# ONLINE APPENDIX A. ROBUSTNESS TESTS

## Table OA1. Policy effects on locus of government responsibility (full table)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | Treatment vs Control |  |  | Policy Duration |  |
| Pilot × Post (DID) | 0.126\*\* | 0.160\* | 0.103 |  |  |  |
| (0.060) | (0.069) | (0.068) |  |  |  |
| Duration × Post (DID) |  |  |  | 0.085\*\*\* | 0.093\*\*\* | 0.077\*\*\* |
|  |  |  | (0.021) | (0.024) | (0.023) |
| Pilot  | -0.031 | -0.009 | 0.309\*\* |  |  |  |
| (0.042) | (0.045) | (0.142) |  |  |  |
| Duration |  |  |  | -0.042\*\*\* | -0.034\*\* | 0.085\* |
|  |  |  | (0.014) | (0.015) | (0.047) |
| Post | -0.397\*\*\* | -0.423\*\*\* | -0.457\*\*\* | -0.453\*\*\* | -0.473\*\*\* | -0.517\*\*\* |
| (0.044) | (0.053) | (0.052) | (0.042) | (0.051) | (0.050) |
| Demographic Controls |  | Yes | Yes |  | Yes | Yes |
| Provincial Dummies |  |  | Yes |  |  | Yes |
| Observations | 4921 | 3801 | 3801 | 4921 | 3801 | 3801 |
| R-squared | 0.025 | 0.099 | 0.158 | 0.027 | 0.101 | 0.161 |

*Not*e: \* p < 0.1, \*\* p < 0.05, \*\*\* p < 0.01. The table presents ordinary least square (OLS) results. Clustered standard errors at the provincial level are reported in parentheses. The estimates of demographic controls, which include age, age square, gender, education attainment, marital status, party membership, household income level, and residential registration (*hukou*) status, are not reported. The estimates of constants, provincial dummies, and year dummies are also not reported.

## Table OA2. Effect of pilot policy and local official news intensity of pilot policy on locus of government responsibility (full table)

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | All samples | Urban samples | Enterprise employees(urban) | Public sector employees(urban) |
| Pilot × Post (DID) | 0.556\*\*\* | 0.559\*\*\* | 0.514 | 2.243\*\*\* |
| (0.118) | (0.165) | (0.333) | (0.682) |
| Pilot × Post × Local news intensity (DDD) | -0.116\*\*\* | -0.182 \*\*\* | -0.159\* | -0.551\*\*\* |
| (0.030) | (0.042) | (0.090) | (0.206) |
| Pilot | 0.287\* | 0.028 | 0.847 | -1.991\*\* |
| (0.155) | (0.126) | (0.523) | (0.975) |
| Post | -0.670\*\*\* | -0.403\*\*\* | -0.306\* | -1.294\*\*\* |
| (0.081) | (0.126) | (0.217) | (0.483) |
| Local news intensity | 0.016\*\* | 0.044\*\*\* | 0.038\*\*\* | 0.029 |
| (0.006) | (0.008) | (0.014) | (0.023) |
| Local news intensity × Pilot | -0.025\* | -0.063\*\*\* | -0.082 | 0.142 |
| (0.014) | (0.018) | (0.052) | (0.140) |
| Local news intensity × Post | 0.088\*\*\* | 0.135\*\*\* | 0.122\*\* | 0.260\*\* |
| (0.025) | (0.036) | (0.061) | (0.119) |
| Demographic Controls | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Province Dummies | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Observations | 3801 | 1955 | 729 | 207 |
| R-squared | 0.166 | 0.163 | 0.191 | 0.260 |

*Not*e: \* p < 0.1, \*\* p < 0.05, \*\*\* p < 0.01. The unreported demographic control variables and clustering are the same settings as in Table 2.

