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China's One-Child Policy

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China's One-Child Policy

Tyrene White

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Introduction

In 1979 China's "one-child-per-couple" policy, or one-child policy, was launched. The policy was part of a multifaceted reform program pursued by the new regime under Deng Xiaoping, and its goal was to limit young, childbearing-age couples to only one child or, failing that, two children. With a population of about 1 billion in 1980, China's leaders were convinced that only a strict program of population control would make it possible for China to achieve its development goal of "modernization by the year 2000." This radical social engineering effort was directly at odds with much of China's reform policy, which saw the state begin to retreat from its pervasive role in every aspect of family and social life. By subjecting childbearing to direct state regulation—that is, claiming that the state had the right and obligation to decide who was allowed to have a child and when—childbearing was effectively "collectivized" at a time when the economy was heading the opposite direction. It is no surprise, then, that the progression of the one-child policy was followed very closely by scholars, journalists, and human rights activists. An impressive body of scholarship has been compiled on this topic, despite serious constraints on research in the 1980s and 1990s. Four national censuses and annual sample surveys have helped improve the quality of demographic data available, but data on policy implementation has been patchy. As a result, two types of studies are dominant: (a) comprehensive works that provide an overview of policy evolution, implementation, and outcomes and (b) case studies that provide more detailed analysis of local policy processes. A third category of scholarship explores the impact and consequences of enforcement, particularly a skewed sex ratio at birth and a rapidly aging population. The scholarship on the one-child policy reflects the nature of the topic, which is broadly interdisciplinary, and the policy has been of great interest not only to political scientists but also to sociologists, economists, anthropologists, historians, and demographers. The works included here bear witness to this breadth of scholarly interest.

General Overviews

Several works provide a broad overview and interpretation of China's one-child policy against the backdrop of China's longer-term population control efforts and demographic changes. Banister 1987 and Tien 1991 examine China's historical and contemporary demographic profile, as well as the evolution of China's population policies after 1949 and the one-child policy. Both utilize data previously unavailable and data from the 1982 census to reconstruct the demographic past. More than a decade passed before a second set of volumes appeared. Scharping 2003 was the first to provide a sustained analysis of the origins and evolution of the one-child policy and its enforcement. This work was followed by Greenhalgh and Winckler 2005 and White 2007. Scharping 2003 explores the demographic challenges China faced after 1949 and the policymaking process that led to the one-child limit. Greenhalgh and Winckler 2005 tracks China's shift from a Leninist approach to population policy to one more in keeping with the neo-liberal regime that emerged during the reform era. White 2007 emphasizes the historical continuity between China's pre-1979 approach to population policy and the one-child policy, and the contradiction between the Maoist campaign methods used for enforcement and the changing realities of reform-era politics in the countryside.

Banister, Judith. *China's Changing Population*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1987.

Banister examines major demographic trends, particularly fertility and mortality. Using 1982 census data, she reconstructs the impact of the Great Leap Forward famine (1958–1960) and analyzes fertility decline in the 1970s, prior to the one-child policy. She concludes that state intervention played a significant role in the pace of fertility decline.

Greenhalgh, Susan, and Edwin Winckler. *Governing China's Population: From Leninist to Neoliberal Biopolitics*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005.

Greenhalgh and Winckler trace the evolution of China's policy development and implementation. Interprets China's population policy as a particular type of biopolitics, one that evolved from a Leninist to a neoliberal form, tracking with China's liberalizing economic and social reforms of the 1990s and 2000s, and with the rise of science and influential scientists who argued the necessity of a one-child policy.

Scharping, Thomas. *Birth Control in China, 1949–2000: Population Policy and Demographic Development*. London: Routledge, 2003.

Offers comprehensive coverage of population policymaking in China from 1949 to 2000 and the development of a bureaucracy capable of implementing the policy. Also examines the demographic consequences of the program.

Tien, H. Yuan. *China's Strategic Demographic Initiative*. New York: Praeger, 1991.

Provides an overview of China's demographic change during the People's Republic and examines the evolution of population policy. Tien sees the one-child policy as a strategic demographic initiative, a necessary corrective to China's demographic dilemma.

White, Tyrene. *China's Longest Campaign: Birth Planning in the People's Republic, 1949–2005*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2007.

