

Research on the Present Situation, Trends and the Countermeasures of Aging Problem

— Based on the Comparison Between China and the United States

Xinwen Hu^{1,a,*}, Xiaoyan Shen²

¹*Suffield Academy, Suffield, United States*

²*Hangzhou Number 4 High School, Hangzhou, China*

a. 27xh@suffieldacademy.org

**corresponding author*

Abstract: According to statistics, the population of the world reached 8 billion in 2022. People's material life and happiness index have been continuously improved. With the persistent development of society, it is obvious that the problem of aging population has gradually become a sign of the aging of modern age structure. In China, China implemented some birth policies, and the fertility rate increased in 2015. However, due to social problems, this trend did not significantly slow down China's aging problem. Against the historical background of the "baby boom" in the America, the economic pressure on the United States gradually increased. In recent years, both the low birth rate and the low mortality rate in the United States also make the problem of population aging more and more significant. Based on the data that show the aging problem in China and the America, those papers analyze the aging trend between the two countries, studies the different policies proposed by China and the United States to solve the social problem of aging and explores the effectiveness of these policies.

Keywords: Population Aging, Trends, China, United States.

1. Introduction

The United States announced on November 15, 2022, that the population all over the world reached 8 billion. The world's population is growing, aging problem is becoming more obvious nowadays. Aging is likely to be the most significant social problem of the 21st century. Looking at the share of the global population across all age groups, for example, in 2021, 1 in 10 people will be in the age group 65 and older. What is more, some reports predict that by 2050, one in six people will be in the 65 and older group [1]. For those aged 65 and over, the number of people who aged 80 and over will grow faster, from 155 million in 2021 to 459 million in 2052 [1]. At the same time, the map of the world's "oldest" countries changed over time, with Europe's Sweden in 1980 having the biggest share of the population aged 65 and over, at 16%. In 2021, Japan will have the most aging population all around the world, with nearly 30% of the population aged 65 and over. South Korea is projected to become the world's "oldest" country by 2050 [1]. In addition, American society is also undergoing a gradual aging process, which will become more severe as the elderly population increases. With the

development of modern medicine, human life expectancy is increasing. For America, the main reason for the increasing aging of the population is the declining death rate and the declining birth rate. Another reason for the rapid aging of American society is the "baby boom" (also known as the "baby boom") of those born between the Second World War and the mid-1960s. In 1990, 12.3 percent of the U.S. population was 65 and older, and it is expected to reach 20.7 percent by 2025. American sociologists state and speculate that after 2030, people over the age of 75 will account for more than half of the aging population. By the middle of the 21st century, the number of elderly population over 85 years old will become more and more [2].

At present, the aging of the population is more severe in the east or northeast of China than in the west and south. The place with the highest degree of aging in China in 2020 is Liaoning, with 2.912 million old people who aged 65 or even 65 above, accounts for 17.42% of the province's overall population. What is more, the degree of aging in Tibet is relatively weak, with 2,006,000 old people that aged 65 and above, and the figure was 5.67% of the province's overall population. The top six provinces or municipalities in China in terms of population aging in 2020 are Liaoning, Chongqing, Sichuan, Shanghai, Jiangsu, and Jilin, respectively. As for the western and southern regions of China, the six provinces where the aging problem is not significant are respectively Tibet, Xinjiang, Guangdong, Qinghai, Ningxia, and Hainan [3]. This paper explores the specific causes and trends of population aging. What are the different policy measures adopted by China and the America to solve the the problem of population aging? This article also analyzes the differences between the two countries in the aging problem.

2. Present situation, Trend, and Countermeasures of Elderly Population in China

2.1. The Present Situation of China's Aging Problem

The aging problem affects different areas of our society, such as labor and financial markets, quantity demand for both the goods and services, such as housing, transportation, social security, and also the relationships between families and families [1]. It is believed that low birth rate and low death rate are the root causes of China's aging problem. Nowadays, the age structure of the Chinese population changed significantly, and the proportion of Chinese aged 65 and over in the total population also increased year by year. In 2000, China had 88 million people aged 65 and over, or 7 percent of the population. China's population is getting older. In 2020, China had 191 million people aged 65 and above, accounting for 13.5 percent of the total population. Compared with the population data in 2000 and 2020, the percentage of elderly people increased by 6.5% [3]. This can indicate that China entered an aging society.

2.2. The Trend of China's Aging Population

In the future, China seems to become a "super-aging" society with super-scale, ultra-fast speed, ultra-early stage and ultra-stable structure [4]. From 1980 to 2010, the percentage of elderly people aged 65 and above in the overall population in China showed a slow rise, and the data remained below 10%. In the decade from 2010 to 2020, the proportion exceeded 10%, and it increased greatly, reaching 21% in 2020. Researchers predicted that in 2030, the proportion of old people who aged 65 and above in China's total population will exceed 20%. In another 30 years, by 2060, it will occupy 36.8% and continue to rise after a period of stability. By 2084, the figure is expected to peak at 46% [4].

