

## Expectations of Filial Obligation and Their Impact on Preferences for Future Living Arrangements of Middle-Aged and Older Asian Indian Immigrants

Sadhna Diwan · Sang E. Lee · Soma Sen

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**Abstract** Filial obligation, described as culturally-defined rights and duties that prescribe how family members are expected to care for and provide support to each other, is an important variable that influences older immigrants' preferences for living and care arrangements. This exploratory study examined variables associated with expectations of filial obligation among middle-aged and older, Asian Indian, first generation immigrants and explored the relationship between variations in expectations of filial obligation and expressed preferences for future living arrangements. Data were collected through telephone surveys of 226 English-speaking immigrants in Atlanta, GA. Although no significant relationships were observed between filial obligation expectations and length of residence in the U.S., respondents indicated a variety of preferred future living arrangements. Contrary to current living arrangement patterns found among older immigrants, very few respondents preferred to move in with their children. The most popular preference was to "move closer to children," followed by "moving to a retirement community" with the majority preferring a retirement community geared to Asian Indians. Other preferences included "not moving" and "returning to India." Variations in expectations of filial obligation, length of residence in the U.S., and self-rated health were significantly associated with these preferences. Implications are discussed for building capacity within ethnic communities to address living arrangement preferences and their repercussions for caregiving in ethnic families and in communities.

**Keywords** Acculturation · Filial piety · Housing · Immigrants · Living arrangements

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S. Diwan (✉) · S. E. Lee · S. Sen  
School of Social Work, San Jose State University, One Washington Square, San Jose, CA 95192, USA  
e-mail: sdiwan@sjsu.edu

## Introduction

There is this myth of the children. We are renegades. We abandoned our parents and came here at whatever age. Our children are going to do the same. Love is all very nice. We must learn to be in the stage of being rather than the stage of [needing]... (Asian Indian male, age 62)

This statement reflects one of the many viewpoints of older immigrants' expectations of filial obligation from their children. The concept of filial obligation refers to the general belief that children ought to support older parents when they are in need (Cicirelli 1990), and researchers have noted that older immigrants from collectivist cultures who reside in developed countries are likely to preserve traditional expectations of filial obligation and kinship care (Ajrouch 2005; Burr & Mutchler 1999; de Valk & Schans 2008). However, studies of older adults' expectations of filial obligation in the U.S., Israel, and the U.K. have found that these expectations vary between ethnic groups (Burr & Mutchler 1999; Katz 2009; Laidlaw *et al.* 2010; Lee *et al.* 1998), and by level of acculturation and education (Angel *et al.* 1996; de Valk & Schans 2008).

In this exploratory study we examine the expectations of filial obligation (also called filial piety) among middle-aged and older, Asian Indian, first generation immigrants and explore the relationship between expectations of filial obligation and preferences expressed for living arrangements in the future. The rationale for this investigation is that expectations of filial obligation will likely influence preferences for future living arrangements (such as co-residence with children, independent living, living in retirement communities, etc.), but very little is known about these preferences since it is largely assumed that older Asian immigrants will prefer more traditional living arrangements, i.e., co-residence with children. Indeed, research on current living arrangements of older immigrants in the U.S. indicates that older Asian and Hispanic immigrants are more likely to live with family than non-Hispanic Caucasian immigrants (Wilmoth 2001). These patterns of co-residence are often attributed to the norms of filial piety or obligation that are prevalent in Asian and Latino cultures.

## Filial Obligation and Preferences for Future Living Arrangements

Filial obligation has been described as culturally-defined rights and duties that prescribe how family members are expected to care for and provide support to each other (Rossi & Rossi 1990). Individuals learn about these attitudes and expectations not only through socialization but also through personal experiences and observations of relationships among family members and members of one's community. Thus, cultural explanations of caregiving relationships such as filial obligation among Asian cultures (Wong *et al.* 2006) and familism among Latino cultures (Sabogal *et al.* 1987) have been proposed to explain kinship oriented living arrangements and preferences for care among ethnic elders. Especially among Asian elders, co-residence with adult children is the most common pattern of living arrangement in developing countries, with India having one of the highest rates of co-residence (Hashimoto 1991).

