

# Discussion the Super-solitary Elder Cultural Phenomenon by Design Anthropology

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## ABSTRACT

*The study explores the relationship about emotional factors and influence of the cultural phenomena have fostered a substantial increase in the ultra-alone social phenomenon. This phenomenon in Taiwan has been accompanied by health management and community-based organizations that must provide home health care survey to assess the physical and mental condition of elders living alone. This study, hoping to understand the social conditions of solitary elders living alone, seeks to provide services designed for the solitary elderly. Case studies are used to understand the deeper causes of solitary elders living alone. What factors enable the elderly to maintain social contact, to effect so-called "successful aging". This study collects and analyzes empirical data to design a service model for the solitary elder living alone. This article identifies the emotional factors in health management to achieve more specific communication, including community-based organizations to provide physical and mental advisory guide service of industries that should be changed in Taiwan for future development.*

**Keywords:** Solitary Elder, Successful Aging, Service design, Cultural Phenomenon, Design Anthropology

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The influence of non-marriage advocates, a continuously rising divorce rate, substantial decline in fertility rates, has now combined to create a situation in which the aging population has become a serious social problem in Taiwan. Since the traditional filial family values have seriously declined, solitary households have risen to the level of mainstream social structure. There has been a sharp rise in the number of solitary elders. [1] the solitary elder cultural phenomenon is a worldwide phenomenon, within a decade the world's

population of elders living alone will increase by 33% even in the United States one in seven people live alone, mostly concentrated in the cities. In the world's highest proportion of those who live alone is concentrated in four countries: Sweden, Norway, Finland and Denmark. (With 40-45% of people live alone); In countries that rely on family social life, about 30% of households are those living alone even the living alone proportion of the German, French, and United Kingdom populations are higher than in the US, including the fastest growing solitary living countries are China, India, Brazil. This study investigated the reasons for the ultra-alone phenomenon (Why should I live alone?), including the rite of passage for young people; young professionals will pay higher rent in the pursuit of freedom and privacy: the pursuit of a second adolescence; young singles are not ideal companions as they refuse to sacrifice their career or lifestyle; divorced men and women believe that marriage is no longer a reliable source of happiness or stability; elderly have often been alone due to divorce and would, rather live alone than live with friends or their children. In other words, people live alone because they have the ability to provide their own. Such as economic development, wealth accumulation, and social security benefits provided by the State; Changes in world history and culture: individual worship, I am more sacred than "community." (Eg: Feminism). This study found that most people do not understand what it means to live alone, such as living alone has nothing to do with age; living alone does not mean that people are lonely. Thus, this study employs compared to being married, those who live alone are more interested in social and civic life, and have more friends.

The United Nations defines the elderly as 60 years and up. The European and North American elderly living patterns show 70 living alone or living with a spouse under independent living arrangements. Only a quarter of them live with children or

grandchildren [2]. In China a smaller proportion of the elderly parents live with their children [3]. The elderly are usually reluctant to burden their children and choose to live alone [4]. This pattern has accelerated due to the rapid increase in elderly population along with changes in culture and traditions. The ratio of solitary elders living alone increased from 20% to 29% from 1971 to 1996 in Canada [5]. In the United States since the 1960s the number of solitary elders living alone has seen a dramatic rise. According to the report from US Census in 1990, 31% of the total number of older Americans (about 950 million people) are living alone. In 1993, the percentage of elderly people had reached 7.1% of the entire population of Taiwan. This demographic change meant that Taiwan is becoming an aging society. The ratio of aged population will continue to increase to 14.6% in 2018 and 20.1% in 2025 [6]. Forecasting to 2020 this number will increase to 15 million, while the ratio of elderly living with their children will decline. In Japan from 1975 to 1985, the number of elders living with their children dropped from 75% to 62%. In the Philippines from 1984 to 1988, the number fell from 80% to 68% [3]. Other countries have developed, on average, about 25-30% of solitary elder living alone, with as much as 53 percent in West Germany. Switzerland accounted for 40%, 39% in New Zealand, Australia with 30% of the elderly living alone [7]. The trend in living patterns around the world for the elderly living alone has gradually increased. For the elderly living alone will choose care facilities or living with their children only when in poor health in order to get care [8]. The independent variables (perceived health status and learned resourcefulness) directly and positively affect quality of life that nursing intervention facilitates learned resourcefulness by teaching or reinforcing constituent skills.

