

The transformation of social governance model of urban elderly groups in the new form of aging society

Xiaowei Li*

Shanxi Academy of Social Sciences, Taiyuan, Shanxi, 030032, China
**Corresponding author*

Abstract: *The aging of China's population has led to the formation of a new form of aging society. Under the new form of aging society, it is imperative to actively carry out changes in the social governance model of urban elderly groups, which can effectively address the risks brought by aging society and also play an important auxiliary role in improving the quality of social public services. Therefore, in the context of the new forms of aging society, this article explores the new model of social governance for urban elderly groups.*

Keywords: *New forms of aging society; Urban elderly groups; Social governance model; change*

1. Introduction

With the improvement of China's urban medical level, the average life expectancy of the urban population continues to rise, which is an important reason for the aging of the urban population. The aging trend of China's population has become higher and more normalized. The issue of population aging is related to national socio-economic development, technological innovation, national governance, and the development of cultural concepts. It is required that top-level design should take precautions against the risks arising from population aging society when carrying out advanced response. At the same time, China's fertility level is in a low state. In recent years, China has adopted the "two child policy" and "three child policy" to prevent risks in an aging society.^[1] However, it is not necessarily that the new form of aging society is necessarily bad. The challenges and opportunities brought by aging society do not necessarily stem from aging, but mainly from the mismatch and inadaptability between the changes in the age structure of the population and the current policies and systems. Therefore, it is also necessary to start from the root cause and reform the social governance model of urban elderly groups to effectively face the risks of aging society.

2. Changes in social governance of urban elderly groups in the new form of aging society

The changes in the social governance of urban elderly groups in the new form of aging society are mainly reflected in the following two aspects: first, the number of empty nest elderly living alone has increased, and the family intergenerational structure has changed. According to the results of a sampling survey of the living conditions of elderly people in urban and rural areas in China conducted by relevant survey units, the proportion of empty nest elderly people in the total elderly population in China increased from 38.9% to 54.3% in the 20 years from 2000 to 2020. The specific data are shown in Figure 1.

Currently, although the proportion of empty nest elderly living alone in rural areas is higher than that in cities, due to the extremely large population in cities, the number of empty nest elderly living alone is not lower than that in rural areas, reflecting the serious problem of empty nest elderly living alone in cities. The reason why there are more empty nest and solitary elderly people in cities is mainly because the average lifespan of the elderly population has increased, and the city has long been at a low level of fertility. Currently, empty nest and solitary elderly people aged 60 to 65 years have experienced the stage of family planning when they are young. Most families are only children, and their children have difficulty taking care of the elderly due to their busy livelihood^[2]. Second, the flow of the elderly population has increased, and the social structure of cities has changed. Currently, the number of elderly people migrating from rural areas to cities is increasing, further causing the complexity of the structure of urban elderly groups to increase, and the types of elderly floating population also have diversified characteristics, such as "nanny type", "migrant worker type", "dependent type", etc.^[3]. There are also significant differences in the demands of different types of elderly groups, while the current flow of the

elderly population continues to increase, and its types are becoming increasingly complex. The large-scale flow of elderly population between urban and rural areas will lead to changes in the urban social structure, which will inevitably have an impact on the social governance of urban elderly groups.

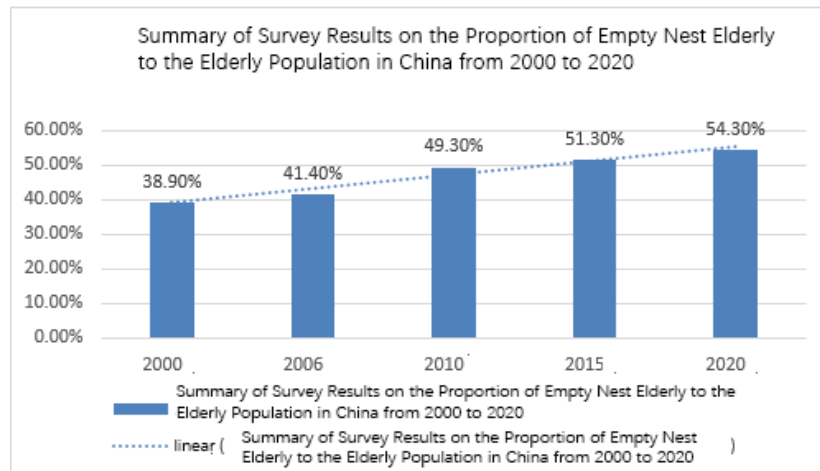


Figure 1: Summary of the survey results on the proportion of empty nest elderly people in the elderly population in China from 2000 to 2020.

