

非正式支持的理论与实证研究
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北京市老龄问题应对方式的再研究

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内容提要

人口老龄化出现以后,如何应对老龄问题成为各国政府关注的大问题。在强化正式支持系统的同时,非正式支持的地位和作用也越来越大,人口老龄化出现较早的国家正在通过公共政策努力强化非正式支持的功能。本书通过对北京市多次大型老年人调查数据和个案的分析,全面深入地研究了北京市以家庭成员为主的非正式支持系统在解决老年人问题方面的特点、程度和主要作用。家庭支持是我国的传统养老方式,也是优秀的文化传统之一。家庭支持不仅可以节省大量的社会资源,而且可以为老年人提供一种符合老年人意愿的生活方式。随着社会经济的发展和老年群体的变化,老年群体从注重经济供养转变到注重生活质量和生命质量。如果将经济保障作为正式支持的主要责任,那么,提高生活质量就是非正式支持的主要目标。北京市作为一个发达城市,应该发掘并充分利用这些资源,为我国应对老龄问题提供新的经验和新的思路。

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重视非正式支持,提高 老年人生活质量

——代《前言》

如何认定和提高老年人的生活质量是目前政府和学界关注的老龄问题之一。从已有的老龄方面调查数据看,影响老年人生活质量的因素是多方面的。本文拟就非正式支持与老年人生活质量关系问题谈些看法,以期加深对提高老年人生活质量问题的认识。

1. 主观感受是评价老年人生活质量的最终指标

老年人生活质量评价标准已有多个版本。中华医学会老年医学学会提出了 11 项指标,确立了老年人健康心理状况、物质经济状况、家庭状况、生活满意度 4 个方面。学者们有的提出 5 个指标,有的提出 4 个指标,^①基本上大同小异。

本文认为,在所有这些指标中,老年人的主观感受是一个最终指标。

(1)老年人是老年人生活质量的最终评判者。不同群体对其生活质量都有不同的评价标准。老年人生活质量的高低,不是由青年人或中年人来评价,而是要由老年人自己来评价。目前社会上的一些研究误区就是用其他群体的价值判断取代老年群体的价值观。虽然价值判断有其相通的地方,但是不同群体对同一事物的看法还是有所区别的。因此,衡量老年人的生活质量应以老年人的主观感受作为核心或最终指标。

^①桂世勋:《中国高龄老人生活质量研究》,载《中国人口科学》,2001 年增刊,第 107 页。

(2) 生活质量中的诸多指标,最终都要反映在老年人的主观感受上。物质经济条件的最大功能是其具有能够满足人们需要的使用价值。老年人的生活设施、居住条件、活动场所等的最大价值就是要为老年人服务,满足老年人的需要。经济发展战略提出的以客户为中心的思想,实际上就体现了这个问题。老年人满意的就是最好的,老年人感到幸福的就是最高的生活质量。所以,忽视了老年人的满意度和幸福感,其他指标再高再优越也无意义。

(3) 老年人生活条件的差异性很大,生活满意度和幸福感具有主观感受的一致性。马斯洛需求层次论之所以受到学者的批评,是因为该理论将需求与经济基础的关系过于刻板化。在实际生活中,经济条件差的老年人并不一定没有幸福感,而经济条件好的老年人也不一定生活满意度就高。因此,仅仅用一些经济指标评价老年人的生活质量,有时很难得出一个一般性结论。从实际情况看,无论处于何种生活条件下,老年人都有一个自己认定的生活满意度和幸福感。尽管这种生活满意度和幸福感可能具有不同的内涵,但就其反映老年人的主观感受而言,依然建立了可以比较的基础。

将老年人生活满意度和幸福感作为衡量老年人生活质量的核心和最终指标,除了前述理由外,还有文化和时代两方面的原因。

中国是一个有着尊老敬老传统的国家。在漫长的尊老敬老文化的流传中,老年人精神愉快、心理满足构成了老年人生活质量的最高标准。《礼记·祭义》中说,养是可能的,但敬就不容易了;敬是可能的,但让老人安逸满足就不容易了。^① 子路曾因不能很好地赡养父母而内疚。孔子说,“虽然吃豆粥、喝清水,但是父母精神上满足和愉快,就是孝了”。^② 孔子曾经质问子夏:“为父母劳作,让父母吃喝,难道这就是孝吗?”^③ 那么什么是孝呢? 用现代的话