## Table OA3. Robustness test with Order logit model

|  |
| --- |
| Locus of Responsibility (Ordered Logit) |
| Pilot × Post (DID) | 0.226 |  | 1.054\*\*\* |
| (0.124) |  | (0.215) |
| Duration × Post (DID) |  | 0.155\*\*\* |  |
|  | (0.042) |  |
| Pilot × Post× Local news intensity (DDD) |  |  | -0.210\*\*\* |
|  |  | (0.053) |
| Pilot | 0.693\*\*\* |  | 0.690\*\* |
| (0.259) |  | (0.028) |
| Duration |  | 0.198\*\* |  |
|  | (0.866) |  |
| Post | -0.823\*\*\* | -0.937\*\*\* | -1.224\*\*\* |
| (0.096) | (0.093) | (0.284) |
| Local news intensity |  |  | 0.034\*\*\* |
|  |  | (0.011) |
| Local news intensity × Pilot |  |  | -0.054\*\* |
|  |  | (0.025) |
| Local news intensity × Post |  |  | 0.166\*\*\* |
|  |  | (0.044) |
| Demographic Controls | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Province Dummies | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Observations | 3,790 | 3,790 | 3,790 |

*Note:* \* p < 0.1, \*\* p < 0.05, \*\*\* p < 0.01. The unreported demographic control variables and clustering are the same settings as in Table OA1.

## Table OA4. Robustness test with multilevel model (random intercept at provincial level)

|  |
| --- |
| Locus of Responsibility (Multilevel Logit) |
| Pilot × Post (DID) | 0.103 |  | 0.514\*\*\* |
| (0.068) |  | (0.115) |
| Duration × Post (DID) |  | 0.077\*\*\* |  |
|  | (0.023) |  |
| Pilot × Post × Local news intensity (DDD) |  |  | -0.090\*\*\* |
|  |  | (0.025) |
| Pilot | 0.076 |  | 0.176 |
| (0.144) |  | (0.173) |
| Duration |  | -0.004 |  |
|  | (0.053) |  |
| Post | -0.453\*\*\* | -0.513\*\*\* | -0.621\*\*\* |
| (0.052) | (0.050) | (0.077) |
| Local news intensity |  |  | 0.008\* |
|  |  | (0.005) |
| Local news intensity × Pilot |  |  | -0.015 |
|  |  | (0.013) |
| Local news intensity × Post |  |  | 0.062\*\*\* |
|  |  | (0.020) |
| Demographic Controls | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Observations | 3801 | 3801 | 3801 |

*Note:* \* p < 0.1, \*\* p < 0.05, \*\*\* p < 0.01. The unreported demographic control variables and clustering are the same settings as in Table OA1.

The multilevel model is constructed as follows:

$$LR\_{itj}=α\_{0itj}+β\_{1}Pilot\_{ij}+β\_{2}Post\_{tj}+β\_{3}Pilot\_{ij}Post\_{tj}+β\_{4}X\_{itj}. \left(6\right)$$

where $α\_{0itj}=α\_{0}+γ\_{0tj}+ε\_{itj}$.