3. Challenges faced by the social governance work of urban elderly groups in the new form of aging society

3.1. There is a lag in social governance concepts, and governance models and ideas need to be transformed

From the perspective of governance philosophy, traditional concepts have grafted the issue of urban population aging onto the level of elderly issues, and in governance practice, more emphasis has been placed on carrying out work for the elderly and developing elderly undertakings, rather than governing an aging society. The governance perspective is too narrow, resulting in unsustainable governance policies, a failure to balance and link the overall social development with the development of the aging industry, and a failure to achieve a balance of development rights between the elderly and other age groups, which is detrimental to the sustainable and coordinated development of urban socio-economic development. At the same time, the current governance work is relatively passive and belongs to responsive governance. The ex post response to governance work can easily lead to political conflicts, and there is also a certain waste of policy resources, which cannot cope with the increasingly complex risks of aging society in the future^[4]; From the perspective of governance model, the governance model originally adopted by the government is characterized by fragmentation, lacking in top-level design of governance, uniformity in planning, and a lack of relevant laws and policies. At the same time, the relevant departments for social governance of urban elderly groups are relatively complex, with unclear powers and responsibilities among various departments and a lack of synergy. The emergence of these issues often leads to policy conflicts, and is prone to adverse situations such as disorderly competition and multiple approvals, resulting in the transformation of social governance work being affected.

3.2. The main body of social governance has become unitary, and the power of various governance bodies needs to be brought into play

The traditional models of urban social governance are the "government led model" and the "government control model". The government's dominant position is absolute, the autonomy of society and the market is weak, the autonomy of elderly groups and families is often ignored, and there is a lack of pluralistic and multi-level shared governance structure among various governance entities, which is reflected in the following aspects: First, the government has too strong control power to take over the affairs of urban elderly groups, but the government is not the only social governance body of elderly groups, and other entities need to bear corresponding responsibilities, and the government functions need to clarify the boundaries; Secondly, the role of society and the market has not been fully played. The aging economy has been affected by both the government and the market for a long time, resulting in deficiencies in resource allocation and industrial operation. Although in recent years, market

participation has become increasingly high in social governance for elderly groups, the role of the market is still limited [5]. Among them, relevant social organizations are key platforms for governance, but their coverage rate is low, and their organizational functions and forms are relatively unitary. Their own development capabilities and standardization level need to be improved; thirdly, the functions of the family and the elderly in participating in autonomy have been weakened, and their enthusiasm is not high. With the gradual reduction of family size, its pension function will become increasingly weak.

3.3. The performance of group interest structure is complicated, and the difficulty of governance work is increasing

At present, urban elderly groups are transforming from "unit people" to "social people," with the shift of the main responsibility body responsible for the maintenance and distribution of the interests of elderly groups. Grassroots communities have become the main responsibility body, and it is easy to ignore the interests of elderly groups. In addition, relevant mechanisms and systems are not perfect, resulting in difficulties in maintaining the vital rights and interests of some elderly groups through institutional channels. Currently, the flow of urban elderly population is increasing, resulting in a more complex performance of the interest structure of urban elderly groups. Among the floating elderly population, part of them migrated from rural areas, and the public welfare security enjoyed by these elderly in rural areas did not move with them to cities, which led to the failure of these elderly to obtain urban public welfare security due to registered residence problems, resulting in the dilemma of broken and unbalanced security in this regard; There is also a portion of the urban floating elderly population, whose structural types have a certain degree of complexity, leading to the inability to carry out social governance through a one-size-fits-all approach.

