides a detailed discussion of my methodological framework and methods adopted for data collection and analysis. My choice of qualitative methodology is determined by the research purpose, which focuses on the perceptions of individuals rather than objective measures of quality of life. Surveying the methods commonly used by previous researchers, I present a rationale for choosing semi-structured in-depth interviews and secondary data analysis as the two methods for this research. I do so while critically evaluating and discussing alternative methods. I further detail the application of semi-structured in-depth interviews, including sampling, recruitment, interview schedule design, inquiry techniques, and the approaches used to analyse data. Towards the end of the chapter, I reflect on my position as a researcher in the context of the project and discuss the reliability and validity of qualitative methods and data.

3.1 Developing the Methodological Framework

The subjective approach to studying an individuals' quality of life emphasises the

perceptions and interpretations of their lived experience. The rationale behind the subjective approach is that quality of life can be defined by people's conscious experiences – in terms of affective appraisal or cognitive evaluation (Diener & Suh, 1997). Therefore, as Campbell (1972, p. 442) has cogently pointed out, "the quality of life must be in the eye of the beholder". This notion forms the cornerstone of the overall methodological framework of this research. As a cognitive 'construct', subjective quality of life is shaped by collective notions of the good life, as well as the individual's own evaluation of their life (Veenhoven, 2008).

The epistemological and ontological premises of this study are that quality of life in old age is a continuous concept which cannot be separated from the past or its social context. Individuals have the ability to construct their perceptions of quality of life by reflecting on their experiences. Providing an overall understanding of the quality of one's life implies a cognitive, intellectual activity and requires an assessment of past experiences and estimation of future circumstances (Bowling, 2005a, p. 13). The potential variability in the social and cultural circumstances of elderly migrants makes the evaluation of their overall quality of life more complex. Thus, the methodological design of this study was adopted in order to convey a strong sense of process by seeing people's perceptions or experiences in terms of streams of interdependent events and elements (Bryman, 2008, p. 388). Therefore, the subjective perspective of studying quality of life should avoid taking a 'snapshot' approach – investigating the issue by focusing on a certain point of time/situation in an individual's life course, overlooking its connections to past experiences and future

prospects.

In acknowledging the importance of lived experiences and subjective perceptions to an individuals' quality of life, a vast range of methods, running the spectrum from the completely quantitative to the completely qualitative with many variations in between, have been applied by previous researchers (Chung et al., 1997). In quantitative methodological frameworks, numerous scales and tests, including self-reported indexes, have been devised to measure selected aspects of people's lives, and a sum-score calculated to assess their overall quality of life. When large and representative samples are used, quantitative methods are able to generate useful scientific data at the population level. Chappell and her colleagues (Chappell, 2005; Chappell & Kusch, 2007; Lai et al., 2007), for example, conducted their project on elderly Chinese Canadians by using a sum-score approach. A large random sample of elderly Chinese Canadians was studied by using structured face-to-face interviews. Variables were selected to measure components of quality of life, including health and migration experiences. Quantitative data was then statistically analysed to generate interrelationships between the different components of quality of life, as well as to assess quality of life *per se*.

Quantitative measures can also be used to fulfil the need for cross-cultural and cross-national comparisons when assessing quality of life. Taking the World Health Organisation Quality of Life Instrument 100 (WHOQOL-100) for example, the questionnaire consists of 100 questions to chart the quality of life of individuals in six

domains of life, namely, physical health, psychological, level of independence, social

relationships, environment, and spirituality/religion/personal beliefs. Applying the

same domains in various cultures, results generated from the WHOQOL Instrument is

comparable across cultures (World Health Organization Quality of Life Group, 1997).

However, as Veenhoven (2000, 2007) points out, people's overall quality of

life is not a simple mathematical concept. Their satisfaction with each component of

life does not necessarily result in a total of satisfaction with the overall quality of life.

The linear sum-score methods only partially reflect the interactions among quality of

life components. How individuals construct their perceptions of quality of life in the

context of their daily life cannot be fully explained by quantitative methods.

Furthermore, quantitative methods such as self-report questionnaires and structured

interviews rely on participants' answers, which are largely influenced by their

immediate feelings and experiences. Such immediate experiences may influence the

answers they provide to the researcher, leading to a snapshot view of their quality of

life. For instance, when a participant has just had a bad experience at work, he or she

tends to report lower current life satisfaction (Gilhooly, Gilhooly, & Bowling, 2005).

In addition, quantitative measures based on scholars' definitions and standards

of what gives a life quality are susceptible to a 'professional centrism' perspective

(Bowling, 2005a, p. 42). Researchers and experts decide what domains are selected

and measured as well as the cut-off scores. Predetermined categories in questionnaires

and structured interviews are used to organise a specific set of (interview) questions

that confine respondents within a formalized structure. Critiques of these measures claim that such professional centrism may lead to findings reflecting what the researcher believes is important, rather than what participants perceive as important to their quality of life (Grewal, Nazroo, Bajekal, Blane, & Lewis, 2004).

In line with such critiques, some qualitative scholars suggest that researchers need to be 'told' about people's subjective quality of life (Fry, 2000). Qualitative methods are therefore used to allow participants to have a voice in identifying the most important aspects of their lives, to explain the impact of these aspects on their lives, and to evaluate these aspects and the overall quality of life (Grewal et al., 2004; Joyce, McGee, & O'Boyle, 1999). For example, Bowling (2007) used in-depth interviews in her Britain-based study to explore older people's interpretations of their quality of life. This method enabled her to share the perspectives of older people and to understand "what gave their life quality and what took quality away from it, how it could be improved" (Bowling, 2007, p. 18).

Qualitative methods were chosen in this study due to my research purpose and the research cohort. Departing from many previous projects which studied random samples to generate a series of representative findings, this project purposively targets a small cohort – elderly Chinese migrants in New Zealand, offering an in-depth view of the lives of this group. I also seek to provide a comprehensive exploration of the circumstances they have encountered, in order to understand their interpretations of quality of life within the migration context, and to explain the range and diversity of

their attitudes.

Studying the quality of life of elderly Chinese migrants by delving into their social support is a new research topic in the New Zealand context. As argued in Chapter Two, the perceptions of quality of life of elderly migrants are largely shaped by their migration experiences and changes in cultural and societal environments. There may be unknown factors to the researchers that elderly migrants themselves find relevant to their quality of life. Therefore, my methodological design highlights the importance of avoiding professional centrism, so as to yield data that are unattainable through quantitative methods, including contextual and embedded meanings provided by participants (Fossey, Harvey, McDermott, & Davidson, 2002).

3.2 Research Methods

The qualitative methodological framework of this study consists of two research methods – secondary data analysis and semi-structured in-depth interviews. The following section details the rationale for choosing these two qualitative methods for my research. Secondary data analysis was conducted at the early stage of this research. This was crucial because it helped to clarify the research questions and the nature of the research cohort. Most importantly, it guided the design of the sampling procedure and interview questions. The semi-structured in-depth interviews were then conducted to generate the primary data for this study.

3.2.1 Secondary Data Analysis

The sources of secondary data used in this study were primarily from government statistics and documents, published and unpublished reports released by Statistics New Zealand, the Ministry of Social Development of New Zealand, the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment of New Zealand, the OECD, the United Nations and other government or non-government organizations. Reports and statistics relating to the ageing population, Chinese migrants and Chinese communities in New Zealand and overseas were surveyed to obtain an overall understanding of elderly Chinese migrants. Considering that the existing research on elderly Chinese migrants in New Zealand was limited, studies from similar 'settler societies' such as Canada and Australia helped to develop the research direction.

The purpose of using secondary data analysis in this study was twofold. First, it provided fundamental information for the research design. The analysis of statistics and migration policies in New Zealand helped to build demographic knowledge about Chinese migrants in New Zealand, which subsequently guided the design of the sampling and interview questions. Second, secondary data analysis was used as a strategy to identify, explore, and understand different dimensions of the topic by studying the research of other scholars, thereby strengthening the findings of this study and enriching the interpretations (Given, 2008, pp. 892-894).

3.2.2 Semi-structured In-depth Interviews

Interviews are a common means for collecting data in quality of life research. More specifically, this study employed semi-structured in-depth interviews. Compared to researcher-dominated structured interviews or participant-oriented unstructured interviews, semi-structured in-depth interviews allow the researcher/interviewer to retain some control over the direction and content of the interview yet provides participants sufficient flexibility to take the interview in unexpected but related directions. This approach encouraged informants to provide a first person account "in their own words" (Packer, 2011, p. 43). During semi-structured interviews, the conversation "oscillates among the researcher's introduction of the topic under investigation, the participant's account of his or her experiences, and the researcher's probing for further information" (Given, 2008, p. 422).

The purpose of the in-depth interviews was to gain deep understanding of the topic. The word 'deep' carries two meanings: first, the interviewer seeks to achieve the same level of knowledge and understanding of the topic as the participants and in-depth interviews are a way to learn the meanings of participants' actions. Second, in-depth interviews go beyond commonsense explanations and aim to "explore the contextual boundaries of experiences or perceptions, to uncover what is usually hidden from ordinary view, or to penetrate to more reflective understandings about the nature of that experience" (Johnson, 2002, pp. 106-108).

A pre-designed interview schedule was used to facilitate and guide the

interview process (See Appendix I). Both background contextual questions and open-ended questions were included so that participants could talk at length about their personal circumstances and experiences in regard to migration and social support. During the interviews, I followed the interview schedule to make sure that key issues were discussed, while at the same time paying close attention to newly emerging themes as well as outliers from the participants' responses. I then used probing questions to discover how these themes were related to the topic under investigation.

As in the case of many studies on migration networks and migrant families (e.g. Massey, Alarcon, & Gonzalez, 1987; Thomas & Znaniecki, 1984), this study focused on both pre- and post-migration experiences. During the interviews, I encouraged the participants to recall their past life stories when they were describing or evaluating their current life. By using this approach, this study successfully avoided the snapshot view of quality of life, and addressed how elderly migrants link their past life to present quality of life.

3.3 Purposive Sample and Participant Recruitment

Given the qualitative nature of this research, my sampling did not aim to be representative. Instead, richness and sufficient depth of information was the major concern so that the phenomenon being studied could be described fully (Fossey et al., 2002). To these ends, a purposive sampling approach was employed to collect information from the targeted cohort.

Although the original intent of this research was to recruit 40 elderly Chinese

migrants in Auckland, I stopped interviewing when I had 35 participants. The reason is that at that point I was confident that subsequent participants would offer no new relevant data, but only corroborating information. This situation signaled that "theoretical saturation" had been reached (Bryman, 2008, p. 416).

3.3.1 Sample Type and Structure

This research is based on a purposive sample, and three criteria were used to recruit my participants.

- Migrated from mainland China;
- Aged 60 years and over;
- Had been living in New Zealand for at least three years.

Previous studies in New Zealand show that there are distinct differences in socio-economic status, demographic profile and migration pattern between Chinese migrants from Hong Kong, Taiwan, mainland China, and other places (M. Ip & Friesen, 2001). In the pilot interviews, the participants who had lived in Hong Kong and Indonesia demonstrated distinctions between social systems and cultural values. Although realizing that studying ethnic Chinese migrants might generate some interesting findings related to this topic, I feared that the social and cultural distinctions between them might make it difficult to draw valid research conclusions. In addition, compared to those from other countries or regions, elderly Chinese from mainland China are much larger in number in New Zealand. Thus, I decided that studying social support and quality of life among elderly migrants originating from

mainland China could produce more policy-significant findings for New Zealand.

In OECD countries, 'the elderly' commonly refers to people aged 65 and over. However, in mainland China, most statistics about the elderly refer to people aged 60 and over because the official retirement age is 60 for men, and 50 or 55 for women, depending on their occupation. In addition, for the purpose of generating rich data about elderly Chinese migrants' ageing and migration experiences, this study included participants aged 60 years and over so that comparison can be made between the young elderly (<75) and the old elderly (≥75)[5].

Migrants are defined by the International Organization for Migration (2011, p. 62) as "an individual who has resided in a foreign country for more than one year irrespective of the causes, voluntary or involuntary, and the means, regular or irregular, used to migrate". Since the research focus of this study is related to migration experience and post-migration quality of life, it was necessary to recruit participants with sufficient lived experience in the host country. Therefore, I only recruited Chinese migrants who had been in New Zealand for more than three years.

Given that gender and migration category (e.g. family reunification versus skilled or business migrant) are two significant attributes impacting elderly migrants' lived experience and living circumstances (Cook, 2010; Eckermann, 2000), the original sampling strategy was designed to pursue a gender balance quota for each migration category. Migrants who arrived under the refugee category were not

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[5] The distinction between 'young' and 'old' elderly has been adopted in other studies (e.g. see Bowling, 2005a, p. 49; Wenger, 2002, p. 256).

included because their migration networks and social support might have been influenced by political issues which were not part of this project. In my interviews, the gender balance was relatively even with 16 males and 19 females. However, it was difficult to get as many elderly skilled migrants who migrated for work reasons as those who migrated for family reunification because immigration policy gives preference to young migrants and few Chinese skilled migrants came to New Zealand until the enactment of the Immigration Act 1987. Among the 35 elderly participants, only three were skilled migrants, while 32 were in the family migration category (see Table 3.1). In addition, there was a distinct age difference between male and female participants. When the interviews were conducted, the average age of male and female participants was 74.2 and 65.2 respectively. Twelve of 19 female participants were aged between 60 and 74, while 12 of 16 males were aged 75 and over (see Table 3.1 and Table 3.2).

Table 3. 1: Sample Structure of Elderly Chinese Participants

Gender	Migration Category	Age Group		Number of Participants
		Young Elderly (60-74)	Old Elderly (≥75)	
Male (N=16)	Family Migration	3	11	14
	Skilled/Business migration	1	1	2
Female (N=19)	Family Migration	12	6	18
	Skilled/Business migration	0	1	1
		16	19	35 (Total)

Table 3. 2 Participant Profile

No.	Pseudonym	Age	Sex	Visa/Citizen-ship Status *	Migration Category	Year of Migration to NZ	Working status	Home ownership	
								CN	NZ
1	Mrs. Yin	66	F	PR	Family Parent	2006	Retired	✓	
2	Mrs. Pei	85	F	PR	Family Parent	1997	Retired	✓	
3	Mr. He	76	M	PR	Family Parent	2000	Retired		
4	Mr. Lee	75	M	PR	Family Parent	2002	Retired		
5	Mrs. Peng	86	F	PR	Family Parent	1996	Retired		
6	Mrs. Zhu	68	F	PR	Family Parent	2002	Retired	✓	
7	Mr. Han	75	M	PR	Family Parent	2009	Retired	✓	
8	Mrs. Zhen	68	F	PR	Family Parent	1998	Retired	✓	
9	Mr. Hong	76	M	PR	Family Parent	1997	Retired		
10	Mrs. Xiu	75	F	PR	Family Parent	1997	Retired		
11	Mr. Jia	79	M	PR	Family Parent	1995	Retired	✓	
12	Mr. Shi	78	M	PR	Family Parent	1998	Retired	✓	
13	Mrs. Shi	77	F	PR	Family Parent	1998	Retired	✓	
14	Mr. Tong	63	M	PR	Family Parent	2007	Part-time	✓	
15	Mr. Zhang	76	M	PR	Family Parent	2008	Retired	✓	
16	Mrs. Zhang	67	F	PR	Family Parent	2008	Retired	✓	
17	Mrs. Qi	64	F	PR	Family Parent	2007	Retired	✓	
18	Mr. Yu	76	M	PR	Family Parent	2002	Retired	✓	
19	Mrs. Yu	73	F	PR	Family Parent	2002	Retired	✓	
20	Mr. Ai	70	M	PR	Family Parent	2004	Retired	✓	
21	Mrs. Ai	67	F	PR	Family Parent	2004	Retired	✓	
22	Mrs. Hui	72	F	PR	Family Parent	2003	Retired	✓	
23	Mr. Guo	80	M	PR	Family Parent	1998	Retired	✓	
24	Mrs. Guo	82	F	PR	Family Parent	1998	Retired	✓	
25	Mrs. Wu	70	F	PR	Family Parent	1997	Retired	✓	✓
26	Mrs. Gu	70	F	PR	Family Parent	1998	Retired	✓	
27	Mr. Tao	75	M	PR	Family Parent	1998	Retired		
28	Mrs. Lin	70	F	NZ citizen	Family Parent	1998	Retired	✓	
29	Mr. Wei	77	M	PR	Family Parent	1997	Retired	✓	
30	Mrs. Wei	74	F	PR	Family Parent	1997	Retired	✓	
31	Mrs. Yang	78	F	NZ citizen	Family Parent	2003	Retired	✓	
32	Mr. Zhou	71	M	PR	Family Parent	1997	Retired	✓	
33	Mr. Hua	66	M	NZ citizen	Skilled	1992	Full-time	✓	✓
34	Mr. Cheng	74	M	NZ citizen	Skilled	1988	Part-time		✓
35	Mrs. Cheng	77	F	NZ citizen	Skilled	1990	Retired		✓

* *PR refers to New Zealand permanent resident with Chinese citizenship; NZ citizen refers to New Zealand citizen.*

3.3.2 Participant Recruitment

Participants were recruited through several approaches, including personal networks, advertisements (see Appendix IV) and snowball sampling (see Table 3.3). Initial contacts were made with several neighbours and friends who fitted the participant criteria or had family members who did so. Five Chinese associations/community centres and two churches were also approached. In doing so, I not only asked the person in charge to help by passing on the research flyers, but also visited several community centres to gain access to potential participants.

Table 3. 3: Recruitment Approaches and Sample Size

Recruitment Approaches	Personal networks	Chinese associations	Chinese medical clinics	Churches	Hair salons	Snowballing
Numbers (Total 35)	3	11	4	2	3	12

Various strategies were employed to cope with the difficulties that emerged at different stages of the recruitment process. In the initial period, the main task was to spread the research information within the targeted population. Advertisements were placed in Chinese supermarkets and community centres, and flyers were sent to Chinese associations by email. It was also crucial to find a 'core' sample so that snowball sampling could commence. Consequently, a neighbour and a friend's mother were interviewed. Although they promised to pass the research information on to their friends and acquaintances, and to give out research flyers when they went to community centres, little feedback was received from them or from potential

participants.

In order to facilitate the recruitment process, I also used direct approaches to access potential participants. As some scholars suggest, direct approaches to older people are most successful in gaining access (Rubinstein, 2002; Wenger, 2002). This is primarily because rapport is easier to establish when the potential participant receives a face-to-face invitation in a public place and can see the interviewer and form an impression of them. Therefore, I visited several Chinese associations/community centres and had casual conversations with potential participants. This approach helped me to increase the number of recruits. In the later stages of data collection, potential participants who heard about my research started to contact me directly. These accounted for one-third of my participants. This was probably because both snowballing and advertising took time to spread and have an effect.

Another factor also impacted on recruitment. Because there was no landline telephone in my university office, the first version of my research flyer provided only my mobile number and email address. As a result, no one contacted me. An elderly woman finally 'enlightened' me when I passed the flyer to her in a senior club. She reminded me that many elderly Chinese were reluctant to call due to the comparatively high cost of calling a mobile number in New Zealand. This suggestion greatly helped the refinement of the research flyer. My landline number at home was added and preferred calling hours were suggested. Subsequently, I received many

phone calls from those who read the flyers. Some participants even kept in touch and exchanged ideas after interviews were completed.

In addition, many older people rely on their adult children for advice, especially those co-residing with them. They might consult their children before expressing a willingness to participate. This increased the difficulty of recruitment because children, if they had concerns about the nature of the research, often tried to persuade their parents not to participate in the interviews. These concerns stemmed from fears by the children, whether deserved or undeserved, that the interviews would place them in a bad light. Thus, family issues such as this may have limited the participation of family-dependent individuals in the research (Wenger, 2002, pp. 262, 263).

In the latter stages of field work, the recruitment strategy aimed to adjust the structure of the sample. It proved extremely difficult to recruit migrants from business/skilled categories. Some potential participants assumed they could easily be identified because they belonged to a very small group, even though I had assured them that their identities would not be revealed under any circumstance. Another person refused to participate because he did not want to recall the tough memories of his earlier migration experiences. As a result, only three skilled migrants (two males, one female) were interviewed.

Over one-third (N=13) of my participants were recruited through Chinese associations and churches. They represented elderly Chinese migrants who had free

time to socialize and had few family constraints. In other words, they were older people who were in good health, had abundant spare time and had satisfying social relations. This particular group of elderly people was made up of individuals who were more likely to participate in the research interviews. However, I also wanted to include other elderly Chinese migrants who were isolated and who were constrained by domestic tasks and could not participate in social activities. As such, research flyers were also posted in Chinese medical clinics and hair salons. As a result, I successfully interviewed seven participants who were isolated due to illness, impaired mobility or financial hardship.

The sample structure can be challenged if recruitment relies too heavily on snowball sampling. Widely considered an effective method in qualitative studies, the snowball approach includes informants on the basis of referrals from preliminary participants. However, it could result in a homogeneous group who share similar socio-economic backgrounds, and consequently influence the validity of the research results (DiCicco-Bloom, 2004). Therefore, in this study, some non-typical cases were purposively sought in order to diversify the research sample so that comparisons and discussions pertaining to differing circumstances could be stimulated.

Seven couples were recruited in my study but they were interviewed separately to facilitate gender comparisons. Given that husband and wife faced very similar circumstances during migration and settlement, it was easier to identify whether males and females acted differently in migration decision-making, how they

dealt with new situations during settlement, and how they spoke of their quality of life in the host country.

3.4 Interview Schedule Design and Refinement

The interview schedule was centred on social support because this has been shown to be crucial to migrants and their quality of life (Bajekal et al., 2004; Chappell, 2005; Lai et al., 2007; Shardlow et al., 2011; Tsang et al., 2004). Studying the sources, types and quality of social support helped to understand various domains of elderly migrants' lives, including socio-economic status, family, social networks and international relations. Social support was thus used as an entry path to exploring quality of life more broadly. During interviews, participants were encouraged to describe and interpret each aspect of their life, as well as its overall quality.

The interview schedule consisted of six sections with each section covering a core topic (see Appendix I). The schedule opened with demographic questions relating to age, gender, highest educational attainment, migration time and category, place of residence before migration to New Zealand, and other internal and international migration experiences. These initial questions facilitated the creation of a comfortable interview atmosphere and contextualized participants' responses to further questions.

The interviews then moved on to explore how migration to New Zealand had taken place and the participants' process of settlement. These questions helped to set the overall tone and direction of the interview, and put the participants' responses in a

migration context. Participants were encouraged to narrate their migration stories. Understanding elderly participants' initial motivations for moving to New Zealand made it possible to associate the motivations with their behaviours and living circumstances post-migration.

Sections Three to Five of the interview schedule focused on living arrangements and socio-economic status, social support, and transnational networks. Inquiring about income, material conditions, living arrangements and need for support was necessary in this study because it not only helped to flesh out migrants' daily lives, but also deepened understanding of their behaviours and future life plans. Specific focus was given to a comparison of actual experiences pre- and post-migration to New Zealand to comprehend how previous life experiences impacted on present evaluations of quality of life. Questions about transnational experiences and networks were asked in order to broaden my exploration of social support.

The final section of the interview schedule was an overall evaluation and an enquiry as to their intentions in regard to future movement. Participants were asked to provide a general impression of living in New Zealand. They were also asked to evaluate their overall social support, quality of life and to reflect on the connections between the two. The design of this section offered a chance for participants to reflect on the entire interview and summarize their overall interpretation.

The interview schedule was piloted by interviewing four participants (two

males and two females). The purpose of doing pilot interviews was to test whether participants were able to understand and answer interview questions, to judge the length of the interviews and to develop interviewing skills (Bryman, 2008, pp. 247-248). The four participants, ranging in age from 66 to 85 years, had different socio-economic backgrounds, had migrated from different parts of China, and were living in different types of households. The heterogeneity of the participants in the pilot study enabled me to obtain a variety of responses with regard to their understanding of interview questions and feelings about the interview procedure. Pilot participants were asked to point out any ambiguity in the questions and comment on the interview pace and schedule design.

All four participants reported that the interview schedule was clear and easy to follow. They could understand the questions easily and felt confident about providing relevant information. Before I conducted the pilot interviews, I had a specific concern in regard to talking about their financial situation. I particularly included this in my interview schedule because financial support is clearly a very important type of social support relating to their quality of life. I was not sure if my participants would like to talk about their income and assets, because they might considered these to be very sensitive 'private' issues. However, during the pilot interviews, I realised that as long as rapport had been well established, participants did not mind discussing their financial situation. Some even provided very detailed comparison about changes in their income pre- and post-migration. Therefore, when I conducted interviews with the rest of my participants, I paid attention to establishing rapport so as to ensure I

was able to gain such information from all participants.

Although an interview schedule is supposed to facilitate and guide interviews, it is not necessary to follow the ordering of the questions strictly. Aware that participants under different migration categories might vary in migration process and experiences, flexibility was essential when following my interview schedule. For example, at the very beginning of interviews, when the participants were asked about the time and category of their migration, they tended to recall their own migration process as well as that of their household. In that case, questions about family structure and the reasons for migration were sometimes covered within one narrative. Therefore, interview flexibility permitted me to keep pace with informants' interests, as well as to shorten the duration of the interview.

3.5 Conducting the Interviews

The field work was conducted between November 2011 and May 2012. A number of important ethical issues, including informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity were considered in the design and implementation of this study. Ethics approval was granted by the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee (Appendix V).

I started each interview with a brief introduction of myself and the research project. Participants were given the Participant Information Sheet (Appendix II) and were asked to sign the Consent form (Appendix III). The two documents informed participants about how the interview would be conducted and how their data would be

used and protected. Issues associated with voice-recording and anonymity were then discussed. Data security and participant confidentiality was assured. During the interviews, participants were free to interrupt or to ask at any time that the recorder should be stopped. At the end of the interviews, I reiterated the participant's right to withdraw data within two weeks. A copy of the interview transcript was sent to the participants if they required. They were also welcome to make further contact with the researcher if they had additional comments.

The length of the interviews varied from 1 hour to 2.5 hours. Except for one professional male, who chose to be interviewed in English, the other 34 participants were interviewed in Mandarin Chinese. Taking the convenience and comfort of participants into consideration, interviews were conducted in their home, place of work or in a public space. These were places in which both interviewer and participant felt safe and comfortable and were sufficiently private to voice-record without interruption and background noise. In the study, over two-thirds of participants chose to be interviewed in their homes, which provided me with information about their family life and daily experiences (Wenger, 2002, p. 271). For example, the displayed photographs of members of several generations triggered discussions about the whole family and intergenerational relationships. Other material, such as diaries or note books shown by participants, also facilitated their story-telling.

Interviewing older people, as Wenger (2002) states, should not be conceived as a one-size-fits-all set of procedures. It is a form of inquiry that should take into

account the diversity of older people. As people grow older, they are more likely to become frail and bereaved, to suffer from mobility and hearing problems, and to need health services. Thus, interviewing people in their 80s or 90s is different from interviewing healthier young elders in their 60s and 70s. In this study, several participants were suffering from chronic illness or hearing impairment. To ensure the quality of interviews, specific strategies were developed. For example, I asked short and clear questions, and sat close to the participant so that he or she could see my facial expressions and lips to assist their hearing. I paid close attention to their emotional changes and avoided upsetting participants with long discussions about sickness.

Although guided by the same schedule, interviews were varied due to the diverse nature of the participants and their ways of organising their answers and stories. Some interviews clearly followed the semi-structured schedule, while other participants preferred leading the 'conversation' with long narratives. In some cases, when the participants were logically developing or reflecting their life stories, I would keep quiet, instead of interrupting them or trying to redirect their thinking, in order to make sure they were articulating their own perspectives rather than telling me what I wanted to hear (Seidman, 2006, p. 25). However, long narratives can also generate an amount of 'off-topic' data which results in more work when transcribing and is a distraction during data analysis. Thus, appropriate interruption was necessary when the narrative had digressed from the subject or started to repeat details. It is essential for a researcher "to be assertive enough to return the interview to its anticipated

course" (Johnson, 2002, p. 111), rather than spending time on irrelevant details.

Probing into details without leading the participant is also essential in semi-structured interviews. In migration studies, participants are usually prudent and less confident due to their minority social status, and are reticent in sharing their experiences and opinions. This is especially the case when they are suspicious about the research purpose (Merry et al., 2011; Pih, Hirose, & Mao, 2012). In this study, I wanted to explore whether the elderly Chinese migrants had gained adequate support from their families, communities or local government, though without making it overly obvious that this was the primary line of inquiry. In order to avoid participants focusing only on the positive or negative aspects of their social support and giving prejudiced evaluations, it proved better to emphasise the notion of 'difficulties in daily lives' and elicit detailed responses on the types of difficulties and their solutions. It was then easier to turn the discussion towards the types and quality of support by citing the words used by the participants themselves in their previous answers. This procedure made it possible to explore elderly migrants' frank feelings of their social support without prejudicing their answers.