①《礼记·祭义》:养,可能也,敬为难;敬,可能也,安为难。

②《礼记·檀弓下》:啜菽饮水,尽其欢,斯之谓孝。

③《论语·为政》:有事,弟子服其劳;有酒食,先生馔,曾以为孝乎?

说,就是让父母有较高的生活满意度和幸福感。为此,明代吕坤指出,“对待父母,最好的是使父母心中愉快,其次是照料父母,最差的是只照料父母却不体谅父母的心理感受”。^①

世界已经进入了一个新的发展时期,可持续发展成为各国发展的基本准则,而可持续发展的目标就是为人类提供最好的生活环境。以人为本的思想已经渗透到经济发展的各个领域。在这个大背景下,评价和提高老年人生活质量应该更多地强调老年人自身对生活的主观感受,而不仅仅着眼于一些技术或物质指标。这并不是说,我们可以忽视物质和技术的条件,而是说,物质和技术条件只有在给老年人带来满足和幸福的时候才有意义。老年人对生活质量的感受有其内在的标准和文化内涵,并不一定伴随物质和技术条件的变化而变化。

2. 非正式支持是影响老年人主观感受的重要方面

支持分正式支持和非正式支持。正式支持(Formal Support)是指由国家或政府提供或干预的社会保障支持。非正式支持(Informal Support)是指由亲属、邻居、朋友等构成的初级群体(Primary Group)对老年人提供的经济、劳务、精神等方面的支持。

从保障角度来说,正式支持和非正式支持是两种不同的支持体系,各有各的功能和存在的条件。^②一些研究指出,只有将两者有机地结合起来,才能为老年人提供高质量的生活保障。^③但是,调查数据也表明,两者在诸多方面并不能相互替代。非正式支持的基础、特征和功能,使其在影响老年人生活感受方面具有特殊的作用。^④

① 吕坤:《呻吟语·伦理》:人子之事亲也,事心为上,事身次之。

② 姚远:《中国家庭养老研究》,中国人口出版社,2001年,第175页。

③ E. Litwak. *Helping the Elderly: the Complementary Roles of Informal Networks and Formal Systems*. 1985 The Guilford Press. p. 50.

④ 本文中未注明出处的均据1999年北京市老年人基本需求问题调查资料。

2.1 老年人希望结交朋友,并得到家人的帮助

调查资料显示,75.3%的老年人喜欢结交新朋友。老年人自身状况的差异性对这个比例有所影响。具有低龄、城区、有偶、文化程度高、收入水平高、企事业单位背景的老年人喜欢结交新朋友的比例要明显高于其他背景的老年人。

该资料还显示,老年人在表达所希望的日常生活帮助者的愿望时,首先都是选择自己的家人。在饮食帮助方面,城区老年人希望女儿,远郊县希望配偶;在穿脱衣服方面,城区希望女儿,远郊县希望配偶;在室内活动方面,城区希望配偶,远郊县希望配偶;在洗漱方面,城区希望女儿、保姆,远郊县希望配偶;在洗澡方面,城区希望女儿、配偶,远郊县希望儿媳、配偶;在做饭方面,城区希望配偶,远郊县希望配偶、儿媳;在上厕所方面,城区希望女儿、配偶,远郊县希望配偶;在上下楼梯方面,城区希望配偶,远郊县希望儿子;在步行方面,城区希望配偶、女儿,远郊县希望儿子;在财务管理方面,城区希望配偶,远郊县希望儿子、女儿;在购物方面,城区希望配偶,远郊县希望儿子。

