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China's One-Child Policy and Implementation

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Though China had been plagued by famines since ancient times, it was not until the Great Chinese Famine in the late 1950s and early 1960s that the state became proactive against future famines. In 1979, under the conviction that overpopulation was threatening China's existence, Deng Xiaoping implemented the "one-child policy," a coercive population control (CPC) measure intended to reduce the country's fertility rate. However, because of the harsh nature of CPC, the disparate gender ratio that has developed, the imminent aging of China's population, and a number of other critical enforcement concerns, CPC has proven to be far from an ideal method of population control.

There have been discourses on the relevance of this policy, and its impacts on fertility decline have become debatable in the light of the subsequent economic development and social and political stability, which accounts for the fertility reduction with a changing age profile. However, the decline in fertility in China, after the improvement of the economy and higher female labor force participation rates, do not offset the need for alternative policies to the current coercive population control measures, especially the necessity for providing higher levels of education for China's female citizens. A new policy focused upon by the Chinese government should deal more with how to address the impacts of the socioeconomic and demographic phenomenon, instead of focusing on maintaining fertility reduction. Though there are a number of suggested alternatives to the one-child policy, educating the female population is the most satisfactory and comprehensive approach.

Keywords: One-Child Policy, China, Population Control, Fertility

Throughout its history, China has been plagued by intermitted famines. Historical records show that between the years of 1333 and 1337, for example, six million people were killed by famine (Paarlberg, 2010). Even the earliest Chinese legends are riddled with accounts of food shortages and widespread starvation (Xinyu, 2010). Notwithstanding hundreds of years of unsustainability, the Chinese government did not recognize famines as a threat worthy of combating until the 19th and 20th centuries (Li, 1982). Despite recognition, it was not until after Mao Zedong incited the largest famine that the world has ever seen (lasting from 1958 to 1962) (Dikotter, 2010) that the Chinese government took action to ensure that history would no longer repeat itself (Li, 1982).

Fearful that China's population would otherwise illustrate the ideal Malthusian catastrophe by outgrowing its food supply thereby limiting the population's ability to sustain themselves (Malthus, 2008; Paarlberg, 2010), China implemented a drastic course of action in 1979 (Jacka, 2007). Today, the course of action that the state chose is commonly referred to as the "one-child policy" (Jacka, 2007). Often characterized as "draconian," "harsh," and "extreme," the one-child policy imposes mandatory, coercive measures on Chinese citizens to restrict China's population growth (Zhang, 2005). More than 30 years after its implementation, the one-child policy has come under strict scrutiny for producing a variety of unintended consequences (Branigan, 2011). If not corrected soon, these consequences may prove extremely detrimental to China.

This article suggests that China should discontinue its one-child policy and the coercive population control measures ("CPCs," hereinafter used interchangeably with "one-child policy") used to enforce it. The Chinese government should bring about a new policy that focuses upon how to address the impacts of the socioeconomic and demographic phenomenon, instead of just concentrating on maintaining the fertility reduction. In place of CPCs, China might consider executing a country-wide policy of making levels of education well past the primary level free, compulsory, and more accessible to females. First, this article will recount how China's history of famine led to the state's institutionalization of strict population control measures. Next, this article will explain the guidelines of China's one-child policy and the CPC strategies that the country uses to enforce it. This article then reviews the major arguments for and criticisms and negative results of the current CPC scheme. Following an explanation of its weaknesses, this article will recognize popularly suggested alternatives to China's one-child policy as well as their limitations. Lastly, using the United Kingdom as an example, this article will suggest that China should focus on reaching its population and sustainability goals through policies that encourage the education of females instead of continuing CPC enforcement.

THE WORLD'S LARGEST FAMINE: A SIGN OF CHINA'S "IMMINENT DEMISE"

As previously mentioned, until recently, famines were a regular and almost expected occurrence in China. In 1918, Dr. Sun Yat-sen, an individual praised for his instrumental role in overthrowing Chinese dynastic rule, described the situation well when he wrote that "China is a country with extended land mass, unlimited material resources, and great population… but mismanagement leaves…whole families perennially shivering and struggling on the verge of famine" (Lien, 1968, p. 298). By 1924, oscillating periods of flood and drought that characterized much of 19th and 20th century China were causing habitual famines that killed an average of 10 million Chinese citizens annually (Lien, 1968; Li, 1982). Despite having acknowledged the problem, however, it was not until over 50 years later that China would attempt to eliminate these famines permanently.

