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Active Participation of Older People in China: Policies and Practices

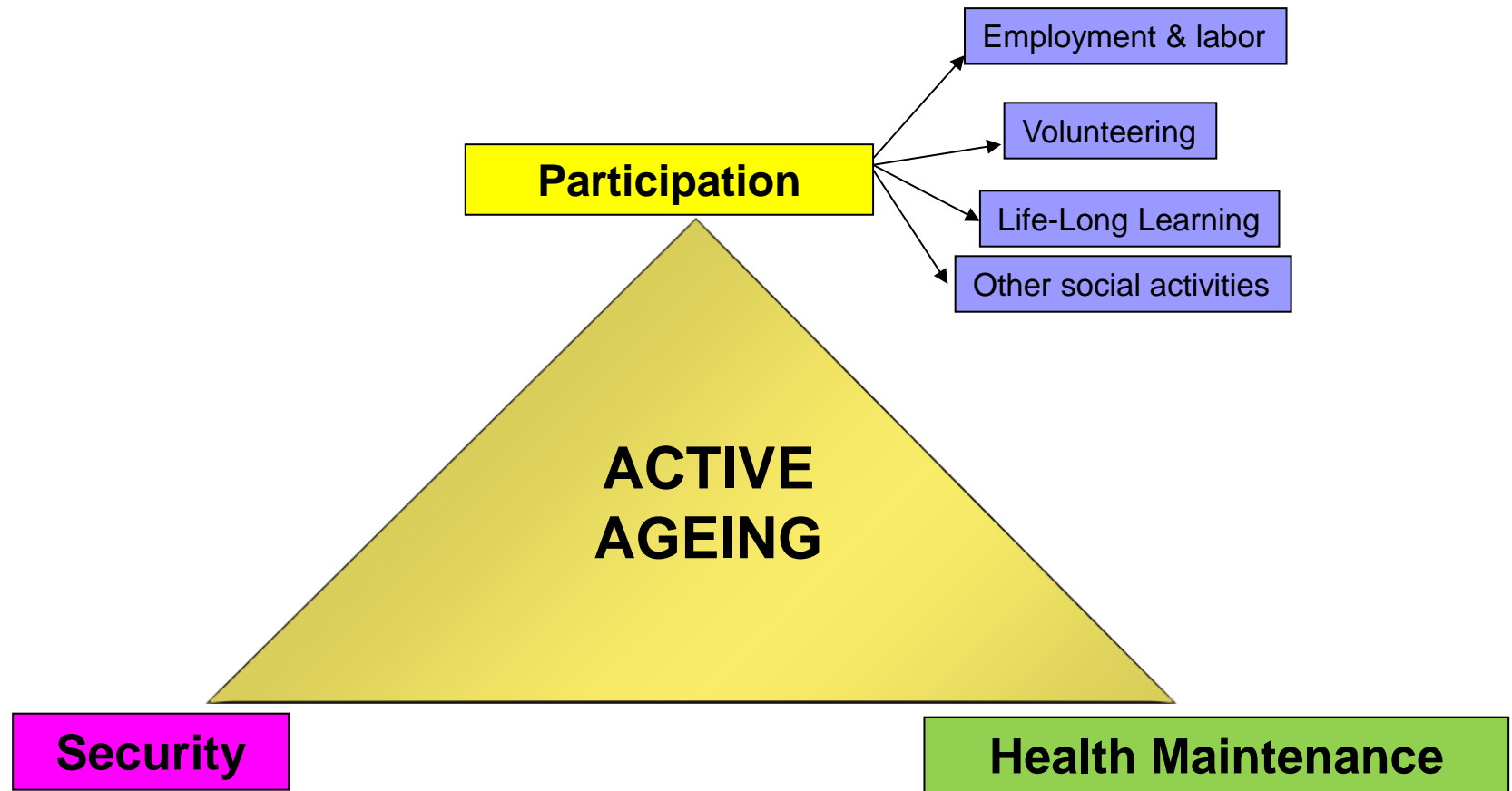
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Overview

