



SNoW

Sino-Nordic Welfare Research Network

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Call for Abstracts! SNoW 2016 Shanghai Workshop

*Family and working life in Chinese and Nordic
welfare policies*

Nordic Centre, Fudan University, Shanghai
21 October 2016

Work-life imbalance has become a critical challenge in modern societies. Research and policies concerning a well-functioning work-life balance has been high on the agenda of European welfare states during the last two decades, and for even longer in the Nordic countries. Currently the scope and generosity of welfare policies in Europe, including the Nordic countries, are under pressure.

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In the wake of China's increasing labor market competition, changes in the role of social gender, and increased population mobility, the question of how to reconcile family and work has become more serious. To some extent, late marriage, postponed childbearing after marriage and declining fertility rate are indicators of work-to-family conflicts. China has over the last two years moved from a predominant one-child policy via "two-children-for-only-one-child-couples" to "a pervasive two-children-policy" as of 2016. An important policy challenge is how to simultaneously better support families in order to increase labor market participation, promote flexible work arrangements, and facilitate child care for working men and women. Will the recent changes in child policies positively affect childbearing, or are other elements of family policies necessary in order to relieve work pressure and reconcile work and family life? Labour migration and family separation are key issues to understand current Chinese challenges: there are around 60 million left-behind children, 50 million left-behind wives, and 60 million left-behind elderly. The extent of separation of family and work in urbanizing China not only negatively influences family well-being, but may also be expected to deter the process of urbanization.

The Nordic countries have gained experience from policies of paid parental leave, including encouragement of fathers to participate in care work, and institutionalized child care. Female labour market participation is relatively high, and fertility rates are among the highest in Europe, although below the level needed for reproduction of the population. What is the Nordic experience? What do we know, and what can be learnt and be of relevance for China and other developing and middle-income countries?

The SNoW 2016 Workshop invites papers on family-work relations and related social policies and welfare institutions in China and the Nordic countries. The aim is to increase knowledge about policy experiences and lessons to be taken and lessons which can be of relevance for policy development in order to achieve a better family-work balance in transforming China.

Papers are invited on the following and related topics: 1. family-to-work impacts; 2. work-to-family impacts; 3. gender and family-work relations; 4. migration and family separation in China; 5. ageing of the population and elderly care in families; 6. family well-being and social policy.

The Workshop is planned for 15-20 participants and the organization of sessions will be decided when information on participants and papers is available.

Those interested in participating in the workshop should provide the following information **before 15 June 2016**:

Title of paper; - Abstract (ca. 100 words); - Contact details (author(s), affiliation, postal address, phone number, and e-mail address.

Information should be sent to members of the Organizing Committee:

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General information:

- * there is no registration fee;
- * participants are generally expected to cover their own travel and accommodation costs; but some modest subsidy may become available. Thanks to a grant from the Norwegian General Consulate in Shanghai, economy flight tickets of 3-4 Norwegian participants can be covered
- * a welcome dinner on 20 October, and lunch and dinner on 21 October will be covered;
- * suggested accommodation: Crowne Plaza Hotel, Fudan (www.crowneplaza.cn) ;
- * the conference is open for non-Nordic/non-Chinese participants;
- * deadline for sending abstracts to the members of the Organizing Committee: 15 June 2016;
- * confirmation of participation will be sent to applicants by 30 June 2016;
- * deadline for paper submission: 1 October 2016

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ARTICLE IN CHINA DAILY

Stein Kuhnle published another article on the op-ed page in the China Daily on “The dilemma of more taxes for better welfare”. The text is reprinted below, and here is the electronic link: http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/opinion/2016-03/02/content_23705465.htm

The dilemma of more taxes for better welfare

By STEIN KUHNLE (China Daily)

Updated: 2016-03-02 08:51



A Chinese clerk counts RMB (renminbi) yuan banknotes at a bank in Huaibei city, East China's Anhui province, January 22, 2015. [Photo/IC]

China has taken major strides in terms of social security and protection. Policies have been built on a combination of social insurance, social assistance and welfare services. And of major importance is the nine-year free and compulsory education for all. Increasingly larger percentages of the population, including the most vulnerable groups, such as poor rural residents, the unemployed and—to a gradually larger extent—migrant workers, have been included in social policies. Minimum living standards schemes, as well as medical insurance and pension schemes have been introduced, although with a fragmented structure and variations in organization, scope of implementation, entitlements and benefit generosity based on people's hukou (household registration) status and other criteria. Therefore, benefits are for many very modest.