In recent years, the elderly living alone happened accident, death or sudden death reported in several days no one at home, such as smell, and likewise in the United States alone over 65 years old, about 3.2% were found at home in urgent need of assistance, or even dead [9]. High prevalence of frailty in solitary elderly individuals and pre-frailty and frailty impacts health because of cardiovascular disease, disability and fracture with their strong association [10]. The data from both home and abroad shows that the proportion of impact and influence on society caused by the elderly living alone, and this population group is still gradually rising. Therefore, solitary elders living alone that cannot be ignored. Only an in-depth understanding of their needs and situation, and given appropriate resources to protect the quality of life of the elderly.

## 2. METHODS OF INQUIRY

This study will use a design anthropology approach to describe solitary elders preferences and views about the factors that influence their choice of lifestyle. Face-to-face, semi-structured interviews will be conducted with 6 solitary elders. Especially, this study focus on Design Anthropology moves from observation and interpretation to inquiry [11]. The step in the research process, namely identification of the problem, planning the research design, selecting a research method, selecting a sampling procedure, data collection, evaluating the data and finally preparing and presenting the research report for service design thinking. The first phase of this study adopts the quantitative research methods using an observation questionnaire. This approach allows the researchers insight into the significant behavior and attitudes expressed; The second phase of this study is to collect qualitative research method interviews (interviewing), by the respondents to talk in-depth to understand their true inner thoughts and feelings, to supplement the questionnaire. This study purports to investigate through textual analysis "Design Anthropology" as the subject. Elements of deconstructive solitary elders' culture. This article draws on data from qualitative interview is below: (1). Interviewee: in-depth interview with 6 elders (Huang, Rong-quan et al) concerning. (2). Survey method: open-ended questions are adopted to understand the identification of people with the value of solitary elders and human-based solitary culture.

By design anthropology, since human beings have different psychologies and values. People's value and identities are constituted by their interpersonal relationships and in their social environments [12]. We try to design according to different solitary elder's needs to meet the needs or even to self-exploration. The consideration of design anthropology for humanity generates the possibility for design study to integrate with anthropology. Design anthropology beings create different social, political, economic, and religious systems in different environments, consuming, and psychological needs in different systems. Therefore, design anthropology can be regarded as a psychology study that crowds and their cultures and apply the behavior results to consider.

The subversion of the traditional, and then against the rise of living alone to change the experience of modern life, for this unprecedented social change, more solitary than just mention personal life choices, more will need to study the whole design of the whole society are as follows: (1). Urban design. (2). Residential design. (3). Design life of objects. (4). Design of social welfare. This study seeks to understand the social situation of the

single elderly living alone and how they adapt to the situation. Through studying their live we hope to understand the deeper causes of the elderly living alone. What factors allow the elderly to maintain social contacts, to define so-called "successful aging". The successful aging as a balance between self-acceptance and self-contentedness need to balance in their life[13]. In this study, empirical data is collected and analyzed to be able to design a specific program. The solitary elder living alone is no longer a temporary problem and there is no permanent cure. We hope to penetrate into the root of the problem to improve the quality of life of the solitary elder living alone, so the elders can enjoy their twilight years. [14]Today "one's primary obligation is to oneself

rather than to one's partner and children. The qualitation approaches to research can provide important insights are now recognized [15][16]. This study investigates the solitary elder living alone(Table 1). There are two issues related in the literature, the discovery of the aging alone phenomenon is not simply a situation unique to Taiwan. This is a challenge the entire international community needs to face. The following will describe the current situation at home and abroad for the elderly living alone. In this study, 6 participants who lived in northern Taiwan and over 65 years in this study by in-depth interview was employed(Table 2). The interview records were transcribed for analysis of narratives.

**Table 1. Interview questionnaire**

Researcher's analysis of solitary elder living alone	
1	How would you define super-solitary elder?;
2	What is important to solitary elder satisfactorily?
3	How have your life experiences influenced the mind of your life?
4	How about your activity with friends and relatives availability?
5	What are your suggestions on how to living alone well and recommendations for specific interventions to promote healthy aging?
6	What do you think the nursing-home?

