

Research on Social Organizations' Participation in Community Elderly Care Services under Welfare Pluralism --Empirical Research Based on Changsha

Yang Bai¹, Jingwei Zhang², Wei Guo¹, Jinrong Yang¹

¹School of Public Administration, Central South University, Changsha, Hunan, China

²School of Marxism, Central South University, Changsha, Hunan, China

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Abstract: At present, China has stepped into an aging society. Therefore, the new era has put forward the requirements of “ elderly care, elderly support, elderly entertainment, and elderly security”. However, the current elderly care system cannot meet these requirements, and the traditional way of elderly care presents a series of deficiencies in the new situation. Based on the analysis of current ways of elderly care, this article combines the typical cases of several communities in Changsha of Hunan province to study the current obstacles faced by the elderly care. Moreover, based on domestic and foreign research, from the perspective of five subjects (government, social organizations, enterprises, volunteers, and community residents), the paper puts forward integrated countermeasures for the path of China's pluralist supply subjects to participate in community elderly care services.

1. Introduction

China has stepped into an aging society, and the proportion of aging population is increasing year by year (as shown in fig. 1). At the same time, the proportion of the population in the dependency age and the birth rate are both declining (as shown in fig.2). In this case, the support and care of the elderly can't be ignored.

In response to this trend, in the report of the 19th CPC National Congress, the party put forward the task requirements of actively responding to the aging population. However, the existing traditional home-based care model has many problems under the current “4-2-1” family structure model. Community elderly care methods also show problems such as insufficient professionalization and lack of staff. In conclusion, the current situation indicates that the existing models are increasingly unable to meet the diversified needs of the elderly in the new situation. Facts have proved that the elderly care problem can't be effectively solved by a single individual, but requires the participation of multiple subjects.

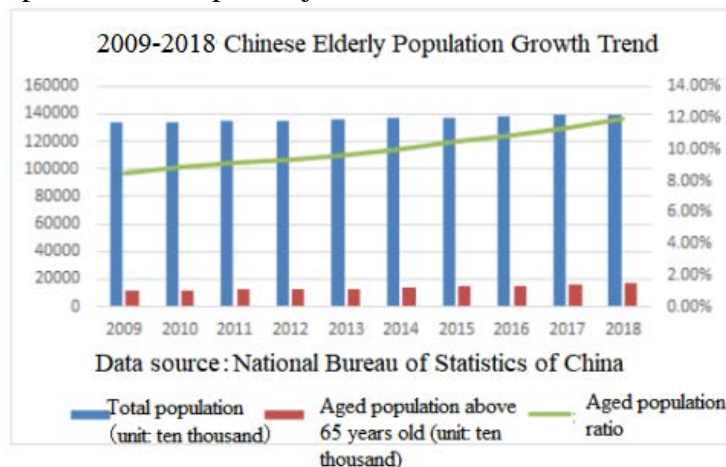


Fig.1 2009-2018 Chinese Elderly Population Growth Trend

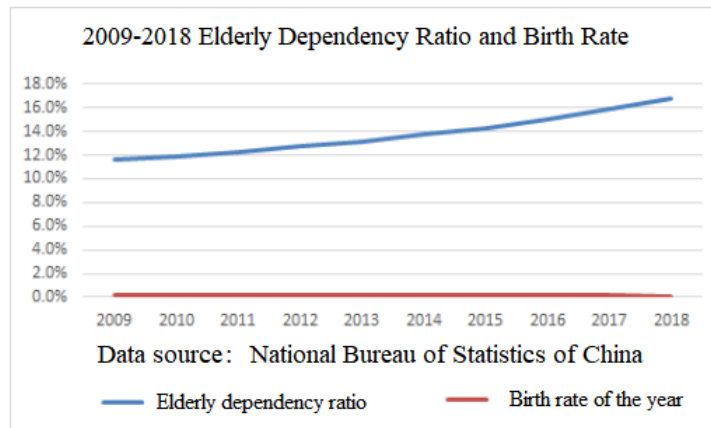


Fig.2 2009-2018 Elderly Dependency Ratio and Birth Rate

2. Literature Review

2.1 On Welfare Pluralism Theory

Rose (Rose, R.) believes that the overall benefits are a mixture of common, supplementary and competitive benefits provided by households, markets, and nations. Evers (Evers, A.) believes that there are four sources of social welfare: market, state, community and civil society. He particularly emphasized the special role of civil society in social welfare and believed that voluntary organizations would play an increasingly important role in social security and welfare development. Johnson (Johnson, N.) believes that the source of social welfare is divided into four parts: state, business sector, voluntary sector, and informal sector. In the context of increasing social problems, it is important to play the role of informal organizations in the provision of welfare. Pestoff (Pestoff, V.A.) believes that the third sector of social organizations has three types of advantages: Empowering services for consumers or users; updating or improving the working conditions of service providers; improving the achievement of public sector service goals through interaction with the third sector.