Extant research on variations in expectations of filial obligation among older adults is mixed. For example, studies of Dutch elders (Liefbroer and Mulder 2006; de Valk & Schans 2008) found that being female, more educated, and older was related to lower

expectations of filial obligation, whereas those from non-Christian religious backgrounds (e.g., Hindus & Muslims) had greater expectations. By contrast, in a sample of Hispanic immigrants in the U.S., Kao and Travis (2005) found that being older, female, and less acculturated was related to increased expectations of filial obligation.

Modernization and aging theory (Burgess 1960) proposes that modernization, combined with individualism and secularization, weakens the norm of filial obligation and breaks down traditional family structures leading to “increasing unwillingness of the young to provide support for their older kin” (Aboderin 2004, p. 33). Thus, living in developed societies may lead to different expectations of filial obligation among both the adult children and the older immigrants themselves.

The life course perspective (Elder 1998) also offers insight on the changing nature of expectations of filial obligation by emphasizing continuity and cumulative experience in one’s life. Transitions in later life are influenced by earlier experiences which shape the subsequent life course of an individual. Therefore, longer length of stay in the U.S. is more likely to be associated with changes in cultural values including expectations of filial obligation. Within the framework of the life course perspective, individuals with greater personal resources—education, income, and better health—are more likely to perceive greater choice and variety in constructing their own life course, and may choose to do so in non-traditional ways. Thus, cultural norms related to expectations of filial obligation among older immigrants may be modified in light of individual experience and perceived availability of other options and models of family relationships. These changes may, in turn, influence how older persons consider alternative living arrangements in the event of changing circumstances over the life course due to retirement, spousal loss, and functional disability.

A review of the literature on older adults’ preferences for future living arrangements indicated substantial variation in the assessment of this phenomenon. Researchers have examined expectations of moving, plans to move, likelihood of moving, preferences for living arrangements, future care, and desire for different types of support. The variables are measured quite differently in each study and therefore only provide guidance on factors that would be relevant to examining the variables correlated with future living arrangement preferences in our Asian Indian immigrant sample.

In the general population, a substantial number of older adults do not expect to move and choose to remain in their own homes and communities. The estimated rates of actual relocation among older persons range from 5% to 30% (Sergeant *et al.* 2008). Among individuals who expect to move, those expecting to move closer to their children were more likely to be older and female, and parents were more likely to expect to move closer to a daughter than to a son. Living alone combined with rating one’s health as poorer also increased the likelihood of expressing an expectation to move closer to children (Silverstein and Angelelli 1998). In a qualitative study of preferences for future care, Roberto *et al.* (2001) found that over 50% of the sample of 45, mostly Caucasian, respondents identified a preference for formal care sources which included retirement communities, nursing home care, and in-home paid care. Most of these respondents were well educated and had adequate financial resources to provide for their care. While many respondents talked about not wanting to be a burden on their children, others indicated that they would rely on their adult children for such support.

Research on preferences for living arrangements of older immigrants indicates that among older Mexican Americans, it is the foreign-born (as compared to the native-born) and those who immigrate later in life who are more likely to expect to live with their children in the event of incapacity. Only a minority express a desire to move into a nursing home (Angel *et al.* 1996). Among Chinese and Korean immigrant elders who reported a gap between their expectations of filial obligation and those of their adult children, the

elders appeared to be more sensitive to becoming a burden to their adult children. Thus, these elders modified their expectations by living independently but remaining in close contact with their children (Wong *et al.* 2006).

Filial obligation expectations and preferences for future living arrangements also have implications for future care arrangements, e.g., preferences for independent living may suggest a preference for relying on formal or paid care as compared to informal support from family when assistance is needed. A clearer picture of such preferences and the factors associated with them will help provide an understanding of the needs of this diverse group of older Asian Indian immigrants and their families and the resources that will be necessary to address these needs.