Examines the evolution of China's population policy after 1949 and how China's distinctive "birth planning" policy led to a program of strict birth limits and the collectivization of childbearing. Rural resistance and the challenges of implementation are detailed. Argues that the mass campaign method of enforcement was the only one capable of overriding the resistance of villagers and local officials.

Edited Volumes

Several edited volumes have contributed considerably to research on the one-child policy and its consequences. Croll, et al. 1985 examines the early years of the one-child policy, providing demographic and sociological background. Peng and Guo 2000 offers a comprehensive overview of demographic trends in the late 20th century. Poston, et al. 2006 updates those trends and includes particularly valuable chapters on abortion and sterilization trends and new marriage market patterns. Zhao and Fei 2007 adds to this analysis and projects trends decades into the 21st century.

Croll, Elisabeth, Delia Davin, and Penny Kane, eds. *China's One-Child Family Policy*. New York: St. Martin's, 1985.

In one of the earliest volumes on the one-child policy, Croll, Davin, and Kane assemble a series of chapters that examine the implementation of the one-child policy and the effects of the policy, both observed and projected. Particularly useful is the chapter on implementation of the one-child policy in urban China.

Peng, Xizhe, with Zhigang Guo, eds. *The Changing Population of China*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2000.

Comprehensive review of historical and contemporary population trends written by some of China's top demographers and sociologists. Covers family and marriage patterns, age and sex structures, urbanization, migration, minority populations, as well as education, health, and environmental issues.

Poston, Dudley L., Jr., Che-Fu Lee, Chiung-Fang Chang, Sherry L. McKibben, and Carol S. Walther, eds. *Fertility, Family Planning and Population Policy in China*. Routledge Studies in Asia's Transformations. London: Routledge, 2006.

Surveys the impact of a variety of factors on China's changing fertility patterns. Chapters devoted specifically to tracking abortion and sterilization trends, fertility in the migrant population, and emerging marriage market patterns are particularly valuable.

Zhao, Zhongwei, and Fei Guo. *Transition and Challenge: China's Population at the Beginning of the 21st Century*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.

Surveys recent trends in all aspects of Chinese demography and population studies, providing a comprehensive view of demographic change in the late 20th century and a vision of what lies ahead in the 21st.

Historical Context

Several important works place the one-child policy in the broader context of historical demographic trends and fertility patterns and practices. Ho 1959 remains the classic study of China's historical population trends. The author's findings are challenged by the more recent work, Lee and Wang 1999, which finds that China is less distinctive in its marriage and reproductive patterns than suggested by Ho. Wolf and Engelen 2008 challenges the methodology and conclusions in Lee and Wang 1999. Chen 1976 and Orleans 1972 discuss population policy in China after 1949, as does Tien 1973. Liu, et al. 1981 compiles articles by China's leading thinkers on population issues in the 1970s. The English-language publication was intended for an international audience. Caldwell and Caldwell 2005 provides an historical and comparative analysis of infanticide in agrarian societies of Asia.

Caldwell, John C., and Bruce K. Caldwell. "Family Size Control by Infanticide in the Great Agrarian Societies of Asia." *Journal of Comparative Family Studies* 36.2 (2005): 205–230.

Compares patterns of, and motives for, infanticide in India, Japan, and China during the premodern, agrarian era. Argues that although high mortality rates generally mitigated the need for infanticide, it was deployed when necessary to assure the continued prosperity of the family. In China, subsistence and survival may have played a larger role than in either India or Japan.

Chen, Pi-Chao. *Population and Health Policy in the People's Republic of China*. Occasional Monograph Series—Interdisciplinary Communications Program 9. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, 1976.

A comprehensive review of China's population and health policies during the early 1970s by one of the few scholars of the era who visited rural China at that time.

Emphasizes the link between health policy and population policy, the organization of population control work at the grassroots, and the Chinese experience as compared to other developing areas.

Ho, Ping-Ti. *Studies on the Population of China, 1368–1953.* Harvard East Asian Studies 4. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1959.

Classic study of China's population growth over six hundred years. Attributes China's relatively high fertility rate to high rates of infant and child mortality, widespread poverty, and repeated famine.

