

Aging in China

Crisis and Opportunity

Questions

- Overall question: population aging and social changes
- What are the realities of health care, aging policies, and family support?
- How is the Chinese government preparing for the country's population aging?
- Global context of aging

Population Aging in China

- China will be the country with the highest number of old people by 2020.
- Their unlimited supply of cheap labor won't be available. It'll become a country of shortage of labor. Their economic growth is likely to slow down.

Social Indicators

- Average life expectancy

China: 75

Macao: 80.3

Hong Kong: 83.8

Japan: 83.3

USA: 78.8

Sweden: 81.7

South Korea: 81

Social Indicators (2)

- **Age dependency rate** ($64 + / \text{Ages } 15 - 64$)
 - China 12% (Macao 11%)
 - India 8%
 - Italy 34%
 - USA 22%
 - Germany 32%
 - Japan 42%
 - South Korea 17%

Cause of china's Population Aging

- Not just the one child policy that had been in place for 36 years until 2015 but **industrialization and urbanization** are the causes. Even without the one-child policy, aging would happen.

Three Characteristics of Aging in China

- Population aging and the one child policy – the 4-2-1 structure
- Industrialization and urbanization – aging in rural areas
- Socialism to the free market system – state responsibility to individual and familial responsibilities

Challenges in Long-Term Care

- **Culture vs structure:** Filial piety, from physical care to financial support for institutional care. Old people who are institutionalized are happier than old people who are living with their son's family.
- In 1999, China's elderly population surpassed 10%. The National Aging Committee was founded.

Challenges in Long-Term Care

- Promotion of public and private **care facilities** by the government: land appropriation, tax exemption, subsidies of new and existing beds, lower interest rates, etc.
- Proliferation of elderly care facilities in major cities.
- The elderlies in the facilities are not “abandoned.”

Gender Relations in Caregiving

- In China, vast majority of women are employed. How can adult children have resources to physically take care of or financially support one to four parents?
- Do men share the informal care work?
- Informal care: **from daughter-in-law to daughter.**
- “**Gender recognition**” – reward care work with compensation.
- Build more care facilities

Population Aging in Asia

- Other Asian countries are facing similar demographic challenges. Thailand and Japan are also estimated to lose 10% of its working age population between 2010 to 2040. Korea is expected to see its workforce shrink by 15%, according to the World Bank.
- This may affect those countries' **immigration policies**.
- Needs for younger workers and care workers for the elderly population.

Pessimistic Scenario

- China will age before getting rich
- Health care cost

Optimistic scenario

- **China's next economic miracle: Embracing older workers.** Eliminate the concept of retirement.
- **Making China's megacities age-friendly.** China added more than 500 million people to its cities in the past 35 years. These hubs will need to become global leaders in facilitating much longer life spans by keeping their seniors active, employed and engaged.