Mao Zedong's Great Leap Forward Was a Big Step Backward for China's Well-Being

In 1949, Mao Zedong founded the People's Republic of China and became its authoritarian leader, breaking down and condemning bureaucratic practices in favor of expanding a socialist state (Dreyer, 2010). Until this time, China had been largely agrarian. In agrarian China, large families were traditionally prized because of their cheap labor costs and contributions to production (Stark, 2003). During the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s, Mao Zedong embraced the practice of cultivating large families in an effort to increase and improve the state's workforce and production capabilities (Masson, 2009). He encouraged Chinese families

to produce as many children as possible and adamantly discouraged the use of birth control, (Masson, 2009).

During this period of hyper-fertility, Mao Zedong's campaign to effect a socialist transformation in China called the Great Leap Forward caused the worst famine in recorded history (Ho, 2003). To increase production, Mao Zedong organized much of society, including food production, into a system of communes (Paarlberg, 2010). These communes, instead of being the picture of productivity, decreased incentives for efficiency. Little food was produced, leaving little for the population to consume (Paarlberg, 2010). Without corrective action, a famine was imminent. When the great famine struck in the late 1950s, Chinese officials cited poor weather conditions as the catalyst. Today, however, some scholars hypothesize that Mao Zedong purposely induced the famine as a means to force communism on the population—withholding supplemental food until citizens accepted the new political structure (Dikotter, 2010).

Regardless of its cause, the great famine severely damaged the well-being of the Chinese state. Over 45 million people died between 1958 and 1962 with nearly 30 million of those deaths being directly linked to starvation (Dikotter, 2010). In some areas of China, hunger eroded the bonds of society so completely that many resorted to cannibalism for survival. In 1960, 50 cases of cannibalism were documented in Yaohejia village alone. Numerous reports chronicled the most disturbing situations in which individuals murdered and feasted on their own family members out of desperation (Dikotter, 2010).

With its classification as a largely agrarian state, Chinese officials believed the great famine was a warning sign of the highest caliber. Since ancient times, a top priority of the Chinese state has been the well-being of its citizens (Li, 1982). Therefore, officials were convinced that the inability to keep its citizens alive and supplied with basic foodstuffs was an indication of the state's "imminent demise" (Li, 1982, p. 697). Hence, to prevent its own extinction, China began developing policies intended to stave-off future famines and ensure that nothing would hinder the country's sustainability (Paarlberg, 2010).

The One-Child Policy Emerges as China's Means of Controlling Population Growth and Securing a Future of Sustainability

Encouraging large families quickly became outmoded after Mao Zedong's leadership ended (Branigan, 2011). "A strong consensus…emerged [after Mao Zedong's death in 1976] at the highest levels of government that the rapid growth of a largely rural population was a major obstacle" to controlling famine and ensuring sustainability (Greenhalgh, 2005, p. 270). Therefore, curbing rather than encouraging population growth was chosen as the means by which China would ensure prosperity for its citizens.

This view was not a new one. Likely triggered by China's population explosion from 150 to 300 million in the 18th century (Li, 1982), China formally acknowledged the threat that overpopulation poses around 1894 (Branigan, 2011). The world followed suit shortly thereafter when, following the lead of Thomas Malthus, Pope Paul VI cautioned the world against the kinds of hardships that would occur if the world's population grew faster than the amount of its available resources (Conroy, 2010). In what may now be looked upon as an ominous foreboding for the future of China, the Pope cautioned that public authorities would use ever-harsher means to avoid these consequences.

In 1979, Deng Xiaoping, the authoritarian successor of Mao Zedong, acted in a manner consistent with fulfillment of the Pope's premonition. With a child-bearing rate of 5.81 (Stark, 2003), China's population was alarmingly projected to exceed 4 billion by 2080 (Shlamowitz, 2010). Deng recognized this as a public emergency that had the potential to lead to food shortages, overcrowding, and the destruction of China's long-term welfare (Stark, 2003).