**Table 2. In-depth interview with a solitary elder**

	sex	Age	education	health	activity with friends and relatives availability	how to living alone well and promote healthy aging	What do you think the nursing-home?
a	F	66	primary school	Hypertension	Good; like to sing with her friends	Farmer subsidy of 3,000 yuan, and another child feeding	excluded
b	F	61	High school	Hypertension Osteoarthritis	No interpersonal relationship, even as the mind alone	6,000 yuan of government subsidy collar	excluded
c	M	58	High school	good	Less friends, along	Rich	excluded
d	M	67	primary school	Weak, often go to hospital	Single, neighbors intersection.	6,000 yuan of government subsidy collar	Hope to care and live if more rich
e	F	64	Retiring professor	good	Like to have own free time	Pension and child support little	excluded

### 3. ANALYSIS & INTERPRETATION

The worldwide twentieth century gradual change from an agrarian society into an industrial society fomented, fast urbanization and changing values, resulting in numerous societal transformations

including family structure. The traditional family care functions are declining. The change in family structure also changed the family network of relationships. The proportion of solitary elders living alone in Taiwan increased from 9.19% to 13.66% [17][18]. The ratio of elderly living alone or living with elderly spouses has increased year by

year. The lack of household family members, relatives, neighbors and friends cause a considerable degree of influence on the care and welfare of the solitary aged. This also highlights that the "solitary elder living alone" is a relatively weak group, likely to be overlooked by other population groups[18]. The elderly population grew to 11.5% and the government estimates increase to 14% from 2013 to 2017 [19]. Solitary elders would have poorer indices of function and health living in a group setting and they have a significantly increased risk of poor nutrition, poor health status, impaired cognition, and impaired daily living activities [20]. In addition, even if there is more than one disease, many elderly respondents perceived health condition. And the neighbor is a major resource network. The importance of primary care has been addressed extensively to promote community health in Taiwan. GEM services are highly recommended to provide better quality of care for the solitary elder population.

On the international front, the major countries with growing elderly population (65 and older greater than 10% of total). In the United States, the number of people age 65 and older is expected to triple during the first half of the 21st century. The growth among the oldest old cohort is the most remarkable. The number of people age 80 and older grew at an average rate of 159% between 1960 and 1990 and will continue to increase at a rate of 70% between 1990 and 2020[21]. Meanwhile, physical impairments and increasing dependency on professional care has shifted to ideas about positive aging and self-mastery [22]. According to OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) released data, the proportion of the elderly population has increased year by year. The aging population is a global issue that should concern all.

#### 4. DISCUSSION

This study used qualitative interviews with six elders to examine their personal reason for living alone. We uncovered factors such as unmarried, widowed and voluntarily living alone. Rapidly aging modern society presents living alone as a lifestyle choice and social phenomenon. This preference reflects the influence of Confucian culture and filial piety within Chinese families [23]. The concept of raising children for protection in old age has gradually declined. The majority of respondents believed that it no longer necessary for the elderly to rely on their children. They want to rely on their own ability to survive because they feel they do not have to live with their children and therefore choose to live alone. The elderly who are infirm and cannot be dependent upon a child or children have social support in their community which plays an important role in their ability to live

alone. In Taiwan, the government to promote the social safety net policies set by the Department "All police units to assist in the care of low-income elderly people living alone and disadvantaged groups' project, include the Substitute Military Service.

*From visiting senior citizens who reside alone, delivering meals to the needy, to bathing residents of nursing homes, these welfare services helped deliver warmth to all corners of society. It's the kind of experience that made us realize military service is not just a compulsory act, but an opportunity for self-growth and personal development."*

#### 4.1 Causes of the elderly living alone

In exploring the reasons why the elderly live alone a holistic perspective is required to avoid drawing conclusions based solely on surface reasons. We should also analyze the background context of the solitary elder living alone to more objectively explain the causes. To understand the causes of Taiwan's elderly living alone, can be divided into individual factors, family factors and social factors.

##### 4.1.1 Personal factors

The solitary elder doesn't mean he or she is lonely man, with life, in fact, it can also be very desirable and safe lifestyle, it could be a life of liberation. In Taiwan, to admit own is solitary elder maybe shamed for some people. And the "defensive individualism"[24] said they often have a hard enough time with my own problems without other people's problems. And increasingly start to express their wish of being treated as valuable individuals with their own needs and desire[25].

(1). Economic autonomy - economic surplus, no shortage of life, that increase has improved the ability of consumers to enjoy a life of privacy through increased income, incurring an increase in those who live alone.(2). Personality differences - more eccentric personality, not wanting neighbors and not liking to communicate with others. Not liking to be bound to others, not liking to live in institutions, not liking to live life in elderly groups. All of these attitudes create a higher likelihood for a person to live alone.(3). The concept of attitude - no idea of raising children for old age; in itself does not like to live with their children; do not want to leave their familiar environment, because of living in the same environment over a long period of time generates a unique emotional attachment, therefore, most of the elderly prefer to live in old houses and do not want to leave to live with others.(4).Single - never married elderly, forced to live alone.