Lee, James Z., and Wang Feng. *One Quarter of Humanity: Malthusian Mythology and Chinese Realities, 1700–2000.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999.

Lee and Wang challenge the accepted view (represented by Ho 1959) that premodern China experienced fertility levels significantly higher than those of Europe. They conclude that efforts to limit childbearing within marriage were as widespread in China as in Europe, and that the family planning efforts under the People's Republic reinforced this long-standing pattern of birth control.

Liu, Zheng, et al. *China's Population: Problems and Prospects.* China Studies Series. Beijing: New World Press, 1981.

A compilation of articles by China's leading population analysts surveying a broad range of population issues. Of particular importance are articles by Zhang Lizhing on birth control, which includes annual figures for contraceptive use and birth control procedures during the 1970s, as well as articles by Liu Zheng, Song Jian, and Hou Wenrou that examine population theory, planning, and policy.

Orleans, Leo A. *Every Fifth Child: The Population of China.* London: Eyre Methuen, 1972.

An early work on population issues in the People's Republic, this volume provides an introduction to the politics of China's population policy and the challenges faced by the post-1949 Communist regime.

Tien, H. Yuan. *China's Population Struggle: Demographic Decisions of the People's Republic, 1949–1969.* Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1973.

Examines the evolution of population policy during the first two decades of the People's Republic.

Wolf, Arthur P., and Theo Engelen. "Fertility and Fertility Control in Pre-Revolutionary China." *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 38.3 (2008): 345–375.

Wolf and Engelen challenge the revisionist finding of Lee and Wang 1999 that Chinese fertility patterns were consistent with European patterns. They reexamine the Lee and Wang data and challenge their findings. Fertility in China, they argue, was far higher than in Europe, suggesting little or no deliberate birth control took place in China. Available online for purchase or by subscription.

Origins of the One-Child Policy

Scholars hold differing views on the origins of the one-child policy and the reasoning behind the Deng regime's decision to implement a one-child policy. Greenhalgh 2008 attributes the decision to launch the one-child policy to the rising influence of a key group of scientists whose enthusiasm for advanced computer modeling led them to argue forcefully for the necessity of a one-child limit. White 1992 emphasizes instead the long-established state approach to population control, which treated childbearing like economic production, subjecting it to strict state planning and regulation.

Greenhalgh, Susan. *Just One Child: Science and Policy in Deng's China.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008.

Argues that the one-child policy resulted from the rise in influence of a small group of scientists who used crude computer modeling to calculate (in error) that a one-child birth limit was the only way to achieve China's economic goals by the end of the century. Interviews with principals in the 1978–1980 policymaking process make this a particularly compelling volume.

White, Tyrene. "The Origins of China's Birth Planning Campaign." In *Engendering China: Women, Culture and the State.* Edited by Christina K. Gilmartin, Gail Hershatler, Lisa Rofel, and Tyrene White, 250–278. Harvard Contemporary China Series 10. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992.

Traces the one-child policy to the emergence of the concept of "birth planning" (*jihua shengyu*) as the organizing framework for China's population policy. Like economic planning, birth planning justified state regulation and rationing of children and culminated in the imposition of a one-child limit in 1979, when ambitious per capita economic goals for the year 2000 made it essential to suppress population growth as quickly as possible.

Provincial and Local-Level Case Studies

By far the largest body of work on China's one-child policy has come from research work conducted at the local level. The sources use local interviews and research materials to provide a detailed picture of enforcement and implementation in a particular place. Taken together, they provide a picture of both continuity and variation in the patterns of policy enforcement. Greenhalgh 1990, Greenhalgh 1994, and Li 1995 examine areas in northern China, while Huang 1989 and Mueggler 2001 cover southern China. Kaufman, et al. 1989 and Short and Zhai 1998 use survey data from different regions of the country to examine variations in local policy implementation, while Zhang 1999 provides a rich case study of village-level implementation in northern China.

Greenhalgh, Susan. "The Evolution of the One-Child Policy in Shaanxi, 1979–88." *China Quarterly* 122 (1990):191–229.

One of several important articles by Greenhalgh on Shaanxi Province. Details how fluctuations in national policy in the 1980s impacted provincial-level regulations on fertility control and their enforcement. Available online by subscription.