In a panicked response, Deng instituted compulsory regulations that limit Chinese citizens to one childbirth per family (Zhang, 2005; Greenhalgh, 2005). These coercive population controls are now enshrined in the Chinese Constitution (Shlamowitz, 2010), attaching legal consequences to any violation thereof. Keenly aware of its status as the first country in the world to exceed 1 billion people (Manhoff, 2005), China's State Family Planning Commission announced that the ultimate goal of the "one-child policy," (Conroy, 2010) was to restrict the state's population growth such that it would not exceed 1.2 billion by the year 2000 (Zhang, 2005). According to one individual who was integral in the policy's original implementation, the one-child policy was only meant to control the birth rate for one generation (Branigan, 2011).

Despite these original statements, more than 30 years after its inception, China still strictly adheres to this policy. The main principles of the current policy were codified in the Family Planning Law of 2001(Conroy, 2010). And the goal of setting population standards until 2000 was later adjusted to keep the country's population fewer than 1.4 billion until 2010 (Masson, 2009). The current law states in pertinent part that "individuals should marry at a late age and that one couple shall bear only one child…Additionally, all spouses must use contraception" (Strawn, 2009, p. 214). Many provinces also require married women to obtain a government permit before becoming pregnant (Strawn, 2009).

Contrary to its title, there are many exceptions to the one-child policy. For example, the birth of twins is not a violation of the one-child policy (Smolin, 2011). Those who live in some rural areas or have children with disabilities are permitted to have a second child. Second children may also be legally born to two parents who are themselves only-children. Furthermore, the policy does not apply to members of ethnic minorities. Despite these allowances, China's one-child policy is still viewed as an inherently negative, draconian practice.

DEBATES OVER THE EFFECTS OF THE ONE-CHILD POLICY

Today, opinions about the effectiveness and necessity of China's coercive population controls are mixed. On one hand, CPCs may be considered an incomparable success because, contrary to China's history, the country has not experienced a famine since CPCs were first implemented (Devereux, 2011). The success of CPCs has also been recognized as an underlying factor in the accomplishment of recent Chinese economic reforms, which have lifted countless citizens out of poverty and raised the country's living standards exponentially (Carpenter, 2011). Perhaps most importantly, CPCs help the state meet its newest goal of keeping the population under 1.4 billion (Branigan, 2011). Today, China's population rests at just over 1.3 billion (Branigan, 2011). Though it is still one of the most populous nations (Shlamowitz, 2010), CPCs have prevented between 250 and 300 million births (Masson, 2009). These successes, however, are greatly outweighed by the negative effects of CPCs.

The major criticisms of CPCs focus upon their detrimental impacts on the societal and demographic aspects, including a rising elderly population, unequal sex-ratio due to sex selection abortion, and violation of the right to reproductive freedom. The coercive population control in China thus has caused an intense debate worldwide. There are two views regarding the current family planning program in China. One view, focusing upon its effects on fertility decline, argues that China's one-child policy is key to stabilizing global population growth, and China would have far too many children if not for such a policy. Let us call people holding such views "CPC Supporters." The other view on the population restriction program questions the relevance of this policy, emphasizing its dramatic socioeconomic, political, demographic, and psychological implications and the negative impacts on the human being. Let us call people holding these views "CPC Criticizers."

Relevance between CPCs and Reduced Fertility Rate

People who are confident about the relevance of China's population control program believe that one-child policy reduces the fertility rate and thus population size, which prevents problems associated with overpopulation, like epidemics, slums, overwhelmed social services such as health, education, and pension, and strains on the ecosystem (Revkin, 2008). CPC Supporters further believe that ending China's one-child policy would cause a population spike.

On the other hand, CPC Criticizers contend that coercive controls had little to do with lowering fertility (Revkin, 2008), which would have happened anyway as a consequence of economic development in the country with industrialization, concomitant increased employment and labor force participation that includes women. Therefore, the CPC Criticizers aver that it is not the policy per se that account for the fertility reduction but the improvement of the economic status of the population. The CPC criticizers further indicate that countries that simply improve access to contraceptives – Thailand and Indonesia, for instance – do as much to reduce fertility as China, with its draconian policies ("China's population: The most surprising demographic crisis," 2011). One-child policy, according to these Criticizers, is only partly responsible for reducing China's fertility rate (Hasketh, Lu, & Xing, 2005). This has been illustrated by the fact that the most dramatic decrease in the rate actually occurred before the policy was imposed from 5.9 to 2.9 in the 1970s after mild childbirth restrictions were introduced (Hasketh et al., 2005).