1. Older persons' participation is a necessary choice to enable active ageing in China
2. Situation of the elderly participating in the social activities
3. Chinese older people's potentials for participating
4. Challenges needed to be addressed
5. Suggestions

1. Older persons' participation is a necessary choice to enable active ageing in China



Three Pillars of Active Aging

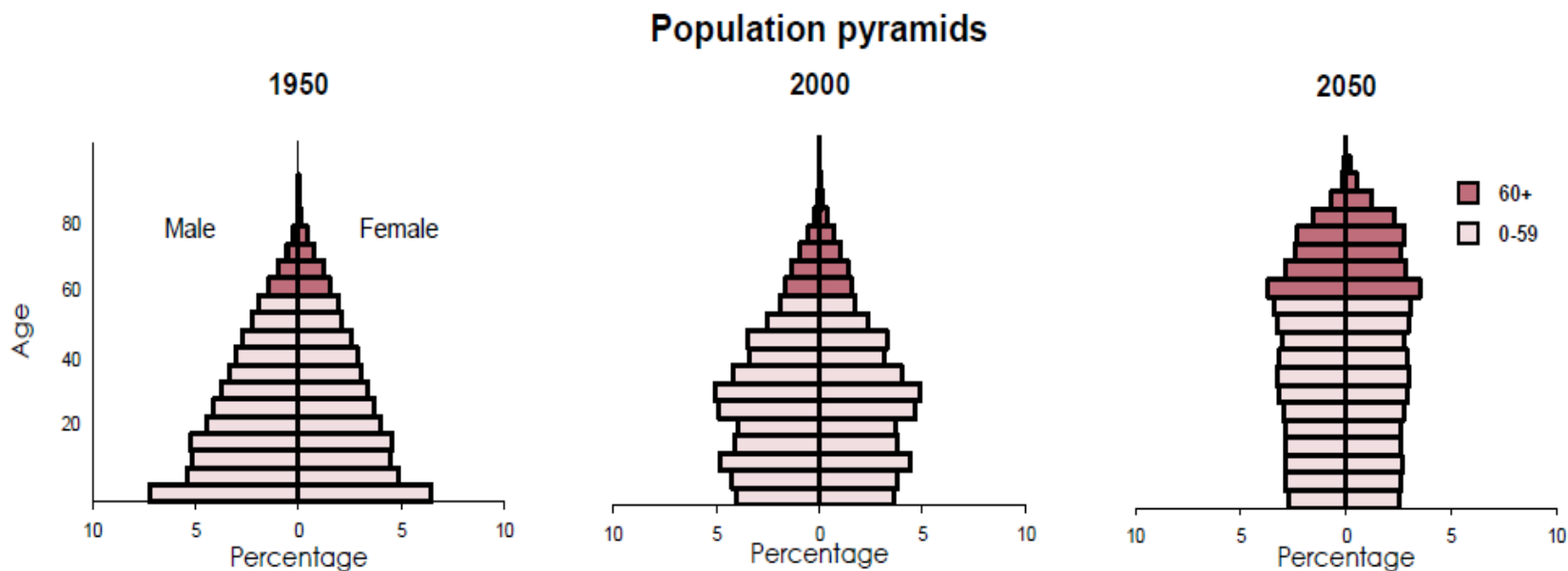
Demographic and social changes

- Increases in life expectancy and longer later life
- Large amount of older population(212 million)
- Rapidly shrinking of young and middle-aged labor(low fertility)
- Improving needs for participation and self-realization
- Less extended family and needs for social networks
- Speeding social and cultural transition

Population ageing in China: a prominent trend

Number and proportion of the elderly aged 60+:

- In 2014: 212 million (15.5%)
- By 2050: 433 million (29.9%)



Source: World Population Ageing:1950-2050, United Nations

“active ageing” is a multi-benefited strategy

- For the elderly individual, active ageing is a realistic and meaningful choice to respond to individual ageing and improve his/her quality of life.
- For the family, active ageing is helpful to enhance intergenerational solidarity with the change of family and the culture of filial piety.
- For the society, active ageing is also a multi-benefited strategy to face population ageing, shortage of labor and setting up an intergenerational harmonious society.