The welfare system is not uniform across the country, but there is at least a declared political aim of achieving universal coverage by 2020. Access to and standards of education and health have been greatly improved, although rural-urban and regional inequalities persist, as does the inequality of income distribution. Compared with developed (some would say "over-developed") European "welfare states", there are also some elements missing in the Chinese social policy development, such as family policy to facilitate reconciliation of childcare and work, and promotion of gender equality.

This policy area, in combination with the recent lifting of the one-child policy, can be crucial for achieving the politically desired increase of the fertility rate to a level that would help maintain a more balanced age composition of the population.

China's economic development makes room for expansion of social policy, but the development of social policy cannot be considered to have been a driver for economic development, as it has in other East Asian countries, and also historically in parts of Europe. For example, one of many motivations for Germany's first chancellor Otto von Bismarck to introduce the world's first large-scale social insurance program in the 1880s was to make Germany perform better in international economic competitions.

Public social spending as a proportion of GDP in China today is low compared to Japan and very low compared to developed market economies in the West. As such, social expenditures are very likely to increase, and this should not be seen as a brake on economic development, rather the contrary.

China as a middle-income country faces new challenges. Addressing issues of poverty, inequality, health and social security has been and will be at the core of the political agenda of the Communist Party of China and the government. Such priorities are good response to the popular demand for better social protection and improvement of services and income levels.

Social policies, broadly speaking, can also reduce a threat to social instability. So, how can social policies be further developed and people's expectations of improved standards of living and well-being be met during times of slower economic growth, growing financial burden of established healthcare and social security programs, and aging population? Will Chinese citizens be willing to pay more taxes in return for increased social spending?

In fact, many Chinese might be willing to pay higher taxes as long as the government increases its social spending. A pre-requisite for this willingness will be sufficient trust in government and the system of tax collection. And trust could be built and strengthened through curbing of corruption. Thus, a recipe for meeting the challenges of increasing financial burdens of healthcare, social security and popular demands for better welfare is first of all one of developing clean and good governance.

However, an important concern is that, increased taxes will hinder China's economic growth as the authorities resort to more proactive fiscal policies to boost the economy. That's why the authorities will need the art to deal with this dilemma.

The author is a professor of comparative politics, University of Bergen, Norway, and professor emeritus, Hertie School of Governance, Berlin, Germany.



Publications

The March 2016 issue of *Journal of Sociology* (Vo.. 52, No. 1), published by Sage Publications (<http://online.sagepub.com/cgi/alerts>) is a special issue on Chinese sociology. It includes the following articles:

Sociology in China, sociology of China: Editor's introduction

Xiaoying Qi

Chinese individualization, revisited

Jack Barbalet

China's road to the construction of labor rights

Feng Chen

Family bond and family obligation: Continuity and transformation

Xiaoying Qi

The changing relationship of women with their natal families

Odalía Ming Hung Wong

Sexology and the making of sexual subjects in contemporary China

Day Wong

Transition to higher education in contemporary China: A study of high school graduates in urban Nanjing

Gina Lai, Jing Song, Odalia Wong, and Xiaotian Feng

Reciprocity (lishang-wanglai): A Chinese model of social relationships and reciprocity - state and villagers' interaction 1936-2014

Xiangqun Chang

The introduction and reception of Max Weber's sociology in Taiwan and China

Po-Fang Tsai



NEWS FROM CHINA

(Collected by Jing Chen, School of Social Development and Public Policy, Fudan University)

Books



Liu, Yaobin. (2016). *Path and Policy on Inclusive Development of New Urbanization in China*. Beijing: Social Sciences Academic Press.