Justification of the Necessity of Population Constraint

The population restriction supporters suppose that extreme overpopulation warrants the extreme one-child policy. China's one-child policy, according to them, is justified in the sense that China faces an extreme overpopulation crisis, and desperate times call for desperate measures. The Chinese government, therefore, cannot be blamed for taking these aggressive, but necessary measures (Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China [IOSC], 1995). However, some criticizers argue that the government is at risk of overdoing things. They say the country's fertility rate may actually be much lower than the official figure of around 1.8, the number that has been used for more than a decade by the Chinese government and international agencies ("Rethinking China's policy," 2010).

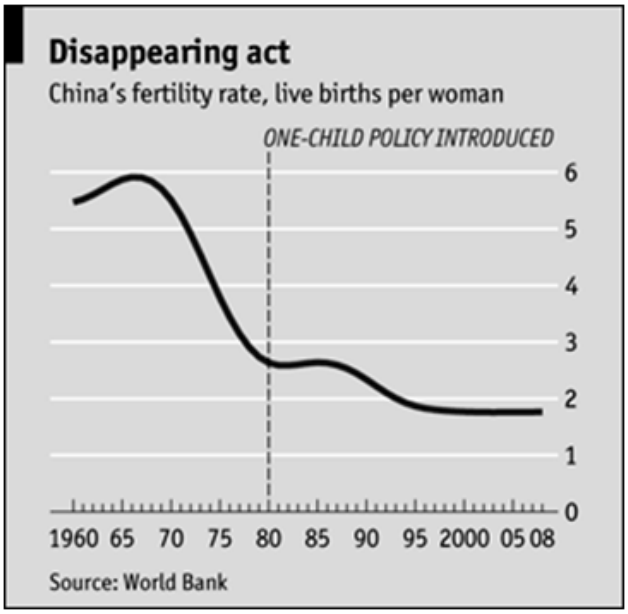

Figure 1. Dramatic decrease in the fertility rate in China in the 1970s
("Rethinking China's Policy", 2010)

The CPC Supporters further justify the family planning program with its promotion of the improved quality of the Chinese population in terms of education and health (Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China [IOSC], 1995). Improvements in food consumption and public health services delivery lead to a reduction in child mortality. With more children reaching adulthood, the need to compensate for the potential loss of a child has

been dispelled. Therefore, the need for more children has been negated in the supporters' opinions. The CPC Criticizers, nevertheless, point out its nature of violation of the human rights to reproduce and form a family (Bayron, 2006). The right to bear children, according to these opponents, is internationally regarded as one of the most cherished human rights, and it should be freely enjoyed by individuals and couples alike (Strawn, 2009).

The CPC Criticizers additionally condemn the harshness of implementing the policy. Methods of CPC enforcement may include: fatal beatings, forced sterilizations of men and women, mandatory pregnancy testing, forced late-term abortions, forced IUD insertion, job loss, the detention of pregnant women, excessive fines that can exceed 10 times a family's yearly income, and the destruction of familial residences (Hershatter, 2004). The CPC Supporters, on the other hand, explain that China outlaws physically forcing women to have abortions. While China previously forced some women to have abortions, it no longer does so, and expressly forbids the practice ("Is China's 'one child' policy sensible?," 2011). The criticizers then refute that although abortions in the last trimester are illegal in China, policy enforcement is left to the sole discretion of local authorities (Smolin, 2011), and the law has been openly flouted. The central government gives each locality a strict quota concerning the number of children that may be born within that region (Strawn, 2009). Without a universal enforcement strategy, local family planning authorities are nearly unrestricted in the methods they may use to reach their quotas. The CPC Supporters further defend that the Chinese people can simply pay a fine to have an extra child, and therefore, the status quo merely discourages and disincentivizes having a second child ("Is China's 'one child' policy sensible?," 2011). Plus, China plans on ending one-child policy in the future. They even cite Vice Minister of the National Population and Family Planning Commission Zhao Baige's statement: "the one-child policy was the only choice we had, given the conditions when we initiated the policy. So as things develop, there might be some changes to the policy, and relevant departments are considering this" (Ni, 2008, par. 5). Faced with those defenses, the CPC Criticizers rebut that fees for a second child are economically damaging. Despite much hype that the policy might be repealed, the central government has decided against it. They moreover refer to the latest report of photographs of Feng Jianmei and her dead seven month old fetus on the internet, which caused public outrage within and outside China. They denounce that incidents like Feng are addressed in a uniform pattern – the local officials apologize and the central authorities pitch in with some remedies. Time and again party leaders give lip service and publicly acknowledge that they are willing to rethink about the policy, but repealing the policy largely eventually looms into oblivion (Hasija, 2012, p. 14).