2. Situation of the elderly participating in the social activities

Overview: policies and practices

policy	focus
The Law of the PRC on the Protection of the Rights and Interests of Elderly People (revised in 2012)	protecting the rights and interests of elderly people to participate in social development.
The 12 th Five-year Plan on Aging(2011–2015)	enabling older people to play their role in community such as educating children, public order and social services. The percentage of older volunteer among older population will reach to 10% by 2015.
The Development of China's Undertakings for the Aged(2008)	helping poor but healthy elderly people to engage in farming, aquaculture and processing business, so that they can support themselves.
Suggestion on Utilizing the Knowledge and Expertise of Retired Professionals (2005)	encouraging senior citizens to participate in the fields of education and training, technological consultation, medical and health work, scientific and technological development and application.
Notice on the retirement age of the female officials or senior professionals in the government agencies or public institutions (2015)	raising the retirement age of female officials in government agencies or female senior professionals in public institutions to 60.

- The Chinese government will plan to raise the retirement age in progressive steps according to an announcement in the 3rd Plenary Session of the 18th Central Committee of the CPC in 2014.

Diversified participation activities



Volunteerism

Lifelong Learning



Employment

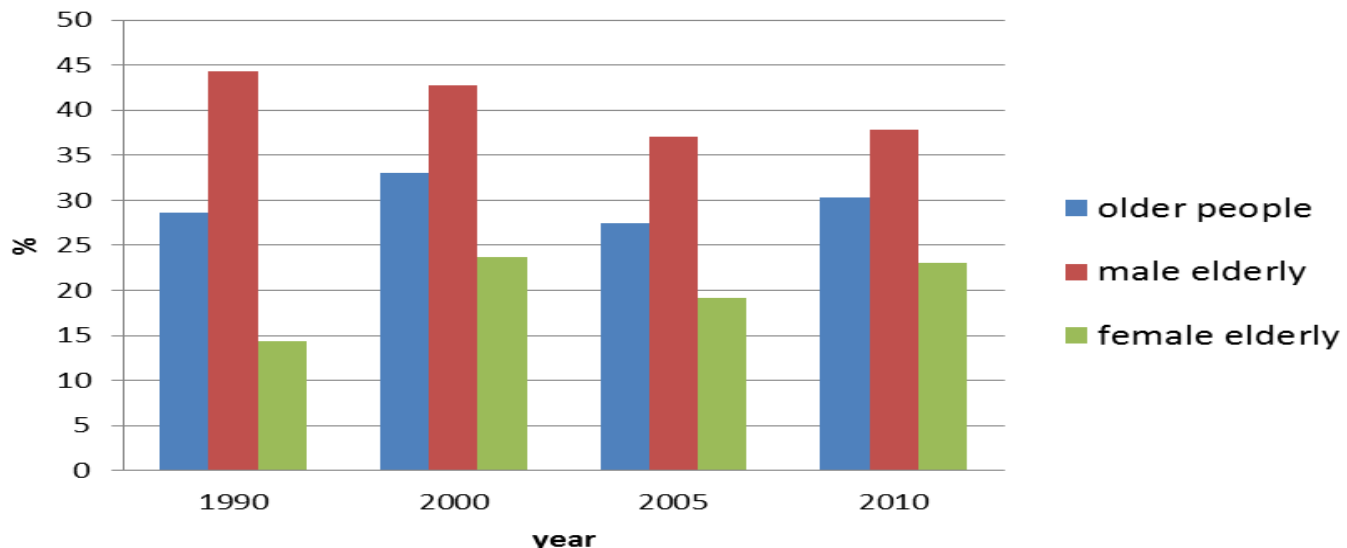
Caregiving



Employment of older adults

- There were 53.73 million(30.3%) employed people aged 60+ in 2010.
- The employment rate of the elderly decreased overall from 33% to 30%
- The declining trend indicates that more older people are freed from working, and have more chances to participate other activities.