All the interviews were voice recorded and fully transcribed by myself to avoid information loss during data processing. This procedure was important for the subsequent detailed analysis and ensured that the participants' responses were captured in their own words. A few participants in the study had concerns regarding voice-recording, but agreed to be recorded after I carefully explained the reasons for

recording and the procedures for data protection. Field notes were taken during the interviews and analysed together with the interview transcripts. Much of the detail based on observations was included in the field notes. For example, unusual facial expressions or body language contradictory to the content of the narrative were noted. In order to eliminate difficulties and mistakes when transcribing, unique terms or unclear accents used by participants were also clarified and noted during the interviews.

3.6 Rapport and the Interviewer-participant Relationship

In contrast to quantitative research or structured interviews, the quality of in-depth interviews is greatly influenced by the people involved in the process (Given, 2008, pp. 728-729; Johnson, 2002). In studies using one-off interviews, as in this research, it is important for the interviewer to rapidly develop a positive relationship with participants. A number of factors, including culture, ethnicity, age and gender, influence the interactions between interviewers and participants (Merry et al., 2011; Wenger, 2002). Trust and good rapport usually decide the depth of the response, and the credibility of the information.

Rapport essentially involves trust and respect for the participant and the information that is shared (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). Establishing a good rapport starts before the actual interview is even conducted. The more care and thoroughness interviewers put into making contact, the better foundation they establish for the interviewing relationship (Seidman, 2006, p. 50). In this study, I

made telephone calls or had face-to-face chats with my participants before holding the formal interviews so that we could develop a sense of familiarity. Knowing that I was an international student from mainland China, most participants showed their trust and were happy to be interviewed. The shared Chinese language and cultural background between me and my participants significantly facilitated the establishment of rapport.

Conducting an interview that feels like a conversation is valuable in the establishment of rapport. "Exchanging information between interlocutors" is one of the normative expectations of conversation (Wenger, 2002, p. 272). Researchers who avoid self-disclosure during interviews or who refuse to share information may increase the distance between themselves and the participant because the latter become uncomfortable about providing too much information (Atkinson & Coffey, 2002; Johnson, 2002; Wenger, 2002). Therefore, I employed a 'reciprocity' strategy to develop a mutual sense of cooperative self-disclosure and trust (Johnson, 2002, p. 109). Such reciprocity is not a strict exchange of perceptions, feelings or reflections during the interview, but involves some form of complementary reciprocity occurring before or after the interviews. For instance, I showed my willingness to provide some form of assistance to them such as translating English documents into Chinese. I also liked to tell my participants my personal migration story. Holding a temporary student visa, my lived experience in New Zealand was different from that of my participants. But to an extent, we shared similar feelings about being a new migrant in an English-speaking country. These shared feelings likely made my participants feel that

they were understood during the interviews. As they got to know more about me, they were more comfortable and confident in the interviews, and were more likely to share their experiences with me, generating rich data for the research. My respect and care reduced the interviewer-participant hierarchy and established further trust.

Most of my participants appeared to find the interview process a comfortable one. That was probably because the interview topic was about their personal life and most questions were open-ended. Having done some voluntary work in senior clubs and community centres in China, I had accumulated experiences about how to communicate with elderly people. In addition, my deep knowledge of elderly migrants, Chinese culture and family values made the elderly participants feel heard, understood and respected. The issues usually encountered by researchers when interviewing people from different cultural backgrounds (e.g. embarrassment caused by inappropriate questions) were avoided in this study (Merry et al., 2011; Wenger, 2002, p. 274). For these elderly participants, the interviews were not just about questions and answers, but more about having a chance to make their voice heard and receiving emotional support from a young Chinese researcher who was in her late 20s.

During the conduct of the research, gender and age presented challenges to the interviewer-participant relationship. Compared to the female participants, the elderly males showed a greater propensity during the interviews to lead the conversation. Some preferred long narratives, insisting on their own plot and challenging the prepared interview schedule. Some researchers argue that gender differences between

the interviewer and participant can affect the interview process and make the interviewer-participant relationship more complicated. For example, due to the gender hierarchy, male participants would want to dominate the interview when the interviewer is female (Arendell, 1997; Reinharz & Chase, 2002; Schwalbe & Wolkomir, 2002). In my case, the age gap between my participants and me was another factor. Some male participants took it for granted that, at my age (late 20s), I did not have sufficient knowledge to understand their experiences and feelings. Consequently, they tended to provide excessive background information. Some even said that "your father might understand the situation", and went on labouring their points. In most cases, I was patient and let them talk to avoid causing embarrassment to them. However, I would eventually lead them back to the interview schedule when they went too far off topic.

The situation described above suggests that when young researchers interview elderly participants, the age gap can influence the interview process and subsequently the quality of data. The researcher should take the perspectives of the elderly participants, showing patience and respect, while at the same time, using their knowledge of the topic and communication skills to ensure that the conversations generate relevant data by staying within the scheduled boundary.

3.7 Thematic Analysis and Representation

The analysis of qualitative interviews is a process of reviewing, synthesising and interpreting data to describe and explain the phenomena being studied (Fossey et al.,

2002). In this study, thematic analysis was employed due to the nature of the research topic and of the research data. By using thematic analysis, the interview data "are segmented, categorized, summarized, and reconstructed in a way that captures the important concepts within the data set" (Given, 2008, p. 867).

During the thematic analysis, both deductive and inductive approaches were adopted to generate codes and themes (Fereday & Eimear, 2006). My extensive literature review helped me to produce a preliminary set of codes, categories and themes. When I analysed the interview data, segments of interview transcripts that contained the same topic were put together and a 'code' was assigned to that particular topic. Codes that belonged to the same category were then put together. Each category covered numerous related codes (see Table 3.4). For example, "living arrangements", "family migration plan" and "family relationships" were put into the "family support" category; and "Time and reasons for migration" and "migration category" were placed into a category called "migration and settlement".

At the same time, in order to avoid 'professional centrism', I also add newly emerging codes into the framework after I had read through all of the transcripts. Marginal notes and analytic memos were also used to refine the coding. This approach ensured that issues initiated by participants that did not necessarily relate to the researcher's agenda could also be analysed and reported (Roulston, 2010, p. 154). In total, 11 categories were identified from the interview transcripts and labelled into three themes, namely, personal information and migration experience; types and

sources of social support to elderly migrants; and perceptions of quality of life (see

Table 3.4).

Table 3. 4: Codes, Categories and Themes

	Themes		Categories	Example of codes (included but not exclusive)
I	Personal information and migration experience	1	Demographic information	Age; gender; number of children.
		2	Socio-economic status	Education; previous occupation; homeownership.
		3	Migration and settlement	Time and reasons for migration; migration category.
II	Types and sources of social support to elderly migrants	4	Types of support received	Language barrier; tangible support; informational support; emotional support.
		5	Family	Living arrangements; family migration plan; family relationships.
		6	Local Chinese communities	Chinese associations; Chinese friends in New Zealand; Chinese language media.
		7	Governments	Pension; social benefits; health care.
		8	Transnational networks	Friends and kin in China, Australia; travels; phone calls; Internet use.
		9	Integration into local society	Relationships with other ethnic groups; sense of belonging; discrimination.
III	Perceptions of quality of life	10	Quality of life	Aspects related to quality of life; well-being; life attitude.
		11	Life plan	Plans for further migration; future plans.

Generating themes is a cyclical process, for there is a reciprocal relationship

between developing a coding framework and understanding a phenomenon (Braun &

Clarke, 2006). Categories are connected and put into different themes based on the

theoretical framework and the research questions. The three themes in this thesis were interrelated but focused on different aspects of the research topic. Data around Theme One – Personal information and migration experience – describes the personal and migration circumstances of elderly Chinese migrants. This theme contextualises the analysis of the other two themes. Theme Two – Types and sources of support to elderly migrants – focuses on social support as an essential feature of quality of life. Theme Three – Perceptions of the quality of life – addresses the participants' interpretation and evaluation of their overall quality of life.

When reporting the findings, data from the three themes are integrated. The core findings of the thesis are generated from Theme Two, which systematically explaining the sources, types and the exchange process of social support. Findings generated from Theme Three: Perceptions of Quality of Life are integrated into the discussion in order to establish the relationship between social support and quality of life. Apart from contextualising the analysis, data from Theme One: Personal information and migration experience are also discussed through the lens of social support. Doing so provides a comprehensive explanation for elderly Chinese migrants' perceptions of quality of life by taking their socio-economic status and migration experience into consideration.

In this study, all the interview transcripts were analysed in their original language. According to Suh, Kagan and Strumpf (2009), if not handled appropriately, the timing of translation can significantly influence the findings of a study. They

suggest that the post-analysis translation approach can help capture "explicit and implicit meanings embedded in the Asian language, as well culturally specific expressions and concepts" (Suh et al., 2009, p. 198). Therefore, in this study, the interview transcripts were analysed in Chinese and only illustrative verbatim comments of the participants were later translated into English when writing this thesis. The translations of their direct quotations were also edited to ensure that they were grammatically correct in English. The post-analysis translation approach not only saved my time from the full translation, but also avoided losing the original meanings of the participant narratives in the process of translation.

3.8 Some Reflection: Evaluating Qualitative Research

As with quantitative research, reliability and validity are also concerns in qualitative research (Bryman, 2008, p. 376). However, many qualitative researchers argue that the two concepts are originally grounded in quantitative research and therefore need to be altered in a qualitative research context. Lincoln and Guba (1985) proposed four alternative criteria to reliability and validity when evaluating qualitative research, namely credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability.

Credibility, which parallels internal validity, refers to the believability of the research findings. To establish credibility, qualitative researchers should make sure that "the research is carried out according to the canons of good practice" and research data "are interpreted from the perspective of the people being studied" (Bryman, 2008, pp. 377, 385). Therefore, several strategies were used to achieve

credibility in this study. First, the research design was based on a comprehensive survey of the relevant literature. Rigorous data collection procedures were followed. Participants were recruited according to specific criteria. The interviews were conducted by using a pre-designed interview schedule. Adequate time was spent in the fieldwork to generate detailed and abundant data.

I also employed a small scale respondent validation strategy to achieve credibility. After the interviews, I made casual contacts with some participants. I solicited their views of the findings from the research when they asked about my research progress. Some of my interviewees provided corroborating evidence after listening to my findings. In addition, although the semi-structured interviews were the main data source, secondary data from census, statistics and other government and non-government reports were used to corroborate the interview findings.

In terms of transferability, which parallels external validity, Lincoln and Guba (1985, p. 316) point out that whether qualitative research findings "hold in some other context or even in the same context at some other time, is an empirical issue". Given that qualitative research typically entails the intensive study of a specific group in a unique context, the meaning of 'replicable' is different from that in quantitative research. Nonetheless, through "rich and thick description", qualitative researchers can allow readers to "transfer information to other settings and to determine whether the findings can be transferred" due to common characteristics (Creswell, 2007, p. 209). In this study, I make an effort to present research findings using rich verbatim

comments of the participants, accompanied by thick description of the participants, the research context, and the setting of this study. In doing so, I enable readers to judge the possible transferability of finding s to other contexts.

Dependability parallels reliability, and is "a measure of the extent to which a reader, on the basis of the evidence presented, concurs with the findings of the research" (White, 2011, p. 235). Peer review and debriefing are strategies commonly used among qualitative researcher to establish dependability (Creswell, 2007, pp. 208-209; Guba & Lincoln, 2005). A study group of nine PhD students from various disciplines, including media studies, Asian studies, migration studies, sociology and political studies, was organised to review my research findings. These peer debriefers acted as 'devil's advocates', asking difficult questions and providing critical suggestions in regard to the data interpretation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). My two supervisors also provided external checks during the research process and data analysis.

Finally, confirmability refers to the objectivity of research findings. While recognizing that complete objectivity is impossible in social research, researchers should attempt to avoid intruding personal values into research findings (Bryman, 2008, pp. 34, 379). Adopting a position between 'insider' and 'outsider', I endeavoured to maintain my objectivity in this study. Sharing the same cultural and similar migration background, I considered myself a research cohort 'insider'. The 'insider' position enabled me to establish good rapport with the participants, and

allowed me to gather robust data and provide a credible interpretation of the data. On the other hand, throughout the research process I acknowledged my role of being a young researcher in my late 20s. This researcher's role made me an 'outsider' in regard to the elderly participants. This position enabled me to maintain a sense of objectivity. Researchers always occupy the space between insider and outsider, for as Corbin Dwyer and Buckle (2009, p. 61) note, "We may be closer to the insider position or closer to the outsider position, but because our perspective is shaped by our position as a researcher…we cannot occupy one or the other of those positions". Maintaining a position between insider and outsider allowed me to provide robust and valid findings.

While all the above strategies were employed to ensure the credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability of this qualitative research, I also acknowledge that "text is open to subjective interpretation, reflects multiple meanings, [and] is context dependent" (Julien, 2008, p. 120). Therefore, I invite readers to make their own evaluation of this qualitative undertaking.

The next three chapters present the empirical findings of my study. In Chapter Four, by examining the dynamics of family support, I will discuss the impact of that support on the quality of life of elderly Chinese migrants.

Chapter Four: Family Support, Intergenerational Reciprocity and Quality of Life

This chapter begins with a general question: how important is family support to the quality of life of elderly Chinese migrants? Traditionally, family is considered to be an integral part of Chinese culture, and family support, especially the filial piety of adult children, is very likely to have an impact on the quality of life of elderly Chinese people (Chappell & Kusch, 2007; H. J. Liu, Ng, Weatherall, & Loong, 2000). However, these traditional family values and intergenerational relationships have been challenged within the transnational migration context. The culture and values of the host society and the high mobility of family members have created new dynamics in Chinese migrant families. Therefore, it is important to re-evaluate the role of family support in the quality of life of elderly Chinese migrants after migration.

There are four sections in this chapter. Section One presents the demographic profiles and socio-economic status of the two groups of elderly participants in my study – Family Parent migrants and Skilled Migrants. Their different backgrounds and circumstances lead to two different migration and settlement trajectories. In Section Two I analyse the migration motivations and decision-making processes of the two groups of elderly participants, and argue that the reasons for their migration influence the family roles they play after migration. Section Three addresses the living arrangements of my participants and reciprocal support between elderly migrant parents and their adult children, aiming to explore how the dynamics of

intergenerational reciprocity influence the elderly parents' perceptions of quality of life. Based on this exploration, Section Four discusses the impact of family support on the quality of life of elderly Chinese migrants. I argue that the significance of family support to elderly migrants declines over time, and their perception of family support evolves with changes in family dynamics. Intimacy at a distance and maintaining independence are regarded by elderly migrants as new values that enhance their quality of life in old age.

4.1 Two Groups: Family Parents and Elderly Skilled Migrants

As illustrated in Chapter Three, my main research data is based on qualitative interviews with 35 elderly Chinese migrants. Thirty-two of them were parents who had been sponsored by their adult children already living in New Zealand. The other three were skilled migrants who had moved to New Zealand at a much earlier age for work reasons. The two groups of elderly migrants had different demographic and socio-economic features, including levels of education, English language proficiency and homeownership. These factors resulted in their having different living arrangements and experiences, which subsequently impacted on their perceptions of quality of life. In addition, the demographic profiles and socio-economic status of the two groups of elderly migrants presented in this section provide the context for the analysis of their social support needs.

4.1.1 Demographic Profiles and Socio-economic Status

As shown in Table 4.1, the two groups of elderly migrants had different demographic profiles and levels of socio-economic status. The 32 family parent migrants ranged in age from 63 to 86, and were all New Zealand permanent residents or citizens. Fourteen of them were males and 18 were females, with average ages of 74.8 and 64.5 years respectively. Seventeen of them migrated to New Zealand before 2000 while six arrived after 2005 and were relative newcomers. The length of time they had lived in New Zealand varied from three to 17 years, with an average of about 11 years. When the interviews were conducted, only one family parent still worked part-time in New Zealand; most of the other 31 had retired before migrating from China.

Table 4. 1: Profiles of the Two Groups of Participants

Migration categories	Number of participants	Average age	Average years of migration	Tertiary education	NZ Home ownership
Family Parents	32 (14 M, 18 F)	73.4	11	69%	3%
Skilled Migrants	3 (2M, 1F)	72.3	22	100%	100%

Unlike the family parents, the three elderly skilled migrants came to New Zealand in their 40s right after the 1987 Immigration Act had come into effect. They all had a high level of education, two with PhD degrees and one with a Bachelor's degree. Two of them were still working at the time of the interviews, while the other had retired after having worked in New Zealand for 15 years.

Compared with the overall elderly population of both China and New Zealand, the 32 family parents also had relatively high levels of education. Twenty-two (69 per

cent) of them had undertaken tertiary education, while the other 10 (31 per cent) were junior or senior secondary school graduates. According to the Fifth National Census of China in 2000[6], the average length of schooling of people aged 60 and over was approximately four years in total, and the elderly living in cities had higher educational attainment than those living in rural areas (Mu, Wang, Yan, & Gu, 2005). In New Zealand, data derived from a survey of 65-year-old people in 2009 indicated that 22.8 per cent of participants had university or other professional qualifications, 13.9 per cent had school qualification, and 38.4 per cent had no formal qualifications (Ministry of Social Development, 2009). The two sets of data suggest that my participants were more highly educated than most elderly people in both China and New Zealand.

Their high level of education also enabled almost all of my participants to acquire stable jobs (e.g. engineers, university teachers and doctors) with relatively high incomes and social status before migration. Among the 32 family parents, six had retired from state-owned enterprises, 14 had retired from public institutions and government agencies, eight had retired from non-state-owned enterprises, and the remaining four were either self-employed or did not have permanent jobs. Most of my family parent participants received above-average pensions from China[7]. However,

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[6] The Chinese government conducted the Sixth National Census in 2010, but the data related to education by age were not available at the time of my research.

[7] Pensions in China are contributory and occupation-related. People who retired from government agencies and public institutions, such as public hospitals and universities, usually receive higher pensions than those who retired from the private sectors. The amount of money is also determined by the average income of the pensioners' place of residence. Thus, people live in large or coastal cities usually have higher retirement incomes than those who live in interior areas. China also has different pension policies for urban and rural areas. Given that all the participants in this study migrated from urban China, policies related to the rural pension system in China are not mentioned in this thesis.

their incomes were very low after the pensions were converted into New Zealand currency. For example, a professional who retired from a college in a medium-sized city received a pension of approximately 50,000 Chinese yuan (around 10,000 New Zealand dollars) per annum. The money could maintain a comfortable standard of living in China, but can barely sustain basic needs in New Zealand. A majority of my participants had retirement incomes from China of no more than 5,000 New Zealand dollars per annum, which is less than half of New Zealand Superannuation. For this reason, a large proportion of family parent migrants had to rely on social benefits from the New Zealand government if they wanted to live independently from their adult children. In Chapter Five, I will discuss in more detail the relationship between New Zealand social benefits and the quality of life of elderly Chinese migrants.

High levels of education do not necessarily mean that the migrants had good English language proficiency. Except for the three skilled migrants, English language was reported to be a key barrier for most family parents. Although more than half of them had lived in New Zealand for over ten years, they still had difficulty in mastering the English language. During the interviews, only three of them reported that they could speak intelligible English. The rest of them were essentially living in Chinese-language surroundings.

Ownership of a dwelling is another factor considered in this study as a means to measure socio-economic status. This is not only because scholars have suggested housing to be a specific research perspective when studying new Chinese migrants

(Painter, Yang, & Yu, 2003), but also because it was identified by my participants as an essential factor in their quality of life. In theory, the elderly are more likely than younger people to own their own homes, and to be mortgage-free due to their decades of earnings (Howden-Chapman, Signal, & Crane, 1999). However, there are additional factors influencing the rates of home ownership among elderly migrants. In this study, home ownership was markedly different between the two groups of migrants. The three skilled migrants all owned their own dwellings in New Zealand, and home ownership to an extent reflected the process of their settlement. In contrast, only one family parent owned an apartment in New Zealand. The remaining 31 did not own any property after migration even though their pre-migration home ownership rate was 100 per cent. When the interviews were conducted, over 80 per cent of them still owned dwellings in China. My interview data also showed that home ownerships in both home and host countries had an enormous impact on these migrants' living arrangements, their intergenerational relationships, transnational movements, and even their further migration plans. These effects will be analysed later in Chapter Six.

The above discussion shows that most of my participants, including the family parent migrants and the skilled migrants, originally belonged to the middle or upper-middle class when they lived in China, as they had high-level education and occupations. The homogeneous nature of these elderly Chinese migrants is largely shaped by the immigration policy of New Zealand. The host country is more likely to open the door to potential migrants with high level of formal education and sound financial status, which means that migrants with considerable income or reliable

financial sponsors have a better chance of moving to New Zealand than those who are of lower socio-economic status.

The preferences of New Zealand immigration policy also resulted in a relatively small gender gap among my participants in terms of their education and occupation in contrast to Chinese migrnts living in other Western countries (Broese Van Groenou, Glaser, Tomassini, & Jacobs, 2006; Chiu, Hsieh, Mau, & Lee, 2005; Cook, 2010; Yi, Yuzhi, & George, 2003). For example, data from the Fifth National Census of China in 2000 showed that only 34.3 per cent of older women aged over 60 had undertaken formal education, mainly primary and secondary education. This figure was much lower than that of older men, which was 71.6 percent (Mu, 2005). Labour force participation rates of women were also lower than for men in China, given that women are expected to do more work in the family by providing care and doing household chores (D. U. Yang & Wang, 2010). In addition, the official retirement age for women in China is five to ten years younger than for men. In the contributory pension system in China, the low labour force participation rates and earlier retirement age of women mean that elderly women are more likely to have lower pensions than men after their retirement and have a higher risk to experience old age poverty. In 2004, the poverty rate for elderly females aged over 60 living in urban China was 18.76 per cent compared to 10.89 per cent for elderly men (D. U. Yang & Wang, 2010).

In my study, 75 per cent of male participants and 58 per cent of female participants had undertaken tertiary education, as Table 4.2 indicates. All my

participants had stable jobs before migration to New Zealand except for one woman who was a full-time housewife and mother. The occupational backgrounds of the male and female participants were very similar. About half of the males and females worked in government agencies, state-owned enterprises, or public institutions such as universities and public hospitals before their migration. Their similar occupational backgrounds also suggest that the gap between their pre-retirement incomes was not very significant. However, given that the female participants retired earlier than the males, their retirement incomes were usually lower than the elderly men. It seems that the income gap between the elderly men and women could be wider after retirement.

Table 4. 2: Socio-economic Status of Participants by Gender

Gender	Average age	Tertiary education	Home ownership post-migration		Pre-retirement occupation	
			In NZ	In CN	Private Sector or self-employed	State-owned enterprises or public institutions
Male (N=16)	74.19	75%	12%	84%	43.7%	56.3%
Female (N=19)	65.95	58%	10.5%	69%	47.4%	47.4%

As some scholars argue, migration transforms women's lives in particularly gendered ways, which cause more gendered inequalities post-migration (Cook, 2010; Silvey, 2004). However, data generated from my study do not support this argument. Among my participants, the gender gap in home ownership and income was narrower among my participants after their migration to New Zealand. Reasons for this will be dissussed in Chapter Five when I analyse their eligibility for the New Zealand pension and other social benefits.

4.1.2 Two Trajectories of Post-migration Family Life

The different demographic and socio-economic features of the two elderly migrant groups resulted in different post-migration experiences both within and outside their households. The family parent migrants usually migrated after their retirement to provide practical help to their children and grandchildren. Thus, most of them did not plan to work and were also not able to work in the host country because of their poor English language proficiency. Although they originally belonged to the middle or upper-middle class in China, and had high-level education and occupations, most of them experienced an obvious drop in socio-economic status after migration.

Having poor English language skills and limited independent income in New Zealand, elderly family parents were more likely than the skilled migrants to depend on their adult children. On the one hand, the dependence lessened the practical difficulties of settling. On the other hand, dependence also led to the loss of their traditional parental prestige and authority within the family. One participant, Mrs. Yin showed her discontentment when she talked about her income in New Zealand. She said: "I can't speak English, so I can't do a lot of things by myself. I even don't know how to withdraw money from the ATM. My daughter keeps my bank card for me. I have nothing."

Due to poor English language proficiency, Mrs. Yin had to give up her financial autonomy, which partly led to her subordinate position in family relationships. In contrast to Mrs. Yin, some participants felt they were losing their

traditional parental prestige for other reasons. Mr. Wei, for example, had a lot of disagreements with his son and daughter-in-law who believed that their father's ideas and opinions were outdated. As Mr. Wei said:

> They thought I'm wrong, about a lot of things, for example, the education of my grandchildren. I was trying my best to not speak out my opinions, or even to keep my mouth shut. … My son also complained a lot of trivial things about me, the way how I talk in public, the way how I dress. I think I always look fresh and decent in public, but he just thought I'm wrong. I don't understand.

Similar to Mr. Wei, another two participants also felt the loss of parental authority in the family because their knowledge and ideas were not considered by their adult children to fit into the new society. Such power dynamics had a long-term impact on their intergenerational relationships, their social participation, their transnational activities, and on their quality of life as a whole.

In contrast, the three skilled migrants all came to New Zealand at a relatively younger age for work reasons. As pioneer migrants in their families, they faced more challenges settling down, such as finding a job, looking for accommodation, and establishing social relationships. However, these tough experiences over the long term gradually turned into power resources. Unlike the family parent migrants, the three elderly skilled migrants showed more autonomy and power than their adult children, and expressed a stronger willingness to pursue an independent lifestyle. Hence, the

family dynamics seemed to be distinctly different between the two groups of elderly migrants.

Findings in this section show that the elderly family parents and the skilled migrants varied in regard to their socio-economic status and migration/settlement trajectories. The shift in their socio-economic status post-migration not only determined the types and sources of social support that they considered as essential, but also shaped their perceptions of quality of life vis-à-vis such support. What is more, different migration trajectories also suggest that these two groups of elderly migrants had different expectations in regard to family support, thus engendering different power relations within the family. These expectations and power relations provide the context for the interpretation of intergenerational support exchanges in the family. This, in turn, helps to provide an understanding of the elderly migrants' perceptions of the relationship between family support and quality of life. This will be discussed in detail later in this chapter.

4.2 Motivation, Negotiation and Migration Decision-making

The two groups of elderly Chinese migrants also provided different reasons for migration. For the 32 interviewees who came under the family reunification stream, reuniting with their adult children and fulfilling grandparent obligations were two prevalent motivations. Given this family dynamic, the migration decisions of elderly family parents were usually made in the context of the wider family. Negotiation between the generations played an important role during the migration process.

In contrast, the three skilled migrants in my study reported other reasons for their migration. Having no family members living in New Zealand, they were pioneers seeking better career opportunities and a more stable social environment. Their migration decision was usually made by themselves after discussion with their partners. The intergenerational dynamics had little impact on their migration process.

4.2.1 Negotiation between Generations

As noted, the 32 family parents suggested that their migration process was usually negotiated between the generations. Young Chinese migrants in New Zealand often encouraged their elderly parents to come to provide childcare assistance, to experience the Western lifestyle and to share the benefits of life in New Zealand. Nine of my participants expressed clearly that, although they had not initially intended to migrate, their strong sense of family obligation greatly impacted their decision, especially when their adult children were experiencing post-migration difficulties.

Many young migrants recently arriving in New Zealand encounter work-family balance issues and find their lives tougher than in China (Ip & Friesen, 2001; Meares et al., 2010). Within New Zealand's 'liberal' welfare regime (Esping-Andersen, 1990), migrant parents need to work harder and for longer hours to establish themselves in the new country and to qualify for government subsidies for childcare. Many face difficulties finding suitable and affordable childcare services or informal support (Baker, 2011; New Zealand Government, 2006; Work and Income New Zealand, 2012b). Therefore, a considerable proportion of Chinese migrants

sponsored the immigration of their own parents to New Zealand with the intention that

the elderly would offer care for their grandchildren and help with domestic tasks while

the young couples work.