Demographic Implications

A major criticism of China's CPC policies, based on its Criticizers, is that, in an effort to prevent overpopulation, China has gone too far by building a foundation for a future of under-population ("Province wants relaxation of China's one-child policy," 2011). There are both unfavorable immediate and long-term effects to China becoming under-populated. One effect is China's rapidly ageing population ("Province wants relaxation of China's one-child policy," 2011). Soon, the elderly will outnumber those in the working generations, which may lead to dire consequences for China's economic and societal development (Brown, 2011). Furthermore, there is no adequate pension coverage in China (Shlamowitz, 2010). With a rapidly growing elderly population, this places a sizeable burden on younger generations to financially support multiple family members (Shlamowitz, 2010).

Facing these potential demographic challenges, CPC Supporters consider that overcrowding is a worse problem than aging population. An overcrowded country is, in the long-term, completely unsustainable, while an aging

population is more manageable and can be corrected with modifications in policy (Wang, 2005). They further believe that one-child policy can be modified to improve demographics. Some provinces, for example, allow families where each parent is an only child to have two children.

Impacts on Gender Equality

Another key criticism of CPCs is that they have caused China's population to yield the largest disparity of males to females in the world (Smolin, 2011). Essentially, a certain number of babies who are expected to be girls at birth never appear in China's national registries (Stark, 2003). This is referred to as the phenomenon of "missing girls." As stated by the policy criticizers, thousands of years of Chinese history dictate Chinese parents prize the birth of sons more than daughters. This fondness for male children makes gendercide a preferable means for complying with China's one-child policy. Specifically, through gender-selective abortion and abandonment or outright murder of female children, Chinese families reserve places in their limited child allotment for the potential birth of sons (Hershatter, 2004). The popularity of resorting to gendercide, these criticizers explain, has directly led to the gender ratio imbalance in China.

Acknowledging the above realities, the CPC Supporters, nonetheless, point out the other side of the balance sheet, that is, population control helps provide a better health service for women and reduce the risks of death and injury associated with pregnancy. With fewer pregnancies, the family planning offices are able to help pregnant women closely monitor their health (Taylor, 2005). Moreover, one-child policy liberates female productivity and improves gender equality, they claim. Women have traditionally been primary caregivers for children; but, with fewer children, they have more time to invest in their careers, increasing both their personal earnings and the national GDP. However, such a gain, criticizers assert, may eventually be cancelled out by the increased burden of caring for two elderly parents singlehandedly ("Is China's 'one child' policy sensible?" 2011).

Other Social and Environmental Implications

In addition, while the CPC Supporters claim that parents with one child have more resources and care for that child than if there were three or four children; the CPC Criticizers contest that the same policy may foster spoiled children, creating so-called the "little emperors" phenomenon.

Furthermore, in solving the pollution and the environment, China advocates population control policy in helping reduce carbon dioxide output, and fight against global warming. The supporters cite statistics to show reducing the country's population would greatly reduce carbon dioxide emissions from human respiration, as well as would slow depletion of natural resources (Doyle, 2007). The opponents, on the other hand, dispute that a larger population does not inherently mean worse environmental conditions. If the right policies are put in place, involving more efficient resource management and energy use, then a larger population could be fine.

After all, it would be much easier to implement a policy that is harmonious with the aspiration of the citizens, which would consequently reduce costs of maintenance, the criticizers say. While, the supporters counter that modern Chinese people actually prefer only one child. Many Chinese couples who are able to have a second child and pay the fine, according to them, yet choose not to do so on the philosophical grounds that it is better for the country to not have a second child. Then, why have protests been so widespread in China against one-child policy (Stankovic & Chan, 2007), the criticizers ask.