Figure1 Percentage of older adults who are employed, 1990-2010



Source: China's National Census in 1990, 2000, 2005 and 2010

Activities of older volunteers

- Associations of older people

- almost 480,000 in 2014
- coverage: 69.42% rural villages, 78.23% urban communities
- Activities: taking part in grassroots community construction, engaging in civic affairs, providing assistance to relatives or friends, etc.

- Older volunteers

- 38.7 percent urban elderly participate in public welfare activities

**Table1 Urban older adults participated in social welfare activities,
(2000, 2006)**

	2006				2000			
	% of older adults who participate	% of adults 60-69	% of adults 70-79	% of adults 80+	% of older adults who participate	% of adults 60-69	% of adults 70-79	% of adults 80+
Public safety maintenance	10.97	11.28	9.94	12.42	12.44	12.64	13.25	7.37
Voluntary labor	22.33	27.45	16.78	8.81	23.75	26.72	21.03	11.64
Volunteer organization	16.02	17.99	12.09	16.68	7.31	7.93	7.01	3.62
Mutual-help group	20.99	22.73	20.57	11.65	7.7	8.4	7.19	4.27
Youth education	8.34	7.93	7.74	12.88	10.56	10.94	10.64	7.24

Source: Longitudinal survey data on China's urban and rural older population, 2006 and 2000, CRCA

Program: Silver Age Action



- The Chinese government started to organize the older volunteer program in 2003.
- Goal: enabling senior intellectuals to aid the western regions and under-developed areas.
- Activities: education and training, technological consultation, medical and health work, etc.
- Older volunteer: 5 millions in 2013
- Service beneficiaries: 300 millions
- Economic value: 80 billion yuan

(Source: cnca,2013)



Program: Caring for the Young People

- The volunteer program has been carried out in 2004.
- Goal: improving the well-being of children by helping them to solve study, life and psychological problems.
- Activities: education, caring and company, protection and supervision, etc.
- Older volunteer: younger and healthy older people
- Service beneficiaries: rural children, left-behind children., etc.
- Coverage: 100 cities nationwide





Supporting adult children

- Chinese older persons are primary caregivers for their spouse, children and grandchildren.

Table 2 Percentage of Chinese older adults helping their children %

	In 2000			In 2006	
	Housework	Grandchildren caring	Farming	Housework	Grandchildren caring
Urban	38.40	40.10	--	32.30	41.43
Rural	53.70	45.40	20.40	41.57	35.28

Source: Source: Longitudinal survey data on China's urban and rural older population, 2006 and 2000, CRCA



Helping Left-behind Children

- The tradition of tight-knit families is eroding as villagers head to cities for work, leaving children--58 million nation-wide--behind with grandparents.
- Nearly a quarter of the nation's children --and a third of its rural children—are left without one or both parents. More than half of those are left by both parents.
- Older grandparents playing important roles in taking care of the grandchildren!

An outstanding model of active ageing



- Prof. Wu Cangping, 93 years old. “The father of China’s Gerontology”. Still working and productive.