(5). Divorce or separation - the absence of a spouse, if no children, then the majority will live alone. (6). Physical illness - physical functional degradation, mobility, will affect their communication with others, interaction, it is difficult to participate in social activities with friends and family alienation, and become solitary. (7). Voluntary choice - individual voluntary choice alone, like an independent life. (8). Education - the lower level of education were more likely to prefer three generations living under one roof, on the contrary, the higher the level of education who are more able to accept three generations or other living arrangement.

#### 4.1.2 Family factors

The Asian families are notions of filial piety. Through the changing modes of intergenerational support between generations and the underlying norms in culturally sensitive ways, we inspect various aspects of parent-child relationships are changing. (1). The sentence punctuation follows the bracket. (2). Children leave home - children may leave due to work, school, immigration and home life, resulting in leaving their elderly parents living alone, over their empty nest life. If when the death of a spouse, then become solitary. (3) The Lost Children - children died, so that the elderly can live alone. (4) No assume responsibility for the care of children - such as children in prison, children have a disease, adverse economic conditions, are unable to provide care for the elderly life. (5) Abandoned - has been abandoned by children or malicious spouse or negligent forced to live alone. (6) Home environment - family living area is small, no place for three generations, two generations of separation, and finally into singletons. (7) Joint decision - alone decide whether or not to just separate the elderly, and more likely to be home, even among family members, co-decision.

#### 4.1.3 Social factors

The "elderly women" will be the future of Taiwan's largest living alone group because the average life expectancy of women is higher more households will contain widows living alone. As such, They noticed a fear among their peers of losing control over their lives once they would grow more dependent on care [26]. Taiwan will take place marriage "squeeze" phenomenon, these "left male" population living alone is noteworthy in the next ten years. In summary, we can see the reason for the elderly living alone is not caused by a single factor. There are many different situations such as: voluntary or involuntary, personal or

environmental factors and sometimes may be affected by many factors. The majority of the solitary elderly successfully adapt to solitary life regardless of the underlying cause for their solitude. I hope that through empirical studies to gain understanding of the reasons for the causes of elderly solitude and adaptation. Developed with technology driven of LINE software, potentially giving more social spaces live alone, so that they can always "switched" to participate in social networks, do not feel lonely in Taiwan. (1). Stereotype - social apathy, alienation, distrust and the stereotype of the elderly, resulting in the elderly population. (2). Social trends - more people living alone, the general acceptance of living alone will relatively increase, which will increase the number of actual willingness to live alone and live alone. (3) Selective background - 1950 fall of the mainland to Taiwan's movement, and the influx of young people in the 1980s rural migration to urban areas. (4) Support Network severed - migrated to the new living environment, the old social support network has been damaged, but also being able to rebuild a new support network, then gradually alienated from family and friends, and slowly became a solitary do not care. (5) Environmental Migration - because older public housing estates rebuild homes or other reasons to be transferred residence, because of the strange new environment, poor health, living area stenosis and other factors, unable to make friends in their new homes and become socially isolated The solitary elder living alone. (6) Inmate factors - some solitary elder might have had to live with their friends, but when inmates move out, sick in hospital, need someone to take care of the situation and moved elsewhere, or death, the elderly will then live alone.

#### 4.2 Strengthen the Focus of Elderly Health and Life

The health of the elderly living alone or not, as well as their psychological state case, how they look in later life and the ability to adapt is quite huge. If the elderly are in good health, have good strength, their quality of life will be high and their dependence on others will be very low. Their ability to adapt to their solitary life will also be high. Conversely, if the elderly suffer from physical pain and illness, their ability to be independent is greatly reduced, and this also affects their mood. They will not be able to successfully adapt to solitary life, with the potential to suffer falls and other mishaps. If the elderly can have a positive look at life, even if things go wrong, they can be successful. Conversely, if the elderly are often complaining, always care about the size of the event they will often feel negative and their visible, physical and mental health will suffer. Improving the physical and mental functioning of elders living alone is very important. For example,

stimulating the elderly to participate in organized activities will enhance their physical activity participation. Providing elderly health care knowledge will enhance their ability to self-regulate their health issues. Community mental and physical activities for the elderly will provide physical and psychological wellbeing. Because aging is negatively associated with the ability to respond to stress and positively related to the homeostatic balance and incidence of pathology death remains the ultimate consequence of aging [27]. Thus, health and property is both important for super-solitary elder, especially in physiological properties.

