

# **Deprivation of Resources: Aged Care in China's Newly Urbanized Areas**

**Keywords:** urbanization, aged care, deprivation, China

**Abstract:** This study explores the impact of China's rapid urbanization on the traditional family support system and older people's access to aged care resources in newly urbanized areas. Data were derived from 725 questionnaires and 42 semi-structured in-depth interviews recently conducted in a suburban area of Nanjing, China. A random sampling approach was used to recruit two sets of participants: those aged 60 and over and their younger counterparts (aged below 60).

Findings suggest that the fast urbanization in China had negative effects on the aged care of elderly residents in newly urbanized areas. At the familial level, urbanization altered people's traditional preference to inter-generational co-residence commonly seen in rural areas, causing a growing number of 'empty-nest' elderly. Strongly believing in filial piety, the older participants expressed a desire for seeing their children more often, and for receiving more hands-on care and financial support from them. In contrast, the younger generation reported difficulties to spend enough time with their parents and experienced a financial burden to support their parents and their own children at the same time. This mismatch between expectations and possibilities to care for family members reveals that the aged care function of the family fades away during the process of urbanization. However, institutionalized elderly support outside of the family (i.e. the state care system and/or community services) has not been established in these newly urbanized areas. Compared to residents living in long-established urban areas who are entitled to the contributory pension system and health care insurance, those 'new' urban residents tend to face a higher risk of old age poverty with little welfare benefits. Thus, this paper argues that the process of urbanization contributes to a twofold deprivation, enlarging inequality among people depending on aged care in China.