2.3. Countermeasures and Suggestions of China's Aging Problem

The root that causes the aging population is declining in the fertility rates, this problem also varies widely from country to country. Africa has the highest fertility rate at about 4.7 children per woman, while Europe has the lowest at about 1.6 children per woman.

In China, the Chinese government adjusted its fertility policy in 2015 in response to a sharp decrease in the Chinese fertility rate, and the "one-child" policy was replaced by a "two-child" policy. After the introduction of the new "two-child" policy system, there was a certain increase in the newborn population, but this rise was not sustained. The reason for the low fertility rate is not only related to the birth policy but also related to the education expenditure required to raise children. To cope with this situation, China established a mature student financial aid policy system. To provide students with national scholarships and grants; Open state student loans; and Free education for normal school students.

Ensuring the needs of the elderly is one of the important countermeasures for China to face the aging problem. There was a significant went down in the proportion of the domestic labor force and there was a went up in the proportion of the elderly population. It is believed that the future commercial outlet will point to the elderly care industry, such as elderly entertainment facilities and elderly care services. China should commit itself to establishing a sustainable security about old-age security, in order to help the elderly spend their old age in peace [3]. What is more, the improvement of social security policy is also very important. To inherit China's excellent traditional culture of "loving, respecting and respecting the elderly", and improve the living standards and spiritual world of the elderly. China introduced a reasonable resource allocation system and is committed to realizing a fair and reasonable allocation of resources. The focus of the policy is on the elderly who have difficulties in life, ensuring these elderly groups can also enjoy basic living conditions [3].

3. Present Situation, Trend, and Countermeasures of Elderly Population in China

3.1. The Current Situation of the Aging Population in America

After the end of World War II in 1945, the United States experienced a baby boom. In 1946, 3.4 million babies were born. Between 1946 and 1964, more than 75.9 million newborns were born, accounting for approximately one-third in the total U.S. population at that moment. The huge population base of the baby boom generation has brought considerable economic pressure to American society. Subsequently, the population growth will slow down. In the latest United States's census in 2023, people over 65 years old have reached 16.5% of the total population.

3.2. The Aging Trend of the American Population

The population over 65 years old in 1920 increased from 4.7% of the total U.S. population to 16.8% of the total population in 2020. The aged population has increased approximately 10 times. In 2020, approximately one in six people in the United States was age 65 and older. In 1920, the ratio was less than 1/20 [2]. The fastest population growth occurred during the baby boom period. At the Southern Population Association conference, the U.S. Census Bureau released one report which titled "The Turning Point of U.S. Population: Population Projections from 2020 to 2060." Reports show that the United States is expected to have a population of over 400 million by 2058. Today, there are approximately 326 million citizens in the United States. That means over the next 40 years, there will be 79 million more people in the United States. The median age of the U.S. population is expected to increase from 38 today to 43 by 2060. It is predicted that by 2050, 1 in 6 people in the world will be over 65 years old [5].

At the same time, due to increasing immigration, declining births, and increasing deaths, it is expected that the number of people over the age of 65 in the United States will increase to 76.95 million by 2034, exceeding the number of people under the age of 18 for the first time in history. By that time, the number of elderly people in the United States will exceed that of children for the first time in history, as defined in the United States [6].

3.3. Countermeasures and Suggestions for the Aging of the American Population

Aging is a challenge which society are supposed to face. Use more resources to care for the needs of older people. At the same time, society needs to find more volunteers to provide life assistance to the elderly [7]. The government can solve the aging problem by establishing a complete service system for senior citizen and investing more money in three or two aspects.

The government has established different institutions in different regions to improve the old people care service system. Establish a Department of Human Services in the state to be responsible for aging work, set up agencies for the elderly at the state level and below, and set up elderly service centers in communities. Various agencies mainly help the elderly fight for their legal rights and provide them with legal services.

Input costs can include human costs and financial costs. The first is that the government increases financial investment and uses most of the fiscal budget for social security and elderly services. The U.S. government's investment in this area accounts for a relatively high proportion of government expenditures. In 2023, 21% of the total fiscal revenue of the United States, or US\$1.4 trillion, will be used for social security. In March 2023, it can provide 49.1 million retired workers with an average monthly retirement benefit of \$1,833 [8]. The second labor cost is the salary paid by the government to nursing workers and other staff. Most elderly service centers in the United States are run by non-governmental organizations with government support. The Elderly Service Center assists in all aspects of life for the elderly through part of government funding, social donations, applying for foundation and scientific research funding support, and collecting rent and meal expenses from the elderly who can pay.