Nineteen of my participants described the migration as 'a win-win solution' for

their families. The adult children could receive practical help while the elderly migrants

had a chance to reunite with their children and enjoy the relatively good environment

and climate of New Zealand. In public discourse in China, New Zealand has a good

reputation for its green environment and relaxed lifestyles. This view was reinforced

after China experienced several food safety scandals and heavy air pollution in recent

years. Under these circumstances, people who have the opportunity to migrate to New

Zealand are considered as being better-off, living in a cleaner environment and having

a higher quality of life. As Mrs. Zhang, who migrated to New Zealand in 2008 when

she was 63, said:

> My son and daughter-in-law had a new born baby. They couldn't
>
> afford to hire a baby-sitter, and they both want to work. So, they
>
> wanted my husband and I to come to help. You know, New Zealand
>
> is a good place for older people. Our immigration is good for them,
>
> as well as for us. It is a win-win situation.

This quote highlights the point made earlier that many Chinese migrant families'

migration plans aimed to benefit the extended family. The younger couples looked

forward to the practical assistance from their parents so that they could settle down

more easily. The elderly parents, in return, expected their children's support for their own adaptation to the new environment. Therefore, the reciprocity was embedded in the whole process of migration and settlement, and later became a key factor in their family relationships.

Over one-third of the family parents originally entered New Zealand with a temporary visa for a short stay (usually six months), but later applied for permanent residency or New Zealand citizenship because their children's households still needed sustained help, or they wanted to stay close to their children as they grew older. The short-term visit provided an opportunity for some elderly migrants to experience life in New Zealand and allowed them time to make further migration plans. The elderly migrants who had an initial short visit were more likely to have a better understanding of their potential post-migration lives. Mrs. Shi, for instance, had a chance to visit New Zealand in 1995 before she applied for permanent residency in 1997. She said during the interview: "I had a short visit to New Zealand before. The second time I came here, I felt I knew a lot about this place. I felt differently from the last visit. I started to enjoy the weather, and didn't feel that lonely."

The migration of elderly parents was an essential part of the 'chain migration' of some Chinese families (M. Ip, 2006b). According to the previous immigration policy[8], if a New Zealand citizen or resident's sibling is the last person in the family remaining in the home country, he or she can apply for residency and reunify with the

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[8] Focusing more explicitly on the economic benefits of migration for New Zealand, the "sibling and adult children category" was cancelled in July 2012 (Immigration New Zealand, 2012a, 2012b).

family in New Zealand (Immigration New Zealand, 2012a). Thus, before this law was changed in 2012, some elderly parents utilised their own migration to help the last family member in China to come to New Zealand under the family reunification scheme. In these cases, the migration decisions of elderly parents involved significant negotiations with additional family members. Although it is considered a benefit to the family as a whole, using their own migration to fulfil such a goal was sometimes seen as a sacrifice by the elderly. One of my participants, Mrs. Yin, who was in her mid-60s, pointed out clearly that:

> We [my husband and I] wanted to visit China, but we had to stay in New Zealand for quite a long time because our other son was applying for New Zealand residency [under the sibling and adult children category]. According to the policy, we cannot leave New Zealand. My husband returned to China only ten days after my son successfully migrated to New Zealand.

Fulfilling family obligations tended to place the elderly Chinese migrants in a subordinate position in the negotiation process. They believed that it was worth the sacrifice if their actions can benefit their children. Such sacrifice, however, naturally raises their own expectations of filial piety from their children.

Compared to the family parents, the migration decision-making of the three skilled migrants involved little intergenerational negotiation. As the pioneer migrants, they were more concerned with their own settlement. Discussion between husband

and wife was a process of rational calculation, which required a sophisticated understanding of the host society. The decisive factors included job opportunities, household incomes, social and natural environment, and social welfare. Mr. Hua was one of the three skilled migrant participants in my study. He came to New Zealand in 1992 when he was in his mid-40s. He recalled during the interview: "I was looking for a permanent position… then I got an offer in New Zealand. They asked me if we would come. I discussed with my wife. Well, New Zealand is far away, but we wanted to try."

The economic reforms in China since the 1980s also prompted the emigration decisions of my skilled migrant participants. Migrating to a Western developed country became a feasible option for these people to seek better opportunities. Mr. Cheng, for example, migrated to New Zealand in 1988 to pursue his career:

> In the 1980s, the economic reform in China just started. Things had
>
> not been on track yet. The research institution I worked in cut down
>
> my research fund… I was in my late 40s, and was afraid of losing
>
> my last opportunity to continue research. So I decided to go to New
>
> Zealand to do my PhD… My wife came to join me two years later.

The above evidence shows a clear difference between family parents and skilled migrants in their migration negotiation process. While intergenerational negotiation played an important role in the family parents' decision to migrate, this was not the case for skilled migrants. As a result, family support was usually considered very

important for the family parents to their quality of life, but the skilled migrants had much lower expectations of support from their adult children.

4.2.2 Negotiation within the Elderly Couple: Gender Differences

Although intergenerational negotiations played an important role in the migration process, negotiation between the elderly couples themselves also influenced the decision-making. Compared to males, my female participants showed a higher propensity to base the migration decision on family obligations, as parents or spouses.

Female family parents in my study tended to show a stronger willingness than their husbands to migrate for the sake of their children's needs. They were also more likely to migrate at a relatively young age to fulfil grandparent obligations. In this study, 12 of 19 (63 per cent) female participants migrated to New Zealand in their 50s or early 60s when their adult children asked them for help. This was facilitated by the fact that the retirement age of women in China is younger than that of men. They were more able than their husbands to retire early and migrate without job constraints. In addition, mothers and grandmothers are usually the main caregivers in the family (Musil, Warner, Stoller, & Andersen, 2004; National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2004). Young skilled migrants, who are eager for domestic help, tend to ask their mothers rather than their fathers. Therefore, elderly mothers are more likely to shoulder heavier family burdens than their husbands.

In contrast, some male participants were reluctant to migrate, giving up their

stable lives and moving away from their long-established personal relationships in China. Mr. and Mrs. Yu, for example, had a heated discussion about their own migration after two of their three children had come to New Zealand in the 1990s. The husband did not want to migrate because he thought migration was meaningless for elderly people when life was very good and stable in China. However, Mrs. Yu, who had visited New Zealand temporarily in 1998 to take care of her grandchild, insisted on applying for permanent residency because of the practical convenience it provided (she wanted to travel frequently and freely between China and New Zealand to see her children and grandchildren). Eventually, after weighing up various factors, Mr. Yu agreed to compromise at the expense of his established and stable status in China and migrated with his wife to New Zealand.

Similarly, spousal obligations also impacted greatly on the decision making of female skilled migrants. One skill migrant participant, Mr. Hua's comment shows how his wife sacrificed her own career to migrate to New Zealand with him. "My wife had some frustrating times, because she had a good job before we came here… My wife didn't work [in New Zealand] for about two years. But afterwards she found a part-time job, worked four days per week." Given that I only included three skilled migrant participants in my study, it is difficult to generalise my argument based on the small sample. However, as previous studies have demonstrated, women are more likely to give up their own career in the home country if their husbands had better career opportunities in the country of destination (Lee, Chan, Bradby, & Green, 2002; Pedraza, 1991). They are also more likely to work part-time post-migration and spend

more time on caring for their families.

The above findings show clear gender differences in migration decision-making. For both the elderly family parents and skilled migrants, women showed a higher propensity to take into consideration the whole family in their migration decisions. This finding corroborates previous research which indicates that Chinese women are more likely to migrate as part of a 'family strategy' (Lee et al., 2002; Tang, Oatley, & Toner, 2007).

Findings in this section also suggest that the entire migration decision-making process of elderly Chinese migrants is usually a part of their plan for the entire family. For the family parent migrants, in particular, negotiations before migration were greatly influenced by the assumption of reciprocal support from adult children. It also indicates that the family roles they played in their post-migration lives were defined by their family-oriented migration motives. In the next section, I continue exploring family dynamics based on reciprocity.

4.3 Dynamics of Reciprocal Support within Chinese Migrant Families

Intergenerational reciprocity is frequently invoked in Chinese migrant families. As illustrated in the last section, an overwhelming number of elderly Chinese migrants come to New Zealand with the intention of providing practical assistance to their children's households and to fulfil their perceived obligations. They typically migrate due to family roles and obligations defined by, and rooted in, Chinese culture. These

roles and obligations are embedded in their post-migration lives, as they tend to define themselves as caregivers and arrange their lives around the needs of their children and grandchildren.

On the other hand, elderly Chinese migrants also expect to receive reciprocal support from their adult children and to enjoy their retirement in New Zealand. Most elderly family parents in this study claimed that at the time of migration they did not worry about their settlement at all because they considered that their children would take charge of their daily lives within and outside the household. The expectation clearly revealed a pattern of intergenerational reciprocity.

In this section, I focus on the dynamics of support exchange within Chinese migrant families. I also seek to explore the types and levels of support exchanged between generations in various types of living arrangements. By doing so, I intend to identify the connections between the dynamics of intergenerational reciprocity and the perceptions of quality of life held by elderly Chinese migrants.

4.3.1 Living Arrangements and Intergenerational Reciprocity

Many studies have identified that living arrangements have an impact on the well-being of elderly migrants and their families, as well as their reliance upon social support (Edmonston & Lee, 2012; Wilmoth, 2001). The common types of living arrangements by elderly migrants include living independently (with or without a spouse), living with children, living with relatives, and living with non-relatives (Edmonston & Lee, 2012).

Studies conducted in Canada suggest that the choices of living arrangements of elderly Chinese migrants are usually influenced by their cultural preferences and individual characteristics, for instance, financial status, English language ability, education, gender, and age (Edmonston & Lee, 2012; M. E. Gee, 2000).

Living arrangements, however, are not decisions based only on elderly migrants' personal circumstances. My interview data show that the dynamics within the migrant families and intergenerational relationships also have a strong influence on their choice of living arrangements. From this point of view, the quality of life of elderly migrants was not simply influenced by their living arrangements *per se*, but by the intergenerational dynamics behind the living arrangement. Therefore, in this study, I identify intergenerational reciprocity as a key element which explains why different types of living arrangements can result in different perceptions of quality of life. Given the family dynamics focus, I divide the living arrangements of my participants into two categories – living with adult children and living apart from adult children.

A large majority of elderly Chinese migrants in my study had experienced changes in living arrangements since their migration to New Zealand. Most of the family parents co-resided with their adult children at the early stage of settlement, but later moved out of their children's homes. The duration of intergenerational co-residence varied in different families according to the needs of their children and grandchildren and the relationships among family members. When the interviews were conducted, ten participants (six males, four females; all family parents) were

co-residing with their children and grandchildren, while 25 (ten males, 15 females; 22 family parents, three skilled migrants) were living apart from their adult children.

In contrast to the 32 family parents, the three elderly skilled migrants showed less interest in intergenerational co-residence. They were more likely and more capable of owning their own homes and of living apart from their adult children. All three skilled migrants expressed their belief during the interviews that intergenerational co-residence did not fit into the New Zealand tradition. They only lived with their adult children for a short time to provide temporary help when necessary. They preferred to enjoy the freedom and avoid family conflicts by keeping some distance from their adult children. Therefore, these families showed different dynamics from the other group of migrants.

Most of the participants who co-resided with their adult children would turn to their children for support, be it practical, financial, informational or emotional. As shown in Table 4.3, 90 per cent of them relied on their adult children for practical and informational support, half of them received financial support from their adult children, and all of them relied on their children for emotional support. In comparison, a smaller proportion of those who lived apart from their children relied on support from their adult children. Eighty per cent of them reported that they had asked for practical support from their adult children, and 88 per cent relied on their children for emotional support. Only 28 per cent of them turned to their children for financial and informational support. Living apart from their adult children, these participants

preferred to rely on themselves for their daily routine, and only asked their children for help when necessary (for instance, when they needed to see a doctor or to do some heavy duties).

Table 4. 3: Support from Adult Children by Living Arrangements

Types of support from adult children	Living arrangements	
	Intergenerational co-residence (N=10)	Living apart from adult children (N=25)
Practical support	9 (90%)	20 (80%)
Financial support	5 (50%)	7 (28%)
Informational support	9 (90%)	7 (28%)
Emotional support	10 (100%)	22 (88%)

The ten participants who co-resided with their adult children took responsibility for almost all the domestic chores within the household, including cooking, cleaning and childcare. The rationale behind such a mode of support exchange was that by shouldering domestic chores, the older family members could help the young migrants to focus on their work, and the elderly would enjoy close bonds with children and grandchildren. On the other hand, the participants who lived apart from their adult children had a comparatively lower frequency of exchange support with their adult children. They only looked after their grandchildren occasionally, and provided a small amount of domestic help in their adult children's households. According to these participants, this low frequency of support exchange was made possible due to support from outside the family (such as the ethnic community and government), which will be discussed in Chapter Five.

It is evident therefore that intergenerational reciprocity was closely related to living arrangements among my participants. Co-residence seems to result in a high frequency of support exchange between the elderly migrants and their children, while those living apart from their children tend to exchange support much less frequently. What is more, and most importantly, the intergenerational support exchange in the co-residential households was not always balanced, resulting in conflicts which impact negatively on the elderly migrants' quality of life.

4.3.2 Imbalanced Reciprocity in Co-residential Households

Imbalanced reciprocity in co-residential households was commonly experienced by my participants regardless of their living arrangements at the time of the interviews. Almost all my participants had experienced intergenerational co-residence after they migrated to New Zealand. Co-residing with their children and grandchildren, my participants provided extensive support to the younger generations. However, more than one-third of my participants believed that the support they received was not commensurate to the support they gave. This perceived imbalance in reciprocity undermined family relationships, and subsequently decreased the elderly migrants' perceptions of quality of life.

Providing Support to Children and Grandchildren

The major support provided by elderly parents to their children's households included looking after grandchildren and taking responsibility for domestic chores. My interviewees had spent six years on average looking after their grandchildren.

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Co-residential living arrangements usually turned the elderly parents into 'full-time' caregivers in the family. Most participants reported that they 'looked after their grandchildren for 24 hours every day', 'took grandchildren to and from school', and 'did almost all the domestic chores'.

Generally, grandmothers performed more housework and provided more childcare than their husbands if the elderly couple co-resided with the same child. However, in some families, the elderly couple lived separately with different children in order to provide help to each of them simultaneously. By doing so, they believed that they had maximized their contribution to the children's households although they had sacrificed a lot in their personal life.

What Chinese migrant grandparents offered to their grandchildren was more than physical care. They also contributed to the process of imbuing cultural values into their upbringing. Chinese culture cherishes family education from grandparents to grandchildren (Da, 2003). Within the migration context, the elderly Chinese migrants felt an even stronger responsibility to teach Chinese language and culture norms to their grandchildren. Mr. Wei, for example, migrated to New Zealand with his wife in 1997. Providing care for their grandson was the primary reason for their migration. He commented on his grandson's education during the interview:

> I spent my own money to send my grandson to learn Chinese. There
>
> was a Chinese language class in our Chinese Association. I sent my
>
> grandson there twice a week, eight dollars each time, only half an

hour. I'd wait for him while he was in class. I also put a lot of energy

tutoring him at home. I made many many cards, Chinese characters,

hundreds of them. You know, there's nowhere we can buy them in

New Zealand.

Although the elderly believed that they had put much effort into socialising their grandchildren, their effort was not necessarily appreciated by the young parents. Sometimes, the young parents even blamed them for bringing burdens to their children. As Mr. Wei further commented:

I thought teaching him [my grandson] Chinese at young age was

very important… My son and daughter-in-law didn't think so. We

had very different opinions… They thought I had interfered too

much [in terms of the grandchildren's education].

This example shows clearly that the support provided by the elderly migrants to their grandchildren was not appreciated by all young parents. This mismatch in perceptions – the perception of providing extensive support held by the elderly, and the perception of bringing extra burdens to the children held by the young parents – resulted in disappointment to the elderly migrants.

In addition to assisting with childcare and domestic chores, elderly Chinese migrants provided financial support to their children. In this study, almost all my participants had invested a considerable amount of money into their children's migration. Within the long-term co-residential households, many elderly parents also

gave their life savings to their children at the time of their arrival. Once they qualified

for New Zealand social benefits or superannuation, most of them gave this money to

the adult children they co-resided with, as a form of 'room and board'. By doing so,

they believed they would not become an economic burden to their children.

Over one-third of my participants talked frankly about how they had helped

their children with the down payment and regular mortgage on their home. They also

gave financial support when their children suffered unemployment or when they

wanted to start their own business. Providing monetary support to children when they

needed it was viewed as a parental obligation. Mr. Ai and his wife had been living

with their son's family since migration to New Zealand in 2004. His comment revealed

this point clearly:

> Because we live together [with my son], we didn't manage our
>
> money. We have enough anyways…We sold our apartment [in
>
> China]; we brought the money and our savings [to my son] ... We
>
> felt obligated to pay for his house. It was quite a large amount for
>
> the down payment. Of course, Chinese parents are all like this.

Another participant, Mr. Hong, admitted during the interview: "It's natural for

the children to spend their parents' money, but we won't financially depend on our

children." Twenty of my participants expressed that they understood the difficulties

faced by their adult children in post-migration life; therefore, most elderly parents were

generous with their money.

Together with financial support, the practical assistance given by elderly parents successfully helped young couples to cope with multiple post-migration challenges. Over half of my participants stated that their own migration to New Zealand enabled their daughters or daughters-in-law to return to the labour market soon after childbirth. Having older parents help with childcare and housework also enabled young couples to work longer hours and have higher incomes, which facilitated the establishment of the young couples in the host country. During the interview, Mrs. Zhang reflected that:

> I think I have given a lot of help to my son. Because of my migration, my son and daughter-in-law could both work. Before I came here, one of them had to stay at home for childcare. Besides, they have no worries and feel at ease when I look after their baby. Thus, they can focus on their work.

Studies on elderly people have demonstrated that giving support contributes to a good quality of life (Bowling, 2005a; Kim et al., 2000; Wentowski, 1981). My study largely confirms this conclusion. Most of my interviewees felt a sense of fulfilment because they provided valuable assistance to their children's households. Some participants even perceived their unpaid housework and childcare as 'an indirect contribution to New Zealand'. The care-giving role played by elderly Chinese parents fostered a sense of self-worth and confidence. All of these positive perceptions added quality to their lives.

Receiving Support from Children

While providing support to their children's households, the elderly Chinese migrants in return received various types of support from their adult children. The support encompassed almost all aspects of the elderly parents' life, both within and outside the household.

Practical and informational support was the most common and the most recognized type of support that the elderly received from their adult children. This ranged from providing transportation, making appointments with doctors, doing shopping, to translating English documents. My study shows that this support was essential to the daily life of the elderly migrants in an unfamiliar environment. Many of the participants described themselves as 'deaf, mute and blind, and understanding nothing' that was going on around them. Therefore, they valued greatly the practical and informational support given to them by their adult children. Mr. Ai described how he and his wife benefited from intergenerational co-residence:

> We can't speak English, and we can't drive. We need help when we
>
> go to see our doctors. Besides, we receive many letters and phone
>
> calls (from English speakers), we can't handle these. Living together
>
> with my son and daughter-in-law, all these difficulties are resolved.
>
> They arrange everything for us, like seeing doctors and shopping.

This quote shows that co-residence helps to facilitate the adaptation of elderly Chinese migrants. As new migrants in a Western country with different cultural and

social systems, these elderly migrants needed a considerable amount of practical and informational support to familiarise themselves with their new home. The lack of established social networks in the host country and their limited English language skills meant that for these elderly migrants, their adult children were usually the only source of such support, especially at the early stage of settlement. As early successful settlement is crucial to migrants' long-term well-being (New Zealand Department of Labour, 2009, p. 116), the practical and informational support facilitating their adaptation contributes to the elderly migrants' post-migration quality of life.

My participants also received financial support from their adult children. The financial support was usually not in direct monetary form, but in the form of food, accommodation, and in other necessities. One of the participants, Mrs. Wei, said: "food and accommodation are all provided by my son." Another participant, Mr. Ai, mentioned that apart from basic daily supplies, his son and daughter-in-law also bought other things for him: "for example, my daughter-in-law buys health food and medicine for us. Other necessities too… and gifts for festivals and birthdays…"

For many elderly Chinese migrants, material support symbolises emotional care and filial piety by their adult children. In fact, such emotional care is what elderly migrants expect and want most from their children. This is clearly manifested in Mrs. Hui's comments about her son. "You see this new rug? My son bought this for me, 2000 dollars. My son buys all sorts of things for me, rice, flour, cooking oil, meat… I don't need to do anything… my son is extremely filial to me… I'm so happy!"

Other participants also indicated that their adult children provided emotional support to them, usually by enriching their daily life in various ways. Some adult children would help them to combat loneliness by teaching them how to drive so that they could get around, or to use the computer and the Internet for entertainment. Others installed satellite TV or even set up table tennis at home so that their parents would feel less bored. Many would take their elderly parents on sightseeing trips during weekends and holidays.

Most participants felt satisfied with the support they received from their children at the early stage of their migration. However, such satisfaction dropped significantly over time in a co-residential situation. Apart from conflicts caused by generational differences, the major reason for this drop in satisfaction was a perceived imbalanced reciprocity in the support exchange process.

Unmet Expectations: Imbalanced Reciprocity

The above discussion provides evidence for the perceived imbalanced intergenerational reciprocity in the co-residential situation. As discussed in Chapter Two, support exchanges within the parent-child relationship are usually heteromorphic reciprocity – the things exchanged may be concretely different but considered equal in value by the actors in the situation. Many participants provided extensive practical and financial support to their adult children with the expectation of receiving emotional support – recognition, respect, and gratitude, for instance. When this expectation was not met, the elderly migrants felt overburdened, exploited, and

subordinated.

Among the 35 participants, 23 expressed clearly that they were willing to do whatever was in their capacity to help their children and grandchildren as long as such contributions were recognized and they were respected. Mrs. Ai, who was 67 years old when she was interviewed, talked frankly: "I feel I'm still young now. I can do a lot [housework for them], but I have my requirement – they must respect me."

Unfortunately, however, a large number of my participants felt offended because they felt that their dedication to their children's household was devalued or insufficiently appreciated. Mr. Hong, who was in his 70s, said during the interview:

> I didn't feel happy when we looked after their child... We took care
>
> of everything and they did nothing at all. We felt exhausted … we
>
> cooked for the whole family… but they were inconsiderate to us,
>
> and that made us unhappy.

Similarly, Mrs. Yin showed her discontent with her son-in-law when she described the intergenerational relationship in her family:

> Looking after my grandson is an onerous job. But my son-in-law
>
> takes our contributions lightly. He insisted that they would be able to
>
> handle everything without the help of me and my husband. He said
>
> "if you want to go back to China, do as you wish. We can survive
>
> without you." … This hurt me so bad… My husband and I are so

angry.

The above two examples show that some participants felt very unhappy about their intergenerational relationships because their contributions to the family were not recognized, and they had not received the respect they expected. In the migration context, many elderly migrants experienced a loss of power in the host society, which highlighted the importance of receiving their children's respect. English language barriers, poor social capital, a lack of familiarity with the host country's social systems, and financial constraints all result in elderly migrants being placed in a subordinate position in the parent-child relationship (Blau, 1964; Treas & Mazumdar, 2002). Therefore, being recognized and respected within the family was crucial to maintaining their self-esteem and well-being.

Feelings of loneliness and isolation due to their time-consuming childcare and domestic chores further accentuated their perception of being overburdened and even exploited. Participants often felt tethered to their children's households, and did not have time and opportunity to socialize. As Mrs. Yin complained:

> If I lived by myself, I could go to a lot of Chinese associations to
>
> attend activities. But now I can't go anywhere. I have to look after
>
> my daughter's child and her house. Elderly Chinese here have a pet
>
> phrase: we are free nannies and guard dogs. How sad we are!

Having few social relationships outside the family led my participants to place high emotional demands on their family members. As almost half of my participants

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indicated, if those needs for emotional support were not satisfied, they would experience a drop in quality of life.

In regards to financial issues, most of the elderly Chinese migrants had invested heavily in their children because they endorsed the traditional Chinese norm that children would support their parents in old age. As shown earlier, many Chinese parents contributed their savings or even sold their properties in China to give financial support to their children in New Zealand. After some time co-residing with their children, some elderly migrants in my study realised that even though they had provided much, they did not receive the expected care in return. Mr. Tong, 63 years old when he was interviewed, paid all the bills for his son's education and migration to New Zealand. When he first came to the country in 2007, Mr. Tong thought he would lead a relaxed retired life and be well supported by his son. He was soon disillusioned when he realised that instead of supporting him in old age, his son expected him to continue to work in New Zealand. He was shocked when he found out that he needed to pay to live in his son's house. Mr. Tong commented:

> I had thought that it's perfectly justified for a father to live in his son's house [for free]. I have raised you for more than 20 years. Can't you just support me in old age for just a few years?!… According to the Chinese tradition, the purpose of raising a son is to guarantee that I would be taken good care of when I'm old… Now, it seems that such a notion doesn't make sense here [in New Zealand].

For some other participants, it was more than not getting good care; they felt they were being financially exploited by their adult children. Mrs. Xiu who was 75 years old complained during the interview:

> My son wanted to start a small business, but he didn't have enough
>
> money. He wanted me to sell my apartment in China to support him.
>
> He promised me that he would buy me a new apartment in China
>
> when he earned enough money. He succeeded and bought several
>
> houses here. But none for me in China… I don't have a home in
>
> China now. I could never return to my home country.

Mrs. Xiu was not alone in such a situation. Other participants also reported similar experiences. In co-residential households, elderly Chinese migrants were at a higher risk of losing control of their money after migration. Their lack of knowledge of international bank transactions or of the English language forced them to hand financial control to their adult children. Whether the elderly parents gave up their financial autonomy ungrudgingly or not, their lack of an independent income reinforced a sense of being controlled by their adult children. Mr. Zhou, who was in his early 70s, commented in a self-mocking tone: "I gave my money to my children when I came here. Later, when I wanted to use my money to make a small investment, they didn't agree. It's easy to give them money, but difficult to get that money back."

Financial issues within the family had a tremendous impact on these migrants' future plans and elderly care. Participants who sacrificed their own properties or life

savings for their children had more concerns about their later years. They were less likely to be able to afford living separately from their adult children even when they were experiencing family conflicts. They were also more likely to subordinate their own needs to those of their adult children. Once their children made new plans or migrated again, they faced a higher risk of being 'abandoned' and experiencing poverty in their old age.

In many cases, imbalanced intergenerational reciprocity forced the elderly migrants to lower their expectations of support from their adult children. They started to re-adjust their perceptions of their children's filial piety. Realising that getting commensurate support from their adult children was impossible, many elderly migrants attempted to achieve a new balance by moving out of their children's house and reducing support to their adult children. Hence, for them independence became more salient than depending on their children for support, and it has increasingly been considered by some elderly migrants as a more realistic means for enhancing their quality of life.

4.3.3 Balanced Reciprocity in Independent Living Arrangements

Living apart from adult children helped some elderly participants to rectify the imbalanced intergenerational reciprocity they experienced during co-residence. Although the frequency of support exchange was much lower than before, elderly migrants reported a higher level of well-being and quality of life when having independent living arrangements.

Fifteen participants in my study felt less burdened when they lived apart from their adult children. They no longer needed to do domestic chores for their children's households, and only looked after grandchildren 'part-time' or occasionally when the young parents were not available. This enabled them to have more leisure time for their own lives. They learned English and computer skills, attended a wide range of social activities, made more friends, and developed a better knowledge of the host society. Mrs. Hui, who had moved out of her son's home two years before, said during the interview: "When my son or his wife is available, they will not send my grandchildren to our place… and then we are quite free. We go to community centre in the morning and play table-tennis." Mr. Wei also said that: "When I don't need to take care of my grandson, all the burdens are gone. I have my spare time. So, I attend the Chinese association. I make a lot of friends and I don't feel lonely anymore."

Having more time to relax and socialize not only contributed to the elderly migrants' psychological well-being, but also broadened their own social networks. Their daily communication was no longer limited to just family members, neighbours or their children's friends. They participated actively in local community activities, or even organised their own senior clubs. Some participants proudly told me that they felt happy making new friends in New Zealand because they "shared similar backgrounds", "had abundant time to chat", "understood each other" and "provided mutual help". The newly built networks empowered these elderly Chinese migrants to maintain their independence and to cope with their daily routine without the help of their children.

Although living apart from their adult children, most participants did not feel ignored or abandoned. They still received companionship, suggestions or language assistance from their children when they asked for help. They also felt emotionally cared for when they received regular phone calls or were visited by their children and grandchildren. Actually, many participants enjoyed such intimacy at a distance, feeling that they had more control over their own lives while maintaining emotional bonds with family members. As Mrs. Zhen said: "Depending on myself is better than relying on my children. I only ask them for help when necessary…. They have their own lives and jobs. I have to live by myself, with independent money and an independent life."

