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中国独生子女政策的经济分析

**ECONOMIC ANALYSIS OF CHINA'S ONE  
CHILD POLICY**

**MEBRATU SEYOUM MESFIN**

指导教师:	Prof. Xiaohua Gong
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## 摘要

对于中国，以及整个世界来说，计划生育政策是政府通过干预手段进行人口增长控制的最重要的社会政策之一。本研究的目的是评估中国自1979年起实施的雄心勃勃的控制人口增长的计划生育政策给中国带来的经济影响及人口问题对其经济的挑战。首先，本文对计划生育政策做了简短的历史回顾，并探讨了中国人口动态和人口年龄结构的过去，现状及将来的变化。本论文还介绍了印度和瑞典的人口动态，并提供了关于这些国家在人口政策方面的努力及在人口控制与管理方面与中国的比较分析。对这两个国家的案例分析有助于更深入地了解不同国家制定和实施的控制人口增长所采取的政策，及它们今后对人口变化的影响，也能更好地了解不同政策选择的有效性。对过去六十年中国经济发展和人口增长控制政策的数据进行分析表明，那些在计划生育政策时代出生的中国市民普遍享有较高的经济收益。证据显示，中国计划生育政策的意义不仅仅在于控制人口，在过去三十年，它还是一种拉动经济增长的手段。时至今日，一方面，计划生育政策已经达到了既定目标—控制人口增长，带动经济增长；另一方面，计划生育政策对中国社会经济和人口产生了复杂而深远的影响，人们因此对中国独生子女政策在未来可能产生的负面作用表示担忧。鉴于中国在政治，经济以及人口方面对世界的重要性，我们对该国未来人口的走向十分关注。

**关键词：**中国，经济增长，计划生育，独生子女政策，人口动态

## ABSTRACT

For China, and the world as a whole, the birth control policy is one of the most important social policies in population growth control through government intervention. The purpose of this study is to assess the real economic impact and the demographic challenges to china's economic prospects of the ambitious one child population growth control policy that has been implemented in china since 1979. Firstly, a brief historical review of the one child policy is addressed, and then the demographic dynamics and population age structure of china's past, present and projected changes in the future are explored in this study. This thesis also presents case studies of demographic dynamics in India and Sweden to give a comparative overview analysis of population policy efforts and population dynamics in those countries. The selection of countries for case studies can add more insight into the policies that countries formulate and implement to control population growth and subsequent impacts on population dynamics, and to gain more insight into the effectiveness of those policy options. Statistical analysis of data on china's economic development and population growth control policies covering the last sixty years suggests that, those Chinese citizens during the one child policy era have, on average, enjoyed higher economic growth. Evidence tells us that the one child policy has been not only as an end in itself, but also as a means to economic progress in china for the last three decades. The one-child policy has accomplished the aims it set out to achieve—controlling population growth and spur economic growth; on the other hand, the one child policy has induced profound and complex socio-economic and demographic consequences that have called China's future policy into question. Given China's enormous political, economic, and demographic importance to the world, the country's demographic future will be of interest to all of us.

**Key words:** China, Economic Growth, One Child Policy, and Demographic Dynamic

I wish to dedicate this master thesis to my mom Felegehiwot Berhe, my dad Seyoum Mesfin, my two brothers Binyam Seyoum and Agazi Seyoum and my sister Zekre Seyoum.

**Mebratu Seyoum**

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 FOREWORD

The one child policy launched in 1979 as an interim policy, with the intention that this should be a policy measure for a period of only 20 to 30 years<sup>1</sup> is probably the largest social experiment in human history.

At the start of China's adoption to an open door and reform policy, raising the standard living of the Chinese population as a means of maintaining legitimacy among the people was The Chinese Government's main objective. Accordingly the government formulated two basic national policies:

- Developing the economy.
- Controlling population growth.

In developing the economy China has achieved records unmatched in the modern world. For the past three decades China's GDP per capita adjusted for purchasing power parity, rose more than four-fold. As a result China has become one of the most dynamic and fastest growing economies in the world.