### Asian Indian Immigrants

Asian Indians in the U.S. are the third largest majority among the groups comprising the Asian and Pacific Islander (API) population (Barnes and Bennett 2002). The considerable diversity within APIs in terms of language, culture, socioeconomic status (SES), country of origin, and recency of immigration (Yu and Liu 1992) necessitates separate examination of issues among different ethnic groups within APIs. Generally, Asian Indian immigrants to the U.S. are highly educated with the average education being a Bachelor's degree, and are economically well off with a median family income higher than that of all other groups (Reeves and Bennett 2004). Entering the middle and upper-middle levels of the occupational structure, Asian Indians have maintained their cultural distinctiveness despite becoming structurally assimilated in the larger society. This was accomplished mainly through the development of voluntary cultural and religious associations which have helped maintain a sense of community among linguistically diverse Asian Indian groups (Gawlick 1997). Research among minorities and immigrants in general has shown geographic proximity, strong kinship ties among family members, and co-residence with family to be important factors contributing to well-being (Kim and McKenry 1998; Wilmoth & Chen, 2003). Thus, structural assimilation (due to higher education, income, and occupational status) and acculturation (due to longer length of residence in the U.S.) may lead Asian Indian immigrants to envision non-traditional living arrangements in the future, whereas cultural values of filial obligation may lead to desiring more ethnically traditional living arrangements.

Based on the empirical research, theoretical considerations, and the unique context of the Asian Indian immigrant population described earlier, we seek to contribute to the literature on immigrant elders by exploring the following research questions:

- 1) How do variables such as gender, education, self-assessed health, availability of children, and acculturation influence expectations of filial obligation among middle-aged and older Asian Indian immigrants?
- 2) How are the various preferences for future living arrangements influenced by expectations of filial obligation, acculturation (length of stay in U.S.), individual resources (self-rated health, gender, education) and available choices (availability of children)?

### Methods

To obtain an understanding of the variety of issues relevant to aging in the Asian Indian community, we asked twelve men and women identified as leaders in the local Asian Indian community in Atlanta, Georgia, to serve as an advisory group to the study. The mean age of

the advisory group members was 58 (range 37 to 75); their average length of stay in the U.S. was 26 years (range 15 to 40); and the average educational level was completion of a postgraduate or professional degree (range college degree to postgraduate degree). The socio-demographic composition of the advisory group is reflective of the majority in the survey sample as described in Table 1. The value of using a community advisory group to guide research on minority elders is established in the literature (Delgado 1996). In a focused discussion held at the beginning of the study the advisory group provided insight into the

**Table 1** Characteristics of the sample ( $N=226$ )

	n	%
Female	64	28
<i>Household income</i>		
\$ 55,000 or less	48	21
> \$55,000–\$100,000	75	33
> \$100,000	103	46
<i>Education</i>		
High school or less	16	7
Some college or graduate	78	35
Post graduate	130	58
<i>Marital status</i>		
Married	211	93
Widowed	6	3
Other	9	4
<i>Current living arrangement</i>		
Alone	6	3
Spouse only	109	48
Child & grandchild	11	5
Spouse & child	73	32
Spouse & others	21	9
<i>Preferred future living arrangement</i>		
Retirement community/Assisted living	9	4
Retirement community geared to Indians	26	12
Different home or apartment	35	16
Move in with children	14	6
Move closer to children	109	49
Other—move in with other relatives	2	1
Other—will not move	16	7
Other—move back to India	10	4
	Mean	SD
Age	57.6	5.8
Years in the U.S.	24.8	8.7
Self-rated health <sup>a</sup>	2.2	0.9
Filial obligation <sup>b</sup>	18.2	3.4

<sup>a</sup> Lower score indicates better status

<sup>b</sup> Higher score indicates greater expectation of filial obligation

issues of filial expectations and preferences for retirement and future living arrangements within this immigrant community. This input enabled us to develop more culturally relevant survey questions related to future living arrangement preferences. For example, the discussion with the advisory group indicated a need to ask specifically about moving in with children as well as closer to them, and about retirement communities that were for everyone as well as those catering specifically to the needs of the Indian community. The comments of the advisory group (9 out of 12 advisory group members also participated in the subsequent survey) are used to provide context to the survey findings on filial obligation and future living preferences which are described below.

