

PROPOSAL: OLD-AGE PENSION, INTERGENERATIONAL TIES AND SOCIAL NETWORKS

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China ages rapidly before getting rich and will soon become the world's most aged society. The plight of the elderly is worsened by the dearth of a formal social security system and lack of services and elderly care. China's vast, albeit shrinking, working-age population often are compelled to stay home to take care of elderly parents, which sacrifices their opportunities to pursue better jobs and intensifies labor shortage in urban China. China recently launched a pension program for rural residents, now covering several hundred million Chinese. The program aims at universal pension coverage for all rural residents age 60 or over.

Pension windfalls have the potential to reach extended families members and the social networks in the communities. This project will fill the gap of empirical studies on China where the largest older population in the world resides. Meanwhile, little is known about the impact of pension on some key factors that may affect the overall effectiveness of pension policies, such as engagement in social networks (as an informal social insurance) and intergenerational ties. Moreover, rigorous empirical methods are required to better identify the pension impact from a series of potentially confounded factors, such as age and cohort related heterogeneity and anticipation effects, that still pose serious challenge to the literature.

The research assistant is expected to work with me on reviewing literature on pension programs in developing countries, cleaning and analyzing a nationally representative survey targeting orderly population. During the process, under my supervision s/he will learn how to implement some quasi-experimental methods, especially Regression Discontinuity Design (RDD) and Difference-in-Differences (DID), in causality investigations of the pension impact.

Candidates should have basic knowledge of Stata and are motivated to learning new empirical research methods. S/he will sit in a shared office in the ISPS building or in the LEPH building at Yale with my full-time research assistant and visiting students who are working on global health economics projects. S/he will be encouraged to learn about and potentially participate in the project of interest.