Greenhalgh, Susan. "Controlling Births and Bodies in Village China." *American Ethnologist* 21.1 (1994): 3–30.

This second article on Shaanxi villages shows how national-level policy reversals in late 1989 and 1990 (caused by the return to power of conservatives in the aftermath of the 1989 democracy movement) led to a renewed campaign to enforce strict birth limits, setting aside the modest policy relaxation that occurred in the mid-1980s. New local guidelines and restrictions are detailed, along with evidence of the use of coercion. Available online for purchase or by subscription.

Huang Shu-min. "Village Cadres." In *The Spiral Road: Change in a Chinese Communist Village through the Eyes of a Communist Party Leader*. By Huang Shu-min, 175–186. *Development, Conflict, and Social Change Series*. Boulder, CO: Westview, 1989.

Details the enactment of a village family planning campaign after higher-level authorities placed pressure on local cadres to meet strict targets for childbirth and to prevent the birth of any unauthorized second child.

Kaufman, Joan, Zhang Zhirong, Qiao Xinjian, and Zhang Yang. "Family Planning Policy and Practice in China: A Study of Four Rural Counties." *Population and Development Review* 15.4 (1989): 707–729.

Using survey data from rural Fujian and Heilongjiang Provinces, the authors find evidence of a de facto two-child policy and lax enforcement of local rules on fines for "unplanned births." Available online by subscription.

Li, Jiali. "China's One-Child Policy: How and How Well Has It Worked? A Case Study of Hebei Province, 1979–88." *Population and Development Review* 21.3 (1995): 563–585.

Discusses the process and effectiveness of the one-child policy in China during the first decade of implementation, 1979–1988, using data from the 1988 Two-per-Thousand National Fertility Survey in Hebei Province. The study showed that implementation was very effective among urban workers, who remained subject to a variety of government controls, but far less effective in the countryside. Available online by subscription.

Mueggler, Erik. "A Shattered Gourd." In *The Age of Wild Ghosts: Memory, Violence, and Place in Southwest China*. By Erik Mueggler, 285–320. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001.

Provides a vivid account of the events that unfold when a village leader in Yunnan Province is pressed from higher levels to enforce local regulations and prevent unauthorized births.

Short, Susan E., and Zhai Fengying. "Looking Locally at China's One-Child Policy." *Studies in Family Planning* 29.4 (1998): 373–387.

Data from the China Health and Nutrition Survey (conducted in 1989, 1991, and 1993), drawn from localities in eight provinces, is used to show the range of variation that exists in local implementation of the one-child policy.

Zhang Weiguo. "Implementation of State Family Planning Programmes in a Northern Chinese Village." *China Quarterly* 157 (1999): 202–230.

Provides a detailed look at interactions between village officials and villagers subject to the one-child policy. Reveals the variety and particularity of implementation and enforcement in rural Chinese villages. Available online by subscription.

Resistance to the One-Child Policy

The one-child policy provoked great resistance, which came in a variety of forms. Wasserstrom 1984 details patterns of resistance in the early years of implementation.

White 2010 shows how patterns of resistance responded to the evolution of rural reforms and links sex-selective abortion to policy resistance. Milwertz 1997, Nie 2005 and Zhang 2007 argue that there has been a significant shift from resistance to acceptance, particularly in urban China.

Milwertz, Cecilia Nathansen. *Accepting Population Control: Urban Chinese Women and the One-Child Family Policy*. Nordic Institute of Asian Studies 74. Richmond, VA: Curzon, 1997.

One of the very few works on the one-child policy in urban China, Milwertz uses data drawn primarily from Beijing and Shenyang to argue that the high rate of compliance with the one-child limit in urban areas was due not only to the use of strict regulatory controls but also to urban women's acceptance of state arguments for the necessity of the policy.

Nie, Yilin, and Robert J. Wyman. "The One-Child Policy in Shanghai: Acceptance and Internalization." *Population and Development Review* 31.2 (2005): 313–336.

Interviews with Shanghainese who were of childbearing age when the one-child policy began in 1979, or when the interviews were conducted in 2003, lead the authors to conclude that Shanghainese view the policy positively and that it is consistent with current childbearing preferences. Available online by subscription.