2.2 Domestic and Foreign Governance and Countermeasures on Elderly Care Issues

2.2.1 Abroad

In Britain, the government has invested heavily in supporting community elderly care services, and encouraged relevant departments and social volunteer organizations to provide various welfare facilities and services for the elderly. The French government is committed to improving the socialization of services for the elderly and elevating services for the elderly to the industry level. Japan mainly has three forms of elderly care: institution-based for the aged, home-based care for the aged and home nursing elderly care.

2.2.2 Domestic

Yongqin Hu (2008) believes that the development of community elderly care must first increase the awareness of community elderly care services. In addition, the community elderly care financing channels need to be expanded. Lingchen Zhang (2011) believes that policies and regulations need to be improved and government support needs to be increased. In addition, it is necessary to recognize the hierarchy of community elderly care services to meet the needs of different elderly people. Jinyuan Wang (2008) believes that it is necessary to integrate community resources and build a community elderly care service network. Lianxiu Yang (2011) believes that it is necessary to improve the professional level of service staff, encourage volunteers to actively participate in community elderly care services, and improve their professional level.

To sum up, the participation of social organizations in community elderly care is very popular in western countries, and it also has a good advantage in dealing with the aging problems in China. At

present, Chinese scholars' research on community elderly care is mainly focused on perfecting laws and regulations, improving community service awareness, enriching the service functions of community elderly care, expanding community elderly care financing channels, and integrating communities. Few scholars use the perspective of welfare pluralism to understand the participation of social organizations in community elderly care services. The purpose of this study is to try to put forward suggestions and countermeasures under the framework of the theory of welfare pluralism, with the example of the participation of Changsha social organizations in the community elderly care.

3. Analysis of the Dilemma of the Development of Elderly Care and the Causes

By investigating the current condition of New Green Social Work Service Center in Yuelu district of Changsha, and combining with the development conditions of other elderly care centers and community elderly service stations, it can be concluded that there are four difficulties in the current development of home-based elderly care in the community:

3.1 Excessive Reliance on the Government and Insufficient Guarantee System

At present, home-based elderly care in the community is led by the government, which assumes the main responsibility of the supply side. This leads to the fact that the public service is basically borne by the government. Moreover, the aging of the society is intensifying, and the government will soon be overwhelmed, which not only affects the government's public functions, but also causes chain problems such as low resource utilization.

Home-based elderly care services are systematic and overall. But so far, the regulatory documents such as the standards for the construction of home-based elderly care services institutions and the operation of the institutions are still immature, especially the lack of mechanisms for access approval, daily management, government purchases, and service evaluation. Meanwhile, the central, provincial, and municipal documents related to home-based elderly care services require the relevant departments to form a joint effort to do the service well, but specific operational documents are lacking, and mechanisms such as horizontal coordination, cooperation, and resource sharing between departments are insufficient.

3.2 Meagre Market Profits, Difficult Business Development

According to market rules, the development of an enterprise must be accompanied by profit. Only profitable enterprises have capital for development and innovation. As the elderly care service is accompanied by the nature of public welfare, it is still very difficult to make a profit for the operation. For example, New Green Social Work Service Center in Yuelu district of Changsha is a home-based elderly care service site operated by the community based on private capital. The main income comes from community subsidies, policy incentives, and low-profit services such as light meals and on-site services. These have directly led to the difficulty of many enterprises participating in community home-based elderly care services.

There are several reasons: First, lack of government support and immature cooperation mechanisms. Although the form of government-purchased services exists, it is mostly limited to dogmatic assessment conditions, which limits the development of non-profit organizations in this cause. It lacks access mechanism for social professional service institutions to participate in home-based elderly care. It also lacks operational norms for access procedures, charging service standards, supervision and financial settlement of social services such as housekeeping services, shopping guides, purchasing services, and psychological counseling. Government and enterprises have not found a more suitable cooperation model. Second, apart from government investment, independent profitability is weak. It is the key point to figure out how to innovate supplementary products for elderly care and expand profit channels for enterprises to overcome difficulties in this public welfare industry. Third, social credibility is not strong, and service awareness needs to be improved. Whether it is due to cost pressures or deficiencies in the development model, some for-profit organizations lack professional and high-quality service-conscious talents, so that the

elderly care services given are not satisfactory. The emergence and extension of negative impacts have shaken the confidence of social groups that have been skeptical of institutional elderly care. For-profit organizations such as elderly care institutions participating in community home-based elderly care have been questioned. This requires more effort to reverse the public's perception.

3.3 Vague Social Organization Definition and Immethodical Participation

As the topic of elderly care becomes increasingly prominent, more and more volunteers and social organizations are willing to participate in community home-based care services. However, at this stage, China still lacks a clear path, access mechanism, and operating system for social organizations to participate, making it difficult for many social organizations and willing individuals to find entry points and define their roles, resulting in an awkward situation.