2.2 初级群体在老年人的实际生活中已经发挥了重要作用

首先,家人是老年人日常生活的主要支持者。多项调查反复表明,配偶、子女为老年人晚年生活提供了最主要的经济、照料和心理支持。有研究表明,在生病时儿子是老人最可靠的支持。^①只有子女不在身边的孤寡老人,保姆才有可能成为比较经常的生活帮助者。至于社区,因其基础性的保障功能而非日常生活的持续性支持,所以作用受到限制。

其次,家人和亲属是老年人经济的重要支柱。虽然在城区老年人的经济收入中,第一来源是离退休金,占83.9%,子女提供仅占8.5%,但在第二和第三经济来源中,子女提供比例分别增至

① 齐银:《中国内地和香港地区老年人生活状况和生活质量研究》,北京大学出版社,1998年,第117页。

62.9%和45.9%。一个值得注意的情况是,在第三经济来源中,亲友提供比例占8.2%,仅次于子女提供和配偶提供的比例。由此得出一种认识,离退休金是老年人经济保障的主来源,子女提供是老年人经济保障的补充源,亲友提供是老年人在关键时刻(比如,生病住院、子女不养、出远门等)经济保障的支持源。对于远郊县老年人来说,无论是第几来源,子女提供的比例最大。有研究表明,尽管经济支持多源化,但是儿子为老年人提供了最为经常的经济支持。^①

其三,家人、邻居、朋友是老年人最重要的精神和心理支持。资料显示,老年人倾诉对象依次是老同事、老朋友、配偶、子女和邻居。远郊县老年人倾诉对象依次是邻居、子女、老同事、老朋友、配偶。也有研究提示,配偶为老年人提供了最好的倾诉心事或问题的支持。^②老年人遇事与晚辈商量的比例高达79%,城区老年人79.8%,远郊县老年人78.2%。而且,这个比例基本上不受老年人性别和文化程度的影响。同样,晚辈遇事与老年人商量的比例一般也在50%~60%左右,而且也不受老年人年龄、婚姻状况、文化程度的影响。

2.3 子女状况影响老年人心情和对生活质量的感受

资料显示,51.9%的老年人认为,心情对生活质量是非常重要的,而且文化程度和经济收入越高的老年人越同意这个看法。

在了解影响老年人心情的因素时,一个引人注意的方面是子女状况。子女下岗、子女经济困难、子女身体不好、与子女不能在一起、子女不能照料自己等均会影响老年人的生活满意度,也都会使老年人心情不好。

在分析老年人对生活满意的原因时,除了经济上无忧无虑之

①齐铨:《中国内地和香港地区老年人生活状况和生活质量研究》,北京大学出版社,1998年,第117页。

②同上。

外,不用操心儿女、儿女生活条件好、孩子家庭幸福、孩子有工作、儿女孝顺等也都是重要原因。

以上方面说明,非正式支持是老年人所希望的,在实际生活中已经发挥了重要的作用,并对老年人的生活感受具有直接的影响。

3. 非正式支持在确保老年人生活质量方面的主要功能

生活质量是反映人们生活状态的一个概念。我们经常提到的概念有生活条件、生活水平、生活质量,这三个概念有所不同。笔者认为,生活条件是指人们生活的物质状况,生活水平是指人们花钱的状况,生活质量应该指人们主观感受的状况。打一个通俗的比喻,就是“吃”、“吃饱”、“吃好”的关系。“吃好”以“吃”和“吃饱”为基础,但又大大超过了前两者,表现为一种精神心理方面的满足。所以,能否满足老年人非物质方面的需要,直接关系到老年人生活质量高或低的问题。如果说,正式支持主要关注了物质方面,那么,非正式支持则在满足老年人的物质需要的同时更多地满足了老年人精神心理方面的需求。