Compared to the family parents, elderly skilled migrants had always maintained independence, not only in terms of their living arrangements but also their relationships with their adult children. Their comparatively higher socio-economic status meant that they did not need to rely on their children for financial support. The better understanding of the social and familial norms of the host country meant that they did not have high expectations for their children to provide care for them in their old age. None of the skilled migrants even mentioned filial piety when discussing elderly care. Instead, they mentioned rest homes and institutional care. Their well-established social networks in New Zealand also allowed them to acquire social support from much wider sources. Therefore, these elderly skilled migrants were more likely to strike a balance in intergenerational support exchange than were the family parents.

Maintaining independence was found to be important in the intergenerational

support exchange process, and subsequently contributed to the quality of life of my participants. Independence enabled the elderly migrants to enjoy intimacy with their adult children at a distance. It helped them to avoid being overburdened by the domestic chores in their children's households. It gave the elderly migrants a sense of being in control of their own life. Most importantly, it helped to achieve satisfactory family relationships by moving closer to a balanced intergenerational reciprocity.

4.4 Conclusion

This chapter has investigated the importance of family support to the quality of life of elderly Chinese migrants in New Zealand. I addressed this question by tracing the dynamics of the participants' post-migration family support. Particular consideration was given to their migration and settlement process, their post-migration living arrangements, and the support exchange between generations. Generally, family was a crucial component of my participants' post-migration quality of life. However, the dependence on family support decreased over time. Their perceptions of family support evolved as family dynamics changed in the post-migration context. Intimacy at a distance and maintaining independence had become the new approaches to enhancing quality of life in old age.

This chapter identified two trajectories of migration and settlement of elderly Chinese migrants. The largest group – elderly family parents – usually migrated to fulfil family obligations or to reunify with adult children. Their migration was a part of the entire family plan and their post-migration life was more involved with their

children's households. The smaller group – elderly skilled migrants – demonstrated more autonomy and independence during their migration and settlement. They showed a higher propensity to remain at a certain distance from their adult children, even as they got older.

Intergenerational support exchange was found to be a key factor shaping the relationship between living arrangements and quality of life. Two patterns of exchange were analysed, together with two types of living arrangements. Within co-residential households, the frequency of intergenerational support exchange was relatively high but, paradoxically, the elderly participants did not always report a satisfying quality of life. In contrast, the participants who lived independently and had less frequent contact with their adult children reported a much higher quality of life. Hence, I argue that people's perceptions of quality of life are not simply determined by the *amount* of support they receive but by the *dynamics* of the support exchange process. The imbalanced reciprocity experienced by many participants prompted them to reflect upon their original expectations of the support their children would give, to re-define their family roles, and to re-construct their perceptions of quality of life. Consequently, many of them changed their living arrangements to pursue a more balanced support exchange.

My analysis of family dynamics within different types of living arrangements explains why an increasing number of elderly Chinese migrants choose to live apart from their adult children. This trend is not only found in New Zealand, but also in

other countries like Canada (Edmonston & Lee, 2012; M. E. Gee, 2000), the United States (Lan, 2002) and China (Lei, Strauss, Tian, & Zhao, 2011). As Gee (2000) reported, while 59 per cent of elderly Chinese migrants in greater Victoria and greater Vancouver (in British Columbia, Canada) co-resided with their adult children, 90 per cent of them showed an unwillingness to live with their child. Similarly, in California (the United States), an increasing percentage of elderly Chinese migrants chose to live apart from their adult children after migration (Lan, 2002). More recent data from China also suggest that compared with earlier generations, elderly Chinese now prefer to live close to their children and enjoy the intimacy at a distance (Lei et al., 2011). All these studies have demonstrated that elderly people who live apart from their adult children are more likely to report a better quality of life and more harmonious family relationships as long as their basic needs for support are fulfilled.

The autonomy and independence pursued by the elderly Chinese migrants also demonstrated that their perceptions of quality of life evolved when cultural, social and economic environments changed as a result of their migration. Historically, family support has been important to the elderly Chinese parents because of the lack of social welfare services in China (B. Schwarz et al., 2010). However, in New Zealand, where elderly migrants can enjoy relatively generous social benefits, the importance of family support may decline overtime.

In the next chapter, I seek to explore the support available at both the community and societal level. I will show that the well-established Chinese language

services provided by local Chinese communities and the social benefits provided by the

host government play significant roles in promoting the quality of life of elderly

migrants.

Chapter Five: Enhancing 'Independence' and Quality of Life with Support from Government and Communities

In Chapter Four, I discussed the relationship between the changing family dynamics and the quality of life of elderly Chinese migrants. I argued that having balanced intergenerational reciprocity and maintaining independence from adult children is important to the elderly migrants' quality of life. Furthermore, my data also suggested that their independence from adult children depended greatly on support from the New Zealand government and from local Chinese communities. In this chapter, I take a broader perspective discussing the types of government and community support available to elderly Chinese migrants, and how the participants utilised that support to enhance their quality of life.

The rationale for discussing both the government and community dimensions of support in one chapter is to reinforce the argument that social support outside the family has become increasingly important to elderly Chinese migrants. Governmental support and community support complement each other to help satisfy their overall needs. My participants showed a high degree of dependency on the financial and material support provided by the New Zealand government, and the emotional and information support received from local Chinese communities. In addition to my qualitative interview data, this chapter also draws on statistics and policies relating to

pensions, social benefits, and health care services in New Zealand and China, not only to generate a broad understanding of the social welfare systems in the two countries, but also to illustrate the relationship between social welfare, migration at old age, and quality of life.

This chapter contains five sections. The first three sections explore the income, housing and health care support received by the elderly Chinese migrants from the New Zealand government. Instead of discussing welfare policies *per se*, I analyse how my participants perceived and utilised support from the New Zealand government. I argue that being eligible for social welfare in both China and New Zealand significantly improved the health and material living conditions of my participants. This privilege reinforced a sense of security in old age and offered new possibilities for the migrants' retirement plans. Section Four focuses on the social support provided by local Chinese communities. I argue that this has become an essential component of elderly Chinese migrants' day-to-day life in New Zealand and helps them to develop new post-migration lifestyles. In the conclusion section, I summarize the main points discussed in the first four sections. I further argue that governmental support and support at the community level complement each other and are more significant to the quality of life of elderly Chinese migrants than family support.

5.1 Government Income Support

In New Zealand, the eligibility of migrants for social benefits is determined by their migration status and length of residency. The detailed requirements for the minimum

number of years of residency vary among different types of benefits. Compared to skilled principal and business migrants, family parent migrants are the most likely to receive income benefits. In 2007, 40 per cent of the total migrant beneficiaries were migrants under the family parent category, a ten per cent increase since 2002 (New Zealand Department of Labour, 2009, pp. 111-112). Among all migrant groups, Chinese migrants accounted for the greatest number of migrant beneficiaries (New Zealand Department of Labour, 2008).

For all of my 32 family parent migrants, the benefits they received from the New Zealand government formed their main source of income. As discussed in Chapter Four, although most of these participants had above-average levels of retirement income from China, the pension they received was less than half of New Zealand Superannuation and could barely support their basic needs in this country. New Zealand Superannuation and the Emergency Benefit[9] were the most common types of income support they received within New Zealand. When the interviews were conducted, 17 family parents (53%) were receiving New Zealand Superannuation and 13 (41%) were receiving the Emergency Benefit. Several family parents had also received other benefits such as Sickness Benefit and Unemployment Benefit, but these only supported them for a short period of time when they were in special need and were not their main source of income.

Compared with the family parent migrants, the three skilled migrants in my

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[9] The Emergency Benefit is means-tested financial assistance provided by the New Zealand government. More details are given in page 153.

study had lower need for the financial support from the New Zealand government.

When the interviews were conducted, Mr. Hua, 66 years old, was working full-time.

The other two skilled migrants, Mr. and Mrs. Cheng, both in their 70s, were

superannuation recipients after working for more than 20 years in New Zealand. Their

longer periods of settlement resulted in a better financial status than the family parent

migrants. Acknowledging that it is difficult to generalize based on only three skilled

migrants, it is reasonable to argue that they were more able to support themselves

financially in old age than the family parent migrants. In this section, I mainly discuss

New Zealand Superannuation and the Emergency Benefit as core forms of income

support received by my participants.

5.1.1 New Zealand Superannuation

New Zealand Superannuation is a universal, taxpayer-funded national old age pension.

Unlike many other countries, work history and previous level of income and

contributions are not relevant to the amount of New Zealand Superannuation.

Receiving superannuation is the right of New Zealand citizens and permanent

residents on becoming 65 years of age if they have resided in New Zealand for at least

ten years, including five since they turned 50 (Koopman-Boyden & Waldegrave, 2009,

p. 83; Work and Income New Zealand, 2012d).

New Zealand Superannuation is set at 50 per cent of median household

income, which means it is set at the OECD poverty line. In 2014, the weekly net rate

was 620.68 New Zealand dollars for a couple, or 410.32 for a single person living

alone (Work and Income New Zealand, 2013b). The relatively generous universal superannuation not only contributes to a very low poverty rate among people aged 65 and over (Baker, 2010, pp. 182-183; Kidd & Whitehouse, 2009; OECD, 2011), but also helps to ensure that "New Zealanders are treated fairly in relation to each other, and in relation to immigrants" (Dale, Lazonby, St John, & Littlewood, 2009, p. 23). With regards to immigrants, those who qualify for pensions from New Zealand's Social Welfare Reciprocity Agreements nations have their overseas public pension deducted from their entitlement to national superannuation (Dale, Lazonby, et al., 2009). However, this direct deduction policy does not apply to Chinese immigrants. This is because the two governments have not established a reciprocity agreement on social welfare. China has a contributory social insurance programme while New Zealand has a flat-rate also universal pension.[10] Therefore, elderly Chinese migrants are able to keep their full public pensions from both China and New Zealand.

When comparing it to the contributory and occupation-related welfare system in China, all of the 19 superannuation recipients (17 family parents and two skilled migrants) in my study appreciated the universal old age pension in New Zealand. Data from China show that retirees from private sector jobs have a higher risk of old age poverty than those who retire from government agencies and public institutions (United Nations Population Fund, 2007, p. 46). From 2000 to 2005, the pension

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[10] Since 1995 China has established a three-pillar welfare model. Some scholars believe that pension reform in China, together with the privatization of state enterprises, was part of global neoliberalism (Dorfman et al., 2013; Hu, 2012; Impavid, Hu, & Li, 2009). Within the current three-pillar model, the responsibility of the Chinese central government has been significantly reduced. A large part of the pension is funded by employees and employers, rather than from state financial allocations.

replacement rate[11] for private sector retirees in China declined dramatically from 68.8

per cent to 49.3 per cent. In contrast, people who retired from government agencies

and public institutions maintained a pension replacement rate of around 90 per cent,

or even higher (Y. Yang & Hu, 2010). The inequalities found in China's pension

system contributed to my participants' satisfaction with the universal New Zealand

Superannuation. One of my participants, Mr. Guo, retired from the private sector in

1998 when he decided to migrate to New Zealand. He commented on his pension

during the interview: "Compared to the New Zealand Superannuation, I feel that my

retirement income in China is much lower. That's why I choose to live in New

Zealand. I can get a higher pension here."

The female participants particularly appreciated the New Zealand pension

system because women tend to work fewer years and earn less than men before their

retirement. In the Chinese contributory pension system, this pattern leads to a lower

retirement income (United Nations, 2010). Mrs. Zhen, who retired from a private

sector in China, compared her pensions in China and in New Zealand. She

commented that:

> My material living conditions here are better than in China… My
>
> retirement income in China is very low because I retired from an
>
> enterprise, and I retired early… Now, in New Zealand, I get more than

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[11] Replacement rate refers to the percentage of a person's pre-retirement income that is paid out by a pension programme upon retirement. It is a measure of how effectively a pension system provides income during retirement to replace earnings which were the main source of income prior to retirement (Peng, 2011).

300 New Zealand dollars per week. I have enough money to use.

As discussed in Chapter Four, the gender gap among my participants in terms of their socio-economic status was not as significant as suggested by many previous studies (Cook, 2010; Yi et al., 2003). Although my female participants tended to receive lower pensions from China than their male counterparts, the income gap was actually narrower after the money was converted into New Zealand currency. As most of the family parent migrants did not participate in the labour force after their migration, the disadvantages experienced in paid work by many young migrant women were not reported by my female participants (Maynard, 2008; Pedraza, 1991). Moreover, the universal New Zealand Superannuation further helped to reduce the gender gap of income among the family parent migrants. Therefore, the slight gender gap in socio-economic status among my participants was primarily the result of their old age and migration status.

Being able to "double dip" (Dale, St John, & Littlewood, 2009) in the two pension systems further contributed to the high level of satisfaction among my participants. Mr. Wei, who started to receive New Zealand Superannuation in 2008 when he was 73 years old, calculated his household income and said that:

My wife and I receive hundreds of dollars every week. That's our

superannuation from the New Zealand government. We also have

retirement incomes from China, 4000 Chinese yuan[12] per month in

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[12] Approximately 750 New Zealand dollars.

total. The money is enough for us… We don't have a big fortune, but

we have enough money to use. My elderly Chinese friends here have

the same feeling as I do.

Actually, the superannuation from both countries can cover a lot more than just their daily expenses. Mrs. Shi commented on her pension: "My husband and I have pensions [both in China and in New Zealand]… We have some money left every month. We'd save the money and it is enough to cover our return tickets to China each year." Similarly, Mr. Hong said when talking about his pension:

My income now is much better. I already have 3000 Chinese yuan

every month [back in China]… Here, my wife and I have more than

600 dollars per week… When we visit China, we'd spend the money

from our Chinese pension, and save our New Zealand Superannuation.

When we are in New Zealand, our pension in China would add up to

our savings… I support my children's visits to China too. When they

are there, I'd give them my Chinese bank card.

Other participants also mentioned that they would use their New Zealand Superannuation for their daily expenses, and save their Chinese retirement incomes for airline tickets and other expenses when they visited China.

Drawing on two pension systems was viewed as a 'privilege' by my participants, and they tended to feel more secure financially than their peers in China. The migrants had higher incomes to support their daily expenses and were better able

to afford social activities and travel. In this sense, having pensions in both China and New Zealand provided them with more options in terms of retirement planning and aged care. They tended to have more freedom to arrange where they wanted to retire – in New Zealand, partly in China, or to travel seasonally between both.[13]

5.1.2 The Emergency Benefit

Compared to the New Zealand Superannuation recipients, the participants who arrived more recently and did not qualify for superannuation had a higher likelihood of experiencing financial stress. These people were usually in their early 60s, and were too young to claim age-related financial support from the New Zealand government. At the same time, they were in a disadvantaged positions in the employment market due to their poor English proficiency and old age. Such circumstances undoubtedly resulted in the financial difficulties. In order to cope with such difficulties, many of them relied on the Emergency Benefit.

The Emergency Benefit is means-tested financial assistance provided to people who cannot support themselves and who do not qualify for any other benefits. Different from other income tested benefits, the Emergency Benefit does not have strict requirements in terms of length of residency, and can be granted on the grounds of hardship to migrants who are ineligible to receive any other benefit (New Zealand

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[13] Some types of means-tested benefits, for example, the Emergency Benefit, would not continue if the beneficiary was absent from New Zealand for more than 28 days (Work and Income New Zealand, 2012c). However, the payments of New Zealand Superannuation could continue as normal when the recipients travelled overseas for 26 weeks or less (Work and Income New Zealand, 2012d).

Department of Labour, 2008). For migrants aged 65 and over and who do not qualify for the superannuation, the Emergency Benefit is specifically granted as an alternative to New Zealand Superannuation (Work and Income New Zealand, 2013c). It is impossible for Family Parent migrants to receive any form of social benefits within the first 24 months of the sponsorship period (Immigration New Zealand, 2013a). But 11 participants in my study started to apply for the Emergency Benefit from their third year of migration. In 2013, the weekly rate of the Emergency Benefit was 384.00 New Zealand dollars for a couple, or 230.40 dollars for single people (Work and Income New Zealand, 2013b). This rate is thus much lower than the New Zealand Superannuation.

Family Parent migrants are usually expected to be self-supporting or to be financially sponsored by their adult children. However, my participants received the Emergency Benefit from the New Zealand government due to self-reported financial hardship. For example, Mr. Shi received the Emergency Benefit for several years before he became eligible for New Zealand Superannuation in 2008. He explained why he applied for the Emergency Benefit as a migrant under the Family Parent category:

> When we applied for the Emergency Benefit, the official [from Work
>
> and Income] asked me why I applied. I said that when we first came to
>
> New Zealand, we brought our savings with us. My daughter and her
>
> husband had good jobs. Why did I need the money from the

> government? But now… the economy was bad, and my son-in-law's
>
> job wasn't as good as before… not much income anymore. So…I need
>
> financial support from the government.

Apart from financial hardship caused by the changed economic situation of their sponsors, another common reason for claiming the benefit is that the sponsor migrated to another country, leaving the elderly migrants alone in New Zealand. For example, Mrs. Yang was left alone by her adult children in 2008, when she was 74 years old:

> My daughter and son-in-law moved to Australia several years after I
>
> came here. They sold their properties [here in New Zealand]. I started
>
> flatting with others. It was difficult for me… They helped me apply for
>
> the Emergency Benefit before they left.

As shown in the above examples, changes to their sponsors' situation led the elderly migrants' to shift from relying on their children's financial support to resorting to governmental support.

The eligibility of Family Parent migrants to access government financial support has led to a public debate in New Zealand about benefit abuse. Some New Zealanders question the eligibility of Family Parent migrants for social benefits because they have made little economic contribution to the country (Bennett, 2012; Trevett, 2012). However, my participants believed that they made an indirect contribution to the host country by looking after their grandchildren and doing unpaid housework for their children's households. As Mr. Yu said:

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> Some local people doubt our eligibility for social benefits and the SuperGold Card[14]. They thought we [elderly Chinese parents] made no contribution to New Zealand… I felt guilty when I first heard about this. But I thought things through later. We spent a lot of money and energy to educate our children, who studied in New Zealand and stayed here after graduation. They work here, buy houses here, and pay taxes. My daughter is a tax-payer… Although we elderly Chinese are not formally employed here, we look after our children's family, we do housework, and we take care of our grandchildren. Consequently, our children can focus on their work and make more contribution to the society. We older people are making an indirect contribution.

Mr. Yu's viewpoint reveals a collectivist cultural perspective in which people calculate their input and output based on the extended family rather than on the individual. Elderly Chinese, in particular, tended to perceive their children and grandchildren as an 'extension' of their own body (W. Li, 2011, p. 46). Therefore, their adult children's contribution to the host country is partly a result of their contribution to the children's household.

Some European studies suggest that feeling stigmatised and unable to reciprocate makes many migrants reluctant to apply for formal social support from the

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[14] The SuperGold Card is a discount and concession card for seniors and veterans, which enables them to get discounts and offers from a range of businesses, government concessions (such as free off-peak public transport) and discounted services from local councils (Work and Income New Zealand, 2012a).

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host country (Hernández-Plaza et al., 2006, p. 1155). However, my participants perceived that an indirect support exchange relationship had been established between themselves and the host country through their contributions to their children's households. Such a perceived exchange relationship helped the elderly Chinese migrants justify their acceptance of government financial support.

Although the amount received was much lower than that of New Zealand Superannuation, the Emergency Benefit was very important to some of my participants. They reported that this money could sustain their basic daily lives in New Zealand because they generally had low material expectations. Mr. Tao was one of the participants who lived on the Emergency Benefit. He said: "The money is enough for me. I'm leading a very simple life. I don't have too many requirements for food and material living conditions." Another participant, Mr. Yu, provided more detailed comments about his living standards in New Zealand: "I brought my clothes and daily necessities from China, so I don't need to spend money on those things when I'm here [in New Zealand]. The money I get from the Emergency Benefit is enough for food."

All the Emergency Benefit recipients in my study admitted that financial support from the government helped them to avoid financial hardship for an extended period of time. As Mrs. Yin said: "My daughter lost her job for a period of time…. My living conditions are much better since I received the Emergency Benefit from the government." Another participant, Mrs. Pei, even published a small article in a local

Chinese newspaper, to show her gratitude to the New Zealand government. During the interview, she read a short paragraph for me:

> The New Zealand government shows caring and humanity to all immigrants. No matter which country you are from, the government treats you well and equally. In particular, the New Zealand government provides the elderly migrants with a lot of support, including financial help, housing assistance, and health care. The only thing I can do is expect my children to work hard and make a contribution to New Zealand society.

The above evidence shows that my participants were satisfied with the social benefits provided by the New Zealand government. In particular, the Emergency Benefit was important to their post-migration life not only because the financial assistance helped them cope with hardship, but also because the money imbued a sense of financial independence from their adult children.

As discussed in Chapter Four, some of my participants experienced intergenerational conflict when co-residing with their adult children. Co-residence made them felt isolated and burdened, thus lowering their quality of life and sense of well-being. They were eager to move out of their children's household in pursuit of freedom. In this sense, receiving the Emergency Benefit from the New Zealand government provided a means for them to achieve financial independence from their adult children. Mrs. Qi, who was in her mid-60s, talked about her experiences during

the interview:

> My husband and I were living with our daughter's family, and her
>
> parents-in-laws. It was so awkward… We applied for social benefits
>
> two years after our migration so that we could move out of my
>
> daughter's house. I think it's better for us to live independently, and not
>
> disturb their lives.

Like Mrs. Qi, another 14 participants also viewed government financial support as a stable source of income. Although the Emergency Benefit rate is low, having a stable income enabled them to move out of their children's household, alleviating family conflict, and helping them to achieve a sense of independence and freedom.

Government income support, including the universal New Zealand Superannuation and means-tested benefits such as the Emergency Benefit, enabled my participants to have an independent and secure income, and thus fostered a sense that they had control over their own lives. These factors have been widely demonstrated as crucial components of a high quality of life for elderly people in general (Bowling, 2005a; Mollenkopf & Walker, 2007). Furthermore, receiving double pensions from China and New Zealand even fostered a sense of being privileged among some elderly migrants. They tended to feel that they had more choice about retirement and aged care. They felt more able to support themselves, whether they chose to live only in New Zealand or for part of the year in their home country.

5.2 Social Housing

Housing is another important element enhancing quality of life in old age (Bowling, 2005a, p. 170; Howden-Chapman et al., 1999; Tanner, De Jonge, & Aplin, 2012). Statistically, older individuals are more likely to own a dwelling compared to younger people (Statistics New Zealand, 2007). However, changing circumstances, including increasing house prices, more diverse family structures and migration in old age, make it more difficult for older people to own their own home. These circumstances highlight the necessity of providing government housing support to older people.

In this section, I introduce and discuss housing-related support provided by the New Zealand government to my participants. This support is primarily in the form of state housing and an Accommodation Supplement. I illustrate why some of my participants needed housing support, and how the support contributed to their quality of life. In line with the arguments I have presented in Chapter Four, I argue in this section that my participants' need for housing was closely related to the changing dynamics of their migrant families.

In New Zealand, the government provides state housing for those who need assistance to obtain affordable, secure and appropriate housing. The definition of 'need' refers not only to a need for financial help, but also includes more diverse and complex needs, such as social, medical and personal needs (Housing New Zealand, 2010, 2013). Consistent with the residential requirement for other social benefits, migrants are eligible for housing assistance after they have lived in New Zealand for

two years. According to Housing New Zealand practice, those who are granted an Emergency Benefit due to hardship are likely to receive housing support at the same time (Dale, Lazonby, et al., 2009; Housing New Zealand, 2012b). All my participants who lived in state houses were recipients of the Emergency Benefit when they started their tenure.

When the interviews were conducted, 12 of my 35 participants (34%) were living in state houses, including three couples and six widowed women. Over half of the 12 began living in state-owned houses in the late 1990s or early 2000s. There were another five participants in the process of application and assessment. It has become increasingly difficult to obtain a state house due to the growing demand for social housing support, especially in the Auckland region (Housing New Zealand, 2010). Usually, my participants applied for a state house when they decided to move out of their children's homes but could not afford to pay rent at the current market price. The relatively low rent of the state houses was the primary reason for them to choose state housing.

Housing New Zealand introduced the Social Allocation System and Income Related Rent Subsidy in 2000, in which the amount of rent paid by tenants depends on their incomes (Housing New Zealand, 2012a). My participants paid no more than 25 per cent of their New Zealand incomes on rent, which is the maximum rent for low income tenants. For those who had overseas incomes, they were also required to pay 50 per cent of this to Housing New Zealand. Compared to the market price, the low

rent for state houses enabled my participants to live independently on their own incomes or benefits.

For those elderly tenants, state houses fostered a sense of stability and control over their living space as well as their lives, both of which have been associated with better health and well-being in old age (Bowling, 2005a, p. 188; Tanner et al., 2012; Walker, 2005c, p. 39). For my participants, sharing private rental accommodation with other people meant that they were 'homeless'. In contrast, a state house offered a relatively stable living environment and fostered a sense of 'owning' a home. This was why Mrs. Hui preferred to live in a state house:

> When my husband and I decided to live by ourselves, my son planned
>
> to rent a place for us. But I wanted to live in a state house, which makes
>
> me feel stable and at ease. I don't like living in a co-rental house. It's like
>
> it is not my home, and I'm only a guest who pays rent.

This perception was further illustrated by another participant, Mrs. Zhen:

> I moved about ten times within my first six years in New Zealand. I
>
> shared accommodation with other tenants, or with the landlords…never
>
> stable… I feel much better since I moved into my own home here [the
>
> state house]… I've been living in this house for seven years.

As clearly shown in the above examples, moving into a public tenancy has become an alternative pathway for some elderly migrants to accomplish a substitute

for owning a home in New Zealand. A similar phenomenon was also found among elderly Korean Americans who tried to reconstruct a feeling of being of home after they moved into public housing (Seo & Mazumdar, 2011).

Considering a state house to be their own home can also be understood within a Chinese social context. Before the Chinese government commercialized and reformed the public sector housing system in the 1980s, all dwellings were owned by the government and assigned to individuals according to their needs and contributions. Having lived in state houses for decades in China, many elderly Chinese migrants perceived this as reflecting the care and concern from the government, and thus they did not link this to social dependence on other tax-payers. This perception of state housing is different from that within the broader New Zealand context, where state house tenants tend to feel stigmatised.

Being a homeowner can foster older people's self-esteem, and reinforce their autonomy and independence (Despres & Lord, 2005). Many scholars have illustrated that in the face of declining levels of engagement with the outside world, older people tend to spend more time at home than when they were younger, and home becomes a symbol of freedom and independence (Haak et al. 2007; Kendig, Clemson, & Mackenzie, 2012; Walker & Walker, 2005). The perception of owning a home and having the capacity and freedom of using the space is thus particularly important to older people. Mrs. Gu, for example, stopped engaging in regular community activities several years ago, due to her declining health. Living in a state house enabled her to

invite friends and neighbours to visit and enjoy a relaxing time in her home. For her, the state house symbolized not only safe and independent accommodation, but also a space which allowed her to maintain social connections when she was physically unable to leave her home.

The sense of 'owning' a home prompted some of my participants to reach out to wider social networks and to care about their neighbourhood relationships. Most of the participants who lived in state houses reported very satisfying neighbourhood relationships, regardless of the ethnicity of their neighbours. Although most of my participants spoke little English, language barriers did not hamper them from establishing relationships in their own ways. Mrs. Zhen, for example, felt happy to have good neighbours who were originally from the Pacific Islands. They exchanged support with each other by helping with some daily chores, mowing the lawn, sharing traditional food, and guarding the safety of their houses. She said:

> When my husband passed away, they [the neighbours] sent me a very
>
> big bunch of flowers. Since then, they always help me with heavy
>
> housework. They are a very kind family. I send gifts to them every
>
> Christmas, and give their kids candy very often… I grow vegetables in
>
> my garden. I also share those vegetables with them. We are all very
>
> happy.

Mrs. Zhen was not the only one who enjoyed her relationships within her neighbourhood. Almost all the participants living in state houses considered their

neighbours to be friendly and helpful. A traditional Chinese saying "a good neighbour is better than a distant relative" was mentioned repeatedly during the interviews. Within the multi-ethnic environment of New Zealand, language and cultural barriers brought challenges to these elderly Chinese migrants in their daily interactions. However, most of my participants tried hard to develop mutual relationships and to maintain emotional bonds with their neighbours. Moreover, compared to the private tenants in my study, the participants who lived in state houses reported fewer experiences of discrimination. This was probably because the tenants of state houses usually had a similar socio-economic status and thus may be more likely to treat each other equally and provide mutual help.