### Sample and data collection

The target population for the sample was Asian Indian immigrants in the Atlanta area, over 50 years of age, who had lived in the U.S. for at least 5 years. Asian Indians are the largest Asian American ethnic group in the Atlanta area constituting 27% of the Asian & Pacific Islander (API) population in Atlanta (Asian American Justice Center 2006). Georgia (specifically Atlanta) has experienced the second largest percentage point increase in the growth of the API population in the country (Smith *et al.* 2000). The study protocol was approved by Georgia State University's Institutional Review Board.

Participants were surveyed by telephone during 1999 and 2000. A sampling frame was constructed consisting of membership lists of persons identified as age 50 or more of ten Asian Indian community organizations. Eight of these organizations represented specific linguistic communities, whereas the other two had members from diverse linguistic communities. The common feature of these eight organizations is that membership primarily comes from individuals whose mother tongue is one of the major Indian languages (e.g., Gujarati, Marathi, Telugu, Hindi, etc.). The organizations provide access to professional and social networks, and opportunities to practice and expose one's children to Indian religion, culture, and history. Many older, first generation Asian Indian immigrants belong to one or more of these ethnic community organizations given the significance of these organizations in maintaining social, cultural, and religious traditions among families. Asian Americans have a greater likelihood of participating in these nationality groups as compared to other minorities (Kim and McKenry 1998). Initial recruitment letters were sent to a total of 542 individuals in the sampling frame of which 6% were unreachable due to incorrect phone numbers, and 26% were unreachable after numerous attempts on evenings, weekends, and additional efforts to locate them at varying times over several months. The response rate was calculated on the basis of the number of individuals with whom an actual phone contact was made (Dillman 1978). Of the 365 individuals successfully contacted by telephone 237(65%) completed the survey, 75 (20%) refused, 40 (11%) were under 40 years of age, and 13 (4%) were unable to communicate in English. A preliminary analysis of completed surveys revealed eleven respondents under age 50 who were excluded from this study giving a final sample of 226 respondents.

### Measures

*Expectations of Filial Obligation* was measured by the attitudes towards filial responsibility scale developed by Finley *et al.* (1988). The scale consists of six variables that assess elders' expectations of adult children to live close to their parents, assist the parents, and have regular contact with parents. The response categories were on a 5-point Likert scale

ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree with higher scores on the scale reflecting greater endorsement of filial obligation. The mean score on the scale was 18.2 (s.d.=3.4) with a range of 7 to 24. An alpha of .73 indicates moderately high reliability for the scale. The validity of the filial obligation scale in this sample is seen through its correlation with another scale on attitudes towards maintaining one's culture which assessed the importance to an individual of celebrating Indian religious festivals, preserving one's cultural heritage, adhering strictly to values, customs, and religion; and only marrying within one's cultural group. The correlation of  $r=.49$  ( $p<.000$ ) indicates that the greater the belief in maintaining one's ethnic culture, the greater the expectation of filial obligation.

*Preference for future living arrangement* was assessed by asking respondents: "In the future, if you were to move, what would be your preferred living arrangement?" Respondents were given a fixed-choice response and were asked to select from *one* of the following: a) move to a retirement community/assisted living; b) move to a retirement community geared to Indians; c) move to a different home or apartment; d) move in with your children; e) move closer to your children; f) other, specify. The question and response categories were developed based on a discussion with the advisory group. Group members felt that it would be easier to talk about their preferences for future living arrangements rather than their expectations, and expressed a variety of living arrangement preferences. Thus the response categories included a range of specific preferences described by the advisory group and included an "other" category where individuals could provide their own preferred option.