3.1 非正式支持的三项主要功能

与正式支持相比,非正式支持表现出三项主要功能。第一,满足老年人紧急援助需要的功能。随着社会经济的发展和老年人健康水平的提高,老年人的自立、自理、自助能力越来越强。但是,老年人毕竟年事日高,对紧急援助的需要会逐渐提高。紧急援助并不表现为日常生活中对援助的需要,而是表现在老年人突然生病或发生意外事故时对援助的需要。一旦出现这种情况,就会需要经济方面的紧急援助或照料方面的紧急援助。尽管有的社区建立了紧急救助网,但是高额的医疗费和不间断的照料任务依然要由老年人家庭本身来解决。特别是在极短的时间内迅速筹集大笔费用并建立一个有效的照料网络,还要靠非正式支持体系。第二,满足情感交流的功能。在老年人经济需求问题逐渐缓解的同时,老年人情感交流需求问题开始为社会所关注。《北京青年报》

发起的“与空巢老人一起过年”活动就是一个典型事例。美国社会学家罗伯特·韦斯将老年人的孤独分为情感性孤独和社会性孤独两类。情感性孤独是指缺乏家庭成员间的交流,社会性孤独是指缺乏朋友间的交流。社会学家沃恩·本特森的研究指出,与好友、亲属和邻居进行的随意性活动会在生活满足感方面起到极大的作用。^①可见,满足老年人情感交流的需要是非正式支持的重要功能。第三,满足安全心理需要的功能。正式支持与非正式支持的区别之一,就是后者在为老年人构建安全心理方面具有独特的作用。这里所讲的安全心理是指老年人的信任感、依靠感和减少生活中的紧张感。老年人需要帮助,老年人能否对帮助者产生信任,将影响到老年人的安全心理问题。前述调查数据表明,老年人往往将亲人作为首选照料者和依靠者。其中固然有一个熟悉不熟悉的问题,同时还有一个信任不信任的问题。费孝通先生提出的差序格局理论^②,实际上指出了老年人以亲疏划分信任与否的标准的文化基础。因此,非正式支持的这种功能,是正式支持所不能比拟的。

3.2 非正式支持功能具有四个特征

非正式支持能够在援助需求、情感需求和安全需求方面发挥其功能,因为非正式支持具有正式支持较少具有的四个特征。第一,责任的而非交换的。由于非正式支持基于血缘、地缘、业源的关系,所以非正式支持运行的双方具有一种责任感,而不是简单的交换关系,由此促成了非正式支持在满足老年人需求和提高老年人生活质量方面的诸多长处。第二,主动的而非被动的。研究表明,正式支持的制度性和职能性使其功能往往呈现出一种“卖方市场”的色彩,被动的、等待的、无选择的,只能提供既有的服务。而非正式支持则完全不同,表现出更多的主动的色彩。老年人可以

①[美]贝·费里丹:《生命之泉喷涌》,作家出版社,1997年,第367~368页。

②费孝通:《乡土中国生育制度》,北京大学出版社,1998年,第28页。

提出自己的要求,服务者也会尽可能地满足老年人的需要,甚至会根据情况主动进行调整,以满足老年人的需要。第三,全能的而非单一的。正式支持的职能划分很细,医疗的、做饭的、家务的、陪伴的、照顾病人等,常常是医疗的不管家务,家务的不管照顾病人,照顾病人的不管做家务,由此形成了一种齐备但又不能完全满足需要的服务。而非正式支持则不同,有需要就有服务、无需要也尽力服务,服务者提供的不是单一的服务,而是全方位的服务,因而受到老年人的欢迎。第四,灵活的而不是刻板的。非正式支持为老年人提供的是一种灵活的服务,需要什么就服务什么,需要做到什么程度就做到什么程度,需要什么时间做就在什么时间做,完全不受时间、地点、内容、条件的限制。而正式支持则受到多种因素的制约。

3.3 非正式支持功能的情感基础

非正式支持之所以能够更好地满足老年人的需求、提高老年人的生活满意度,是因为非正式支持是建立在情感和关系的基础之上。基于情感的非正式支持,一方面可以提供老年人所需要的服务,使老年人始终生活在安全的环境中;另一方面可以满足老年人的精神心理需求,保持老年人的历史、尊严和连贯性的家庭地位。