It is my opinion that since China has to feed 22% of the world's population with less than 7% of the world's arable land, this policy is completely understandable as a means to human preservation throughout the country (Global Futures Studies & Research, 2011). This decision also seems necessary as the growing population would clearly have significant consequences not

only in China but all around the globe. Although the one-child policy has been slowing the population growth, the sheer number of people is still increasing by about 12 million each year, with which environmental sustainability would be of profound concern throughout the world (Brown, 1995).

However, because of the above mentioned failures, it is difficult for Chinese officials to assert that CPCs are an ideal means of controlling fertility rates (Greenhalgh, 2005). As the feared consequences of the policy have become excessively detrimental to citizens, a newly designed and well-executed policy is indispensable to prevent the extreme societal and demographic implications. A new policy should focus more upon how to address the impacts of this phenomenon rather than maintaining the fertility reduction.

SOME PROPOSED ALTERNATIVES TO CHINA'S ONE-CHILD POLICY

Though Chinese officials believe that abandoning the practice of CPCs will lead to a population increase, this fear is inaccurate. Most experts do not agree. Many countries, including some of China's neighbors like Japan and South Korea, have not only been successful in lowering fertility rates without the use of CPCs, but they have also been more successful than China at controlling the size of their populations (Smolin, 2011). On the other hand, the declines in fertility in China, after the improvement of the economy and higher female labor force participation rates, do not offset the need for alternative policies to the CPCs, especially the necessity to educate the Chinese females.

There are multiple alternatives to the current population control methods that China employs. Instead of continuing the current repressive enforcement polices, officials should seriously consider some of the most commonly suggested alternatives, like: (1) replacing China's "one-child policy" with a "two-child policy;" (2) creating a Chinese society that only condones late-life marriages; and/or (3) improving compulsory education standards for females in China.

Allowing Two Children per Family Does Not Alleviate the Core Concerns of the "One-Child Policy"

The first alternative, increasing China's child allotment to two children per family, seems very promising on its face. The two-child alternative gained popularity when China announced recent success in producing lower fertility rates through the secret, experimental implementation of a "two-child policy" in Yicheng County (Smolin, 2011). This experiment reportedly reduced fertility rates more effectively than the one-child policy (Smolin, 2011). It also attained a gender ratio closer to the ideal of 106:100 (Smolin, 2011). Since announcement of the successes of this experiment, officials from some of China's most populous provinces have begun seeking relaxation of the current family-planning model ("Hope in reforming China's one-child rule?," 2011).

Though a two-child policy may sound like a viable solution, it is only a superficial improvement to China's current policy. There is no guarantee that allowing each family two children will alleviate the most serious concerns that current CPC policies elicit. First, it is unlikely that a two-child policy will have a substantial effect on China's declining population. Though CPC enforcement adds valuable incentives for having only one child, many Chinese parents purposely limit themselves to one child out of financial or other concerns (Brown, 2011). A two-child policy, therefore, would do little to persuade these parents to have more children.

Furthermore, a two-child allowance will not change the deep-seeded Chinese preference for male children, nor will it alleviate the male to female disparity ratio. Experts in the fields of anthropology and sociology contend that, regardless whether the restrictive allotment is one or two children, Chinese families will continue

having babies until they have a boy (Casper, 2011). This means that gendercide and other gender-selective ways of discarding female babies will still be practiced. Therefore, the gender disparity ratio will remain as well.

Additionally, a two-child policy changes only the number of children allowed to each family; it does not change the harsh means by which the policy will be enforced. The articles announcing the possibility of a two-child policy have not been accompanied by news concerning changes in implementation. It is assumed, therefore, that the central government will continue to issue regional quotas, and the local government will be charged with meeting these quotas without a universal enforcement method. Hence, the local governments will still maintain their freedom to use repressive tactics like forced sterilization and abortion, leaving Chinese citizens susceptible to human rights violations if the two-child policy is not obeyed.

Late-Life Marriages Are Also a Detrimental Option Because They Lead to Increased Criminal Activity

The second alternative, fostering a society that condones late-life marriages (Villegas, 2011), may yield even poorer results than the implementation of a two-child policy. Though societies that endorse later marriages tend to see a decrease in fertility, these societies are also likely to see an increase in crimes like widespread prostitution and human trafficking (Smolin, 2011).