3.4 Unbalanced Service Supply and Demand, Great Pressure on Human Resources

On the one hand, the elderly population is increasing, especially the advanced ages, old solitary people, empty nesters, and disabled elderly, and other special groups, the demand for services for the elderly has increased correspondingly; On the other hand, full-time (part-time) staff engaged in aging work have a large workload, especially it lacks professional elderly service personnel. Nowadays, many home-based elderly care centers are still staffed by community cadres, which not only greatly increases the work burden of community cadres, but also affects the development of daily community work. It also makes it difficult to improve the management service level of home-based elderly care centers, so that most home-based elderly care centers have relatively single service contents. The first reason is that there is a big gap between the capital and manpower investment needed by the elderly care service industry and what the government can provide at present. The financial support is not enough. The second reason is that there is no thorough personnel training mechanism. The elderly care industry has just started and lacks professional staff training and strict employment mechanisms. The last but not the least, it neglects to explore the resources of the community itself.

4. Countermeasure Analysis

Aiming at the above-mentioned problems in the current state of elderly care in Changsha, through analysis, a pluralist co-governance model is obtained, which is co-managed by government, social organizations, enterprises and other for-profit organizations, society and school volunteers, and social residents.

4.1 Government Involvement

Community elderly care services is a kind of public goods and a public welfare undertaking with strong social welfare nature. As a provider of public goods, the government should become the leading force in the construction of community elderly care service models.

First of all, the construction plan of community elderly care service system plan in Yuelu district of Changsha should be improved. The government should provide social organizations with a guarantee for participating in community elderly care services, lay a solid policy foundation for social organizations to provide services, and promote social organizations to better display their flexibility. Secondly, the government should be able to formulate normative opinions on the provision of community elderly care services by pluralist subjects, and clarify the content and responsibilities of each subject. The government mainly provides policy support and financial subsidies, while community activities should be undertaken by social organizations. The neighborhood committee or the entrusted third party should take the responsibility of supervision. Through these methods, the participation in the community elderly care system of social organizations in Yuelu district can be improved.

4.2 Coordination of Social Organization Centers

In order to develop the mode of social organizations participating in social elderly care services,

it is necessary to promote the formation of social organizations' own ecology. It is essential to introduce market competition mechanism to promote the formation of the purification capacity of social organizations. At the beginning of the formation of the mode of social organizations participating in the community elderly care service, there will be many problems, and the government and society should give a certain degree of understanding and tolerance. But that does not mean acquiescence to the problems. Social organizations need to continuously improve their service quality and awareness, improve internal coordination and management, and provide the best service, so as to be recognized by the society and the market.

4.3 For-Profit Organizations Such as Enterprises

As a social force that undertakes the supply of government elderly care services, social enterprises can combine the triple resource advantages of the market, the government, and society. They can use the business model to effectively provide elderly care services while giving full play to social welfare. They can become an important support for socialized elderly care with their own advantages.

Enterprises can directly participate in community elderly care. Enterprises should coordinate the development of home-based elderly care services, community elderly care services and institutional elderly care services. The service of the property and the concern of the enterprises make the advantages of the community elderly care system available. Enterprises can also adopt an indirect participation model, that is, provide related information transmission and other services. They can build a subsidy system, explore the establishment of assistive device allocation systems for disabled and semi-disabled elderly, and cultivate indirect elderly care services. Enterprises can issue free mobile phones to those empty nesters. As long as the elderly have difficulties, the enterprises can immediately launch community elderly care services. Making community elderly care services into a cause is not only good for the elderly, but also can be widely welcomed by the elderly.

4.4 Participation of Social and School Volunteers

As one of the social groups, it is necessary for college students to care about the status quo of society. Facing the phenomenon of increasing aging, they should contribute their own strength. There are many volunteer groups, but not many are specifically targeted at community elderly care services. Independent individuals not only have limited strength, they are also not conducive to sustainable development. For colleges and universities, there are many student associations, which are highly organized and sustainable. This energetic group needs to find a connection point with the elderly in communities, that is, it needs a third party to maintain long-term communication between students and the elderly. This will not only provide effective help for the elderly in the community, but also help to establish a long-term service mechanism with the gradual improvement of policies.

4.5 Participation of Community Residents

It is important to mobilize the enthusiasm of the residents and weaken the generalization of the power of administrative orders. Residents should become the masters of community activities. It is necessary to establish a real community mobilization mechanism, that is, the collective action orientation based on the community of interests, so as to enhance the autonomy of the community residents. From the perspective of community residents, it is necessary to establish a new cooperative network, norms and trust to build the social capital of the city and increase the social capital stock to promote the development of the whole society. With the support and recognition of the public, it radiates social capital to social organizations, social work and neighborhood committees, induces government policies, talents, funds and public opinion support and other social resources to flow into social organizations, so that social organizations can play a greater role in social management and adapt to the trend of the era.

5. Conclusion and Expectation

The issue of elderly care is a very important topic for China which is stepping into an aging

society. The pluralist elderly care services proposed in this study is just aimed at the elderly care problems in the new era. It is not only governed by a single subject such as the family or the community, but integrates the entire strength of society to provide care for the elderly from multiple aspects, provides physical and psychological care, as well as responding to the nation's call of positive aging.

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