Wasserstrom, Jeffrey. "Resistance to the One-Child Family." *Modern China* 10.3 (1984): 345–374.

An important early contribution to this topic, detailing a variety of methods employed at the local level to avoid or oppose the one-child limit. Available online for purchase or by subscription.

White, Tyrene. "Domination, Resistance, and Accommodation in China's One-Child Campaign." In *Chinese Society: Change, Conflict, and Resistance*. 3d ed. Edited by Elizabeth J. Perry and Mark Selden, 171–196. Routledge Studies in Asia's Transformations. New York: Routledge, 2010.

Argues that rural childbearing-age couples are caught between two discourses—a state discourse insisting that the one-child limit is essential for the welfare and success of the nation as a whole and a cultural discourse that insists on the need to bear a son. Resorting to sex-selective abortion and abandonment of baby girls is a way of accommodating this contradiction while resisting state discourse.

Zhang, Hong. "From Resisting to 'Embracing'? The One-Child Rule: Understanding New Fertility Trends in a Central China Village." *China Quarterly* 192 (2007): 855–875.

Uses detailed ethnographic research in a rural village to reveal a shift in attitudes away from active resistance to the one-child policy. The author finds many couples making decisions to embrace the local policy on birth limits, and explores the social, economic and demographic motives for this shift. Available online by subscription.

Fertility Decline

The determinants of China's fertility decline have been debated vigorously. Aird 1978 tracks the decline in fertility that resulted from the post-1970 family planning program. Lavelly and Freedman 1990 argues that fertility decline began prior to the start of China's family planning program. Peng 1989 and Cai 2010 both acknowledge the multiple factors that contributed to fertility decline. Peng 1989 concludes that socioeconomic development and other factors played a greater role than government policy, while Cai 2010 concludes that population policy was the primary cause of fertility decline. Zeng 1996 questions data suggesting an extremely low fertility level. Gu, et al. 2007 tracks variations in birth policy and concludes that the fertility level is about 1.5.

Aird, John S. "Fertility Decline and Birth Control in the People's Republic of China." *Population and Development Review* 4.2 (1978): 225–254.

Examines fertility trends and birth control usage in the 1970s, prior to the implementation of the one-child policy. Available online by subscription.

Cai, Yong. "China's Below-Replacement Fertility: Government Policy or Socioeconomic Development?" *Population and Development Review* 36.3 (2010): 419–440.

Compares fertility in Jiangsu and Zhejiang, two of the most developed provinces in China, to examine the relationship between socioeconomic development and low fertility. Argues that structural changes brought about by socioeconomic development and ideational shifts accompanying the new wave of globalization played a key role in China's fertility reduction. Available online by subscription.

Gu Baochang, Wang Feng, Guo Zhigang, and Zhang Erli. "China's Local and National Fertility Policies at the End of the Twentieth Century." *Population and Development Review* 33.1 (2007): 129–148.

Top Chinese demographers provide the most comprehensive look to date on variations in local fertility policies and regulations. Using data from all 420 Chinese prefectures, the authors argue that fertility policy and actually achieved fertility levels in China have converged around 1.5, a level that is far below replacement fertility.

Available online by subscription.

Lavelly, William, and Ronald Freedman. "The Origins of the Chinese Fertility Decline." *Demography* 27.3 (1990): 357–367.

Argues that the Chinese fertility decline predated efforts to promote family planning and that it began in urban areas among better-educated households, much as it did in Europe. The authors concede, however, the powerful role of China's population control policy in determining the timing and speed of the fertility decline in the 1970s. Available online by subscription.

Peng Xizhe. "Major Determinants of China's Fertility Transition." *China Quarterly* 117 (1989):1–37.

Examines the role of a variety of factors in China's fertility transition. While acknowledging the role played by government policy in hastening the fertility transition, Peng emphasizes the differential role of development, culture, and education in explaining regional variations in the transition process. Available online by subscription.

Zeng Yi. "Is Fertility in China in 1991–1992 Far Below the Replacement Level?" *Population Research* 50.1 (1996): 27–34.

Problems in the statistical reporting system and, in particular, fraudulent reporting by grassroots officials motivated to report good numbers and hide bad ones, are argued to have artificially lowered the reported fertility rate in the early 1990s. Available online for purchase or by subscription.