*Availability of children* was assessed by a categorical variable which was derived from asking respondents how many daughters and sons they had. The new variable was coded 1=daughters only; 2=sons only; and 3=daughters and sons. All respondents reported having children. The rationale for examining availability of daughters and sons separately is that in many Asian cultures sons rather than daughters are considered as potential caregivers (Kauh 1997; Yi and Lin 2009). *Self-rated health* was assessed by a single item, used extensively in the literature that asked individuals to rate their health as excellent, very good, good, fair, or poor (Idler and Benyamini 1997). The validity of this measure in this sample is seen through its moderate and significant relationship with a variable measuring self-report of the number of chronic conditions ( $r=.34$ ,  $p<.01$ ). Acculturation was assessed indirectly through *length of residence in the U.S.* measured in number of years. Demographics included *gender*; *age*, and *education* which was assessed an ordinal level variable asking respondents to describe their years of schooling. Because of the correlation between income and education ( $r=.38$ ,  $p<.01$ ) and more missing data on income we dropped income from the analysis.

## Data Analysis

Descriptive analyses (Mean, SD, and frequencies) were used to provide a profile of the sample. Pearson correlations were used to examine the variables associated with expectations of filial obligation. Since preferences for living arrangement is a non-ordered categorical variable, we used a multinomial regression model using STATA (StataCorp 2007, version 10) to determine the correlates of various preferences for future living arrangements. In a multinomial regression model, the relative risk ratio is similar to the odds ratio in logistic regression. The relative risk ratio of a coefficient indicates how the risk of the outcome occurring in the comparison group compares to the risk of the outcome occurring in the referent group. A risk ratio  $>1$  indicates that the risk of the outcome

occurring in the comparison group increases as the variable increases. In other words, with a one unit increase in the independent variable the outcome is more likely to occur in the comparison group. A risk ratio < 1 indicates that the outcome is more likely to occur in the referent group (UCLA 2008). The regression analysis used a robust variance estimator for data clustered by married couples which is appropriate because there were several married couples in the sample where some correlation is likely between their responses.

## Results

Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of the sample and descriptive statistics for the independent and dependent variables. The mean age of the sample was 58 years and the average length of residence in the U.S. was 24 years. Little over two-thirds were male, the majority was married, and 46% had annual incomes of \$100,000 or more, and the majority had a postgraduate education. Forty-eight percent of the sample lived with spouse only, and 32% lived with a spouse and child. Those who lived only with a spouse tended to be older on average than those who lived with a spouse and child (59 years vs. 55 years). These living arrangements suggest that those who lived with a spouse and child were likely to have a younger child in the home who was supported by the parents as compared to those who lived with a child and grandchild (5%) where it was likely that the respondent was living in the adult child's home. Those who lived with spouse and others typically had siblings or other relatives co-residing with them.

The preferences for future living arrangement are quite varied. Almost half (49%) preferred to "move closer to children." Sixteen percent preferred moving to a retirement community with the majority indicating that they would prefer a retirement community geared to Indians. The smallest group was in the "move in with children" category. Based on responses elaborated in the "other" category, we created two additional groups: one who said that they would not move and a second who indicated that they would prefer to return to India.

Surprisingly, none of the variables included in the correlation analysis were significantly associated with expectations of filial obligation (Table 2).

For the multinomial analysis, the dependent variable was recoded into five main categories which were: move to a retirement community (combining both retirement community categories); move to a different home or apartment; move closer to children;

**Table 2** Correlates of expectations of filial obligation

	Filial obligation	Self-rated health	Education	Availability of children	Age	Years in US	Gender
Filial obligation	1.00						
Self-rated health	-.03	1.00					
Education	.03	-.08	1.00				
Availability of children	.02	.06	-.01	1.00			
Age	-.02	.20*	-.02	.02	1.00		
Years in US	.03	.01	.10	.00	.20*	1.00	
Gender	-.04	.17*	-.17*	.00	-.12	.00	1.00

\*  $p < .05$



move in with children; and not move at all (which was a choice volunteered by the respondents when asked to specify if they had another choice). Due to their relatively small numbers and the distinct nature of the preferences, two groups of respondents in the 'other' category ( $n=12$  or 5% of the sample) were dropped from the analysis: two respondents who indicated that they would prefer to live with siblings, and ten respondents who said they would prefer to move back to India. There were an additional 19 cases that were dropped in the multinomial analysis because they had missing data in one or more of the variables considered in the analysis, resulting in a total sample of 195 cases.