Most people have credited this economic miracle to China's adoption of an open-door policy in the late 1970s and the subsequent transition from a planned command economy to a socialist market economy with Chinese characteristics.

However, economic policy was only one of the two pillars in China's quest for modernization; the other is the population-control policy.

The population control policy is based on two basic concerns: First human and material production should be controlled and planned. China had a planned economy, so any unplanned rapid population growth adds burden for the government hence it should be controlled. Second is the pressure of population on natural resources: With twenty-two percent of the world's population living within the borders of China on only 7% of the world's arable land, 7% of fresh water, 3% of the forests and only 2% of oil resources, the Chinese government sought to reduce depletion of resources by decreasing population growth.

The question can be asked: Have the strong population-control policy efforts by the government supported China's economic growth over the past three decades?

Since the inception of the one child policy three decades ago, China has witnessed demographic changes of historic proportions. Thirty years after it was launched, China's one child policy is credited with cutting population growth to an all time low while contributing to three decades of spectacular economic development.

By implementing the so called one child policy China has transformed the demographic patterns from extreme high fertility, high mortality and rapid population growth to low

fertility, low mortality and low population growth rates within a very short transition period compared to the non government controlled population growth changes in the western world.

China is now a post- transitional society; due to China's unusually rapid fertility declines with life expectancy reaching new heights its population will face a more rapid and severe process of ageing. If current family planning policies persist, fertility rates are projected to remain near or possibly even sink below present levels, which could facilitate the central government's current demographic objective of keeping China's population under 1.6 billion by the year 2050.<sup>2</sup>

Comparing this with India, with its significant higher fertility levels India is forecasted to move ahead of China in total population size by 2035.<sup>3</sup> Due to the unrestraint population growth in India, China will lose its position as the most populous country in the world.

There has been increasing concern about the economic implications of the one child policy and the subsequent demographic challenges to China's sustainable economic development and growth in recent years. Although China's one child policy has successfully slowed its population growth and facilitated stable economic growth the one child policy also induced significant long-term consequences. The costs associated with the policy are apparent and are rising. According to China's National Committee of Population and Planned Birth, China's demographic dynamics during the next 30 years will have the following trends:

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- A peak of workers entering the labor market by 2015 followed by a decline in the working-age population.
- A growing proportion of elderly with inadequate pension or family support, in what demographers call it the “4-2-1 problem,” (a reference to the fact that in many families one child will be expected to support two aged parents and four grandparents).
- A disproportionately high number of male births attributable to sex selective abortion.

These demographic changes are set to undermine China's long-term stability by inducing labor shortages, slowing economic growth, and increasing pressure for internal migration and immigration.

The significance of these issues has brought questions among the majority of scholars and even some policy makers within the Communist Party of China whether the one-child policy, as an interim policy, should proceed to its usual end or whether the time has come to make changes to China's current family planning measures.

The current situation indicates that China is not yet at the stage of development where population changes matter a great deal for economic growth. But when that time comes, perhaps in a decade or so, demographic changes will have a profound influence not only on economic growth but also on China's global competitiveness.

## **1.2 NEED FOR STUDY**

Over the past three decades, china has achieved two wonders, that is, historic demographic transition and rapid economic development.

First, China's unrivalled economic growth over the past thirty years has been recognized as the economic miracle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. China has been keeping its average economic growth rate at 9.6% per annum and increased its economic aggregates by 11 times.<sup>4</sup>

Second, the complete historic demographic transition and the subsequent socioeconomic changes of china's population have been profoundly affected by the one child policy. The total fertility rate declined from 5.8 in 1970 to 1.6 in 2000 according to the fifth population census.<sup>5</sup> By the end of 2003, China's population stood at 1.29 billion, accounting for 22% of the world's total population. The family planning policy has led to a reduction of 300 million births during the last thirty years, with the birth rate continuing to decline. As China is the most populous country in the world, the rapid decline in fertility rate has a profound effect on china in particular and the world population growth in general.

The family planning policy and the subsequent demographic transition brought a remarkable "demographic dividend" in china's age structure composition. According to research estimates 15% of china's economic growth since 1978 is accounted for favorable demographic dividend.<sup>6</sup>



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