**International NordWel Summer School**

**University of Helsinki, 9-12 June 2015**

**Key note abstracts**

**Sonya Michel, Professor, Department of History, University of Maryland, College Park, USA**

**Outsourcing Failing Welfare States: From the Local to the Global**

**Abstract**

Over the past few decades, the welfare states of the “global North” have undergone major changes as the result of several converging trends. Toward the end of the twentieth century, the distinctive “welfare state regime” clusters (as identified by Gøsta Esping-Andersen) that had emerged after World War II began to blur under the influence of “Third Way” and neoliberal approaches. In many places, this led to cutbacks in welfare states and efforts on the part of states to marketize, privatize, or “re-familialize” functions that had become public provisions. Meanwhile, the demand for both child care and elder care was increasing, as a result of the spike in female labor force participation and population aging. In response to demands for paid care workers (for both children and elders) from the global North, women from the global South began migrating in greater numbers, creating a “care drain” in their own societies that could not be fully met by the “emerging economies” of the South or the development of informal “global care chains.”

In an effort to begin mapping these patterns, my lecture will focus on three aspects of this latest phase in welfare state development, with particular attention to their effects on women and gender relations: 1) shifts in approaches to welfare state provisions in “emerging economies” under the influence of the “Washington consensus”; 2) the “feminization” of both intra-regional and international migration; 3) the increasing role of migrant care workers from the global South in performing care work in the global North. Among other things, I will explore the relationship between different welfare regime types and the demand for migrant care workers, and touch on the implications of the tilt of caring resources from south to north for reaching the Millennium Development Goals set by the UN for the year 2015.

**Yuegen Xiong, Professor, Department of Sociology, Peking University, Beijing, CHINA**

**Individual Power and the Politics of Welfare Projects in China: Bringing Persons Back in Institutional Analysis**

**Abstract**

Conventionally, social scientists (mainly sociologists, political scientists and economist) put more concentration on the role of ideas, norms, customs and rules in the policy process that will yield different outcomes under the concrete circumstance. Meanwhile, policy researchers have noticed the impact of state administrators, experts and even policy entrepreneurs on the policy process, however, it is still blurring who have a decisive power at different phase of policy-making and implementation. In the recent decade, there is a growing interest on social policy-making and welfare studies in post-socialist China. However, the significant role of key individuals (for instance, Chinese state leaders) in the social policy-making and welfare politics has not been adequately studied yet. In this lecture, by employing a case study approach, I will explore how the ideas, individual perceptions and personal experience of state leaders and government officials influence their intentions, motives and strategies in social policy making in China in the context of economic transition, rapid social change and globalisation.

The main research questions are raised in the following sequence:

First, understanding the significance of state leaders in the highly centralised political setting of social policy making in China;

Second, describing the continuity and change of the leaders' ideas and individual perceptions on social policy in the past decade?

Third, interpreting how personal experience may influence Chinese leaders and government officials' ways of doing in social policy making for the sake of strengthening political legitimacy and maintaining social order?

Based on the above efforts, I hope I am able to find a new exit of discovering the hidden logic and ethical clue of welfare politics in post-socialist China.

**Noel Whiteside, Professor, Department of Sociology, University of Warwick, UK**

**Gendered issues in funded pensions**

**Abstract**

Women’s pensions are lower than men’s and this article analyses why this is so. Recent shifts towards pre-funded pensions, particularly personal pensions, adversely affect women’s income security in old age. As is widely acknowledged, labour market disadvantages (broken working lives: low paid work: large families) translate into lower pension savings for women. Under personal accounts, thanks to compound interest, gender-derived pension gaps are larger than pay gaps and grow over time. The root of the problem stems from basing pension rights on ‘standard’ working lives – working lives usually followed by men (who are the minority of pensioner populations) but which are currently being thrown into question by labour market reforms in many EU member states. Funded schemes need to secure social goals, but current policies cannot compensate inequalities generated by personal savings as a basis for old age income, particularly in the context of financial and labour market instabilities, public expenditure constraints and rising costs generated by demographic ageing

**Paul Marx, Associate Professor, Centre for Welfare State Research, University of Southern Denmark**

**The political behaviour of temporary workers**

**Abstract**

Do workers on temporary contracts differ in their political preferences from workers on permanent contracts? In many European countries temporary work has been deregulated over the past decades and now around 14 % of the employees in the EU work on contracts with a limited duration. For affected workers, this implies the constant risk of job loss and recurrent spells of unemployment may be the consequence. At the same time political protests, the emergence of populist parties and other signs of disenchantment with mainstream politics have raised public concerns about the political integration of citizens with weak labour market attachments, particularly among the young. The presentation will therefore address the following questions: do temporary workers blame political parties for their perceived disadvantage and, if yes, how does that affect upon their party preferences and voting behaviour? Do such workers turn toward anti-system parties (such as the radical right) or to the populist left? Or do they tend to abstain from voting?

**Jin Feng, Professor, School of Economics, Fudan University, Shanghai, China**

**Does the increase of retirement age affect unpaid care provision?** **----****A Study of Urban Workers in China**

**Abstract**

Increasing retirement age has been observed in many countries during population aging. One of the concerns against the policy is that increasing retirement age may have negative effect on unpaid care provision in household. There is a strong involvement of grandparents in their grandchildren’s care both in developing and developed countries. Studies find that retirement probability is increased with new grandchildren born in the U.S.(Lumsdaine and Vermeer, 2014). In Europe, workers having grandchildren are more likely to retire earlier (Hochman and Lewin-Epstein, 2013; Van Bavel and De Winter, 2013). Hence, retirement decision is made not only by wage and pension benefit, but also by the demand for care. In view the fact that increasing retirement age will change the relative revenue of income from labor participation and care provision, it might lead to a longer working period. Particularly, in a mandatory retirement system, increasing retirement age will definitely cause people stay longer in labor market.

With less help from parents, the younger generation has to spend more time on household care work. Then, labor participation rate of younger generation will be reduced. Therefore, the general labor supply effect of the policy is not clear. We study care provision of workers before and after retirement in urban China to test this effect.

The mandatory retirement age in urban China is relative low, 60 for male, 55 for white collar female workers and 50 for blue collar female workers. In the urban China, labor participation rate of age 50-54 group is lower than 60%, nearly 20 percentage points lower than in OECD countries. Other things being equal, the younger a worker is, the less likelihood the retirement is. When retirement age is low as in China, workers can gain human capital return as informal employees after retirement instead of providing domestic care, especially for skilled workers with higher wage. Hence, increasing retirement age may not necessarily reduce care provision.

We use data from China Health and Retirement Longitudinal Study (CHARLS) to compare the care provision before and after retirement. If there is no significant change under current retirement age, then increasing retirement age may not have negative effect on care provision. On the contrary, if care provision has increased after retirement under current retirement age, then it implies that increasing retirement age will have a negative effect. Using samples of 50-65 male and 45-60 male, we find that, generally speaking, the probability to care grandchildren increases after retirement and the effect is larger in female group. But there is no effect on the probability of elder care. Furthermore, for female group, we find that for those aged 45-54, retirement has not changed their care probability. Only when the retirement age is higher, there is a negative effect on care provision in female group.