Table 3 shows results from the multinomial regression analysis for four categories of preferences compared to "moving closer to children" which was the reference category since it was the most popular choice among respondents. The overall model was significant (Wald chi square=46.85,  $p<.05$ ).

For predicting the choice of moving to a "retirement community" the only variable that approached significance ( $p<.06$ ) was filial obligation expectation. Increase in expectation of filial obligation decreased the likelihood of choosing a retirement community as compared to moving closer to children.

For the choice of moving to a "different home," as filial obligation expectation increased, the relative risk for choosing a different home decreased by a factor of 0.86. Thus, increase in filial obligation expectation is more likely to put a respondent in the choice of moving closer to children as compared to choosing a different home. Self-rated health approached significance ( $p<.06$ ) in predicting this choice, where the better one's self-rated health, the more likely the individual would choose a different home as compared to moving closer to children.

For those who chose to "move in with their children" longer length of residence in the U.S. significantly decreased the likelihood by a factor of .93 of choosing to "move in" as compared to "moving closer" to their children.

Finally, for those who volunteered the option of "not moving/staying here" the significant predictors were self-rated health, and filial obligation expectation. As expectation of filial obligation increased, the relative risk for choosing the option of "not moving/staying here" decreased by a factor of 0.79 as compared to moving closer to children. The better the self-rated health, respondents were 85% (RRR=1.85) more likely to choose "not moving" as compared to moving "closer to children." Thus, an increase in filial obligation expectation or an improved rating of one's health is likely to put an individual in the move closer to children category.

## Discussion

This study contributes to the literature on first generation, ethnic minority immigrants by examining expectations of filial obligation, variations in preferences for living arrangements, and variables associated with these preferences in a sample of Asian Indian immigrants.

In contrast to previous research with Mexican American immigrants, we did not find any correlations in our sample between filial obligation expectations and education or length of residence in the U.S. Thus factors associated with variations in cultural expectations of filial obligation in this group might be related to variables not measured in the study and need further research.

One noteworthy finding of this study is the substantial diversity in preferences for future living arrangements within this sample. Contrary to common wisdom about preferences for co-residence with adult children among immigrant Asian families, moving in with children

**Table 3** Predictors of preferences for future living arrangements (N=195)

	Relative risk ratio	Standard error	Z
Model Wald chi2=46.85*			
<i>Retirement community<sup>a</sup></i>			
Filial obligation	.89	.05	-1.83**
Health	1.16	.27	.64
Education	1.03	.26	.13
Available children <sup>b</sup> : Sons only	1.02	.68	.04
Sons & Daughters	1.23	.74	.34
Age	.98	.04	-.39
Length of years in U.S.	1.02	.02	.92
Female	.83	.38	-.39
<i>Different home<sup>a</sup></i>			
Filial obligation	.86	.05	-2.36*
Health	1.58	.39	-1.84**
Education	1.12	.27	.48
Available children <sup>b</sup> : Sons only	.61	.41	-.72
Sons & Daughters	1.09	.59	.17
Age	.95	.03	-1.31
Length of years in U.S.	1.02	.02	1.13
Female	.38	.22	-1.62
<i>Move in with children<sup>a</sup></i>			
Filial obligation	1.12	.17	.77
Health	.80	.30	-.56
Education	.93	.20	-.30
Available children <sup>b</sup> : Sons only	1.96	2.60	.51
Sons & Daughters	3.77	4.19	1.19
Age	1.06	.05	1.18
Length of years in U.S.	.93	.02	-2.14*
Female	2.01	1.42	.99
<i>Will not move/stay here<sup>a</sup></i>			
Filial obligation	.79	.08	-2.14*
Health	1.85	.44	2.58*
Education	1.14	.44	.34
Available children <sup>b</sup> : Sons only	.28	.31	-1.14
Sons & Daughters	1.11	.82	.14
Age	.91	.05	-1.48
Length of years in U.S.	1.06	.04	1.34
Female	.27	.24	-1.44