This book provides a theoretical and analyzing framework for the inclusive development of new urbanization. Based on theoretical review, the book interprets the new concept of inclusive development of new-style urbanization at first. Then quantitative research methods are used to analyze the status, process and the influential mechanism of new urbanization in four specific regions in China. Next, the book draws international experience by comparing inclusive development practices between typical developed countries and developing countries. At last, four aspects of policy implications are concluded based on theoretical and empirical study to promote the new urbanization path as the strategy choice of Chinese urbanization path.

Chen Zhao and Lu Ming. (2015). *Toward Urbanization with Social Harmony*. Beijing: Peking University Press.

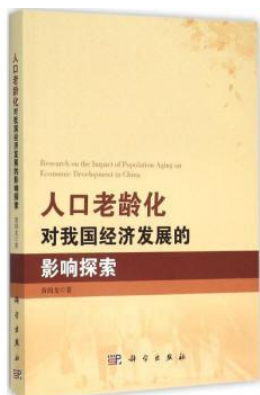
Household Registration System in China influences the integration of labor market and hinders the sustained growth and social harmony during China's development process.

Firstly, a global database has been utilized to discuss about the impact that population size, globalization and urbanization have on the scale of prime city. Then microdata was used to inspect how Household Registration System influenced individual behavior and welfare status. Based upon the systemic and comprehensive empirical study, the book comes to two advices. First, the reform of the Household Registration System should aim to lower the standard that migrant population can obtain local residents' status; the second is that local public service should be made available to non-household residents step by step. Then win-win effects can be achieved both in fields of economic growth and social harmony.

Wang, Yuesheng etc. (2016). *Living Ways for People in the Era of Social Transformation from the Perspective of Family Structure*. Beijing: Social Sciences Academic Press.

Based on the data of 2010 National Population Census and compared it with former census data from 1982、1990 and 2000, the book pays attention to the influential factors towards changing family structure during the era of social transformation and demographic transition in China. Firstly, it reveals the up-to-date status and changing features of family structure in modern China as an overall description. Then it explores the similarities and differences of family structure in regional and rural-urban dimensions respectively. Living arrangements of Chinese elderly under the aging background are also inspected in detail. At last, a tentative prediction for the future family structure of China is provided in the book, too.





Huang Runlong. (2016). *The Influence of Population Aging on Economic Growth in China*. Beijing: Science Press.

From the perspective of developed countries and historical development, the book offers an objective inspection of both the influential mechanism and pathway of population aging towards saving, consumption as well as social security. Based on theoretical and empirical studies, the book used combined research methods in Sociology, Economy and Management to fully discuss hot social issues such as endowment insurance integration and later retirement.

Upcoming Events

Economic Transformation, Migration and Social Governance: The Sixth International Conference on Social Development in Pearl River Delta and Yangtze River Delta (5-6 November, 2016, Shanghai, China)

As the frontiers of the economic reform and the most developed areas in China, Pearl River Delta (PRD) and Yangtze River Delta (YRD) have received much scholarly attention. In order to promote the comparative studies on these two areas, the Sociology Departments of Chinese University of Hong Kong, Fudan University, East China University of Science and Technology, and the Sociology and Social Work Department of Sun Yat-sen University will jointly hold "The Sixth International Conference on Social Development in Pearl River Delta and Yangtze River Delta" in the campus of East China University of Science and Technology on 5-6, November, 2016. The major theme is "Economic Transformation, Migration and Social Governance".

The 2016 Annual Meeting of China Population Association (21-24 July, 2016, Fujian, China)

This year's annual meeting will focus on population and development issues under the new background of the Universal Two-child Policy. Topics dealing with population strategy, Active Aging, migrant population, urbanization, etc. are all welcome. For more detailed information, please refer to the website as below:

<http://www.cpaw.org.cn/view/408916.shtml>

Please visit the SNoW website:
<http://www.uib.no/en/snow>