我国具有重家庭重亲情的文化传统,非正式支持正是维系并提供了基于这种传统的各种服务,因而可以满足老年人的多方面需要,保证老年人获得自己认定的生活质量。

4. 结束语

老龄问题的目标就是保证和提高老年人的生活质量。实现这个目标,非正式支持具有重要作用。由于主观感受是衡量老年人生活质量的最终标准,所以,非正式支持借助情感基础构建了一个责任的、主动的、全能的和灵活的生活支持,从而满足了老年人紧急援助、情感交流和心理安全的需要,提高了老年人生活满意度和

幸福感的主观感受水平。

实践也提示我们,无论是正式支持还是非正式支持,实际上都无法独自确保老年人的生活质量。对此,西方社会学家提出了“分担功能理论”(Theory of Shared Function)和“协调平衡理论”(Balance Theory of Coordination)。^①前者要求将正式支持与非正式支持有机地结合起来,后者要求不断寻找两者的平衡点。在经济不发达时期,正式支持对老年人生活质量的影响会大一些,而在经济发达时期,非正式支持的影响可能会超过正式支持。因此,只有将正式支持和非正式支持有机地整合起来,我们才能将提高老年人生活质量建立在持续的、稳固的基础之上。

① E. Litwak. *Helping the Elderly: the Complementary Roles of Informal Networks and Formal Systems*. 1985 The Guilford Press. p. 9, p. 16.

Abstract

With the process of aging, governments all over the world have attached importance to how to deal with aging. We need to not only intensify the system for formal support, but also pay much attention to the significance of informal support. Firstly, the pressure of aging gives prominence to the significance of informal support. Secondly, informal support is necessary for the change of older people's demands. Now the most serious problem of older people is poverty, but they will aim to run for high life-quality if the problem of poverty has been resolved gradually. Thirdly, the study on the significance of informal support is very important in theory. It is valuable to put the relevant viewpoints in perspective and form theoretical points in accordance with aging issues in China.

From the datum of some surveys about older people in Beijing, we come to a conclusion that the informal support, which mainly depend on family members, have played an important role in resolving older people's problems.

Firstly, older people's living care depends mainly on family members. The respondents who hardly look after themselves mainly depend on family members and other relatives to eat, dress, bathe, go upstairs and downstairs and move about in the house. Spouses are the most important minder for older people. In the day-to-day activities like eating, dressing, cooking, toilet, moving in the house, financing and so on, the proportion of older people who depend on spouses is great than the proportion of older people who depend on other family members. Son is the second important minder inferior to spouse in toilet, going upstairs and downstairs, financing, shopping, walk. And daughter is the second important minder inferior to spouse in eating, dressing, washing up and bathing. Daughter-in-law is the second important minder inferior to spouse in eating, dressing, cooking,

shopping. Besides, grandchildren also offer some living care. Datum also indicates that the minders whom older people want most are family members. In eating, older people in urban want their daughters to help them and older people in outskirts want their spouses. In dressing, older people in urban want their daughters to help them and older people in outskirts want their spouses. In moving about in the house, both older people in urban and older people in outskirts want their spouses to help them. In washing up, older people in urban want their daughters and nurses to help them and older people in outskirts want their spouses. In bathing, older people in urban want their daughters and spouses to help them and older people in outskirts want their daughters-in-law and spouses. In cooking, older people in urban want their spouses to help them and older people in outskirts want their spouses and daughters-in-law. In toilet, older people in urban want their daughters and spouses to help them and older people in outskirts want their spouses. In going upstairs and downstairs, older people in urban want their spouses to help them and older people in outskirts want their sons. In walk, older people in urban want their spouses and daughters to help them and older people in outskirts want their sons. In financing, older people in urban want their spouses to help them and older people in outskirts want their sons and daughters. In shopping, older people in urban want their spouses to help them and older people in outskirts want their sons. As to the function of community, we founded that it is very limited because community is insufficient to offer timely, continuous, variable and individualized services.