Apart from state housing, the New Zealand government also offers a means-tested Accommodation Supplement to help people with their rent, board or mortgage payments. The amount of supplement is determined by the applicant's income, assets, accommodation costs, and family circumstances. In general, it covers 40 to 50 per cent of the applicant's regular payments (Work and Income New Zealand, 2013a).

Thirteen of my participants had received or were receiving an Accommodation Supplement from the New Zealand government, which helped them to alleviate their financial stress and to develop a sense of financial independence from the adult children. Eight of the 13 Accommodation Supplement recipients were co-residing with their adult children or living in their children's house when they received the

supplement. They gave that money to their children and in doing so they believed that they did not rely on their children financially. However, although they paid rent to their children, the intergenerational dynamics did not change. Their children still expected the elderly parents to provide intensive assistance including doing domestic chores and looking after their grandchildren. In other words, paying rent to their children did not relieve them from family responsibilities. Changing living arrangements was still considered necessary to achieve freedom and independence.

In this sense, receiving an Accommodation Supplement together with the Emergency Benefit enabled some participants to move out of their children's house and afford a rental house. Mrs. Qi talked about how receiving such government support helped her to move out of her daughter's house when they encountered intergenerational conflicts:

> My husband and I received the Emergency Benefit from the government, which was less than 300 New Zealand dollars per week. We couldn't afford to rent an apartment or a small house. But later we got Accommodation Supplement, about 120 dollars. Thanks to that money, we finally rented a small apartment. We have been living here for two years.

Another five participants also expressed similar viewpoint that having an Accommodation Supplement from the New Zealand government helped them to achieve more independent living arrangements.

As discussed in this section, the housing support provided by the New Zealand government played an important role in shaping elderly Chinese migrants' living arrangements and lifestyle, as well as their perceptions of quality of life. Housing support from the New Zealand government helped to foster a sense of independence from their children. State housing even nurtured a sense of having their own home in the host country, making New Zealand a feasible choice for their long-term ageing plans.

5.3 Health Care

New Zealand provides publicly funded or subsidized health care and disability services to its citizens and permanent residents. People who are eligible for social welfare can receive free inpatient and outpatient public hospital services, subsidies on prescription medicines, and other health-related services (Ministry of Health, 2013a). In this health care system, people who feel unwell usually go to see a general practitioner (GP) first. The GP consultation fee is usually quite affordable for beneficiaries or the elderly, ranging from less than ten New Zealand dollars to around 30 dollars each time but could be higher for others. GPs act as gatekeepers to secondary services, which consist of specialists and consultants in particular fields who are normally based in hospitals (Dew & Kirkman, 2002, p. 79). Public hospitals charge no fees for accident or emergency treatment and services. Adult patients pay five dollars[15] for each prescription when they collect subsidised medicines from

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[15] Before 1 January 2013, the amount patients contributed towards the cost of their medication was three dollars per prescription item instead of five dollars (Ministry of Health, 2013b).

pharmacists. Apart from health care services for illness, a wide range of treatment and medical costs caused by accidents and workplace injuries are also covered by the Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC)[16].

Given that all of my participants were New Zealand citizens or permanent residents, they were all eligible for publicly funded health care services. In contrast to Family Parent migrants, the three skilled migrants in my study also purchased private health care insurance in New Zealand, and thus were able to utilise both public and private resources. When the interviews were conducted, all of the 35 participants reported that they had utilised public health care facilities since they migrated to New Zealand. All participants had visited GPs or seen a medical specialist when they felt unwell, and ten participants had undergone surgery or had been hospitalised for a period of time. The frequency with which they visited GPs varied from every three years to every month, depending on their health status. Most of my participants utilised primary and secondary health care services for long-term and short-term illnesses. Two participants had applied for financial compensation and home help provided by ACC after they suffered accidents.

Apart from two skilled migrants who came to New Zealand in the 1980s, all other participants were also eligible for public health care in China. China has established a so-called "Basic Medical Care Programme" to subsidise both inpatient

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[16] ACC provides comprehensive, no-fault personal injury cover for all New Zealand residents and visitors to New Zealand. It can not only help with the payment for treatment, but also provide tangible help or care services at the patient's home (Accident Compensation Corporation, 2013).

and outpatient fees[17] for citizens who participate in the programme. The Basic Medical Care Programme covers approximately 50 per cent to 80 per cent of medical costs within the maximum limitation per annum[18]. Patients themselves pay the rest of the cost for their medical treatment. However, similar to the Chinese retirement pension system, medical care is also contributory and occupation-related. A small proportion of retirees who worked for government agencies or public institutions are entitled to additional subsidies, which cover expenses beyond the maximum limitation of the Basic Medical Care Programme. Due to the additional subsidies, those who are entitled to them can be considered as having free medical care.

In general, my participants were satisfied with the health care services in New Zealand, although some participants perceived that there were shortcomings to the system. The comments were usually based on a comparison between the systems in New Zealand and China. Mrs. Xiu expressed her satisfaction during the interview: "It's so expensive to go to hospital in China… But here, I pay less than 20 dollars to see a GP, and spend three dollars for each prescription. The welfare is really good." Mrs. Gu, who needed long-term prescription medicines due to her chronic conditions, had a similar perception:

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[17] There is no GP system in China. In urban areas, patients typically go directly to outpatient departments in public hospitals. The outpatient department performs the function of the GP.

[18] The percentage of reimbursement and the maximum limitation varies in different regions in China. For example, since 2013, in Beijing, the Basic Medical Care Programme for elderly people covers 70% of their inpatient fees. The maximum reimbursement is 2,000 Chinese yuan (approximately 400 New Zealand dollars) for outpatient services, and 170,000 Chinese yuan (approximately 34,000 New Zealand dollars) for inpatient services per annum (Human Resources and Social Security Department of Beijing, 2012).

> I get the medicine every three months… Every time I pay 15 dollars for
>
> five different types of medicines. The [New Zealand] government pays
>
> the rest, about 400 dollars for me… In my own country, you know, I
>
> may have to pay the full price if I am prescribed some really good
>
> medicine… Health care system here is better than in our country.

As shown in these quotes, my participants reported a high level of satisfaction with the health care system in New Zealand mainly because they could access health care services for free or at a low cost. This was especially the case when they compared health care in New Zealand with their health care experiences back in China which were much more expensive. The New Zealand health care system was hence considered to be superior.

Data show that the advantage of having access to this superior health care not only contributed significantly to their life satisfaction, but was also a crucial reason why my participants wanted to live permanently in New Zealand. Mrs. Gu's comment reveals this point clearly:

> I want to go back to China, that's my home. The feeling gets stronger
>
> as I grow older… But on the other hand, nobody can look after me if I
>
> return to China. You know, health care in New Zealand is better and
>
> equal. The medical care here is based on need.… Staying here, I can
>
> have better medical care when I'm older and my health declines.

Comparisons were constantly made between China and New Zealand, not just

regarding the cost of health care, but also its quality. My participants felt satisfied with the high quality of service provided by medical practitioners in New Zealand, which made them feel truly cared for. They sometimes received phone calls from their GPs to remind them to have a regular physical examination. In hospitals they felt they were given respect because specialists and nurses worked hard and treated them with patience. Several participants also mentioned that they had installed a medical alarm at home, enabling them to get quick access to medical centres in case of an emergency. Mr. Ai compared his experiences in China and New Zealand and said:

> My daily life here is basically the same to that in China. One big advantage of living here is the free health care. Doctors here work hard and are very professional. Although health care in China is also very convenient, plus I have medical insurance, as a patient, I feel more respected here when I go to see doctors than in China.

The correlation between health and elderly people's quality of life has long been established in the literature. People who are in a better physical and mental health are more likely to report a better quality of life (Bowling, 2005a; Gallicchio et al., 2007). For my participants, being eligible for the superior health care services in New Zealand signified a greater chance of maintaining health for longer, which was essential to their quality of life in old age. A sound health care system also helps to reinforce a sense of security, especially for those who are in their 70s or 80s, and are experiencing declining health. One of my participants, Mrs. Wu, who was 70 years

old at the time of the interview, expressed this view:

> Talking about quality of life, I think my life [in New Zealand] is very
>
> quiet and at ease. There's no need to worry even when I'm sick. I can
>
> go to hospitals immediately, and don't need to think about the bill…
>
> Here, the social welfare is good. I feel very happy to have this secure
>
> and stable life.

It is important to point out that eight of my participants actually did not use health care system frequently, even though they perceived it to be a superior system than China's. Indeed, existing research shows that Chinese do not utilise health care facilities as much as other ethnic groups in New Zealand (Asian Public Health Project Team., 2003; Scragg, 2010; Scragg & Maitra, 2005). A survey conducted in 2006-2007 found that a lower proportion of Chinese adults (82%) had a regular health practitioner or service that they could attend when they felt unwell, compared with European (95%), Māori (93%) and Pacific Islanders (93%). With regard to secondary health care services, a lower proportion of Chinese adults (16%) used a public hospital compared with European (22%), Māori (27%) and Pacific Islanders (21%) (Scragg, 2010).

Previous research suggests that language barriers are the major factor preventing elderly Chinese migrants from using health care services more effectively (DeSouza & Garrett, 2005). Ten of my participants also provided this as the main reason for their reluctance to seek help from public health care. Many participants

would usually ask their children to provide transportation and language translation help when they needed to see GPs or specialists. When their children were not available, my participants needed to rely on language translation services provided by public hospitals, which were not always readily available. This often extended the time they had to wait before receiving treatment. Sometimes the barriers seemed to cause so much worry that the elderly migrants were reluctant to see a doctor to avoid the embarrassment caused by their English language problems. Mr. Han expressed this worry during his interview:

> In comparison to the problems in communicating with the doctor,
> waiting for a long time for treatment doesn't cause as much concern.
> But, say, if you need a CT scan, and you need to go to the doctors, it is
> really worrisome if your children were not there [as your interpreter]…
> They [the doctors] are all Europeans [who don't speak Chinese]… plus,
> when you need blood test or X-ray, you need to go to a second place.
> It's really inconvenient for us elderly people.

In order to overcome the language barrier, some of the elderly Chinese migrants chose to visit GPs who could speak Chinese. One-third of my participants had a usual GP who shared the same language (Mandarin or Cantonese), and therefore felt more able to receive effective treatment with fewer anxieties. As Mrs. Ai said: "Nowadays we have more and more Chinese migrants in Auckland. Many departments and institutions have Chinese staff. This is good for us… Now we elderly

people don't need the company of our children when we go to see doctors."

Some primary health care services, such as GPs and family doctors, are able to provide Chinese language translation services, alleviating some of the elderly migrants' worries, but such services are far less convenient in secondary health care in New Zealand. It is for this reason that the language barrier is the major issue preventing elderly Chinese migrants from making effective use of health care services in New Zealand.

In addition, lack of information was another factor which hampered elderly Chinese migrants from fully utilising the health care services provided by the New Zealand government. One set of age-related health care services largely overlooked by elderly Chinese migrants are the home support services (including household support and personal care) that the New Zealand government provides. Providing home support services to the elderly fits with an increasing government and advocacy groups emphasis on 'ageing-in-place' (Auckland District Health Board, 2013; Kirkman, 2005, p. 114). By receiving home support services, older people are better able to live in their own homes rather than to move into residential institutions. The home support services include household support such as cleaning, meal preparation, shopping, and personal care, including showering and dressing.

Only three of my participants knew of and used the home support services, while the others had little knowledge of them. Two factors may have contributed to this lack of information. First, since there are no similar services provided in China,

the elderly Chinese migrants may not realise that such home support services are available to them in the host country. What is more, as the home support services do not target any particular ethnic or language group, the services are usually advertised in English and through a doctors' referral. Given that most of my participants had poor English language proficiency, they found it difficult to apply for the services even after a referral had been made, and found it even more difficult to receive the services from English-speaking support workers. Therefore, such services were not particular attractive to elderly Chinese migrants, and the services were seldom introduced to my participants by their peers.

It is partly for these reasons that seven of my participants resorted to the health care resources in China as a backup option. Furthermore, several of my participants questioned the GP system in New Zealand. Patients with serious but non-emergency illnesses need to go through their GP to access further treatment in hospitals, which costs money and prolongs their waiting time. They thought this was a major reason why it took longer time for them to get their illness cured. As Mrs. Zhen said:

> In China, [patients are treated] very fast. Here, we have to make
>
> appointments when I need to see GP. I can't go to hospital whenever I
>
> want. But in China, you can go to any hospital at any time you want,
>
> and you'll be treated right away, of course, as long as you can pay for it.
>
> Here, the system doesn't allow me to do that.

Even if they were referred to a hospital, they might spend a long time on a

waiting list before they can be treated. To improve health care equity, New Zealand hospitals allocate resources preferentially to people who have an emergency or a life-shortening illness (Sharpe, 2011; Sheridan, Kenealy, Connolly, & et al., 2011). Therefore, people with non-emergency illnesses are usually put on a waiting list for a medical check-up or surgery in public hospitals. Sometimes the waiting list can be quite long, causing concerns to the elderly Chinese migrants.

Five of my participants had travelled to China specifically for medical treatment in the past few years. Another six said they used medical services every time they visited China, including having regular physical examinations and purchasing medicines. Mrs. Zhu who went back to China for cataract surgery said:

> Public hospitals here [in New Zealand] have a long waiting list. I didn't
>
> know how long I had to wait, so I went back to China to have a surgery
>
> there… I'm eligible for the Basic Medical Care insurance in China. So
>
> I only need to pay 20% of the surgery fees myself. It's affordable for
>
> me. I also had other private insurance [in China], which covered other
>
> fees.

This quote shows that medical care in China was considered by some participants as a backup option when confronted with long waiting lists in New Zealand. This was especially useful for the participants who had joined the Basic Medical Care programme or other insurance programmes in China, which allowed them to access health care there without much financial concern.

My participants also gave other reasons for using health care services in China. Some believed that doctors in China had more clinical experience than those working in New Zealand because of the larger population in China. Others preferred to use traditional Chinese medicine rather than Western medical therapies. Still others, especially those who were covered by the Basic Medical Care insurance in China, did not want to waste their Chinese healthcare subsidies, and therefore purchased medicines or had physical examinations when they visited China.

Even those who had private health insurance in New Zealand would occasionally go back to China for health care. The three skilled migrants in my study all had private health care insurance and did not rely only on public health services. This means that they could access private medical services without having to wait on public hospital lists. However, as certain services are not covered by private insurance in New Zealand, these migrants still seriously considered using medical service in China as a backup. Mrs. Cheng, a skilled migrant in her mid-70s, spent a lot of money on private health care insurance, expecting quicker and better service. However, she felt that what she had received was not commensurate with her investment.

> I have private insurance, so the hospitals don't want me to use public
>
> resources. Instead, they want the insurance company to cover all my
>
> fees. However, the insurance company has its own policy to limit my
>
> expenses… Sometimes, it is difficult for me to have CT and MRI scans
>
> here… I put approximately 20% of my income into my health care
>
> insurance, but the service was not as good as I had thought… Last year,

> I went back to China, and had those tests done very quickly, and they
>
> were covered by my Basic Medical Care insurance.

The above examples illustrate that elderly Chinese migrants, family parents and skilled migrants alike use health care services in China as a strategy to compensate for perceived deficiencies in the New Zealand system. Thus, although most of my participants reported satisfaction with New Zealand's publicly funded health care system *per se*, the quality of their lives was further enhanced by accessing health care services in both the home and host countries. Health care services in China were viewed by my participants as an alternative to speed up their treatment when services in New Zealand were not available immediately. Their eligibility for the two health care systems meant that they had more opportunities to access health care services than their Chinese and New Zealand peers.

As discussed in the three sections above, income support, housing and health care represent the most important types of government support that impact upon the quality of life of elderly people in general. As Bowling (2007, p. 19) argues in her British study, poor health, inadequate housing and financial circumstances are the most commonly mentioned things that would take 'quality away' from the life of older people. Therefore, for the elderly migrants in my study, especially the family parent migrants, being eligible for the financial, housing and health care support from the host government contributed significantly to their post-migration quality of life. More importantly, their accessibility to government support moved beyond national borders, and included both the home and host countries. Practically speaking, these

migrants had better material living conditions and more medical resources to maintain their health and quality of life. Moreover, being able to access resources in two countries generated a sense of privilege and security, which is very valuable to a good quality of life and subjective well-being (Benson & O'Reilly, 2009; Muldoon, Barger, Flory, & Manuck, 1998).

Although the New Zealand government also provides other types of support to migrants, elderly Chinese migrants do not usually utilise these supports. For instance, informational support provided by the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)[19] aims to help migrants to understand more about the host society, their social rights, and the social services available to them. However, my participants seldom went to the CAB for help. This is mainly because such support is usually readily available from the well-established Chinese communities in New Zealand, which have become a major source of support for elderly migrants when dealing with day-to-day issues. It is not surprising to find that my participants gained almost all forms of informational and/or emotional support from local Chinese communities. In the next section, I explore these community-based supports and illustrate how this support enhanced their post-migration quality of life.

5.4 Local Chinese Communities

In the previous three sections, I discussed the support provided by the New Zealand government to the elderly Chinese migrants. I argued that government income,

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[19] The Citizens Advice Bureau provides free and confidential service, advice and support to clients regardless of their demographic profile (Citizens Advice Bureau, 2013).

housing, and health care support enabled my participants to move out of their children's house, live independently and pursue a better quality of life. This section shows that, as a complement to this government support, the support provided by local Chinese communities further enhanced their independence by providing informational, emotional and practical support. As defined in Chapter One, in this thesis the term 'Chinese communities' not only refers to geographical spaces where Chinese businesses and community groups are clustered, but also includes Chinese-language media, community services and cultural activities (Bedford & Ho, 2008; Fennema, 2004; Friesen, 2008).

As shown in Table 5.1, there is a significant difference between the participants who co-resided with and those who lived apart from their adult children in terms of receiving support from Chinese friends and local Chinese communities. Among the ten participants who co-resided with their children, only two acquired informational support and half of them received emotional support from their Chinese friends and local Chinese communities.

Table 5. 1: Support from Friends and Local Chinese Communities
by Living Arrangements

Types of support	Living arrangements	
	Intergenerational co-residence (N=10)	Living apart from adult children (N=25)
Practical support	----	10 (40%)
Financial support	----	----
Informational support	2 (20%)	13(56%)
Emotional support	5 (50%)	20 (80%)

In contrast, among the 25 participants who lived apart from their adult children, a much higher percentage received practical (40%), informational (56%) and emotional (80%) support from their Chinese friends and peers in local Chinese communities. This was mainly because the independent living arrangements freed them from family responsibilities and they had more time to extend social networks outside the family. In addition, living apart from their adult children could inhibit them from receiving immediate support from their adult children. The elderly migrants therefore needed to resort to other sources of support. My interview data show that social support provided by friends and local Chinese communities played a significant role in fostering the independence of my participants and subsequently contributing to a better quality of life.

5.4.1 Essential Sources of Information

The elderly Chinese migrants received informational support from local Chinese communities through three major sources – Chinese associations, peers and local Chinese language media. Chinese associations play an important role in promoting the development of local communities. The primary goals of many Chinese associations are to provide support to new migrants and bridge the connection between ethnic Chinese communities and the local society. To date, there are over 100 associations in New Zealand with most of them based in Auckland. Twenty-two participants (ten males and 12 females) in my study had joined at least one Chinese association at the time of the interview. Many of them reported that Chinese associations were their

major source of information relating to the host society and their post-migration life.

Age-related information and resources provided by Chinese associations were the most needed and valued by my participants. Such information ranged from applying for social benefits to utilizing health care services. One of my participants Mr. Shi had been a member of a Chinese association for over ten years. The association helped him to acquire information about the host society. During the interview he commented that:

> Our association has organised a lot of activities for us elderly members,
> including seminars about New Zealand social benefits, New Zealand
> health care systems, and public transportation… Almost all the elderly
> members in our association know the Auckland public transport quite
> well, it helps us elderly people to get around the city.

Mr. Shi's comment exemplifies how Chinese associations provide pragmatic information targeting the specific needs of elderly migrants. For the elderly migrants, this was the fastest and most effective way to accumulate knowledge about the host society. As discussed in the previous sections, the social benefits and resources available were perceived as essential to the maintenance of their independence. Therefore, Chinese associations serve as a channel through which elderly migrants can understand the available aged care resources provided by the New Zealand government.

Apart from providing pragmatic information, many Chinese associations also

organise free English language classes for elderly migrants. The teachers are usually young bi-lingual Chinese volunteers. They teach elderly Chinese migrants simple conversational English aiming to facilitate their basic daily activities, such as shopping and taking a bus. Mrs. Pei talked about her English learning experiences during the interview: "I have learnt a little bit of English in our association, the simplest vocabularies and conversations. I can only memorize those I need to use in my daily life." Such English language support was perceived to be important because it helped the elderly migrants to deal with basic daily routines and to maintain their independence.

The above examples show that both the information and language support provided by Chinese associations helped to enhance the independence of the elderly Chinese migrants. In addition, Chinese associations also served as platforms for these migrants to extend their social networks and friendships. Compared to those who never attended community activities, the participants who joined Chinese associations reported that they had more friends in New Zealand. The information shared among peers was usually about elderly migrants' daily life and the interests of elderly people, information which was seldom provided by adult children. The elderly migrants also gave advice to their peers who confronted difficulties in their lives and needed help. Mr. Jia, who had lived in New Zealand for more than ten years, talked about the importance of friends to his life.

There is a lot of information I can't get from my children, but [I can get]

from my friends. Some of my friends speak better English than I do, and they told me a lot of important things. For example, I live in a state house. I need to contact Housing New Zealand every time I leave New Zealand. One of my friends told me the phone number of an office of Housing New Zealand, which deals specially with such issue. Since then I didn't need to go to the office in person. That's very convenient. In addition, we also share a lot of information about Chinese community activities. When we read something interesting or important on newspaper, we call friends and let more people know.

Another participant, Mrs. Gu, also talked about the importance of shared information among elderly Chinese friends and how she provided informational support to her friends:

I've lived here for more than ten years, I've dealt with a lot of things by myself, including renewing my visa and applying for social benefits. Although I speak little English, I try to get things done by myself and I don't want to rely on my children. For example, last time when I renewed my visa, I wrote down all the detailed information about the whole process, including the address of the office, transportation to the office, the documents needed, how to communicate with the official. I later gave the notes to several of my friends, they were so happy and told me 'Thanks for your note, so detailed, and I don't need to ask

others about that anymore.'

The above two quotes show that to some extent peers were able to provide more useful information to the participants than their adult children. This was especially the case when it comes to ageing issues. Elderly migrants tended to share similar perspectives about ageing and elderly care, they encountered similar difficulties in the host society, and they knew better what a person in the same situation needed. In this sense, the informational support from peers can be very valuable, and even indispensable to the post-migration life of elderly Chinese migrants.

The development of Chinese communities in New Zealand have also resulted in a boom in Chinese language media, establishing a "virtual Chinatown" (H. Li, 2009). By 2008, there were over 20 Chinese language newspapers and magazines, mostly free and based in Auckland. There were also five radio stations and four television channels with significant Chinese language content, as well as several websites serving the Chinese population (Friesen, 2008; M. Ip, 2006a; H. Li, 2009). The Chinese language media was viewed by my participants as another important channel for information and resources about the host society, as well as about local Chinese communities. These Chinese-language media overcame language barriers, providing my participants with easily accessible information on migration policy and social welfare. Even the classified advertisements were considered valuable, providing information in Chinese that could facilitate my participants' daily life, such

as rental properties available.

The informational support provided by local Chinese communities enabled my participants to understand more about the host society. As discussed earlier in this chapter, many of my participants were able to adopt independent living arrangements and lifestyles only because of the financial and housing support provided by the New Zealand government. As a complement, the informational support provided by local Chinese communities further helped them to deal with their daily life by themselves, fostering their independence from their adult children.

5.4.2 Companionship and Emotional Care

Alongside informational support, local Chinese communities also provided emotional support that contributed to the quality of life of my participants. By joining Chinese associations and making friends with other elderly Chinese migrants, my participants gained valuable companionship and felt they were emotionally cared for.

Most Chinese associations organise weekly meetings and activities which include Tai chi, table tennis, playing musical instruments and ballroom dancing. Many of my participants reported that community activities provided them with opportunities to meet peers and keep each other company. Mrs. Xiu expressed her opinion about the importance of companionship from peers:

> I'm 75 years old now, and I don't have energy to socialize too much.
> But I still attend activities in our Chinese community centre regularly. I

meet my friends there every Sunday. We chat and play Tai chi together.

It's necessary to have my friends' companionship.

Another participant, Mrs. Pei, talked about the emotional care she received from the Chinese association she belonged to: "The friends in our association know that I'm widowed and live alone. Last year, when I was sick, the chair of our association and some friends came to visit me. I felt warm deep in my heart."

For many elderly Chinese migrants, family and adult children initially acted as their main source of emotional support. However, receiving emotional care from peers and friends was just as important to some participants, who felt that their peers could better understand them than their children. Mrs. Zhen expressed the feeling clearly during the interview:

Sometimes, my son can't give me the care I really need, not helpful at

all. I told him I was bored at home and felt lonely. He bought a

2000-dollar game console for me. I don't want to play video games at

all! The iPad he bought me was not that bad though. That's all that he

could come up with… and he can't be with me all the time. My elderly

friends are different (from my son). They understand my needs better,

and we have more time to be together. We are good companions to each

other.

The above quote shows that although many participants longed for emotional support from their children, the children did not always understand the needs of the

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elderly or have much time to spend with them. In such circumstances, emotional support from peers became essential and irreplaceable to these elderly migrants.

In addition, emotional support from peers and friends was even more important for the elderly migrants who were left alone in New Zealand by their adult children. Mrs. Yang commented:

> I've made a lot of new friends [in New Zealand]. Some of them are my
>
> neighbours, and some are friends I know from community activities.
>
> They know that my children are not in New Zealand, and they call me
>
> very often, to check on me. They care about me a lot. I feel good.

The previous pages have shown that emotional support from elderly peers was very important to my participants. The sharing of elderly people's perspectives and having time to accompany each other made their peers an indispensable and irreplaceable sources of emotional support. This finding is congruent with many international studies on older people in general, suggesting that those who have many friends feel more emotionally supported than those who are alienated from their networks (Adams & Blieszner, 1995; Bowling, 2007; Broese Van Groenou et al., 2006).

5.4.3 Facilitating Day-to-day Life

In addition to the informational and emotional support provided by Chinese associations and peers, the well-established Chinese communities in Auckland also

help accommodate the day-to-day needs of elderly migrants in other ways. As discussed earlier in this chapter, the most commonly mentioned difficulties my participants faced were caused by their low English language proficiency and limited mobility. However, they indicated that such difficulties have diminished since the rapid development of businesses and services in local Chinese communities. Chinese-style products and services provided in the Chinese language satisfied the basic demands of my participants. From this point of view, local Chinese communities in New Zealand play a crucial role in facilitating the daily life of elderly migrants.

As a result, 11 of my participants claimed that they did not need much practical support in their day-to-day life. Mr. Zhou, who was in his early 70s, expressed his opinion during the interview:

> I don't think there are many difficulties in my daily life. For example, I
>
> can go to bank by myself to deal with a lot of things, such as paying
>
> bills and withdrawing money. They have Chinese staff working in the
>
> bank. My family doctor is also a Chinese. It's quite convenient for my
>
> daily life.

Other participants shared the feeling that the rapidly developing Chinese communities and businesses in Auckland helped to alleviate the English language barrier faced by elderly Chinese migrants. Mrs. Guo said: "Shopping is very convenient. Of course, that's because we always go to Chinese supermarkets and shops. There we can buy almost everything we need."

Nineteen of my participants admitted that there were still difficulties that required them to rely on their adult children for support. Nonetheless, most expressed the feeling that being able to cope with daily life by themselves fostered a sense of independence. Mrs. Wei encountered great difficulties when she first came to New Zealand in the 1990s, when there was a small Asian population and Chinese communities were far less developed. She and her husband literally needed to rely on their son to manage their daily routine, from banking and shopping to dealing with official documents. According to Mrs. Wei, the development of Chinese communities in Auckland has enabled her to manage her daily routine by herself in Auckland, even after her son migrated to Australia:

> When we first came to New Zealand, we had to ask my son to take us
>
> out for shopping. Now it's not a problem for us to shop. There are
>
> many Chinese supermarkets. We can do our shopping by ourselves
>
> without bothering any one… We can do our banking by ourselves. ASB
>
> and National Bank, they both have Chinese staff. Many government
>
> departments also have Chinese-language services… My son is no
>
> longer here [in Auckland], but we can live on our own.