## Table OA5. Robustness test with intergenerational difference

|  |
| --- |
| Locus of Responsibility |
|  | OLS | Ologit | OLS | Ologit |
| Retired | -0.646\*\*\* | -1.249\*\*\* | -0.704\*\*\* | -1.381\*\*\* |
| (0.125) | (0.259) | (0.123) | (0.256) |
| Pilot | -0.182 | -0.210 |  |  |
| (0.111) | (0.231) |  |  |
| Duration |  |  | -0.101\*\*\* | -0.160\* |
|  |  | (0.037) | (0.077) |
| Post | -0.324\*\*\* | -0.573\*\*\* | -0.489\*\*\* | -0.911\*\*\* |
| (0.091) | (0.185) | (0.084) | (0.173) |
| Pilot × Post | -0.054 | -0.082 |  |  |
| (0.115) | (0.231) |  |  |
| Duration × Post |  |  | 0.084\*\* | 0.175\*\* |
|  |  | (0.040) | (0.079) |
| Retired × Pilot × Post (DDD) | 0.043 | 0.119 |  |  |
| (0.254) | (0.506) |  |  |
| Retired × Duration × Post (DDD) |  |  | -0.113 | -0.212 |
|  |  | (0.085) | (0.169) |
| Retired × Pilot | 0.430\*\*\* | 0.786\*\* |  |  |
| (0.152) | (0.312) |  |  |
| Retired × Duration |  |  | 0.183\*\*\* | 0.347\*\*\* |
|  |  | (0.051) | (0.104) |
| Retired × Post | 0.404\* | 0.759\* | 0.628\*\*\* | 1.211\*\*\* |
| (0.208) | (0.418) | (0.202) | (0.408) |
| Demographic Controls | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Province Dummies | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Observations | 1568 | 1568 | 1568 | 1568 |
| R-squared | 0.162 |  | 0.164 |  |
| Pseudo R2 |  | 0.063 |  |  0.064 |

*Note:* \* p < 0.1, \*\* p < 0.05, \*\*\* p < 0.01. The unreported demographic control variables and clustering are the same settings as in Table OA2 using urban data.

## Table OA6. Robustness test with other confounding variables

|  |
| --- |
| Locus of Responsibility |
| Pilot × Post | 0.060 |  | 0.471\*\*\* | 0.112 |  | 0.553\*\*\* |
| (0.070) |  | (0.120) | (0.068) |  | (0.118) |
| Duration × Post |  | 0.068\*\*\* |  |  | 0.082\*\*\* |  |
|  | (0.024) |  |  | (0.023) |  |
| Pilot × Post × Local news intensity (DDD) |  |  | -0.109\*\*\* |  |  | -0.115\*\*\* |
|  |  | (0.030) |  |  | (0.029) |
| Pilot | 0.407\*\*\* |  | 0.401\*\* | 0.269\* |  | 0.256\* |
| (0.143) |  | (0.157) | (0.142) |  | (0.155) |
| Duration |  | 0.114\*\* |  |  | 0.070 |  |
|  | (0.048) |  |  | (0.047) |  |
| Post | -0.430\*\*\* | -0.501\*\*\* | -0.628\*\*\* | -0.458\*\*\* | -0.520\*\*\* | -0.660\*\*\* |
| (0.053) | (0.051) | (0.083) | (0.052) | (0.050) | (0.081) |
| Local news intensity |  |  | 0.016\*\* |  |  | 0.017\*\*\* |
|  |  | (0.006) |  |  | (0.006) |
| Local news intensity × Pilot  |  |  | -0.025\* |  |  | -0.025\* |
|  |  | (0.014) |  |  | (0.014) |
| Local news intensity × Post |  |  | 0.085\*\*\* |  |  | 0.087\*\*\* |
|  |  | (0.025) |  |  | (0.024) |
| Expectation of upward mobility | 0.085\*\*\* | 0.086\*\*\* | 0.084\*\*\* |  |  |  |
| (0.017) | (0.017) | (0.017) |  |  |  |
| W/O pension insurance |  |  |  | -0.220\*\*\* | -0.224\*\*\* | -0.215\*\*\* |
|  |  |  | (0.044) | (0.044) | (0.044) |
| Demographic Controls | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Province Dummies | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Observations | 3589 | 3589 | 3589 | 3801 | 3801 | 3801 |
| R-squared | 0.163 | 0.165 | 0.170 | 0.163 | 0.166 | 0.172 |

*Note:* \* p < 0.1, \*\* p < 0.05, \*\*\* p < 0.01. The unreported demographic control variables and clustering are the same settings as in Table OA1.

