China's Social Security Policy in the Context of Its Evolving Employment Policy

Barry L. Friedman Heller School for Social Policy and Management, Brandeis University Waltham, MA, USA

Abstract

In the evolution of China's social protection system, employment policy and pension policy have been closely intertwined, with employment considerations often dominating. The transition from socialism first sought to protect jobs, then to reduce redundancy, and used pension policies to support these approaches. Adverse effects could not be avoided, but there is only small evidence of adverse effects on pensions. The demographic transition focused attention on specific problems of the pension system, but this area also was constrained by the employment considerations that have kept the retirement age low. Nevertheless, there is evidence of considerable work among older people. The transition out of agriculture has brought migrants into contact with urban pensions, but with many barriers. Rural pensions are still very limited.

Keywords: pension policy in China, employment policy in China, social protection in China