The above examples show that because of the well-developed Chinese communities in Auckland, many elderly Chinese migrants are able to accomplish daily routines without relying on support from their adult children. Similarly, an American study conducted in San Francisco suggests that compared with the elderly Korean, the

elderly Chinese participants reported low needs for English language assistance "due to the fact that there is a wide availability of Chinese services in San Francisco, as well as a critical mass of Chinese living in this city" (Wong et al., 2005, p. 115). The ability to fulfil their daily practical needs means more than maintaining a living in the new country. More importantly, it symbolizes an independent lifestyle and/or life attitude which is an essential element for elderly migrants of a good quality of life (Grewal et al., 2004; Wong et al., 2005).

5.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, I discussed support provided by the New Zealand government and the local Chinese communities to elderly Chinese migrants living in New Zealand. I argued that the two sources of support complemented each other, enhancing the quality of life of the elderly migrants. Government and community support was found to be important to my participants' post-migration life not only because it alleviated financial and practical difficulties, but also because such support helped to foster a sense of independence from their adult children.

The elderly Chinese migrants were generally satisfied with the social benefits and other welfare services provided by the New Zealand government. New Zealand Superannuation, means-tested benefits (e.g. Emergency Benefit), social housing, and health care were highly praised by my participants because it helped to ensure a secure income, stable living arrangements and good health care. All three aspects are fundamental factors in the quality of life of elderly people (Tsang et al., 2004; Walker,

2005b).

I also found that the elderly migrants in my study were not just passive recipients of government support. Instead, they were active agents who strategically pursued better means of support by accessing social benefits and health care services in both China and New Zealand. During the process, they experienced a strong sense of privilege which meant that, when compared with their peers living in China and other elderly people living in New Zealand, they could have better resources and opportunities to maintain their physical health and well-being. The accessibility of resources in two countries also opened up more options for future retirement plans and aged care.

In contrast to the support provided by the New Zealand government, support from the local Chinese communities played a significant role in fulfilling the informational and emotional needs of elderly Chinese migrants. The fast developing Chinese communities in Auckland provided opportunities for the elderly migrants to participate in social activities and to develop their social networks. The informational support provided by Chinese associations and peers helped my participants to know more about the host society and to enhance their ability to deal with post-migration life. The emotional support provided by peers in New Zealand also became indispensable and irreplaceable to the elderly migrants, especially when they realised that their emotional needs could not be met by their adult children. In addition, the local Chinese communities further diminished the English language barrier they faced.

The development of businesses and services offered in Chinese made it possible for the elderly migrants to manage their daily routines without assistance. All these findings are congruent with overseas studies conducted in the United States, Australia and Canada, suggesting that ethnic communities provide new migrants with various services and resources to facilitate their daily lives, to improve their social adjustment, and to enhance their well-being (Chow, 2012; Erdal & Oeppen, 2013; Pih et al., 2012).

Building on Chapter Four's argument that maintaining independence from adult children has enabled many elderly Chinese migrants to enhance their quality of life, I further argued in this chapter that support from the government and local Chinese communities complemented each other, contributing to the independence of elderly Chinese migrants. Receipt of government income support provided the elderly migrants with a stable and sufficient income to make them independent of financial support from their adult children. Housing support enabled them to have their own living space. Living apart from their adult children imbued the elderly migrants with a sense of control over their own life, and freed them from being over-burdened by family obligations. In addition to government support, well-developed Chinese communities provided information and services in the Chinese language, enabling the elderly migrants to manage their daily practices without relying on hands-on support from their adult children.

The findings in this chapter suggest that government and community support

have become particularly important for many elderly Chinese migrants, because such support contributes significantly to their sense of independence. In the New Zealand context, support from these two sources has shown a tendency to surpass family support in importance and they have thus become the central factors influencing the elderly Chinese migrants' quality of life. However, this may not be the case for new migrants in other Western countries. In the United States, for instance, many elderly parent migrants face financial constraints and depend heavily on family support after their migration due to the lack of public assistance and affordable health care for newcomers (Treas, 2008). Therefore, the relationship between government support and the quality of life of elderly migrants largely depends on the migration policy and social benefits in the host country.

Accessing social benefits in both the home and the host countries indicates the elderly Chinese migrants' participation in transnational activities at the macro level, but the intensive connections they maintain with their social networks in China symbolise their active role in maintaining transnational ties at the micro level. In the next chapter, I explore social support from transnational networks and illustrate how the micro level transnational activities help to enhance elderly Chinese migrants' quality of life.

Chapter Six: Enhancing Quality of Life in the Transnational Social Space

In the precious chapter, I indicated that the elderly Chinese migrants I interviewed were involved in transnational activities at the macro level. They received pensions from both China and New Zealand, and travelled between the two countries in order to utilise health care services. This transnational participation enabled them to access more resources and provided opportunities to enhance their quality of life. In this chapter, I focus on their transnational participation at the micro level – how the elderly Chinese migrants maintained connections with family members and friends who live in other countries. More specifically, I delve into the social support provided and received by these migrants and their transnational social networks, and explain the impact of transnational support exchange on the quality of life of elderly migrants.

This chapter starts with a discussion of the different methods employed by the elderly Chinese migrants to maintain their transnational connections. In line with the discussion in Chapter Two, I take a broad perspective when defining transnational connections by including both physical cross-border activities and communications in virtual spaces. Hence, in Section One, I identify three ways used by my participants to maintain their transnational ties, namely transnational visits, international phone calls and the use of the Internet. The factors determining their abilities to participate in transnational activities will also be discussed in this section. Section Two focuses on

the types of support exchanged in the transnational context. Different types of support, including financial, practical, informational and emotional support, will be discussed in detail. I argue that the elderly Chinese migrants are not just recipients in the transnational support exchange, but also active support providers. Based on the discussion in Sections One and Two, Section Three takes a step further by discussing the impact of transnational participation on the quality of life of elderly Chinese migrants. I argue that maintaining connections in the transnational social space enabled the elderly migrants to have more potential resources to enhance their quality of life. However, as transnationals, they also faced challenges in their future life and may experience uncertainty about where to settle in their final years.

6.1 Three Forms of Transnational Participation

My interview data show that the elderly Chinese migrants in New Zealand participated in transnational activities in three main ways. While making cross-border visits was the most direct way for them to maintain connections with family members and friends, international phone calls were the easiest and most convenient way of maintaining the connections and had become a part of the post-migration daily life of many elderly Chinese migrants. Compared with the two conventional ways, the Internet is an emerging approach used by elderly Chinese migrants to maintain their transnational connections. Each of these forms of transnational participation is discussed in turn.

6.1.1 Transnational Visits

In my study, some participants viewed transnational visits as an important part of their post-migration life. Some would travel frequently to China or other countries where they had family members but others, for a variety of personal reasons, showed less interest in cross-border visits.

About one-third of my participants travelled regularly to maintain transnational connections. Mr. and Mrs. Yu, for example, undertook frequent transnational visits. They made circular visits to China, Australia and New Zealand because their children and grandchildren had settled in all three countries. For them, making transnational visits was part of their post-migration life. During the interview, Mr. Yu commented that:

> My eldest daughter is in China, my son is in Sydney, and the youngest
>
> daughter is in New Zealand. The current situation for our family is that
>
> we are living in three countries, four cities. Family reunion is too
>
> difficult for us. That's why my wife and I have to travel around quite
>
> often.

For people like Mr. and Mrs. Yu, their transnational visits were family oriented, and making regular visits enabled them to maintain strong family connections. Apart from visiting family members, other participants gave different reasons for making regular visits overseas. Mr. Tong, for example, visited China once or twice a year, mainly

because he wanted to reconnect with his old friends. He said: "It's just a feeling. I want to go back to have a look, again and again… [In China] I have friends to spend time with me. I visit China mainly to see my old friends, and to recollect our good old days."

In most cases, the purposes for making transnational visit were multiple, combining visiting family and friends, sightseeing and shopping. Mrs. Zhen expressed this point of view clearly. She said:

> I would like to visit China once a year for several reasons. I still have an
>
> apartment in my hometown, so I want to go back to look after it. I miss
>
> a lot of Chinese food, which I can't find here (in Auckland). I also want
>
> to go shopping in China. I always want to go back to have a look. I miss
>
> my friends, and my siblings.

Compared with the family parent migrants, the skilled migrants in my study talked more about how they combined business and family visits in one trip. Mr. Hua, who had established strong cooperative relationships with working partners in China, had visited China frequently in the past few years. He said: "On average, I visited China three or four times every year… Usually, I combine my work and family visiting together… I try to see my mother once or twice per year."

The above quotes show that some of my participants, both family parents and skilled migrants, enjoyed making regular visits to China or to a third country. The

desire to maintain strong connections with their family, friends, and home country through physical visits seemed to be the major drive for their regular or frequent cross-border activities. However, over half of my participants made transnational visits far less frequently. They only travelled when necessary, for instance when selling properties in China or attending funerals of important family members. Mr. Lee, for example, had visited China only three times since he migrated to New Zealand in 2002. During the interview, he expressed his opinion about visiting China:

> I returned to China three times since I came here. The first time was in 2005, for Chinese New Year. The second time was in 2006 when my mother passed way. The third time was in 2009… I don't have any close relatives [in China] anymore. Plus, the winter is too cold and summer too hot [in my hometown]. The weather makes me uncomfortable… food safety, in particular, worries me… brings a lot of trouble… in my opinion, I don't think it's necessary to visit China once a year, of course, not to mention all the expenses.

As exemplified by Mr. Lee's comment, a variety of factors resulted in infrequent transnational travel by many elderly migrants. Not being able to adjust to the weather conditions and having health problems were the most commonly mentioned concerns of my participants. Having no close family members living in China was another factor which led some participants to feel that making regular cross-border visits was unnecessary. As Mr. Ai said during his interview:

> I don't have any close relatives in China. I followed my only son to
>
> New Zealand. My whole family is here. I only have an apartment left in
>
> China. I have my friends and neighbours help me to look after my
>
> apartment. I may visit China next year, because I need to renew my
>
> [Chinese National] ID card and my bank account.

My participants believed that they could maintain contact with relatives and friends through other means, not just transnational visits. Mr. Lee further commented that: "In my opinion, there are various ways to maintain connections with kin and relatives. I make phone calls to my cousins sometimes. That's enough… I don't think it's necessary for me to visit China often."

The fact that many of my participants did not participate in frequent transnational visits echoes findings in the literature, which suggests that elderly migrants tend to be less mobile than young migrants (K. Li, 2009). However, as I demonstrated in Chapter Two, transnational participation is not limited to physical visits. The rapid development of communication technology has expanded transnational social space from the physical world to virtual space.

6.1.2 International Telephone Calls

Making phone calls was identified by my participants as the easiest and most convenient way to maintain contact with their overseas social networks. Most of my

participants purchased phone cards[20] to reduce their call costs, which were less than five New Zealand dollars per month. The cheap rates available using phone cards enabled my participants to maintain regular contact with kin and friends overseas. Mr. Wei, for example, enjoyed inexpensive long distance phone calls and felt satisfied with the transnational connections maintained through this method. He said:

> Making phone calls from New Zealand to China is very cheap, even cheaper than calling a domestic landline. Usually, a phone card costs me seven New Zealand dollars, and it covers about 600 minute's phone calls from New Zealand to China. It's very cheap, so I call my friends and siblings in China very often. Whenever I'm bored, I call them. It's very convenient to make such international phone calls. Some of my friends here use computers quite often. I don't have a computer. But using phone calls is also very convenient to maintain contact with people in China.

Another participant, Mrs. Yu, recalled her experience of making international phone calls in the 1990s, and explained how developments in communication technology had enabled her to re-establish regular contact with her social networks in China. She said:

> When I first came to New Zealand in 1998, we mainly made contact to

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[20] Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) technologies allows telephone calls to be made over an IP network, such as the Internet, instead of the ordinary public switched telephone network (PSTN) system.

China by letters. Once, when my son was not at home, I called my

husband, who was in China at that time. We just chatted for about ten

minutes… Later, it turned out that it cost my son 30 New Zealand

dollars. How expensive it was! But now, 30 dollars' phone cards are

enough to cover my regular phone calls to China for over six months.

Thanks to the development of communication technology, I can afford

international phone calls… I call my siblings every week. It's very

important to me. It's part of my life now.

As Vertovec (2004, p. 219) argues, the boom in ordinary, cheap international

telephone calls has significantly facilitated global linkage, and "low-cost calls serve as

a kind of social glue connecting small-scale social formations across the globe".

Having lived in China for decades, most of my participants had established

long-term relationships there. Mrs. Yu was not alone in reporting that making

telephone calls to people living in China was a crucial part of their post-migration life.

Mrs. Zhang also made this point clearly:

Maintaining contact with them [relatives and friends in China] is very

important to me. It's part of my life. Otherwise, I would feel that I lost

something deep in my heart. I want to know their life. They care about

me too. Every time we make phone calls, we talk a lot. Sometime, we'd

ramble for quite a long time…on things happening in New Zealand and

China.

Although some of my participants had made new friends in New Zealand and attended regular community activities, maintaining connections with old social networks in China was still considered an indispensable part of their post-migration life. As discussed earlier in this chapter, many elderly migrants for a variety of personal reasons found it difficult to make regular and frequent transnational visits to China. In contrast, they believed making phone calls was an easier and more flexible way to maintain transnational connections.

6.1.3 The Internet

Existing literature on the Internet has established a positive relationship between Internet use and the quality of life of elderly people (Gardner, Kamber, & Netherland, 2012; Kamal & Patil, 2004; Mellor, Firth, & Moore, 2008). Studies have demonstrated that in general the elderly use the Internet for communication, entertainment and information (Gatto & Tak, 2008; Hilt & Lipschultz, 2004). These online activities help elderly people to maintain connections with their social relationships, to enhance their physical and mental health, and to enrich their daily activities.

As discussed in Chapter Two, the use of the Internet helps to establish transnational connections in virtual space. For many migrants, the Internet plays an important role in their daily life – facilitating migrant settlement and adjustment in the host country, strengthening connections with their social networks in their homeland, and developing transnational lifestyles (Khvorostianov, Elias, & Nimrod, 2012).

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However, little research has addressed the role played by the Internet in maintaining transnational connections by elderly migrants.

Surprisingly, over half of my participants (19 out of 35) indicated during the interviews that they used a computer and the Internet as a significant means to communicate with their family and friends living overseas. They usually used instant messaging platforms, such as Skype or QQ[21], when communicating with family members living in other countries, and used email to contact peers in China and in New Zealand.

The Internet enabled my participants to have video chats with their family members, making it better than telephone calls in many ways. Mrs. Hui, for example, enjoyed the convenience brought to her life by video chat. She said: "When my elder son went to the United States, I missed him very much. Many years later, we got computers. Every time when we do a video chat, I feel he is with me. Now, we have video chats every two or three days." Another participant, Mrs. Ai, also used instant message platforms to contact her family members living in China. She said:

> Sometimes I get bored at home. So I contact my family on QQ. My younger brother created a chat group for our whole family. I can chat with my siblings, my nieces, and my nephews. It's very convenient. We can also play online games together.

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[21] QQ is an instant messaging software commonly used in China. QQ offers a variety of services, including video chat, online social games, music, shopping and microblogging.

For elderly migrants like Mrs. Hui and Mrs. Ai, the use of the Internet enabled them to actually see their core family members regularly. The 'face-to-face' chat significantly reduced the perceived physical distance between family members, creating a sense of togetherness and 'virtual intimacy' (Wilding, 2006).

Emailing was another communication tool often used by my participants as an alternative method to contact peers in China and New Zealand. What is most fascinating is that they used email as more than a tool for contact, but for sharing life stories and personal interests with a group of friends. Mr. Hong talked about how he used emailing to contact his friends:

> I use email to contact a lot of my friends, both in New Zealand and in China… I organise my email contacts into different groups according to their residential places (China or New Zealand). I also have a group called 'photographers'. Members belong to that email group are all interested in photography.

Like Mr. Hong, another three participants also enjoyed using group emails to maintain contact with small circles of friends. This changes the traditional one-to-one pattern of social contact into "electronic gatherings" of older people (Kamal & Patil, 2004, p. 89). These Internet-based gatherings enabled my participants to discuss a wide variety of topics with other members of that email group, fostering a sense of 'hanging out' with their old friends in virtual space.

Different from instant messaging which is a synchronous communication tool, requiring participants to be online at the same time, emailing overcomes differences in time zones. As Mr. Hong said:

> The first thing I do after getting up in the morning is check for emails on my iPad. Because of the time difference, the emails from my Chinese friends usually arrive at midnight. I check their emails in the morning, and then reply to them. So my friends can read my emails when they get up.

Obviously, emailing enables communications to be sent at any time, with the recipient able to respond at his or her own convenience. The sense of transcending time and space contributes to a perception of intimate connectedness (Wilding, 2006).

6.1.4 Factors Influencing Transnational Participation

As previous discussion has highlighted, the elderly Chinese migrants in this study participated in transnational activities to different degrees and in different ways. Several factors influenced their ability to maintain transnational connections: health, financial status, computer literacy and home ownership.

Health

Health is one of the most crucial factors impacting on the physical mobility of elderly migrants. As discussed earlier, about two-thirds of my participants were not able to, or

did not want to, make frequent transnational visits primarily because they had concerns about their health. Many participants claimed that after years living in New Zealand, they felt unable to adjust to the climate in China, and easily became ill during their visits. Some participants had difficulties in managing long distance flights, which also prevented them from making regular cross-border trips.

Health was a particular concern of older elderly migrants. Mrs. Peng, who was in her mid-80s, commented on her health during the interview:

> I've got used to the climate in New Zealand. I've lived here for 15 years. Every time I went back to visit my hometown, I got sick. Some of my friends had the same experience too. So I don't want to visit [my hometown]. I can't stand that. My GP also asked me to avoid travelling long-distance.

Expecting their physical mobility to decline with age, some participants in their early 70s showed a strong willingness to travel as much as they could before their health conditions prevented them from long-distance travel. As Mr. Jia said: "I plan to visit more frequently and regularly in the next few years when I am still healthy enough (for long-distance travelling). As I grow older, I probably won't be able to travel that much in the future."

The above quotes indicate that health status was a vital factor determining the ability of the elderly migrants to undertake transnational visits. Compared to those in their 60s or early 70s, my participants who were in their late 70s or 80s expressed

more concerns about their physical mobility, and therefore travelled much less between China and New Zealand.

Financial status

The financial status of the elderly migrants influenced several aspects of their participation in transnational travel. Participants who had higher incomes from China and/or New Zealand were undoubtedly more able to afford the cost of airline tickets and other expense of making transnational visits. In the past few years, for example, Mr. Wei and his wife visited their siblings in China and their sons in Australia regularly. Mr. Wei said:

> We have enough income and savings, so we want to spend some money
>
> on travelling... We visit China every two years. We also go to Australia
>
> regularly to see our grandchildren and to have a holiday there. Last year,
>
> we celebrated our golden wedding anniversary in Australia. We had a
>
> good time there.

Compared with Mr. Wei, some participants in my study had greater financial concerns about undertaking transnational travel. This was especially the case for recipients of means-tested benefits provided by the New Zealand government. For example, the recipients of Emergency Benefit have their payment suspended if they are absent from New Zealand for more than four weeks (Work and Income New Zealand, 2012c). Therefore, the participants who required financial support from the

New Zealand government were more restricted in their ability to travel. As Mrs. Qi said: "I only visited China twice since I migrated to New Zealand in 2007. Because I receive the Emergency Benefits from the New Zealand government, I can't be away for more than 28 days. So I stayed in China for only 28 days when I visited."

My participants' financial status also impacted on their use of the Internet. The ability to afford a computer and access to the Internet is a pre-condition for transnational participation in virtual space. One of my participants, Mrs. Yang, stopped using the Internet a couple of months before she was interviewed. She explained:

> I live on the Emergency Benefits and sometimes feel it is a little bit difficult to make ends meet. I need to pay the rent, the phone bill, the power bill, and the Internet. It's very stressful. My laptop crashed recently, so I terminated my broadband services. It saves me some expenses.

The above comments indicate that financial status was a critical factor influencing my participants' ability to maintain transnational connections. Financial stress not only limited the chance to make transnational visits, but also constrained how they communicated in virtual space.

Computer literacy

There is growing consensus that maintaining and enhancing social networks is

increasingly related to digital access and computer literacy. Elderly people are more likely to experience the disadvantages of the 'digital divide' and lag behind other age groups in the adoption and use of computers and the Internet (Gardner et al., 2012). While 19 of my participants (nine males, ten females) viewed the computer and the Internet as an important tool for social contact and entertainment, there were 16 participants who were unable to use a computer.

Mastering computer skills and accessing the Internet enabled the elderly migrants to maintain closer ties with their home country. Some participants in my study reported that they visited China-based websites almost every day for news and information, and watched Chinese TV dramas and programmes. In doing so, these migrants not only felt easier to pass their leisure time and combat loneliness, but also accessed more 'authentic' news about China (Yin, 2013), creating topics of conversation when they contacted their Chinese friends and generating a sense of living a dual life. Mrs. Xiu, who learned to use a computer and the Internet several years ago after her husband passed away, said in her interview: "I use the computer and the Internet every afternoon to read news and contact friends. If I still have spare time, I search for [Chinese] TV dramas on the Internet… My life is definitely enriched since having my computer."

Some of my participants viewed computer and Internet skills as basic skills for living in New Zealand. They believed that the elderly migrants who could not use computers and the Internet were more likely to be at a disadvantage when settling in

the host society. On the contrary, those who had acquired the skills were more able to live an independent life in the new environment. For example, Mrs. Zhen, who started to learn computer skills several months after her migration to New Zealand, expressed her view that:

> I felt it was necessary to learn how to use a computer. If I didn't learn, there would have been a lot of things I would never know and understand… Here [in New Zealand], you can't rely on your children for everything… I always try my best to find out solutions on the computer before asking for help.

Similar to Mrs. Zhen, some other participants reported that they use search engines to find out information about both China and New Zealand, or to look for solutions when they came across difficulties in their daily life. Mr. Yu said: "The Internet is my good friend. It's a treasure-box of knowledge. Every time I come across a question, no matter what it's about, I can always find answers on the Internet." As demonstrated in previous literature, using search engines to seek useful information is one of the most popular function used by elderly Internet users (Gatto & Tak, 2008). This function was especially important to my participants who tried to maintain their independence in New Zealand.

Although the Internet was viewed by my participants to be a robust tool to gain information about China and to contact Chinese friends, none of the family parent migrants used online banking to transfer money between their Chinese and

New Zealand's bank accounts. This was probably because they were unable to use New Zealand online banking system due to their poor English language proficiency and the lack of understanding of the technological system (Benamati & Serva, 2007).

Home ownership

My interview data also revealed a clear connection between home ownership in China and the frequency of, and satisfaction with, transnational travel. The participants who had their own dwellings in China tended to visit more often, and felt more relaxed and happy when they stayed in China. Mr. Shi and his wife usually visited China once a year, and felt satisfied with their transnational visits. He said:

> We have an apartment in China, we do not rent it out, so we can go back
>
> whenever we want to. It's very convenient. Every time before I go back,
>
> I would ask my son, or my daughter-in-law, or my granddaughter to go
>
> to clean my house, so we can live in it immediate after arrival.
>
> Otherwise, where should we live? As long as I have a dwelling there, I
>
> feel at home, literally.

Another 13 participants also reported that owning a dwelling in China brought a lot of practical convenience to my participants when they travelled back to the country. They did not need to spend extra money on accommodation, and could also afford to stay longer.

In contrast, people who did not own homes in China tended to express more

concerns about visiting their home country. They needed to make arrangements with their relatives or friends to see if someone could provide them with accommodation or set aside an extra amount of money for staying in hotels or rental accommodation. Mrs. Xiu, for example, felt that it was difficult for her to visit China frequently because she had sold her apartment and, therefore, did not have a home in China. She said: "I can't visit China often… I don't have my own home there. I have to stay in hotels, or live with my siblings or friends. That's not what I want."

Obviously, for those who had their own homes in China, transnational visits were much easier to manage and more satisfying. For those who did not have their own dwellings, accommodation support from families and friends could also help to reduce the cost of their visits. However, as Baldassar, Baldock and Wilding (2007) have argued, sharing accommodation during transnational visits can also generate conflict caused by factors such as different living habits, or difficult family relationships. These conflicts may have a negative impact on their satisfaction with transnational visits, and subsequently, make migrants less willing to travel back to their homeland.

6.2 Types of Transnational Support

Social support in this study is categorised into four types, namely financial, practical, informational and emotional. My interview data suggest that the four types of support were commonly exchanged between my participants and their family and friends who lived overseas. Some support was more likely to be exchanged during transnational

visits, while others could be exchanged when the providers and recipients were geographically apart. As the following discussion illustrates, support exchange is largely facilitated by international telephone calls and the Internet.

6.2.1 Financial Support

My findings suggest that in the transnational context little direct economic support was exchanged. As discussed in Chapter Five, most of my participants had retirement income from China and at the same time received financial support (superannuation or means-tested benefits) from the New Zealand government. Hence, they usually did not need financial support from their adult children or other family members. However, nine of my participants provided occasional financial support to their siblings in China due to the perceived family obligations.

For many participants, being absent meant they could not adequately fulfil the duties of taking care of family members as is commonly required in Chinese culture. Hence, they needed a way to show their care when they were away from China. Many participants believed that their financial status in New Zealand was better than that of their siblings in China, and they considered that providing occasional financial support to siblings compensated their absence. Mr. Wei indicated this when he said: "My brothers live in the countryside. Every time we went back, I gave them money… I think I'm quite generous to them… in terms of financial matters." Another participant, Mrs. Pei, shared a similar perspective. She received New Zealand superannuation and lived in a state house. When commenting on her financial status,

she said: "I have more than enough money to cover my rent and daily expenses. I also have retirement income in China, about 3,000 Chinese yuan (per month)[22]. I give almost all of that money to my younger sister." The above quotes show that providing financial support to siblings was viewed by my participants as an alternative way to fulfil their family obligations when they were unable to provide hands-on support to them during their absence.

For some participants, however, giving money to siblings had other meanings. Three of my participants had parents living in China. Due to the long distance, they were not able to provide hands-on care for those parents. Therefore, their siblings in China had to take full responsibility for providing care on their behalf. This generated a sense of guilt among my participants because they felt that they had failed to provide filial support to their own parents as Chinese social norms expect. The three participants also showed a sense of gratitude to their siblings, and therefore felt they should compensate them by giving money or sending gifts. As Mrs. Yin said:

> All my siblings are in China, and my father is there as well… My younger sister is taking care of him…I'm here, so I'm not able to provide any physical support. But I can help them with money. I call them often, say nice words to my sister, and send her money. I also send gifts to them in traditional Chinese festivals. My father likes New Zealand manuka honey.

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[22] Approximately 600 New Zealand dollars.

The above example illustrates that giving money to their siblings was used as a way to compensate them for the filial duties they provided to the participants' parents. In doing so, my participants felt that their own filial duties were partly fulfilled. In addition, it was also a way for them to show their gratitude to their siblings and therefore feel less indebted.

6.2.2 Practical Support

Practical support was commonly provided and received during the elderly migrants visits to their family and friends in China or in another country. Mr. and Mr. Yu, for example, travelled regularly to China, New Zealand and Australia to provide domestic assistance to their children and grandchildren and to deal with various family issues. As Mrs. Yu said:

> My husband and I usually travel separately. This ensures that at least one of us can stay in China for a longer time to deal with all kinds of family issues. We both have siblings who are very old now. We probably won't have many chances to visit them in the future. Besides, we have a daughter in China, sometimes she needs our help as well. We don't travel together, so we can also have a person stay here (in New Zealand) to look after my youngest daughter's house.

The transnational activities of this elderly couple symbolized a form of family strategy, which helped to meet the practical needs of family members living in different

countries.

Practical support was also provided and received by my participants and their family members, even when they were geographically apart. Mr. and Mrs. Guo, for example, provided practical assistance to their son who lived to Australia. The most difficult task they had to deal with was selling their son's house in New Zealand. Mrs. Guo said:

> One year after he migrated to Australia, he wanted to sell his house here
>
> [in Auckland], so my husband and I started to prepare immediately. We
>
> did a lot of things before we handed over the house to the real estate
>
> agent. We found workers to repaint all the walls and repaired some stuff
>
> in the kitchen and bathroom… and washed the carpet, a lot of things.
>
> Those took us almost half a year… We were so tired.