## Table OA7. Robustness test of short-term and long-term effect of policy duration and local official news intensity on political trust

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Local Gov | Province Gov | Central Gov | Local Gov | Province Gov | Central Gov | Local Gov | Province Gov | Central Gov |
| Duration | -0.319\*\*\* | -0.206\*\*\* | -0.103\*\* | 0.241 | 0.041 | -0.090 | -0.011 | -0.103 | -0.132 |
| (0.057) | (0.051) | (0.048) | (0.161) | (0.143) | (0.135) | (0.128) | (0.133) | (0.107) |
| Local news intensity (1 yr) | -0.208\*\*\* | -0.165\*\* | -0.088 |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| (0.073) | (0.065) | (0.062) |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Duration × Local news intensity (1 yr) | 0.165\*\*\* | 0.099\*\*\* | 0.034 |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| (0.038) | (0.034) | (0.032) |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Local news intensity (3 yrs) |  |  |  | -0.052\*\*\* | -0.041\*\* | -0.022 |  |  |  |
|  |  |  | (0.018) | (0.016) | (0.015) |  |  |  |
| Duration × Local news intensity (3 yrs) |  |  |  | -0.075\*\* | -0.029 | 0.003 |  |  |  |
|  |  |  | (0.030) | (0.027) | (0.026) |  |  |  |
| Local news intensity (5 yrs) |  |  |  |  |  |  | -0.068\*\*\* | -0.054\*\* | -0.029 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  | (0.024) | (0.021) | (0.020) |
| Duration × Local news intensity (5 yrs) |  |  |  |  |  |  | -0.021 | -0.002 | 0.008 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  | (0.016) | (0.014) | (0.013) |
| Enterprise employee | 0.051 | -0.050 | -0.112\*\* | 0.051 | -0.050 | -0.112\*\* | 0.051 | -0.050 | -0.112\*\* |
| (0.056) | (0.051) | (0.048) | (0.056) | (0.051) | (0.048) | (0.056) | (0.051) | (0.048) |
| Public sector employee | 0.038 | -0.021 | -0.086 | 0.038 | -0.021 | -0.086 | 0.038 | -0.021 | -0.086 |
| (0.083) | (0.074) | (0.071) | (0.083) | (0.074) | (0.071) | (0.083) | (0.074) | (0.071) |
| #Old age people in the family | 0.015 | 0.015 | 0.001 | 0.015 | 0.015 | 0.001 | 0.015 | 0.015 | 0.001 |
| (0.017) | (0.015) | (0.014) | (0.017) | (0.015) | (0.014) | (0.017) | (0.015) | (0.014) |
| Demographic Controls | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Province Dummies | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Observations | 1549 | 1529 | 1555 | 1549 | 1529 | 1555 | 1549 | 1529 | 1555 |
| R-squared | 0.075 | 0.099 | 0.106 | 0.075 | 0.099 | 0.106 | 0.075 | 0.099 | 0.106 |

*Note:* \* p < 0.1, \*\* p < 0.05, \*\*\* p < 0.01. The unreported demographic control variables and clustering are the same settings as in Table 3.