Secondly, family members and relatives are important supplementary sources of older people's income. The dominating sources of older people's income are pension, but the second and the third sources are mainly from children. There is a noticeable thing that 8.2% of the third sources, which are just inferior to children and spouses, are from relatives. Maybe we can draw a conclusion that the leading sources of older people's financial security are from pension, the supplementary sources are from children and the sources, which are used in an emergence, are from relatives. For older people

in outskirts, the leading sources are from children. Although the sources of financial support are multiple, the standing sources are from their sons.

Thirdly, the most important mental support of older people is derived from family members, neighbors and friends. We consider the subject whom older people unburden themselves to as the indicator of mental support. The subject whom older people unburden themselves to is old friends, spouses, children and neighbors in the order of importance. The subject whom older people in outskirts unburden themselves to is neighbors, children, old friends and spouses in the order of importance. Therefore, the effect of friends and neighbors on older people's mental care is great than that on financial support and living care. Another study indicates that family members supply older people with important mental support. The main sources of mental support are from spouses, daughters and sons and the most important sources are from spouses. Older men, literate older people, currently married older people and older people who live with their spouses only depend mainly on their spouses. While the other depend mainly on their children. Collected data also manifests that 79% of older people consult with their children, 79.8% of older people in urban consult with their children and 78.2% of older people in outskirts consult with their children. And the above proportion is insensitive to older people's gender and education. Meanwhile, about 50%~60% of children consult with their parents and the proportion is insensitive to older people's age, marriage and education. All the above can support the view that informal support is very important for older people.

Fourthly, nurse plays a relevant important role in taking care of older people in urban, especially older people who are sick, older people who live in "empty nest", or older people who live alone. In Chinese culture older people do not want to owe gratitude to somebody, so they are not willing to fall back on neighbors and friends and they depend on nurse but family members. In urban community the role of nurse become more and more prominent.

Fifthly, the activities of volunteer are occasional, such as condolence on holidays, occasional help for older people who live alone. Volunteers also

play a beneficial part in foster atmosphere in which everyone respects and helps older people.

In the case study, we found that the function of informal support is related to older people's living conditions and personality. In bungalow community, the relationship between neighbors is very close because of living together for a long time. As to the mutual help in bungalow, all the residents consider it as a natural thing. And all of them agree that everyone will be in need one day and distant relatives are less beneficial than neighbors. Besides, residents' committee plays an important part in mutual help. In commercial housing community, things are very different. Old friends connect with each other less. The relationship between new friends is not very close. It is difficult to communicate with neighborhood. The reasons of this situation result from many aspects such as less connection with old friends, short-term communication with old friends, the psychology of keeping away which affects the building of new relationship, children's worry, older people's personality, the effect of culture and dialect and so on. Most of older people are not satisfied with this kind of neighborhood. Under the circumstances that older people are distant from old friends and their children are very busy with their business, it is required to build new relationship to take after each other. To solve the problem, residents' committee should organize all kinds of activities. Insufficient community activities will result in less communication between older people. Older people also create new forms of informal support because of the significance of informal support for their own. For example, friends who bathe together, flowing family, enjoying the spring festival in the form of "three in one", alternative support with pay, recruiting daughters for holidays.

Older people's high life-quality is related to informal support. While informal support is linked to economic development, social progress, family transition and older people's personal information. Most intellectuals think that it is vital to intensify informal support because of the unique function of informal support. But in reality, with the socio-economic development informal support become weak more or less, specifically in resources and traditional mechanism for the maintenance of informal support. How to resolve the problem? We should

guarantee number of helpers and excellent operating mechanism to utilize the system of informal support. First, we should intensify the system of policy for informal support. Second, we should build the mechanism for the smoothing operation of informal support. Moral and kinship are the basic of informal support, but it is not enough. In market economy, we need different kinds of mechanism. Third, we also should create and improve the system of social support for informal supporters to form the supporting network to help them.

In a word, the focus of ageing issues in Beijing varies from financial support to life quality. The points which older people pay much attention to are spiritual and cultural life, health preserving and healthy living-style. If financial support is the main aspect of formal support, then improvement in life quality is the main objective of informal support. There are many social and family resources in Beijing. So we should make use of these resources to the greatest advantage to provide a satisfying supporting network for older people in transition.