### 4.3 Piety thought Traditional Culture

The health of the elderly living alone or not, as well as their psychological state case, how they look in The importance of family relationships to a person's physical and mental well-being cannot be ignored. In particular, "filial piety" in traditional Chinese culture is very important. Children should honor and care for their parental responsibilities. The findings from these interviews show that if the child has a respectful attitude in treating the elderly, and is always caring, greeting them, the elderly are pleased and satisfied. Good family support networks for the elderly living alone are a big help

to adapting to solitary living. However, if the child is indifferent to the elderly, the elderly feel the pain. This situation would lead to trouble events in life. Apart from a family support system, the establishment of family friendly and supportive environment is also helpful for the elderly, so that when you encounter difficulties, multi-party resources exist to assist to avoid falling into a deeper dilemma. With no relatives or friends the strengthening of the community network with social worker support can intervene to help them expand and enhance their ability to adapt to solitary life.

### 4.4 Successful Aging thought Design Anthropology

Design Anthropology brings together key thinkers and practitioners involved in servicing and experiencing our contemporary society and world, including the community-based organizations to provide physical and mental advisory guide service of elder industries that should be changed. Especially, the design anthropology offers the definitive guide to the issues facing the shapers of our increasingly complex material world [28]. Meanwhile, service design as material to provide a successful aging of model.



Fig 1: A Prospection of Successful aging though service design by Design Anthropology

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

The study found that solitary elders living alone were willing to participate in this interview and open in-depth dialogue. Researchers learned in this process to identify and promote elderly inner energy, more respect and pay attention to them. The Department provides advantages so that "solitary elders living alone," can have dignity in their twilight years. It can be seen, not entirely alone will have a negative state of mind, as long as there is sound support network, good interpersonal interaction, participation in social activities, etc., can give solitary elder living alone support to help them adapt to solitary life and have a sound mind and body. The individual body as a machine with an abundance of living functions [29]. The solitary elder needs good dietary well-being, physical health and psychosocial well-being. Meanwhile, That six priority action areas are identified as steps to achieving the long-term goals, and indications of specific actions intended in each area are provided[30]:(1). Pensions/Income Supports.(2). Long-Term Care Services for Older.(3). People. (4). Housing and Accommodation.(5). Ensuring Mobility for Older People. (6). Ensuring Quality Health Services for Older People. (7). Promoting Education and Employment. In the future the elderly health care industry must provide the service-care concept to provide a better future. This study reminds to rethink the solitary elder of their welfare in the global era(Figure 1).

This study discuss solitary elders' aging experiences and look for dynamic linking between their life manner and vital involvement in old age. In order to break down the problem-orientation and pathological approach of elderly, this study have focused on the "active aging" of social participation to realize older adults how to promote themselves getting active, their subjective experiences of aging and find the unique meanings from vital involvement and reflecting back on life. The capacity of a person to initiate and maintain social relations, and his or her willingness to use for "assistive devices"by themselves, seemed essential to foster behavioral change. The results of this study are as follows: (1). The interpersonal relationship of the solitary elders showed the lived experience of the life manner that affected deeply to this key cause of seniors, and the major health situation also significance, influence their manner of development and adaptation phases.(2). These solitary elders emphasized their own definition and perception of aging. They are satisfied their life and sense of aging self-perceptions are mainly from physical, mental, and social present and their points of view toward aging. In addition, for the nursing-home can be divided into three stages like independent, assisted, full care and solitary elders have shown different attitudes in these three stages.(3). This research shows that there are two power resources which make those solitary elders to have a positive attitude in participating in their later life: one is the unique parts of a person such as staying active, showing their personal qualities; another is the experiences that every individual would experience: being able to adopt the changes in their lives, which bring the features of their participation.(4).

These solitary elders not only choose lifestyle themselves but also cope with changes in the manner of aging and participation though the process of positive psychological adjustment and changing self-behaviors, it helps them to attain an optimal aging balance.(5).From the review of solitary elders' past life experience, it indicates that their ego integrity has been completed, and they have reframed the meaning of active aging for themselves. This study form the viewpoint of service design in "Design Anthropology" developing a prospection of successful aging. This is the future outlook of the research.

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