4. Discussion

The latest census results in both two countries prove that population aging is a social problem facing both countries. First, the report shows significant declines in population growth rates in both countries. Secondly, average age of population in both countries is around 38 years old, which is the lowest level in recent years. While the birth rate is declining, both the United States and China are facing the pressure of population aging to varying degrees. Among them, China's aging rate is relatively rapid.

China is going to enter super aging society. In past 10 years or so, the proportion of the elderly population aged 65 and above in the total population has changed from a slow increase to a substantial increase. The degree of aging is at an upper-middle level globally, and it is predicted that it will reach its highest level in about 60 years [8]. According to the plan predicted by the United Nations, the period from 2020 to 2035 will be a stage of accelerated aging in China's population. During this stage, the correlation of the population aged 65 and over will rise rapidly from 12.6% to 22.5%. Under this scenario, aging level of Chinese population will surpass that of the United States in 2034 [9].

Compared with China, the United States population aging rate is relatively slow, and the changes in the age structure of the U.S. population are also relatively gentle. The proportion of old people over sixty-five years old in the total population of the United States is relatively stable at about one-sixth. However, according to the report, it is predicted that in 10 years to 2060, the overall median age and the rate of old people will increase markedly in the total population [10]. Ten years from now, the elderly population in the United States is expected to enter a stage of accelerated aging, and

the gap between the proportion of people who is enable working for society and those over 65 years old will become huge. Therefore, like China, the overall population age structure of the United States will form an inverted triangle shape due to the aging problem.

5. Conclusion

This article mainly analyzes the widespread aging problem in the two countries societies based on census data and compares the aging trends in the two countries. It can be concluded from the article that China's aging problem is currently more serious than that of the United States, but the United States's aging trend has also become more serious due to problems such as the baby boom, low fertility rate, and low mortality rate. This article proposes solutions to China and the United States' social problems in their respective countries. Against the historical background of the "baby boom", the economic pressure on the United States has gradually increased. Recently, the United States had a problem of population aging. This problem has become more and more obvious. Based on the data on the aging population of the United States and China, this article analyzes the aging trend between the two countries, studies the different solutions for the social problem for aging proposed by both China and the US, and explores the effectiveness of these policies.

Firstly, address the low fertility rate, a problem that exists in both countries. The government can improve social welfare and establish policies that are conducive to families with multiple children so that people do not have to be afraid to have children because they are worried that they will not be able to afford the expenses of raising children. Secondly, the elderly in both countries also need policies that can protect their life in old age. For China, the government needs to pay special attention to the low-income elderly group and establish pension benefits to provide basic living conditions for these elderly people so that they can have a happy life in their later years. At the same time, the government can strongly support volunteer services. The United States has done a good job in this regard, and many nursing homes are private. But at the same time, the government will also provide help to these charities. Moreover, many American people will voluntarily provide volunteer services to the elderly. There is a lot of room for development in China's volunteer service initiative, and the government should encourage young people to take care of the elderly voluntarily. It is hoped that China and the United States will formulate reasonable policies from now on to try to improve the country's aging problem.

Authors Contribution

All the authors contributed equally and their names were listed in alphabetical order.

References

- [1] Pan, Y.R. (2024) *Report on Accelerating Global Ageing Calls for No One to Be Left Behind in an Ageing World*. China Business News, A10.
- [2] Qu, Y. B. (2012) *Analysis on the Increasing Aging of the American Population*. Modern Communication, (05),23-24.
- [3] Kuang, P. Wang, Z. (2024) *Current Situation, Causes and Countermeasures of Population Aging in China*. Modern Trade Industry, (10), 160-163.
- [4] Qiao, S.P. (2024) *The Process, Trend and Problems of China's Population Transition*. Journal of Zhejiang Wanli College, (01), 61-67.
- [5] Mark clark, W. (2018) *An Aging America Requires New Approaches*. Retrieved from <https://pcoa.org/zh-CN/news/an-aging-america-requires-new-approaches/>
- [6] Census Bureau Releases New Report on Aging-Ready Homes. (2023) Retrieved from <https://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-releases/2023/aging-ready-homes.html>
- [7] Jacobsen, L. A., Kent, M., Lee, M., Mather, M. (2011) *America's Aging Population*. Population Bulletin, 66(1).

- [8] Guo, B.J. (2017) *The Impact of the Baby Boom Generation on American society. Journal of Anqing Normal University (Social Sciences Edition)*, (03), 63-65.
- [9] Policy Basics: Where Do Our Federal Tax Dollars Go? (2024) Retrieved from <https://www.cbpp.org/research/federal-budget/where-do-our-federal-tax-dollars-go>
- [10] Sociological Anthropology Network. (2023) *Comparison of Population Strength and Optimization of Population Development Strategies of Major Countries From an International Perspective.*