

**Conference on
Economic Aspects of Population Aging in China and India**

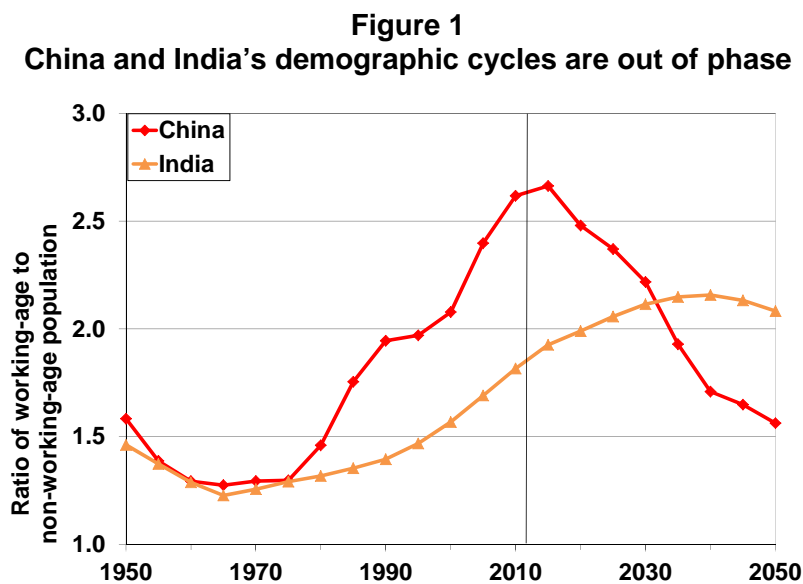
**Prospectus and Call for Papers
August 20, 2012**

The Program on the Global Demography of Aging, the South Asia Initiative, the Asia Center, the Harvard-Yenching Institute, the Harvard China Fund, and the Weatherhead Center for International Affairs (all at Harvard University), and the Walter H. Shorenstein Asia-Pacific Research Center (at Stanford University) propose to hold a conference March 7-8, 2013 at Stanford University on economic aspects of population aging in China and India.

Background

China and India are, by far, the two most populous countries in the world. Between them, they account for 37% of world population. As a result of declining fertility, increasing life expectancy, and the progression of large cohorts to the older ages, both of them, like all other countries, have aging populations. The proportion of China's population aged 60 and older is projected to grow from 13% today to 34% in 2050. India's 60+ share is expected to increase from 8% to 19% over the same period.

Despite the similarity in the forces underlying the two countries' demographic trends, their demographic developments are occurring at different times. China's total fertility rate began to fall much earlier and faster than India's, and its life expectancy began to rise much earlier. As a result, the time periods when each country has experienced a rise in the ratio of working-age population (taken to be ages 15-64) to the dependent population are quite different, as shown in Figure 1.



Source: United Nations (2011). *World Population Prospects*.

Demographic change such as the one shown in Figure 1 can lead to a demographic dividend – a one-time boost in GDP per capita – when the working-age share of the population is relatively high, if that population is productively employed. China is currently experiencing a peak in the

ratio of working-age to dependent population; but with its population aging rapidly, that ratio is set to decline. In India, the ratio is still rising, and it will be several decades before the effect of population aging in lowering the ratio will be felt in a major way.

For a variety of reasons that encompass but also extend beyond demographic factors, both countries have experienced rapid economic growth, though China's rate has been much higher than India's. With the two populations aging at different rates, the relative economic growth paths of the two countries may also change.

Comparative studies of the effects of population aging can also spur a broader comparison of economic and social development in China and India, entailing consideration of forms of government, health systems, standards of living in both rural and urban areas, family structure, and the status of women.

Now is an opportune time to study these issues because of the availability of rich, high-quality, and harmonized micro-data emerging from an array of relevant surveys: CHARLS, LASI, SAGE China, SAGE India, World Health Survey China, and World Health Survey India.

Call for papers

Papers to be presented at the conference will address the economic determinants or consequences of population aging in China or India. They can focus on China or India or can compare the two. Papers can also cover other countries in South or East Asia.

The papers will be presented at a conference at Stanford University to be held March 7-8, 2013. Lead authors will have their travel and hotel covered (economy airfare).

Revised papers will be considered for a special issue of a new academic journal (to be published by Elsevier), *Journal of the Economics of Aging* (JoEA). Papers will be reviewed and assessed in relation to the high standards of the journal. The special issue will be co-edited by David Bloom (Co-Editor of JoEA and Professor of Economics and Demography at the Harvard School of Public Health) and Karen Eggleston (Director, Asia Health Policy Program, Shorenstein Asia-Pacific Research Center at Stanford University). It is anticipated that 6 to 10 papers will be included in the special issue, depending on the number and quality of the submissions.

Prospective contributors are invited to discuss their ideas with Bloom or Eggleston.

Timeline

Call for papers circulated: September 1, 2012

Closing date for responses: November 1, 2012

Conference: March 7-8, 2013

Submission of manuscripts to JoEA: July 15, 2013

Publication of special issue: fourth quarter of 2014