\* p&lt;.05; \*\* p&lt;.10

<sup>a</sup>Reference group: Move closer to children; <sup>b</sup> Reference group: Daughters only

was the least preferred alternative in the sample. The most preferred choice was to move closer to adult children.

Overall, variations in expectations of filial obligation, self-rated health, and length of residence in the U.S. were associated with the various preferences for living arrangements.

In terms of preferences for specific living arrangements, consistent with existing studies of older Mexican-American immigrants (Angel *et al.* 1996; Wilmoth 2001), we find that shorter length of residence in the U.S. (which is a proxy measure of level of acculturation) is associated with a preference to move in with children as compared to moving closer to children reflecting a stronger adherence to the traditional pattern of living arrangements (although years in the U.S. and expectations of filial obligation appear uncorrelated).

Those preferring to move to a different home were likely to have lower filial obligation expectation. Although we do not have data on other variables that drive this preference, it is possible that this group may be considering an “amenity” move, i.e., moving for an improved life style or to maintain a network of friends, or to scale down their housing arrangements (Litwak and Longino 1987). Those who preferred to stay in their own home were likely to have lower filial obligation expectations, and poorer self-rated health. This may reflect the desire of this group to live an independent life and not become a “burden” on the children. The preference of a retirement community as a future living arrangement is interesting, although the majority who expressed this preference wanted a retirement community that was geared to their cultural needs. In contrast to previously noted preferences for informal or family based long-term care services among diverse groups of Asian immigrants (Lai and Chau 2007; Yeo *et al.* 2001; Braun and Browne 1998), we see that there are immigrants who would consider this option, especially if there were some attempts to cater to their ethnic or cultural preferences. However, none of the variables in the model were significant in predicting the choice of a retirement community and this remains an area of further investigation.

Studies of older immigrants typically assess acculturation through length of years in the U.S. rather than directly measuring filial obligation expectations. Including both variables in this study allow us to assess the impact of each variable separately on the various living arrangement preferences. The correlation between length of residence in the U.S. and expectations of filial obligation was not significant and the findings confirm the need to include additional measures of cultural norms such as filial obligation expectations beyond using length of residence in the U.S. as a proxy for acculturation.

In addition to the introductory comments provided earlier in this paper, the following comments made by advisory group members provide some context to our findings related on expectations of filial obligation and exemplify the conflict that older immigrants experience about expectations of filial obligation and echo prior research on this topic:

Now when truly the time of sacrifice comes, that is the moment when it is really scary. Especially when you know that career demands are different, job conditions are different. It is not going to be like you can take time off and go late. It is such a conflict of interest. We would be subjecting them to conflict, torn between love and duty and demands of their own. (female, age 62).

I am talking about that stage of life when we cannot get up and move around. The trouble is that children have it when they are at the peak of their career. They have very little time. They may be inclined to spend more time but do you want them to give up everything and take care of you and nurse you? (male, age 67).

Our interest are not so focused that we can be happy with one kind of interest...when you are in that community (with the similar professional individuals) you are longing to be closer to your children. Every time you divide yourself and try to focus on one interest group, the other one pulls you apart. If housing of common interests happens to be closer to our other interest that will work. If I have to go to Arizona to find retired engineers, and my children are living here, then I don't think I can live there for very long. (male, age 57).