Infant Abandonment and Adoption

One consequence of the one-child policy was an increase in the numbers of infants abandoned and adopted. Johnson, et al. 1998 shows how the one-child limit led to abandonment of infant girls by some and adoption of girls by others. Johnson 2004 explores these issues more fully, as well as the condition of China's orphanages. Zhang 2006 confirms Johnson's findings by showing the patterns of informal adoption of infant girls.

Johnson, Kay, Huang Banghan, and Wang Liyao. "Infant Abandonment and Adoption in China." *Population and Development Review* 24.3 (1998): 469–510.

The authors argue that infant abandonment and adoption are interrelated in rural China. Birth limits, combined with the perceived need for a son, press some to abandon female infants, while childlessness, or the lack of a daughter, lead other rural families to adopt them. Adoptions occur despite the threat of government-imposed penalties for those who exceed their birth limit through infant adoption. Available online by subscription.

Johnson, Kay Ann. *Wanting a Daughter, Needing a Son: Abandonment, Adoption, and Orphanage Care in China*. St. Paul, MN: Yeong & Yeong, 2004.

The definitive work on infant abandonment and adoption in China, expanding and extending previously published work. Johnson examines the causes of infant abandonment, the motives for domestic adoption, efforts to improve poor orphanage conditions, and the emergence of a system of international adoption.

Zhang Weiguo. "Child Adoption in Contemporary Rural China." *Journal of Family Issues* 27.3 (2006): 301–340.

Follows on the earlier work of Johnson 2004, analyzing the pattern of informal adoption of girls in rural China. Shows that the desire for daughters is strong among many rural families and that adoptions are often arranged by childless couples or by those who wish to have both a son and a daughter. Available online for purchase or by subscription.

Sex Ratio Imbalance and Missing Girls

Evidence of distorted sex ratios at birth by the early 1990s led to a search for causes. Early analyses, such as those in Zeng, et al. 1993, argued that the underreporting of births of infant girls skewed the sex ratio artificially. Subsequent research suggested that underreporting did play a role, but Banister 2004; Cai and Lavelly 2003; Ebenstein 2010; and Wei, et al. 2009 all conclude that the main causes are son preference and the one-child policy. Murphy 2003 and Li and Lavelly 2003 examine the role of son preference as a cause of the sex ratio imbalance, while Chu 2001 interviews rural women about pressures to have a son. Gu and Roy 1995 places China's sex ratio imbalance in the context of sex ratios elsewhere in Asia.

Banister, Judith. "Shortage of Girls in China Today." *Journal of Population Research* 21.1 (2004): 19–45.

Banister argues persuasively that son preference is the primary cause of China's skewed sex ratio and the shortage of girls. In contemporary China, son preference is worse in rural areas but also widespread in urban areas. The problem is amplified by government policy, the availability of sex-selective abortion, and low levels of fertility. Available online for purchase or by subscription.

Cai, Yong, and William Lavelly. "China's Missing Girls: Numerical Estimates and Effects on Population Growth." *China Review* 3.2 (2003): 13–29.

Comparing data from the 1990 and 2000 censuses, the authors distinguish between the "truly missing" girls in the population and the girls who went uncounted because they were hidden from census-takers. They conclude that the number of truly missing girls in 2000 was 8.5 million, since only one-third of those counted as missing in 1990 appeared in the 2000 census. Available online by subscription.

Chu Junhong. "Prenatal Sex Determination and Sex-Selective Abortion in Rural Central China." *Population and Development Review* 27.2 (2001): 259–281.

Interviews with a variety of women of childbearing age reveal their motives for sex-selective abortion, how they are able to find out the sex of their fetus despite laws forbidding sex-selective abortion, and the very practical considerations that lead many to choose sex-selective abortion, including the intense cultural pressure to give birth to a son: Failure to have a son diminishes their worth and their families' rural status. Available online by subscription.

Ebenstein, Avraham. "The 'Missing Girls' of China and the Unintended Consequences of the One Child Policy." *Journal of Human Resources* 45.1 (2010): 87–115.