## Table OA8. Robustness test of main results in Table 1 and Table 2 with multiple imputation

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | All samples | Urban samples | Enterprise employees | Public sector employees |
| Pilot × Post | 0.038 |  | 0.406\*\*\* | 0.529\*\*\* | 0.452 | 2.274\*\*\* |
| (0.058) |  | (0.103) | (0.136) | (0.294) | (0.609) |
| Duration × Post |  | 0.055\*\*\* |  |  |  |  |
|  | (0.020) |  |  |  |  |
| Pilot × Post ×Local news intensity (DDD) |  |  | -0.100\*\*\* | -0.138\*\*\* | -0.100 | -0.553\*\*\* |
|  |  | (0.025) | (0.033) | (0.075) | (0.185) |
| Pilot | 0.473\*\*\* |  | 0.442\*\*\* | 0.074 | 0.523 | -2.110\*\* |
| (0.118) |  | (0.129) | (0.106) | (0.440) | (0.946) |
| Duration |  | 0.135\*\*\* |  |  |  |  |
|  | (0.039) |  |  |  |  |
| Post | -0.397\*\*\* | -0.456\*\*\* | -0.526\*\*\* | -0.340\*\*\* | -0.376\*\* | -1.254\*\*\* |
| (0.042) | (0.041) | (0.065) | (0.094) | (0.177) | (0.416) |
| Local news intensity |  |  | 0.015\*\*\* | 0.034\*\*\* | 0.041\*\*\* | 0.023 |
|  |  | (0.005) | (0.006) | (0.011) | (0.019) |
| Local news intensity × Pilot |  |  | -0.014 | -0.048\*\*\* | -0.108\*\* | 0.177 |
|  |  | (0.012) | (0.015) | (0.044) | (0.128) |
| Local news intensity × Post |  |  | 0.066\*\*\* | 0.084\*\*\* | 0.098\*\* | 0.238\*\* |
|  |  | (0.020) | (0.027) | (0.049) | (0.101) |
| Demographic Controls | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Provincial Dummies | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Observations | 4921 | 4921 | 4921 | 2587 | 929 | 270 |
| R-squared | 0. 131 | 0. 132 | 0.137 | 0.141 | 0.171 | 0.222 |

*Note:* \* p < 0.1, \*\* p < 0.05, \*\*\* p < 0.01. The multiple imputation used demographic features—age, gender, education, minority, party membership, urban hukou, household income—in the predictor matrix, with predictive mean matching method. Subpopulation results are estimated with subpopulation imputations.

## Table OA9. Robustness test of main results in Table 3 and OA5 with multiple imputation

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Local Gov | Province Gov | Central Gov | Local Gov | Province Gov | Central Gov |
| Pilot | -0.918\*\*\* | -0.701\*\*\* | -0.389\*\* |  |  |  |
| (0.144) | (0.129) | (0.123) |  |  |  |
| Local news intensity (1 yr) | -0.160\*\*\* | -0.194\*\*\* | -0.136\*\*\* | -0.160\*\*\* | -0.194\*\*\* | -0.136\*\*\* |
| (0.059) | (0.053) | (0.051) | (0.059) | (0.053) | (0.051) |
| Pilot × Local news intensity (1 yr) | 0.444\*\*\* | 0.311\*\*\* | 0.134\* |  |  |  |
| (0.094) | (0.084) | (0.080) |  |  |  |
| Duration |  |  |  | -0.306\*\*\* | -0.234\*\*\* | -0.130\*\*\* |
|  |  |  | (0.048) | (0.043) | (0.041) |
| Duration × Local news intensity (1 yr) |  |  |  | 0.148\*\*\* | 0.104\*\*\* | 0.045\* |
|  |  |  | (0.031) | (0.028) | (0.027) |
| Demographic Controls | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Province Dummies | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Observations | 2360 | 2335 | 2370 | 2360 | 2335 | 2370 |
| R-squared | 0.077 | 0.101 | 0.112 | 0.077 | 0.101 | 0.112 |

*Note:* \* p < 0.1, \*\* p < 0.05, \*\*\* p < 0.01. The multiple imputation used demographic features—age, gender, education, minority, party membership, urban hukou, household income—in the predictor matrix, with predictive mean matching method. Subpopulation results are estimated with subpopulation imputations.

# ONLINE APPENDIX B. QUALITATIVE EVIDENCE ON PILOT POLICY AND NEWS COVERAGE

The pilot reform of “Fully funding of individual account” is a following up reform of the pension reform in 1997, where the central government proposed shared responsibility of the social welfare. This is clearly indicated in the policy content of 1997 reform below, although the action is not de facto compulsory:

*Except for some special programs (e.g., insurance for occupational injury and childbirth) for which individuals do not need to pay fees according to the law or international practice, the fundraising responsibility for all other social insurance programs should be shared by the state, enterprises, and individuals. Enterprises and individuals should pay for insurance fee, whereas the government provides a fiscal subsidy under exceptional circumstances. Raising funds from individuals is not only helpful for expanding the funding source of social insurance but also for increasing labor’s awareness of social insurance. (“Speeding up and deepening the reform of social insurance system,” 20 May 1997)*