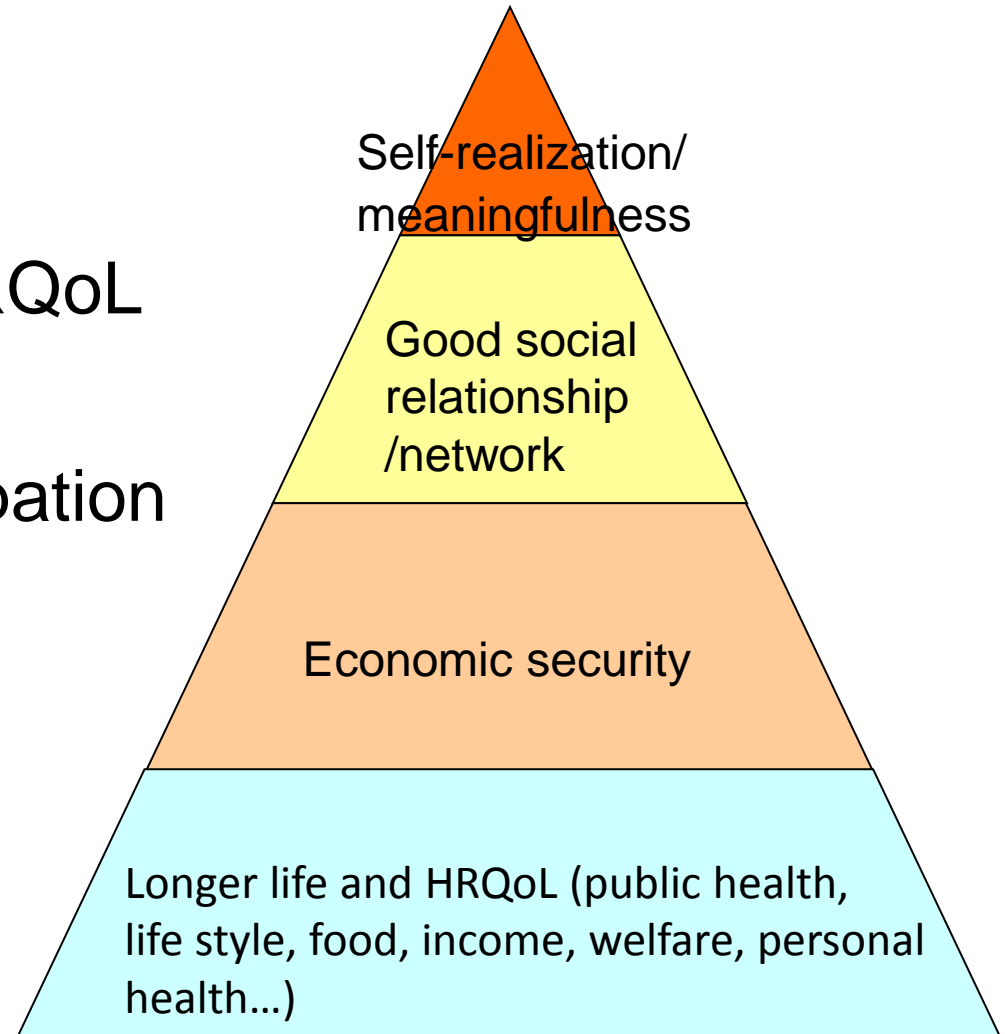
Trends of the participation of the Chinese elderly

- Trend toward longer work life and later retirement
- From specialization(elite group) to popularization(common people).
- From political and economic life to social and cultural life.
- From individual participatory activities to formal organized participation.

3. Chinese older people's potentials for participating

Improving older persons' needs and expectations

- Longer life and higher HRQoL
- Better economic security
- Stronger desire of participation and self-realization.