Argues that China's sex ratio imbalance is caused by the one-child policy. The author uses data on the severity of fines levied on policy offenders as a measure of the strictness of fertility control. He finds that in high-fine penalty areas, fertility is lower but sex-selective abortion and sex ratio imbalance is higher than in areas with less strict fertility control. Available online for purchase or by subscription.

Gu Baochang, and Krishna Roy. "Sex Ratio at Birth in China, with Reference to Other Areas in East Asia: What We Know." *Asia-Pacific Population Journal* 10.3 (1995): 17–42.

Places the sex ratio imbalance in China in comparative perspective, examining it in the context of sex ratios at birth in other parts of Asia.

Li Jianghong, and William Lavelly. "Village Context, Women's Status, and Son Preference among Rural Chinese Women." *Rural Sociology* 68.1 (2003): 87–106.

Li and Lavelly find that son preference among rural women is stronger in lower income and mountainous regions, where sons are believed to provide crucial financial support. Son preference weakens as women's income, autonomy, and education rises. The authors find that female infant mortality is higher among women who score higher on measures of son preference. Available online by subscription.

Murphy, Rachel. "Fertility and Distorted Sex Ratios in Rural China: Culture, State and Policy." *Population and Development Review* 29.4 (2003): 595–626.

Explores the consequences of the interplay between gender bias in population policy and in rural culture. Argues that the compound effect is likely to result in the continued discrimination against daughters. Available online by subscription.

Wei Xing Zhu, Li Lu, and Therese Hesketh. "China's Excess Males, Sex Selective Abortion, and One Child Policy: Analysis of Data from 2005 National Intercensus Survey." *British Medical Journal* 338 (2009): 920–923.

The authors use an official intercensus survey of more than 4.7 million people under age twenty to analyze sex ratio trends. They find skewed sex ratios across all age cohorts under age twenty, both urban and rural. Sex ratios were near normal for first births but far worse for second births. The authors estimate about 32 million excess males in China in 2005.

Zeng Yi, Tu Ping, Gu Baochang, Xu Yi, Li Bohua, and Li Yongping. "Causes and Implications of the Recent Increase in the Reported Sex Ratio at Birth in China." *Population and Development Review* 19.2 (1993): 283–302.

Leading Chinese demographers analyze the data on sex ratio imbalance and conclude that the majority of the problem is statistical. Births of girls often go unreported if they are in violation of local birth plans. Available online by subscription.

Coercion and Human Rights

China's strict population control program has been criticized for violating human rights and using coercive methods of enforcement. Mosher 1983 provided an early picture of the use of coercion based on the author's fieldwork observations in Guangdong Province. Aird 1990 uses documentary sources to compile a chronicle of the use of coercion, particularly forced abortion and sterilization. Hom 1991–1992 situates the one-child policy in a feminist context, while Li 1996 examines the links between coercion and legal failures. Huang and Yang 2004 argues that coercion and institutional development are inversely related.

Aird, John S. *Slaughter of the Innocents: Coercive Birth Control in China*. AEI Studies 498. Washington, DC: AEI, 1990.

Aird examines the implementation of the one-child policy during the 1980s, focusing in particular on the use of coercion to enforce the policy, including forced sterilizations and abortions.

Hom, Sharon K. "Female Infanticide in China: The Human Rights Specter and Thoughts toward (An)other Vision." *Columbia Human Rights Law Review* 23 (1991–1992): 249–314.

Situates the one-child policy and its consequences within the broader institutional context of violence against women or, as she calls it, the regime of "social femicide."

Huang, Yanzhong, and Dali L. Yang. "Population Control and State Coercion in China." In *Holding China Together: Diversity and National Integration in the Post-Deng Era*. Edited by Barry Naughton and Dali L. Yang, 193–225. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

Uses institutional analysis at the provincial and village level to explore variations in the use of coercion to implement the one-child policy.

Li, Xiaorong. "License to Coerce: Violence against Women, State Responsibility, and Legal Failures in China's Family-Planning Program." *Yale Journal of Law & Feminism* 8.1 (1996): 145–191.

Discusses the weakness of China's legal system, including law formation, implementation, and administration, and how those weaknesses allow for the widespread use of coercion in population control enforcement.