The pilot policy of “Fully funding of individual account” follows the direction of pension reform and continues the solution of highlighting individual accounts for pension issues in China. For instance, some main statements from the 2005 document reads:

*The main tasks (of this reform) are to ensure that the pension is distributed on time; protect the basic life of retirees; gradually fully fund individual accounts; perfect the system of a combination of social and individual accounts; construct a multilayer pension insurance system; and clarify the responsibility of the central and local governments, enterprises, and individuals. (“Decision on perfecting basic system of pension insurance for enterprise employees,”14 December 2005)*

As we noted in the main discussions, the local news coverage of the pilot policy describes the generosity of the government and the finance subsidy of the national and local finance, better off for everyone, in addition to the shared responsibility of pension contribution. In this part, we present the qualitative evidence of the local media that refers to the shared responsibility, the necessity of reform, and the government’s efforts of managing and keeping the bottom support.

Here is one typical article from a local official newspaper:

*On January 15, the reporters learned from the Provincial Department of Labor and Social Security that as one of the eight pilot provinces for the “Fully funding of individual account” reform, the “Delivery plan” of our province has been currently approved by the State Council. The funding from the National Finance has reached 0.9 billion, and the pilot policy has been comprehensively launched. Chief of Pension Insurance Division Liu said that a crucial issue of the current effort of perfecting the pension insurance system is fully finding of individual pension accounts. Our tentative system is a mixed two-tier system comprising social and individual accounts, whereas the contribution of all enterprises and individuals enter the social account for the payment of retirees. The parts that are supposed to be in the individual account of the enterprise employees are only nominal without substantive funding. The main reasons is that no historical accumulations of pension insurance exist, and given that the number of retirees is increasing, we have to move the parts that are supposed to be saved for individual accounts to ensure the current payment, which will lead to empty individual accounts. According to statistics, the empty scale of current individual accounts has already reached 700 billion, and it is increasing by billions each year. Facing the challenge of population aging, if we leave empty individual accounts as they are, the payment of retirees and the operation of pension insurance systems will be negatively affected. Liu said that “Fully funding of individual account” reform will guarantee that all the contributions from individuals will enter the individual accounts and will not be diverted to social accounts. Subsequently, the finance will meet the shortfall of the insurance funding without moving individual accounts. Every percent of a fully funded individual account will receive a subsidy by 0.75 percent point from the National Finance and 0.25 percent point from local finance. (“Our province will start fully funding individual pension accounts; individuals’ contributions will all enter individual accounts,” 17 January 2007, He Nan Daily)*

Here is one article from another local official newspaper:

*This policy aims to support the basic pension and social old-age insurance systems by reforming basic pension calculation and grant methods. We are ensuring the on-time granting of pension for enterprise retired employees while expanding the coverage of the old-age insurance system for everyone included in the scheme. This guarantee requires the government to intensify the collection of insurance funding and tighten the supervision and management. Moreover, we should improve and integrate multiple approaches for fund raising to fully fund individual accounts. (“Pilot plan of “Fully funding of individual account” reform for enterprise employees in Shanxi Province,” 30 September 2006, Shanxi Daily)*

One local official report addressing the 2005 State Council No. 38 states the following:

*The “Decision on Perfecting the Basic System of Pension Insurance for Enterprise Employees” is an important resolution made by the central authority on the basis of the overall socioeconomic development of our country. The decision is vital for the healthy and sustainable development of the economy, as well as for the long-term safety of our nation. It is also essential for protecting the wellbeing of our prefecture’s citizens. (“Tianjin’s pension insurance system is having a critical reform; the coverage is expanding,” 17 July 2006, Tianjin Daily)*