Large proportion of the young-old and good physical health condition

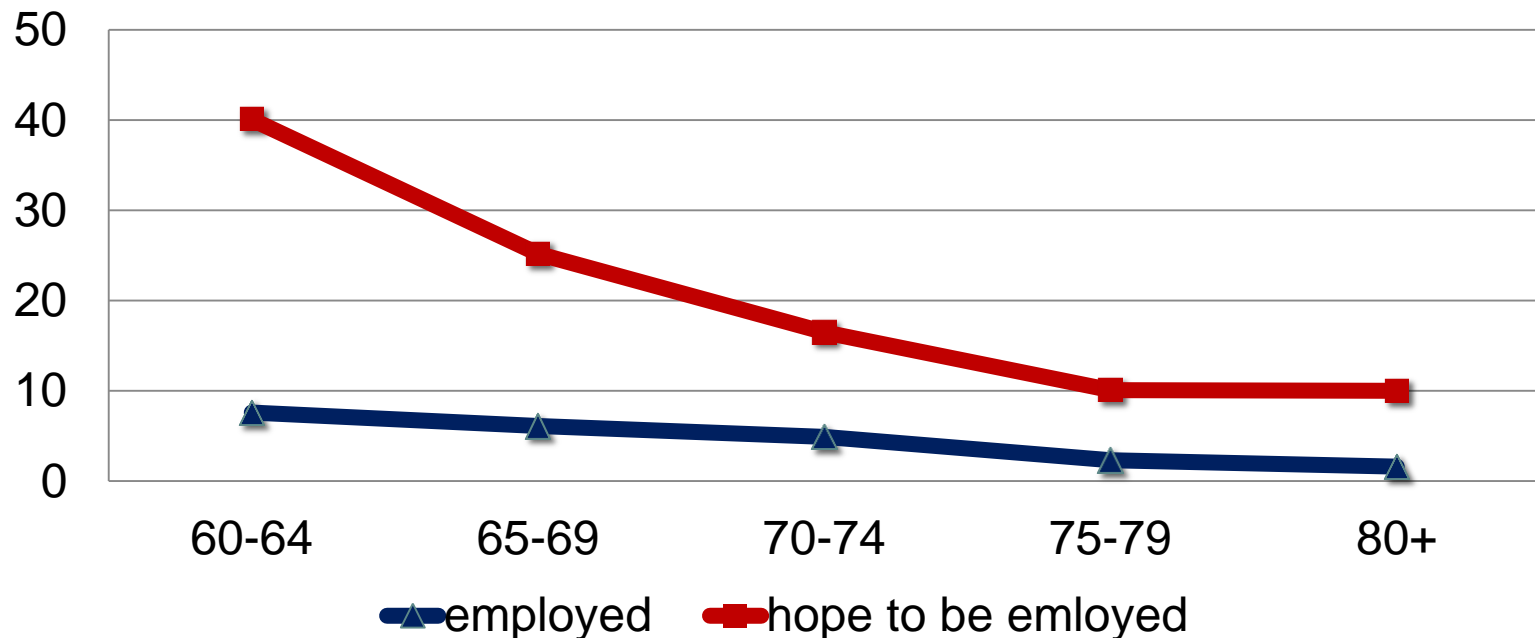
- 100 million (56.18%) older Chinese people aged 60-69.
- 148 million (83.15%) of older people are physically healthy, only 2.95% of elderly need other's care in daily life.

Source: China's National Census in 2010

Strong desire to be employed

- Among the urban elderly, 24.2% desire to do paid work. 46.6% male elderly aged 60-69 hope to work longer.

Figure3 Employment rate and desire of employment of older adults in Beijing %



4. Challenges needed to be addressed

- Stereotypes on older people- inactive vs. productive?
- Financial well-being- incentives or disincentives for continued work?
- Rights of participation- unprotected vs. protected?
- Chances to participate- limited vs. diversified?
- Capabilities for participation- challenges of new technologies to older people

5. Suggestion

- Developing supportive and effective policies to eliminate ageism and barriers of participation for older people.
- Extending working years is not the only strategy, older people's contribution in informal sectors should be valued.
- Providing a substantial amount of funds to help to meet the basic needs of poor elderly esp. those in rural areas and as caregivers.
- Encouraging civil societies and NGOs to play a greater role in older people's social participation.

5. Suggestion

- Providing diversified opportunities to older people and assist them in gaining access to the information.
- Training older people to improve their capabilities.
- Developing a harmonious and supportive cultural and social environment.

THANK YOU!