Mosher, Steven. "Birth Control: A Grim Game of Numbers." In *Broken Earth: The Rural Chinese*. By Steven Mosher, 224–261. New York: Free Press, 1983.

This chapter documents the coercive extremes observed by Mosher in southern Guangdong Province in the early 1980s.

Policy Debate

As the 21st century began, the one-child policy came under increasing criticism, given China's changed demographic and economic profile. Wang 2005 and Wang 2010 lay out several important costs of the one-child policy and argue for the necessity of policy change. The edited volume Gu and Li 2010 compiles articles by Chinese scholars exploring the same issues. Zeng 2007 adds to the debate by offering a specific proposal for a gradual policy transition. Greenhalgh 2001 visits the issue through the eyes of Chinese feminists, revealing the rise in cautious opposition to the one-child policy on feminist grounds.

Greenhalgh, Susan. "Fresh Winds in Beijing: Chinese Feminists Speak Out on the One-Child Policy and Women's Lives." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 26.3 (2001): 847–888.

The author's interviews with Chinese women reveal the emergence of feminist opposition to the one-child policy and its attendant controls over female reproduction and the female body. Links the international discourse on women's health and reproductive rights to the growth of feminist opposition to the one-child policy. Available online for purchase or by subscription.

Gu Baochang, and Li Jianxin, eds. *21 shiji zhongguo shengyu zhengce lunzheng*. Beijing: She hui ke xue wen xian chu ban she, 2010.

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Zeng Yi. "Options for Fertility Policy Transition in China." *Population and Development Review* 33.2 (2007): 215–246.

Discusses five scenarios for future evolution of the one-child policy and advocates a "soft landing" or gradual process of transition. Examines aging, labor force trends, and pension costs, concluding that a transition away from the one-child policy should begin as soon as possible. Available online by subscription.

Selected Research Materials

Basic research materials in Chinese include Peng 1996 and Yang, et al. 2001, which provide chronologies for the evolution of family planning work, as well as official documents and speeches. The website of the National Population and Family Planning Commission of China is the official governmental website. All relevant government documents, announcements, or directives are published here, as well as information on the family planning bureaucracy and its activities. The *Zhongguo renkou he jihua shengyu nianjian*, published annually by the National Population and Family Planning Commission, provides data on demographic change, as well as extensive material on activities and developments at the provincial level. The annual *Zhongguo renkou tongji nianjian* provides official statistical data as calculated by the State Statistics Bureau. *Renkou yanjiu* and *Renkou yu jingji* are the two leading academic journals in the field.

National Population and Family Planning Commission of China.

The website of the official governmental commission on family planning and population work, with corresponding Chinese version. The NPFPC, called the State Family Planning Commission prior to 1996, maintains extensive websites in Chinese and English that provide information on population and family planning developments, including international activities.

Peng Peiyun, ed. *Zhongguo jihua shengyu quanshu* (中国计划生育全书). Beijing: Zhongguo renkou chubanshe, 1996.

A massive compilation of government documents and speeches by Communist Party and government officials related to population policy, covering the entire period after 1949.

Renkou yanjiu (人口研究). 1977–.

The flagship academic journal on population issues, published by People's University in Beijing. Frequently used after 1979 as a vehicle for communicating and emphasizing policy developments.

Renkou yu jingji (人口与经济). 1980–.

Less policy oriented than *Renkou yanjiu*, this journal favors quantitative methods of demographic analysis but also features many policy-related articles.

Yang Kuifu, Liang Jimin, and Zhang Fan, eds. *Zhongguo renkou yu jihua shengyu dashi yaolan* (中国人口与计划生育大事要览). Beijing: Zhongguo renkou chubanshe, 2001.

Provides a narrative look at the evolution of China's population policy and the implementation of the one-child policy.

Zhongguo renkou he jihua shengyu nianjian (中国人口和计划生育年鉴).

Annual yearbook on family planning work, including data on contraceptive use, plus articles providing summaries of family planning work by topic and locality. Prior to 2005, this yearbook went by the name of *China Family Planning Yearbook* (*Zhongguo jihua shengyu nianjian*).

Zhongguo renkou tongji nianjian (中国人口统计年鉴).

Annual yearbook providing historical and current data on China's demographic profile.

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