Several other participants also reported that they helped their children by looking after or managing the children's house after they had migrated to Australia or returned to China. The detailed tasks included house cleaning, paying for electricity and the Internet, leasing the house out, and managing the rents paid by tenants. Being able to provide practical support indicates that the elderly migrants played a significant role in facilitating the transnational activities of their adult children. Taking care of the young migrants' property meant that these elderly people played an anchor's role in New Zealand. Such a role, although it provided an opportunity for the young migrants to return to New Zealand in the future, confined these elderly parents

to the host country.

My participants also received practical support from their relatives and friends living in China. For example, some participants residing in New Zealand asked their siblings to look after their apartment in China, or to obtain official documents from China when they needed to renew their visas or apply for social benefits in New Zealand. Most participants reported that they tried their best to deal with all issues by themselves when they visited China, so that they could save other people the trouble. When the elderly migrants needed help, they usually turned to their adult children or other family members first. Friends were seldom asked for help in the transnational context. As Mr. Guo said:

> Sometimes, I need help from people who live in China. I would always
>
> turn to my daughter first. If she couldn't deal with it, I will go for my
>
> old friends. I try to not ask friends for help. I felt bad to bother others. I
>
> still have friends in China. But I only ask them for help when I don't
>
> have any other options.

Reluctance to ask for support from friends was linked to the fact that friendships are usually considered as voluntary relationships, largely without obligations to care for people as they age (Litwak, 1985; Wong et al., 2005). In the migration context, the bond between friends living in different countries could weaken further due to distance and lack of communication. Asking for support from friends could also generated a stronger sense of indebtedness (Hupcey, 1998).

Therefore, most of my participants tried to avoiding asking for practical support from friends who lived in other countries unless absolutely necessary.

As discussed earlier, many participants used the Internet to contact their core family members living in other countries. This contributed significantly to the strengthening of family bonds. Apart from its communication function, the Internet also filled some of the migrant's practical needs. For example, some participants used video chat to show their children and grandchildren letters written in English which they had received from government departments and to ask for help in translating them. In this sense, the modern communication technology enabled the elderly migrants to receive more forms of support in the transnational context.

6.2.3 Informational Support

In line with the findings in Chapter Five, friends and peers in New Zealand were considered by my participants as an irreplaceable source of informational support. My participants also exchanged a lot of information through telephone calls and emails with their friends who lived in China. Mr. Jia, for example, expressed his need to know more about China from his friends. He said:

> Sometimes I read news in the Chinese language newspapers in New
>
> Zealand. There are also editorials talking about the social issues in
>
> China. So I call my friends to check the reliability of the news…
>
> Sometimes, we also talk about our perceptions of ageing and death. We

are all in our late 70s. Living in different countries, we may have

different perceptions about later life.

Although the Chinese community in New Zealand is well-established and Chinese migrants can receive a lot of China-related information through newspapers, radio, television, and the Internet, many of my participants still wanted further information from their peers. They wanted to know not just about social or political news in China but, more importantly, about information of special interest to elderly people that they could not get from local sources. For instance, they would ask their friends and previous colleagues about changes to social welfare policies and health care services which might directly impact their access to elderly care resources.

As pointed out earlier, some elderly migrants also shared information and resources with their friends in China through the Internet. Mrs. Xiu explained how she used group emails to share information with her old colleagues and friends. She said:

> I used the Internet to contact my friends and old colleagues in China.
>
> We use the email not for saying hello to friends. We mainly use it to
>
> communicate some ideas relevant to our older people, such as our
>
> perceptions of ageing, our knowledge and information about health
>
> care.

Emailing provided a platform from which my participants could share a variety of material, textual, visual or audio, with their Chinese friends. The shared information about personal hobbies, life stories, and health care not only enriched their daily lives

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in New Zealand, but also helped them to maintain transnational ties with old friends.

Several of my participants believed that they were able than their friends in China to access richer sources of information due to the lack of censorship in New Zealand. The feeling of being able to provide valuable and exclusive information to their friends motivated some of my participants to keep transnational connections with their peers in China. It also engendered great satisfaction because they were at a better vantage point to access such information. As Mr. Hong proudly expressed during the interview:

> I send them [friends] information they cannot access in China. Things
>
> from Youtube, which they don't have access to (due to censorship)…
>
> This makes all of us happy… I can see a lot of interesting information
>
> and [China-related] news that they would never know, and I can send
>
> these to my friends who might be interested through the email.

Apart from the exclusive information that they have access to, the migration experience itself also provided topics of discussion that the elderly migrants could share with their peers in China. Many of my participants believed they had richer life stories and knowledge than their Chinese friends who had never migrated. Therefore, when their friends in China needed informational support about migration, travelling or buying New Zealand products, my participants usually felt able to provide their friends with detailed information and suggestions. This also imbued them with a sense of pride and self-confidence when maintaining their transnational ties.

6.2.4 Emotional support

Receiving emotional care is the most significant benefit that my participants received from their family members and friends living overseas. As Baldassar, Baldock and Wilding (2007) point out, emotional support helps migrants cope with homesickness and the profound sense of loss about the long distance separating them from other family members. Although a large proportion of my participants had built up their own social networks in New Zealand and had friends with whom to spend their spare time, they still needed emotional support from people they had known for a long time in China.

Emotional support can be embedded in other types of support. The practical and informational support provided by family and friends was also perceived by my participants as a kind of emotional care. In addition, maintaining regular contact with family and friends brings emotional comfort. Mr. Guo, who used instant messaging platforms very often, expressed his opinion about using the Internet. He said:

> I have three grandsons, one is in China and the other two are in Australia. We see each other on the computer very often. They talk with me in a very intimate way. That comforts me. Sometimes, we keep the video chat on for hours. My wife and I can see what they are doing in their house, and they can also see what we are doing here. My granddaughter even showed me her new pets, some little rabbits. It feels like we are still living together.

Meeting regularly in the virtual space made my participants feel that they were emotionally cared for by their adult children even though they were not living nearby. In addition, maintaining transnational communication also helped to combat the loneliness experienced by some participants who had not established social networks in New Zealand. As Mrs. Yin said: "Maintaining contact with them [kin and friends in China] makes me happy. Otherwise, I don't have people to talk to. We only have one Chinese language television. I can't understand the English programmes. Life would be so boring."

Several of my participants reported that they experienced a sense of pride and satisfaction during their communication with friends living in China. As Mr. Wei said:

> I called my relatives and old friends in China very often…They all
>
> think that my wife and I are lucky to live in New Zealand, in this good
>
> environment. They are all jealous of us. We should be content with what
>
> we have. … Making phone calls with my Chinese friends is pleasant
>
> and delightful.

Although such pleasant feeling was not caused directly by the emotional support they received from others, contacting old friends in China undeniably brought positive feelings to my participants, contributing to their quality of life. In line with the notion of "reflected appraisal" (Veenhoven, 2008, p. 48), these elderly migrants felt positive about their own life when their friends believed that they were better off. In this sense, maintaining connections with friends in China also contributed to my participants'

subjective well-being.

6.3 Being Transnationals: Advantages and Challenges

In the previous two sections, I have demonstrated that many of my participants participated actively in transnational activities in various ways, including making physical visits overseas, making international phone calls and using the Internet. Although a relatively low proportion of the elderly Chinese migrants made regular and frequent cross-border visits, their transnational participation in the other two ways was much more active than commonly assumed.

The social ties maintained through their transnational participation enabled my participants to receive social support from a wider range of sources, expanding from the host society to their home country. These transnational ties were further enhanced through the process of support exchange. The practical, informational and emotional support they received from their transnational social networks helped them to cope with daily difficulties, fight against boredom and soothe nostalgia, thus contributing to their well-being and quality of life. By providing financial, practical, and informational support, my participants perceived themselves as being able to fulfil family duties and to be useful to their friends. This self-fulfilment also contributed to their quality of life.

More importantly, by participating in transnational activities, many of my participants developed a transnational perspective in terms of how to enhance their quality of life in old age. Having experienced different cultural and social

environments in both China and New Zealand, my participants learned to lower their expectations for family support and to optimise various sources of elderly support from the government, communities and other social networks.

Acknowledging the advantages brought by their transnational participation, some of my participants also faced some potential challenges to their quality of life. Being transnationals meant that my participants had to lead a dual life (Heikkinen & Lumme-Sandt, 2013), establishing and/or maintaining social networks in both New Zealand and China. However, the two sets of social networks weakened over time. Being absent from China, my participants were not able to develop new relationships, and meanwhile their previous social networks inevitably shrank due to the death of old friends and siblings. The result was that the elderly migrants could no longer receive actual support from their social networks in China. Their reluctance to ask old friends for practical support, or their inability to find an appropriate person to provide help clearly indicates that their social networks in China were weakening.

In New Zealand, their newly established social networks were not stable enough to fulfil their long-term need for support, especially emotional support. Mr. Jia commented on his social networks in New Zealand and said sadly:

> I have fewer friends in New Zealand than in China. Most of my
>
> friendships in China were established in school and work places. We
>
> had known each other for decades. Here [in New Zealand] is different.
>
> Most of my friends are my neighbours or peers in the same Chinese

association… It's difficult to establish deep emotional bonds with these new friends. Maybe it's because we are old and we have a lot of concerns when making friends. I'm not sure.

For many participants like Mr. Jia, their new friends in New Zealand could provide them with good companionship and help combat loneliness. However, they found it difficult to establish robust friendships in the migration context. This was probably because many of the elderly Chinese migrants in New Zealand had not really settled down. They might be physically mobile, travelling between the two countries or even returning to China at some point and never returning to New Zealand. This situation made their newly established social networks not only weak, but also fluid. This posed great challenges to the elderly migrants because it was difficult for them in such circumstances to establish long-term stable relationships providing emotional support.

Another downside to the transnational lifestyle is that uncertainty about where they would settle when they became older caused anxiety among the elderly migrants. Mrs. Gu expressed her deep concerns during the interview:

I've been thinking about it for quite long time. I told my husband, 'let's travel [between China and New Zealand] for several more years when we can still do. And when we cannot travel any more, we'd stay at home [in China].' I don't know why, but I want to die at home, not in another country. But on second thought, if I returned to China, no one

would be there to take care of me. They [the two daughters] are here in

New Zealand after all. Even when I'm here, they cannot come and take

care of me every day, let alone if I'm in China. Probably, if I stay here,

I'd end up in rest home. I'm quite afraid.

Like Mr. and Mrs. Gu, who could afford to lead a transnational life while they were still physically healthy, another eight participants also encountered difficulties making decisions about where to settle down during their later years. Such anxiety was caused by the dilemma of choosing between returning to their home country to follow the traditional Chinese notion of 'falling leaves return to the root' or accompanying their migrant children, many of whom were living in New Zealand or Australia but might have further plans for migration. What is more, the anxiety became even more intense when, as pointed out earlier in Chapter Five, the elderly migrants had to weigh the costs and benefits of the social welfare systems in China and New Zealand.

Based on evidence in this section, it is safe to argue that being transnationals benefited these elderly migrants in various ways. Exchanging financial, practical, informational, and emotional support within transnational social networks was crucial to their perception of quality of life. However, it is also evident that their transnational lifestyles engendered great anxiety and worries in my participants, causing potential risk to their quality of life in the future.

6.4 Conclusion

This chapter has explored the social support of elderly Chinese migrants in the transnational context at the micro level. I addressed this question by viewing elderly migrants as active participants in transnational activities. By analysing the ways my participants exchanged various types of support with their overseas social relationships, I argue that transnational activities and communications had a crucial impact on their quality of life.

Most of the elderly Chinese migrants in my study could be labelled as 'transnationals', although they were not as mobile as their younger counterparts. Their international travel was constrained for a variety of reasons, including their declining health status and limited financial condition. However, their participation in transnational social spaces was largely facilitated by the rapid development of communication technologies. By making international telephone calls and using the Internet, my participants maintained their social ties with people living in other countries.

At the micro-level, various types of support were exchanged between my participants and their family and friends who lived overseas. In general, the elderly migrants provided more financial and practical support to their family members who lived overseas than they received back from them. This was mainly because the financial needs of the elderly Chinese migrants had been met by the receipt of income support from the New Zealand government, and their practical needs were provided

by the local Chinese communities. On the other hand, the informational and emotional support received from their transnational social networks played a significant role in enhancing the quality of life of the elderly Chinese migrants. This echoes previous research suggesting that elderly migrants engage in transnational practices mainly to satisfy their emotional needs (K. Li, 2009). The various types of support exchanged in the transnational context contributed to the quality of life of the elderly Chinese migrants.

At the macro level, as discussed in Chapter Five, social welfare and services provided by both the Chinese and New Zealand governments enabled the elderly Chinese migrants to have more options in regard to their life in retirement. Compared with their peers living in China and many other elderly people living in New Zealand, my participants were able to access more government and community resources to fulfil their needs for support. They also tended to have a better understanding of how to utilise the various sources of support to enhance their quality of life. Their transnational participation at both the micro and macro levels shows that the enhancement of quality of life of elderly migrants moves beyond national borders to transnational social spaces.

So far, based on my findings, it is possible to identify a positive connection between transnational participation and the quality of life of the elderly Chinese migrants. However, enhancing quality of life is an ongoing task intertwined with the natural process of ageing. As the elderly migrants become older, will the transnational

engagement still be a positive factor to their quality of life? The concerns about their future expressed by some of my participants reveal the complexity of this issue. While transnational participation opened up more options and sources in regard to their ageing and retirement, it also engendered uncertainties about where they should spend their final years – in their home country, in New Zealand, or possibly undertake another migration to follow their children to a third country. Making such decisions is not an easy task, for it requires an overall evaluation of both formal and informal social support. The quality of life for the elderly migrants is thus a result of optimising various types of social support from multiple sources in the transnational social space.

Chapter Seven: Conclusion

This thesis set out to investigate the relationship between social support and quality of life of elderly Chinese migrants living in New Zealand. More specifically, I explored *what types* of support elderly Chinese migrants received and from *whom*, and *how* social support contributed to their quality of life. Taking social support as a lens, I also examined their reasons and motivations for coming to New Zealand, and how these motivations related to their post-migration quality of life. Personal factors, such as gender, socio-economic status and migration categories, and situational factors, such as migration policy, social benefits and socio-cultural environment were also analysed when I investigated the relationship between social support and quality of life. By exploring these research questions, my research not only contributes to the body of empirical knowledge of this specific group of elderly migrants, but also provides theoretical insights into the connections between social support and quality of life.

As discussed in Chapter Two, I drew upon multiple theoretical perspectives to address these research questions. First of all, I have taken a subjective approach to elucidate the quality of life of elderly Chinese migrants. Hence, their personal lived experiences, cultural and societal backgrounds, and living circumstances were taken into consideration as I studied their subjective perceptions of quality of life. As a key component of quality of life, social support has been viewed by this study not only as

a static resource but also as a dynamic exchange process during which people establish their interpersonal relationships and seek support to enhance their quality of life (Blau, 1964; Gouldner, 1960; Kim et al., 2000; Molm et al., 2009). Furthermore, a transnational perspective was used to contextualise my research on elderly migrants (Heikkinen & Lumme-Sandt, 2013; Torres, 2013). Transnationalism has significantly changed the scenarios of elderly migrants' lives in terms of how they live their lives and how they maintain social ties within both the host and their home countries. Therefore, in this thesis, I situate the two key concepts – social support and quality of life – in a transnational context. Integrating the above three related perspectives provided a theoretical framework to understand the relationship between social support and the quality of life of elderly migrants in the context of transnational migration.

My research data show that elderly Chinese migrants in New Zealand gain support from their migrant families, local Chinese communities, their home and host governments, as well as from relatives and friends in China or other countries. The types of support received encompass the financial, the practical, the informational and the emotional. I argue that these different dimensions of social support complement each other, enhancing the quality of life of elderly Chinese migrants. Other specific research questions, such as the reasons and motives for their migration to New Zealand, and the key personal and situational factors of their quality of life have also been answered through analysis of the different types and sources of support.

In this final chapter, I synthesise these findings to make theoretical arguments about the relationship between social support and the quality of life of elderly Chinese migrants. Specific emphasis is given to the interconnections between the different dimensions of social support. I will then discuss the empirical, theoretical, and policy implications of the findings, and how this research contributes to a better understanding of the quality of life of elderly Chinese migrants. I conclude the chapter by noting some directions for future research.

7.1 Social Support and Quality of Life

In the three empirical chapters, Chapters Four to Six, I analysed the different dimensions of social support used by elderly Chinese migrants. Chapter Four focused on the family dimension, exploring what types of support were provided, received and exchanged between elderly Chinese migrants and their migrant families. Chapter Five moved the focus beyond the family to discuss support provided by governments and communities. Chapter Six took a broader perspective and discussed support at the transnational level. The organisation of the chapters accentuated the major argument of the thesis that enhancing the quality of life of elderly migrants is a process of optimising *multi-dimensional* forms of social support from family, governments, ethnic communities, and transnational ties.

7.1.1 Family Support: The Starting Point

The majority of the elderly Chinese migrants in my study were migrants who came to

New Zealand in recent years under the Family Parent category. Reuniting with their children for aged care and fulfilling their obligations as grandparents were the main reasons for their migration in their later years. Hence, intergenerational support exchange is naturally embedded in their migration experience.

Most of these elderly Chinese migrants had high expectations of support from their children when they first came to New Zealand. However, traditional forms of 'Chinese-style' intergenerational support were challenged by new cultural, societal and economic circumstances. Many of the elderly migrants experienced a huge drop in their quality of life not only because of generational conflicts within the family but also because of a sense of being exploited, burdened and isolated during the support exchange process. As shown in Chapter Four, many of these migrants spent most of their time doing domestic chores and taking care of their grandchildren, expecting to receive respect, gratitude and emotional care from their children. Apparently, when heterogeneous types of support were exchanged between the elderly migrants and their adult children, the value of each type of support was subjectively perceived and assessed by individuals. While domestic chores and childcare were devalued by the young migrants, the elderly migrants tended to feel that they were not well reciprocated.

This sense of imbalanced reciprocity, especially when receiving less support than providing, tends to make people feel burdened and frustrated (Davey & Eggebeen, 1998; Rook, 1987), and consequently damages existing exchange

relationships (Blau, 1964; Gouldner, 1960). Therefore, withdrawing from the imbalanced intergenerational exchange becomes a strategy employed by many elderly Chinese migrants to sustain their well-being when they felt overburdened. The intergenerational support exchange within those migrant families reveals that people's perceptions of social support and quality of life are not only influenced by the amount of the support they received, but also determined by the exchange dynamics.

The elderly Chinese migrants, especially recently arrived family parents, also experienced a significant loss of power and independence after their migration. Seldom mastering the English language or embracing local culture and customs, they were usually isolated in their children's family with little social participation. Many family parent migrants relied largely on their adult children to deal with issues outside the household and therefore felt subordinate to and dependent on their children. This finding that elderly Chinese migrants felt burdened with family obligations and dependent on their adult children echoes previous research on elderly Chinese migrants living in other countries such as Canada and the United States (Chappell, 2003; M. E. Gee, 2000; Treas & Mazumdar, 2002). The experience of these elderly migrants reveals the limitations of family support for promoting their well-being (Treas & Marcum, 2011). Young family members are so preoccupied with settling in the new country that providing companionship and support to their elderly parents is sometimes overlooked or ignored. However, changing power relationships within the household and the new societal circumstances caused by migration provided an opportunity for the elderly Chinese migrants to re-evaluate the importance of family

support with regard to their quality of life.

My study also shows that the value of family support becomes less when government and community support is available. This finding differs from those of studies conducted in the United States and many European countries, where elderly migrants have to rely on families for financial and emotional support because they are ineligible for most government benefits and have few opportunities to develop their social networks (Treas, 2008; Treas & Marcum, 2011). In contrast, the New Zealand government has a relatively low residence requirement for new migrants to access old age pension and housing support. The financial support provided by the New Zealand government enabled the elderly Chinese migrants I interviewed to gradually withdraw from intergenerational support and to start to pursue greater independence and better quality of life.

Such aspirations for independence were not only manifested in their living arrangements but also in the new lifestyles they developed post-migration. Living apart from their adult children, many elderly Chinese migrants were able to spend more time participating in cultural activities or associations organised by local Chinese communities. In Auckland, the well-developed Chinese communities provide for the emotional and social needs of elderly Chinese migrants. These alternative support sources outside the family made many of my participants and their adult children re-evaluate their perceptions of family obligations. The choices available to them significantly challenged the existing power-dependence relationships within the

family. Their extended social networks, together with financial independence, altered the way that these elderly migrants perceived the role family support played in their quality of life.

It is necessary to point out that individuals have different perceptions and requirements for independence. My findings in Chapter Four revealed differences between men and women and between people who arrived under different migrant categories regarding the importance given to family obligation over aspirations for independence. Compared to men, elderly women usually had a stronger sense of family obligation, and were therefore more likely to subordinate their own independence to their children's needs. In addition, the elderly skilled migrants had a higher requirement for independence than the family parent migrants. Their relatively higher socio-economic status, English language proficiency, and long-term living experience in New Zealand contributed to their stronger desire for independence and self-reliance.

Although the family is the starting point for many elderly migrants when pursuing a better quality of life post-migration, new social and cultural circumstances in New Zealand altered their original plans. I argue that family support is no longer as important as many elderly migrants had thought pre-migration. Instead, support from outside the family become increasingly important to the migrants' pursuit of a better quality of life.

7.1.2 Government and Community Support: Crucial and Imperative

The New Zealand government has become a crucial source of social support outside the migrant family for elderly Chinese in Auckland. Government income and housing support enhanced the quality of life of elderly Chinese migrants largely because the migrants perceived that such support could bring them a sense of independence from their adult children. Compared to many other OECD countries, New Zealand provides relatively generous social welfare to new migrants (OECD, 2011; Overbye, 1996). Elderly migrants with permanent residency or citizenship are able to apply for means-tested social benefits after two years' residence in New Zealand. They are also eligible for the universal superannuation after living in New Zealand for ten years. This stable government income support not only ensured the material living conditions of the elderly Chinese migrants, but also freed them from over dependence on their adult children.

Almost all my participants were recipients of New Zealand social benefits and pensions, and they explicitly made a connection between their quality of life and the level of social benefits they received from the government. The participants who reported a higher satisfaction with their quality of life were usually in their 70s and 80s and, due to their longer residence in New Zealand, were recipients of the government old age pension. In contrast, recent arrivals in their 60s who were only eligible for the means-test Emergency Benefit, which is paid at a much lower rate than the pension, reported a lower quality of life. It is possible that the lower life

satisfaction reported by the new arrivals have been a result of the initial difficulties they faced in the host country due to their limited knowledge of and living experiences in New Zealand. Nonetheless, the material living conditions of these elderly migrants were largely determined by the government social benefits available to them, accentuating the importance of the government as a source of social support outside the migrant family.

Government housing support also directly contributed to the quality of life of my participants because it provided opportunities for independent living arrangements. Echoing many previous studies about the elderly in general, having independent and stable living arrangements contributes to better well-being in old age by fostering a sense of control over the living space and lifestyle (Howden-Chapman et al., 1999; Kendig et al., 2012; Tanner et al., 2012).

Findings from my research have clearly illustrated that financial and housing support from the New Zealand government was essential to the quality of life of the elderly Chinese migrants who arrived under family parent category. Receiving government support enabled them to develop a sense of independence, freeing them from being over reliant on their adult children for financial and housing support. Consequently, the migrants were able to achieve a balance between having a relaxed retirement and enjoying family intimacy at a distance. In addition, government support enabled the elderly parents to live apart from their adult children. Shouldering fewer domestic chores allowed them to have more time for social participation and to

widen their social networks in New Zealand. This further enhanced their perception of quality of life.

Recent modifications to New Zealand's migration policies suggest that it will be increasingly difficulty for elderly migrants to access social welfare (Housing New Zealand, 2010; Immigration New Zealand, 2013b). These policy changes emerge from ongoing debate in New Zealand whereby some politicians and European New Zealanders argue that newly-arrived elderly migrants make little economic contribution to New Zealand and therefore should not be covered by the universal old age pension or other social benefits (Peters, 2013; Tan, 2013). However, in this thesis I offered a different perspective on this argument. As I have argued in Chapter Two, there is an exchange relationship between migrants and the host country. With regard to elderly Chinese migrants, and in particular those family parents, the exchange relationship between them and the host country was established through their adult children, the young skilled migrants. The elderly Chinese migrants made an indirect contribution to New Zealand by investing in their children's migration and education pre-migration, and providing domestic support to their children's household post-migration. This means that the young couple can both work full-time in the host country with few family constraints. Even those who stayed in New Zealand after their children's migration to a third country still made contributions by looking after their children's properties and paying taxes when consuming products and services.

Furthermore, the universal pension and the age-related social benefits for

family parents are also the main reasons for young Chinese migrants to choose New Zealand as the country of destination. As an important party in the exchange chain, the elderly Chinese migrants made significant contributions to their families and the host society. Therefore, their eligibility for social welfare should not be undermined by the superficial notion that they make little direct economic contribution to New Zealand.

Apart from monetary and housing support from the government, health care services are another important factor that influenced the quality of life of both the family parent migrants and elderly skilled migrants. As New Zealand's health care system has both advantages and disadvantages, the elderly Chinese migrants I interviewed were not entirely satisfied with it, and thus many chose to complement the health services in the host country with those available in China. I will discuss this in more detail in the following section.

In addition to the support from the government, local Chinese communities contribute to the elderly Chinese migrants' quality of life in different ways. Local Chinese community centres and associations provide a Chinese-language public space for elderly Chinese migrants to socialize with peers, to obtain useful information, and to get practical help when coping with daily challenges. Other Chinese social and commercial services also help to create familiar living surroundings where elderly Chinese migrants are able to speak their native language and maintain their Chinese lifestyle (Cain et al., 2011).

Support from the New Zealand government and local Chinese communities complement each other, satisfying the financial, practical, informational and emotional needs of the elderly Chinese migrants in my study. Although family was the original motivation for them to migrate, the social welfare benefits provided by the government later turned out to be the crucial reason for their long-term stay in New Zealand. In many cases, elderly Chinese migrants chose to stay even after their adult children's further migration to other countries or return to China. Such a choice illustrates that the importance of public support to their quality of life has surpassed the importance of family support. Family responsibility for caring for elderly Chinese migrants has been partly replaced by the government and local communities.

7.1.3 Transnational Support: Privilege and Uncertainty

In Chapter Two of this thesis, I argued that the study of elderly Chinese migrants should be situated within a transnational context. Findings in Chapter Six illustrated that many elderly Chinese migrants developed transnational lifestyles after they had migrated to New Zealand. Transnational support bestowed privileges upon the elderly migrants, enhancing their quality of life. Their transnational connections enabled them to access social services and to establish social networks in both the home and the host countries. However, the elderly migrants were simultaneously confronted with the dilemmas of transnational life. Being transnational means they were uncertain about their future life. Causing anxiety and worry, such uncertainty can have a negative impact on quality of life.

Both macro and micro levels of transnational social support contribute to the privileges perceived by the elderly migrants. At the macro level, most of the elderly Chinese migrants had access to pensions and health care services from both the Chinese and New Zealand governments. They had bank accounts in both countries and managed their savings according to interest rates and travel plans. Although public health care services in New Zealand are relatively low cost and of high quality, elderly Chinese migrants were not always satisfied with long waiting lists for surgery or specialist appointments. Therefore, many of my participants used health care services in China as a backup option when their needs could not be provided for in New Zealand. Ability to access pensions and health care services in both China and New Zealand symbolised the privilege of being transnational migrants, which significantly contributed to the well-being and quality of life.

At the micro level, transnational support was received, provided and exchanged between relatives and friends through cross-border travel, long-distance telephone calls, and communication technologies such as the Internet. It is for these reasons that maintaining transnational connections became a vital part of the day-to-day lives of the elderly Chinese migrants. Sharing information, emotions and life stories in the transnational social space helped to develop a 'virtual intimacy' with their families and friends (Wilding, 2006). The informational and emotional support conveyed through transnational communication not only enriched the post-migration lives of these elderly Chinese migrants, but also contributed to their well-being and quality of life.

Several factors were found to affect elderly Chinese migrants' transnational participation in my study. Firstly, their health status determined whether they could travel back and forth between China and New Zealand frequently. Compared to the young elderly, who were in their 60s or early 70s, the old elderly in their 80s visited China and other countries much less frequently. This was primarily because poor health tended to limit their mobility. Secondly, the financial circumstances of the elderly migrants also impacted on their transnational activities. Those who had higher incomes and assets were more able to afford regular transnational travel, long-distance telephone calls and the Internet.