As proposed by the life course perspective, these statements suggest that expectations of filial obligation are influenced by older immigrants' own life course: growing up with the expectation of filial obligation towards their parents; an awareness of how one's own migration was a break from previous norms; an understanding of the changes in lifestyle that have occurred by moving to the U.S., that is the strains experienced by adult children in terms of managing careers and raising families; and an emphasis on maintaining autonomy and independence. Consistent with cultural norms of close family ties, these immigrants express a desire to maintain close ties with their adult children. However, the diversity in expectations of filial obligation is consistent with modernization and aging theory which posits that there is a "general trend away from expecting to count on one's children for care...which reflects the underlying desire for independence and avoidance of 'becoming a burden'" (Robison and Moen 2000, p. 523).

The findings of this study are useful in understanding the future demands for long-term care among Asian Indian immigrant elders and for planning intervention strategies and services to accommodate different needs within ethnic communities. The predictors of particular preferences are varied and we cannot assume that all immigrant elders will want the same choices. For those expecting to move closer to children, appropriate family caregiver supports will need to be developed to assist the maintenance of such arrangements. This includes increasing awareness of community resources among the elders and their adult children. For those preferring more independent living arrangements, or desiring the amenities of retirement communities, future research should explore issues that will need to be addressed—e.g. culturally-relevant, community-based support services for older adults as well as for their adult children. Service providers and program planners need to engage the ethnic community in considering the development and expansion of housing and care alternatives for its members. Social workers and other service providers can be the catalysts in these immigrant communities to engage community members in the search for meaningful alternatives to support its elders. As members of the advisory group remarked:

We, as an Indian community, have not come to that stage as we came here as very young people and few people have reached that stage. But we will get there, where people will be in their 80's and what will happen then? We cannot get there and then start looking. (male, age 67).

I hope we can ....continue our discussion... We are only at the fringe of this retirement group in this society. Fortunately or unfortunately the Indian community will make a big jump. All of us came at one age group and all of us are going into retirement age. That will happen and will hit us very suddenly in 5 to 10 years. (male, age 67).

In considering the implications it is necessary to qualify the findings of this study. The non-random nature of the sample limits the generalizability of the findings to the groups represented in the sample (members of various organizations) but not to other individuals, for example those who do not belong to such ethnic organizations. We do not have data on the individuals who refused to participate in the study and therefore cannot assess whether any systematic differences existed between respondents and non-respondents.

Living arrangement preferences are shaped by the availability of choices and resources and the single geographic location of the sample may also limit variability in responses that may be found in groups of Asian Indian immigrants in diverse parts of the country. Thus, those who live in higher density ethnic communities may have different preferences as compared to those who live in communities with fewer fellow immigrants. Additionally,

since all respondents had children, we do not know the living arrangement preferences of immigrants who do not have any children, or those who may have other children living in India or elsewhere outside the U.S. We also do not know the strength of the preferences expressed by respondents and consequently cannot accurately make predictions of actual behavior. However, in a study of Taiwanese elders, Hermalin and Yang (2004) found substantial concordance between the preferred living arrangements expressed by these elders and their subsequent outcomes at the end of a 12 year period. This was especially true among better educated respondents. This suggests that expressions of preferences will have some impact on subsequent behavior, especially if the preferences expressed (e.g. retirement communities, adequate housing options) were actually available to older individuals. Finally, due to the significant correlation between income and education and greater missing data on income, we only used education in the multinomial model. Given that education and income are not linearly related, adding a direct measure of income to the multinomial model would have been useful in detecting any differences between housing preferences that are related to income variations. This limitation needs to be addressed in future research on this topic.

Despite the limitations, the strengths of this study are its inclusion of various segments of the immigrant Asian Indian community and explicit examination of the impact of length of residence in the U.S. (acculturation) and expectations of filial obligation on future living preferences. The relationship between preferences, life events, and actual behaviors among these immigrants remains to be seen, but observations of the community suggest that Asian Indian immigrants have indeed established a variety of different living arrangements as they have aged. And, data on preferences suggest directions for development of housing options which have heretofore not been addressed in this immigrant community. It would be important to engage older persons and their children in the development of viable living arrangements that support these preferences. Longitudinal data on immigrant communities are also needed to develop a clearer picture of the link between preferences and behaviors as this generation ages.

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