4. Measures for reforming the social governance model of urban elderly groups in the new form of aging society

4.1. Actively transforming the concepts, models, and ideas of social governance

Based on the current lag in the concept of social governance for urban elderly groups and the lack of models and ideas, it is necessary to actively transform the concept, model, and ideas of social governance. First of all, in terms of governance concepts, we should transform from a responsive governance concept to a forward-looking governance concept, so that the lagging nature of the concept can be resolved, and from passive social governance to active social governance. The forward-looking governance concept emphasizes more predictability, pertinence, and accuracy. Based on the actual situation of social governance of urban elderly groups, plan and design the implementation content of governance wages, and adopt methods of evaluation, pre judgment, and advanced deployment to improve the ability to cope with social risks of aging, thereby improving governance capabilities; Secondly, in terms of governance model, we should transform from current fragmented management to holistic governance. It is not only necessary for the government to play its leading role in this aspect of governance, but also necessary to build an internal linkage mechanism, effectively integrate relevant policies, attach importance to the cross sectoral and cross functional nature of public policies, and bring together all long-standing issues. Through the joint efforts of various government departments to coordinate and utilize their own resources, an efficient governance network can be formed. At the same time, it also requires the broad participation of various governance entities to form a multi-agent governance pattern that includes various governance entities; finally, in terms of governance thinking, we should shift from focusing on the elderly to focusing on the entire population. While considering social governance for the elderly, we should also pay attention to the changes in life and behavior of different age groups due to the impact of the elderly, and effectively manage all aspects of changes, so as to achieve balanced and coordinated development of various groups.

4.2. Creating a joint governance model with multiple governance entities

The issue of social governance for the elderly is a key issue that is widely concerned by society. Therefore, for the issue of social governance for the elderly, it is not only necessary to involve government departments, but also to encourage all relevant governance entities in society to participate in it. Moreover, under the guidance of government departments, various governance entities should form a joint force, build a multi governance entity co governance model, and jointly contribute to the social governance of urban elderly groups. For example, the market, family, and elderly groups themselves can

be introduced into the co governance model. In terms of the market, it is necessary to comprehensively construct and develop the aging industry market, and encourage market related entities to develop diversified industries such as aging finance, manufacturing, services, and livability, so as to not only activate the aging market, but also create high-quality services for the elderly population; In society, we should reshape the free space, create an atmosphere of respect for the elderly, and unite social forces to strengthen the provision of social services for the elderly; At the family level, it is necessary to emphasize the responsibility of providing for the elderly, encourage children to live together with their parents, and actively fulfill their obligations of supporting and caring.

4.3. Continuously improving the equality of public services

The equality of social public services refers to the equality of supply. In view of the current governance dilemma of the urban elderly floating population, the government departments need to strengthen the construction of equal public services, innovate and improve the public service mechanism of the floating elderly population, break through the previous registered residence restrictions, improve the coverage of public service supply, and enable the elderly population flowing from rural areas to cities to also enjoy social security services. And enjoy the same rights of public services as the elderly population in cities, especially in the settlement of medical insurance in different regions. It is necessary to fully realize the settlement of medical insurance in different regions, and try Unicom joint insurance. In addition, based on the complex characteristics of the elderly floating population, a precise social governance model of "integrating points and areas" should also be established. It is not only necessary to adhere to the principles of openness and integrity in formulating comprehensive policies for social governance, but also to carry out classified monitoring for various types of elderly floating population, assess the needs of various types of floating population, and provide policy supply based on demand, thereby improving the quality of governance.

5. Conclusions

In summary, in the new form of aging society, fundamental changes have taken place in the social governance of urban elderly groups, and the previous governance models are no longer applicable. It is necessary to develop effective governance models based on the changes in the social governance of urban elderly groups in the new form of aging society. Enable the new governance model to meet the needs of various urban elderly groups, thereby improving the quality and efficiency of social governance for urban elderly groups, and effectively avoiding social risks of aging.

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