Another important factor influencing transnational participation identified in my research is home ownership. Elderly migrants who owned a house or apartment in China found it easier and cheaper to maintain regular return visits because they did not need to spend extra money on accommodation and could afford to stay longer. In addition to these pragmatic advantages, owning a home in China also provided an extra option for retirement. It also enabled some elderly Chinese migrants to travel seasonally and spend an equivalent amount time in both countries. Owning a home in China also made it possible for them to return to the country when it became difficult as they grow older to maintain an independent life in New Zealand. Therefore, owning homes in multiple locations enabled elderly Chinese migrants to enjoy a more stable and secure old age.

The use of computer and the Internet was an unexpected factor that emerged

from my research relating to the transnational communication of elderly migrants. Due to the notion of 'digital divide' (Cresci, Yarandi, & Morrell, 2010; Kiel, 2005), Internet use is largely overlooked when studying elderly people. However, my research revealed the importance of the Internet to maintaining transnational connections. As shown in Chapter Six, a significant proportion of elderly Chinese migrants in my study were Internet users. This not only facilitated their transnational communications but also helped to combat loneliness and enrich their daily lives. The information conveyed through the Internet enabled the elderly Chinese migrants to cope with difficulties in their daily lives and to maintain their independence.

Transnational participation at both the macro and micro levels contributed significantly to the quality of life of the elderly Chinese migrants. At the same time, they also faced dilemmas in their transnational life. To start with, the ties that the elderly Chinese migrants had in the transnational social space were not strong enough to fulfil their needs for support. As such, these networks were not considered as optimal sources for practical support, though they were seen as reasonable sources of emotional and informational support. Long-term absence from China weakened their original social ties. Having different living surroundings and experiences in New Zealand, the elderly migrants found themselves to an extent estranged from their previous social relationships in China. In addition, their social networks also shrank due to the death of old friends and siblings. More often than not, they had difficulty in finding appropriate people to ask for help when they were in need. It was for these reasons that the elderly migrants were often reluctant to ask for assistance unless it is

absolutely necessary when using these networks.

On the other hand, their newly established social networks in New Zealand were small and unstable. As mentioned earlier, most elderly Chinese migrants developed new friendships only with peers in Chinese communities because of their poor English language proficiency. However, these elderly migrants are a mobile group and members change frequently due to their transnational travels and return migration. Establishing long-term and stable friendships was not an easy task for the elderly Chinese migrants. As such, their social networks in New Zealand were also not strong enough to provide sufficient support, especially emotional support, to meet their needs.

The other problem faced by the elderly migrants was the level of uncertainty in their transnational life. While transnational lifestyles provided more sources of social support, they could also cause anxiety and worry for elderly migrants. As they grow older and physical mobility declines, elderly Chinese migrants expect to settle down in a place where they can optimise their sources and types of support. However, their current transnational life made it difficult for them to establish a secure and settled future. They were constantly weighing various factors and locations. They could choose to remain in New Zealand but at the cost of losing strong emotional support from their networks in China. They could return to China but give up the generous social benefits in New Zealand. They could also migrate to another country (such as Australia) by following their adult children and starting a new life all over

again. Each option had gains and losses. Most elderly Chinese migrants postponed their decision-making and left the uncertainty for the future, generating serious worry and anxiety in their transnational life and reducing their well-being.

In summary, transnational support brought extensive benefits to the quality of life of the elderly Chinese migrants regardless of whether they were passive or voluntary transnational migrants. The transnational lifestyles helped them to develop new perspectives regarding ageing and retirement. Their access to social support also moved beyond national borders, expanding to a transnational social space providing more options and resources. However, multiple options also led to uncertainty about their future, imposing constraints on their quality of life.

The social support that many elderly Chinese migrants expected and pursued is multi-dimensional in both types and sources. Realising that they need different types of support, including financial, practical, informational and emotional, to enhance their post-migration quality of life, many of the elderly migrants I interviewed pursued and optimised support from different sources and multiple sites. In some aspects, such as financial and informational, support from the New Zealand government and local Chinese communities has surpassed family support and become more important to the quality of life of these elderly Chinese migrants. Nonetheless, family still remains the last resort, and the emotional support from family cannot be completely replaced by any other source. Therefore, for elderly Chinese migrants, their quality of life depends on a balanced combination of the multi-dimensional

forms of social support from the family, from governments/communities, and from transnational ties.

7.2 Contributions and Implications

This study, although based on a small number of qualitative interviews, provides original contributions to the understanding of the social support and the quality of life of elderly Chinese migrants at both the theoretical and empirical levels. Taking the perspective of the elderly Chinese migrants I interviewed, I was able to identify the most significant components of their quality of life. Very often, the post-migration life of elderly Chinese migrants is investigated as a subtopic under the study of young skilled migrants and their migrant families (Da, 2003; Pyke, 2004). Taking such a perspective, many existing studies highlight the importance of family support to the quality of life of elderly Chinese migrants (Dhar, 2011a, 2011b; Lan, 2002; Lo & Russell, 2007).

However, by taking the perspective of elderly migrants, my research challenges these findings and argues that independence from, rather than reliance on, their adult children can also be viewed by elderly Chinese migrants as an important factor of a good quality of life. Hence, the support outside the family which can enhance their independence is of particular significance. These findings add new insights to the current debate about what elements are perceived as most significant to the quality of life of elderly migrants, especially those from China.

Other studies have also pointed out that elderly migrants are not merely

support receivers but also providers (Chou & Chi, 2001; B. Schwarz et al., 2010). However, there has been a lack of theorisation in regard to this perspective. Applying theories of support exchange, my thesis sheds new light on the theoretical understanding of the relationship between social support and quality of life. The quality of life of elderly Chinese migrants is not simply determined by the amount and the content of support received, but more importantly, it is influenced by the *dynamics* of how support is provided and received among individuals, as well as their perceptions of support during the exchange process. This argument accentuates the importance of maintaining a balanced intergenerational reciprocity in enhancing the elderly migrants' quality of life.

At the outset of this thesis, I defined the social support of elderly Chinese migrants as multi-dimensional. By contextualising this support with theories of transnationalism, I have highlighted interconnections between different sources of support. As such, I argue that having a balance between support from family, governments, ethnic communities, and transnational ties is vital to the overall quality of life of many elderly Chinese migrants.

On the empirical front, there was a paucity of systematic research prior to my study on the quality of life of elderly Chinese migrants in New Zealand. My empirical findings about their migration motives, post-migration lived experiences, daily difficulties, perceptions of social support, and quality of life contribute to our knowledge about elderly Chinese migrants in this country. These findings are of

special significance given that an increasing number of elderly Chinese migrate to New Zealand for retirement, generating public concern over the allocation of social benefits. While this cohort has been largely overlooked in academic research in New Zealand, my study provides a voice for elderly Chinese migrants to express their need for social support and their perceptions about what support is essential to the quality of their post-migration life.

Based on a comprehensive understanding of the perceptions of these elderly Chinese migrants about social support and quality of life, this research also has implications for government policies and practices. As shown in Chapter Five, elderly Chinese migrants tend to make an indirect contribution to New Zealand society by providing significant support to their adult children's households. This contribution should be taken into consideration when New Zealand government authorities modify their policies and practices regarding the eligibility of elderly Chinese migrants for old age pensions and other social benefits. When skilled young Chinese consider emigrating from China, their parents' access to social welfare in the host country is an important factor influencing their choice of destination. Raising the threshold of elderly migrants' access to government support could potentially reduce the number of high-quality young migrants who choose to come to New Zealand.

Therefore, providing social welfare to elderly Chinese migrants is not only significant to the quality of life of this cohort but also crucial to the New Zealand government's strategy of attracting quality migrants to the country. The resources

saved from more stringent social welfare and family parent migration policies may not compensate for the loss of possible contributions that potential young Chinese migrants can make to New Zealand.

7.3 Further Research

Several possible directions for future research have emerged during the course of my study. First, government support has been identified as a significant determinant of the quality of life of elderly Chinese migrants. This is mainly because the New Zealand government has relatively low residence requirements for new migrants in terms of their eligibility for age-related social benefits. The universal old age pension in particular contributes to their well-being and quality of life. However, in many other OECD countries, such as Canada and Australia, more stringent requirements make it difficult for new migrants to access social welfare. How does access to social benefits affect the quality of life of elderly Chinese migrants living in these countries compared to those living in New Zealand? Cross-national comparative research can shed light on how elderly Chinese migrants in various host countries perceive their quality of life. Such research can deepen our understanding of the role played by the host government in regard to the quality of life of elderly migrants.

Apart from social welfare provided by host governments, other factors in the host society, including public attitudes to migrants and the size, type and degree of establishment of the migrant population also impact on the quality of life of elderly migrants. As my study indicates, the considerable number of Chinese migrants and

emerging Chinese communities in Auckland helped to facilitate the adaptation of my participants to the host country and contributed to their quality of life. However, the situation may be different for those who move to other parts of New Zealand or to a country with smaller Chinese population. Therefore, cross-national and regional comparative research can also address the impact of various factors such as attitudes of the mainstream society and the population of migrants on the quality of life of elderly migrants.

Moreover, most of my participants were elderly parents who migrated to New Zealand to reunify with their adult children. Their post-migration quality of life was to an extent oriented and influenced by their children's migration plans. However, there is another group of elderly Chinese people, who refused to migrate with their adult children and chose to retire in their home country. Are their perceptions of quality of life similar or different to those expressed by my participants? What types of social support do they receive from the government, the communities and their adult children living overseas? And how does the support affect their quality of life? In this respect comparative research between elderly migrants and non-migrants can shed lights on two key issues. One is the relationship between the support provided by their adult children and the elderly parents' quality of life. The other is the relationship between the migration experiences of elderly migrants and their own perceptions of quality of life.

Furthermore, I argued in Chapter Six that participating in transnational

activities provides advantages for many elderly Chinese migrants but uncertainties about the future may impact negatively on their quality of life. Because I interviewed my participants only once, I was not able to trace how my participants dealt with these challenges over time and how their quality of life is influenced by such challenges. Therefore, longitudinal research on the transnational participation of elderly Chinese migrants and how their quality of life fluctuates in the transnational context would provide a more comprehensive understanding of this factor on their quality of life.

7.4 Concluding Remarks

The quality of life of elderly Chinese living in Auckland, New Zealand, is significantly influenced by multi-dimensional forms of social support from family, governments, ethnic communities, and transnational social networks. Enhancing quality of life in a foreign land is not an easy task, especially for elderly migrants who face language problems, cultural differences, and ageing challenges.

My thesis concludes that the pursuit of a good quality of life is a process of balancing the benefits and challenges that co-exist with each other in post-migration life. Acknowledging that some unsatisfactory aspects of life after international migration cannot be altered, optimizing the available benefits is employed as a strategy to compensate for and to alleviate difficulties. Therefore, for elderly Chinese migrants, enhancing their quality of life is a process of optimising support from multi-dimensional sources.

Appendix I: Interview Schedule

'Social Support and Quality of Life of Elderly Chinese Migrants in New Zealand'

Interview Topics for Elderly Participants

1. Background Information

- (Sex)

- Age

- Highest educational attainment

- Employment status/retirement

- Migration category

- Month and year of arrival in New Zealand

- Place of residence before migration to New Zealand

- Other migration experiences (both internal and international)

2. Migration Experiences

- Why did you come to New Zealand?

- Did you have any family members, friends or people living in New Zealand before you arrived?

- Did they provide any help to you during your migration and settlement?

- How long did it take you to find a home or a job (if applicable)?

3. Living Arrangement and Socio-economic Status

- Please tell me about your main family members and kinships in New Zealand.

- Are you living alone, with partner/children or with extended family now?

- Is your current living arrangement different from that when you lived in China?

- Do you own the dwelling that you are living in now?

- Did you own a dwelling when you lived in China?

- Are you satisfied with your current living arrangement? If not, do you have any plans to change it?

- Do you have a paid job? If not, what are your sources of income (pre-and post-migration)?

- Is your current household income higher or lower than when you lived in China?

- Compared to what you had in China, are you satisfied with your material conditions in New Zealand?

4. Social Support

- Who do you usually turn to for assistance when you encounter difficulties in New Zealand (e.g. family members, friends, co-workers, etc.)?

- Who did you usually turn to for assistance when you lived in China?

- What types of help have you gained from family or friends in New Zealand (e.g. money, care, companionship, etc.)?

- Do you feel satisfied with their help?

- Have you ever done anything to return the help you have gained?

- Do you have as many friends in New Zealand as you did in China?

- How did you establish your friendships here (e.g. participating in clubs and/or church, neighbourhood, co-workers, joining in cultural activities)?

- How often do you have contact with them?

- Do you have any non-Chinese friends or do you often have contact with people from other ethnic groups since you moved to New Zealand?

- Can you speak fluent English? How much do you think your ability to speak English influences your life?

5. Transnational Experiences and Networks

- Do you have any close family members living in China or in other countries?

- How often and how do you have contact with them (e.g. Internet, telephone, post)?

- How often do you visit them? Do you want to visit them more often or not?

6. Overall Evaluation

- What is your impression and feeling about New Zealand?

- Is it different from your expectation?

- How important do you think your family support is to your quality of life?

- How important do you think the help from other social relationships (e.g. friends, co-workers) is to your quality of life?

- How important do you think that having contact with family members or friends living in China or other countries is to your quality of life?

- Do you plan to stay in New Zealand, return to China, or migrate to other countries?

- In Auckland, the Chinese population and community have grown quickly in the last two decades. How does that affect you?

- Are you satisfied with your overall quality of life in New Zealand compared with that in China?

<div align="center">

"新西兰老龄华人移民的社会支持和生活质量研究"
访谈提纲

</div>

1. 基本信息

- （性别）

- 年龄

- 最高学历

- 工作状况/退休

- 移民类别

- 移居新西兰时间（年/月）

- 移居新西兰前居住地

- 其他移民经历（国内/国际）

2. 移民经历

- 您为什么会移居新西兰呢？

- 在您来新西兰之前，您有家人，亲戚，或朋友居住在新西兰吗？

- 在您移民和定居的过程中，他们为您提供过哪些帮助呢？

- 您花了多长时间找到合适的住所和工作（如适用）？

3. 居住安排和社会经济状况

- 您在新西兰的主要家庭成员和亲戚有哪些？

- 您现在是单独居住，和配偶/子女一起居住，还是生活在更大的家庭中？

- 您现在的居住安排和您在中国时有区别吗？

- 您拥有现在住所的所有权吗？

- 您在中国时拥有自己的住房吗？

- 您对您现在的居住安排满意吗？如果不满意，您有打算改变现有的居住状况吗？

- 您目前有工作吗？如果没有，您的收入来源是什么呢？请分别描述移民前和移民后的状况。

- 和您生活在中国时相比较，您现在的家庭总收入是增加还是减少了？

- 和您生活在中国时拥有的物质生活条件相比较，您对现在在新西兰的物质生活条件满意吗？

4．社会支持

- 当您在新西兰遇到困难的时候，您通常会向谁寻求帮助呢（例如，家人，朋友，同事等等）？

- 当您生活在中国的时候，通常会向谁寻求帮助呢？

- 您在新西兰的家人和朋友都向您提供过哪些种类的帮助呢（例如，经济帮助，生活照料，陪伴等等）？

- 您对他们的提供的帮助满意吗？

- 您有没有为回报他们的帮助做过些什么？

- 您在新西兰的朋友比在中国时的朋友多还是少？

- 您在新西兰是如何与朋友建立起友谊的（例如，参加社团或俱乐部，参加中国文化活动，参加教会活动，邻居，同事，等等）？

- 您和朋友见面的机会多吗（频率）？

- 您在新西兰是否有非华裔的朋友，或者您是否有过和非华裔的人打过交道？

- 您能说流利的英语吗？您认为您的英语水平对您的日常生活有影响吗？

5．跨国移民经历和社会网络

- 您目前有主要家庭成员生活在中国或者其他国家吗？

- 您和他们联系的多吗（频率）？您通过什么方式和他们保持联系呢（例如，网络，电话，信函）？

- 您探望这些亲友的频率如何？您希望探亲次数能更多一些吗？

6．综合评价

- 您对新西兰的总体印象和感觉如何？

- 这和您之前的期望有差别吗？

- 就您个人而言，来自家庭的支持对提高您的生活质量有多大的重要性？

- 就您个人而言，来自朋友，邻里，同事的等社会关系的支持对提高您的生活质量有多大的重要性？

- 您认为和居住在中国或其他国家的亲友保持联系对提高您现在的生活质量重要吗？

- 您对未来的居住地有什么计划？留居新西兰？回中国？还是移居到其他国家？

- 近二十年，奥克兰的华人数量和华人社区发展迅速。这对您的生活带来什么影响？

- 和您之前在中国的生活相比较，您对您在新西兰的总体生活质量满意吗？

Appendix II: Participant Information Sheet

(English)

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

'Social Support and Quality of Life of Elderly Chinese Migrants in New Zealand'

PhD student: Jingjing Zhang

Thank you for expressing interest in my PhD project, which is co-funded by the China Scholarship Council and The University of Auckland. This project explores the migration experiences, family relationships, social support, and the perceived quality of life of elderly Chinese migrants.

In this study, I am interviewing 40 Chinese migrants over the age of 60 years, who migrated from mainland China and have been living in New Zealand for at least 3 years. In this confidential interview, you will be asked about your migration experiences, family, social networks and perception of your quality of life. Your personal stories and viewpoints are valuable for this project.

The interview will take about 1 to 1.5 hours, and could take place in your home or another place of your choice. Your permission to digitally record the interview will be sought. The interview will be conducted in Mandarin or English (your choice) and then subsequently transcribed into English in preparation for analysis. All the interviews will be conducted, translated and transcribed by myself. This will help to protect your confidentiality.

Participating in an interview is voluntary. You can ask questions about the study and you may ask to stop the audio-recorder or terminate the interview at any time for any reason. You can also withdraw the information you have provided, without giving a reason, up until two weeks after the interview. Should you wish to have a copy of your transcript or a summary of the research findings I will be happy to forward you copies. All the material resulting from the interview will be held securely for 6 years, after which hard copies will be shredded and electronic files deleted. During this time, interview data will be stored in a locked cabinet separate from participants' Consent Forms in the office of the Department of Sociology at the University of Auckland and electronic files will be kept on a password protected computer.

The data collected in the interviews will be used for my doctoral thesis, conference presentations and future publications. Extracts from the interviews will be used as illustrations of study findings. Although confidentiality and anonymity cannot be fully guaranteed because it is possible that someone else you know in the Chinese community may be able to recognise you, any information from your interview used in publications will not identify you as its source. You will be given a

pseudonym or participant code and other information that could help others identify you will be removed.

If you agree to be interviewed, please contact Jingjing Zhang. As a way to thank you for your time you will receive a small gift of a $20 supermarket voucher. Just before the interview, I will ask you to sign a consent form. Should you have any concerns, or require further information about the study, please let me know.

Sincerely,

Jingjing Zhang

Phone: 021 0376058

Email: jzha374@aucklanduni.ac.nz.

For any queries about the conduct of this project, you may also contact my supervisors:

   Prof. Maureen Baker, phone: 09 373 7599 ext 88610, email: ma.baker@auckland.ac.nz

   Dr. Louise Humpage, phone : 09 373 7599 ext 85115, email: l.humpage@auckland.ac.nz

Or the Head of the Department of Sociology:

   Professor Alan France, phone: 09 373 7599 ext 84507, email: a. france@auckland.ac.nz

For any queries regarding ethical concerns you may contact the Chair, The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee, The University of Auckland, Office of the Vice Chancellor, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142. Telephone 09 373 7599 ext. 83711.

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE ON …03/10/2011… for (3) years, Reference Number …7569…

(Chinese)

研究参与者须知　　"新西兰老龄华人移民的社会支持和生活质量研究"

奥克兰大学社会学系博士生：张晶晶

感谢您对我的博士研究课题的关注。该课题由新西兰奥克兰大学和中国国家留学基金委共同资助，目的是研究新西兰老龄华人移民的移民经历，家庭关系，社会支持和生活质量。

在这项研究中，我将采访 40 位年龄在 60 岁以上，来自中国大陆地区，并且已经在新西兰生活 3 年以上的老年人。访谈内容会完全保密，话题包括移民经历，家庭、社会关系以及您对生活质量的看法。您的切身体会和个人观点对此项研究有重要的价值。

访谈会占用您大约一到一个半小时的时间，可以在您的家中或其他您方便的地点进行。我会在征得您的同意后对访谈进行录音。您可以选择用中文普通话或英语接受访谈。访谈录音随后会被转录，整理并翻译为英文以备分析。所有的采访、转录和翻译工作都将由我本人独自完成，这将有助于对您提供的信息进行保密。

参与此项研究是自愿的。您可以向我提出与此项研究有关的各种问题。 您有权利在访谈的过程中随时要求暂停录音或停止访谈，而无需给出任何理由。您也可以在访谈结束后的两周之内撤回您提供的资料。如果您想要得到一份访谈的文字记录或者一份研究成果小结，我将很乐意为您提供副本。由访谈得到的所有资料都将被严格保存 6 年，之后纸质的资料会被撕毁，电子版的资料会被删除。在这 6 年期间，访谈资料将与"参与者同意书"分开，密封保存在奥克兰大学社会学系的办公柜中，电子资料会被保存在有密码保护的电脑里。

访谈数据将用于我的博士论文、会议报告和文章发表，部分访谈内容摘录将会用作对研究发现的例证和解释。由于您周围可能有人会知道您参与过此项研究，也许我不能为完全的匿名性作出绝对的保证。但是，公开发表的所有研究成果都不会透露您的个人身份。在需要的情况下，我会使用参与者代号和化名来保护您的个人身份不被他人识别。

如果您同意参加访谈，请主动与我（张晶晶）联系。为了感谢您参与，您将得到价值$20 元的超市购物券。在访谈正式开始之前，需要您签署一份同意书。

如果您有任何疑虑，或者想要得到关于此项研究的更多信息，请随时与我联系。

　　张晶晶，手机：021 0376058，电子邮箱：jzha374@aucklanduni.ac.nz

若您对此项研究有任何疑义，您也可以联系我的导师：

　Maureen Baker 教授，电话：09 373 7599 转 88610，电子邮箱：ma.baker@auckland.ac.nz

　Louise Humpage 博士，电话：09 373 7599 转 85115，电子邮箱：l.humpage@auckland.ac.nz

或者联系奥克兰大学社会学系主任：

　Alan France 教授，电话：09 373 7599 转 84507，电子邮箱：a. france@auckland.ac.nz

任何有关于伦理方面的质询，请您联系奥克兰大学校长办公室，伦理审查委员会主席。

地址：The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee, The University of Auckland, Office of the Vice Chancellor, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142.

电话：09 373 7599 转 83711

该项目已于 2011 年 10 月 3 日通过奥克兰大学伦理审查委员会的审批，有效期 3 年，参考号 7569。

Appendix III: Participant Consent Form

(English)

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

(This form will be held for six years.)

'Social Support and Quality of Life of Elderly Chinese Migrants in New Zealand'

PhD student: Jingjing Zhang

I have read the Participant Information Sheet and understand the nature of this research. I understand that taking part in this study is voluntary and I have the opportunity to have my questions answered to my satisfaction.

- I agree to take part in this research.
- I understand that the interview will take 1 to 1.5 hours of my time.
- I understand that I may withdraw myself from the interview at any time, and I may withdraw my data within two weeks of participating in the interview.
- I agree/ do not agree that the interview be digitally recorded.
- I understand that I may ask to stop the recorder at any time during the interview for any reason.
- I understand that the interview will be conducted, transcribed and translated by Jingjing Zhang. Only her supervisors will have access to this data, helping to protect the confidentiality of the interviewees.
- I understand that if the information I provide is reported/published, this will be done in a way that does not identify myself as its source. However, confidentiality and anonymity cannot be fully guaranteed.
- I understand that all the data will be kept for 6 years, after which they will be destroyed.
- I wish/ do not wish to have a copy of the transcript of interview recording.
- I wish/ do not wish to receive a copy of the summary of research findings.

Name _____

Signature _____   Date _____

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE ON…03/10/2011… for (3) years, REFERENCE NUMBER…7569…

(Chinese)

研究参与者同意书

（此同意书将被保存六年）

"新西兰老龄华人移民的社会支持和生活质量研究"
奥克兰大学社会学系博士生：张晶晶

我已经阅读过"研究参与者须知"，并且已经理解这项研究的性质和内容。我知道参加此项研究是自愿的，我有过询问的机会，我的所有问题均得到认真解答。

- 我同意参加此项研究。

- 我明白访谈会占用我大约一到一个半小时的时间。

- 我明白我有权利随时退出访谈，也有权利在访谈结束后的两周之内撤回我的数据。

- 我同意/不同意对这次访谈进行录音。

- 我明白我可以在访谈的过程中以任何理由要求暂停录音。

- 我明白采访、转录和翻译都将由博士生张晶晶独自完成。只有她的导师有权利接触研究数据，并且对参与者信息严格保密。

- 我明白，公开发表研究成果不会透露我的个人身份。但是，这不能保证绝对的匿名性。

- 我明白所有的研究数据将会被保存六年，之后被销毁。

- 我愿意/不愿意获得一份访谈的文字记录。

- 我愿意/不愿意获得一份研究成果小结。

姓名：_____

签名：_____ 日期：_____

该项目已于 2011 年 10 月 3 日通过奥克兰大学伦理审查委员会的审批，有效期 3 年，参考号 7569。

Appendix IV: Advertisement

(English)

WANTED:
PARTICIPANTS FOR STUDY OF CHINESE MIGRANTS

- Are you from mainland China?

- Are you 60 years old and over?

- Have you been living in New Zealand for at least 3 years?

If you answered 'yes' to these questions, I invite you to participate in a confidential interview that will explore your migration experiences, social support and your perceived quality of life in New Zealand. This interview will take about 1 to 1.5 hours, and will occur in your home or another place of your choice. Each participant will be given a small gift of a $20 supermarket voucher to acknowledge their time and contribution.

For more information, please contact:

Jingjing Zhang, PhD student in the Department of Sociology, The University of Auckland

Mobile: 021 0376058

Home: 09 6292549

Email: jzha374@aucklanduni.ac.nz

(Chinese)

诚征：老龄华人移民研究参与者

- 您来自中国大陆地区吗？

- 您的年龄是 60 岁以上（含 60 岁）吗?

- 您已经在新西兰生活至少 3 年了吗?

如果您对上面三个问题的回答是"是"，我诚挚地邀请您参加一次访谈。访谈的内容涉及到您的移民经历，社会支持和在新西兰的生活质量。 访谈会占用您大约 1 小时，可以在您的家中或其他您方便的地点进行。访谈的内容将会严格保密。

为了感谢您的参与，每位参与者都会获赠价值$20 的超市购物券。

如果您愿意参加此项研究，或您想知道更多信息，请联系：

张晶晶， 新西兰奥克兰大学社会学系博士生。

手机：021 0376058

宅电： 09 6292548

邮箱：jzha374@aucklanduni.ac.nz

Appendix V: Ethics Approval

Office of the Vice-Chancellor
Research Integrity Unit

UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE

03-Oct-2011

MEMORANDUM TO:

Prof Maureen Baker
Sociology

Re: Application for Ethics Approval (Our Ref. 7569)

The Committee considered your application for ethics approval for your project titled **Social support and quality of life of elderly Chinese migrants in New Zealand** on 30-Sep-2011.

Ethics approval was given for a period of three years.

The expiry date for this approval is 03-Oct-2014.

If the project changes significantly you are required to resubmit a new application to the Committee for further consideration.

In order that an up-to-date record can be maintained, you are requested to notify the Committee once your project is completed.

The Chair and the members of the Committee would be happy to discuss general matters relating to ethics approvals if you wish to do so. Contact should be made through the UAHPEC secretary at humanethics@auckland.ac.nz in the first instance.

All communication with the UAHPEC regarding this application should include this reference number: **7569**.

(This is a computer generated letter. No signature required.)
Secretary
University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee

c.c. Head of Department / School, Sociology
    Miss Jingjing Zhang
    Dr Bruce Curtis
    Alan France

Additional information:

1. Should you need to make any changes to the project, write to the Committee giving full details including revised documentation.

2. Should you require an extension, write to the Committee before the expiry date giving full details along with revised documentation. An extension can be granted for up to three years, after which time you must make a new application.

3. At the end of three years, or if the project is completed before the expiry, you are requested to advise the Committee of its completion.

4. Do not forget to fill in the 'approval wording' on the Participant Information Sheets and Consent Forms, giving the dates of approval and the reference number, before you send them out to your participants.

5. Send a copy of this approval letter to the Manager - Funding Processes, Research Office if you have obtained funding other than from UniServices. For UniServices contract, send a copy of the approval letter to: Contract Manager, UniServices.

6. Please note that the Committee may from time to time conduct audits of approved projects to ensure that the research has been carried out according to the approval that was given.

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