According to social scientists, marriage makes men more peaceful (Villegas, 2011). Settling down in a monogamous relationship lowers both their testosterone levels and propensities for violence. An over-abundance of single men has been proven to lead to high levels of crime and social disorder (Manhoff, 2005). For example, without the security of a significant other, men are found to resort to prostitution syndicates (Manhoff, 2005). In societies where early marriages are discouraged, prostitution is known as a practice that provides a sexual outlet, allowing the sanctity of the family to be preserved for later years (Smolin, 2011).

This problem may be further exacerbated by China's disparate gender population (Smolin, 2011). In an area where there are considerably more men than women, it is difficult for men to find monogamous female companions (Smolin, 2011). One Chinese man explained, "[W]here there are 120 men for every 100 women, it [is] not easy to find a girlfriend, let alone keep her" (Matjila, 2011, par. 19). Within a decade, China could be faced with a "bachelor generation" (Carpenter, 2011). Approximately 30 million men will be unable to find brides (Villegas, 2011).

This situation can motivate desperate men, especially those who have been legally required to wait until later in life for marriage, to obtain wives through illegal means. Some men may resort to activities like adult kidnapping and human trafficking (Smolin, 2011). A similar scenario has been played out in places like India, where selective-gender eradication has been practiced for generations longer than in China. In India, men outnumber women such that men must purchase brides from other locations (Manhoff, 2005). Men may also resort to sharing a wife with their brothers. In the most desperate situations, men have also been known to take part in bride kidnapping. Especially in small villages, it is common for baby girls to go missing; or women to be drugged, abducted, and sold to men seeking marriage. These practices are so widespread that most men do not even know that what they are doing is illegal.

Though policies that condone the birth of more children and call for later-life marriages seem to be practical alternatives to China's current CPC regulations, both have serious drawbacks that may be more harmful to the Chinese population than the current one-child policy. Therefore, neither should be considered as a realistic option for managing China's population.

The Education of Females: A Natural Method of Population Control

Numerous studies have shown that educating females is a natural way to lower a region's fertility rate (Roudi-Fahimi & Moghadam, 2003). As female education levels rise, fertility and population growth fall (Roudi-Fahimi & Moghadam, 2003). Women with education surpassing the post-primary level have noticeably fewer children than women who have only a primary education (Gachiri, 2011). The education of females, therefore, is likely the best option to replace China's present coercive population control measures.

Increased educational opportunities lead to a larger variety of career and life choices. Education prepares women to step into roles in their nations' social, economic, and political realms as equals (Gachiri, 2011). Women who accept these roles generally want smaller families, and make conscious family planning decisions to achieve their desired family size (Roudi-Fahimi & Moghadam, 2003). Educated women are also more likely to be able to express themselves fully and understand the consequences of their decisions (Ara, 2011). This causes them to make family planning choices with confidence and conviction (Feder, 2011).

Currently, the education available to females in China does not meet the standards required for widespread population control. The Chinese government offers its citizens nine years of compulsory education (Zhang, 2005). A child's parents must pay full tuition for anything beyond this level. In China, it is not unusual for almost twice as many males to receive higher education than females (Zhang, 2005). This causes women to account for 70% of illiterates in China, and only one-third of China's university graduates (Hershatter, 2004). Because natural population control is a result of literate females making reasoned decisions through knowledge and learning, figures like these show that the massive quantity of uneducated females in China will not lead to lower fertility rates without CPC regulations.

Currently, using CPCs, the number of births per woman in China is comparable to that of the United Kingdom, a region that does not rely on harsh CPCs to monitor overpopulation (Hershatter, 2004). Therefore, it may be beneficial for China to use the United Kingdom's female educational standards as a baseline for their own policies. In the United Kingdom, all citizens, including females, have the opportunity for a full time education until the age of 19 (Machin & Vignoles, 2005). Compulsory education is offered to all children until the age of 16; thereafter, monetary incentives are used to ensure post-compulsory educational participation for an additional three years.

These educational policies have been very successful. In the United Kingdom, the female literacy rate is 99% (Central Intelligence Agency, 2011), and nearly 60% of university degrees are awarded to women (MacLeod, 2003). Both of these figures contribute to a correlative natural fertility rate of around 1.8, and stand in stark contrast to China's extremely high female illiteracy rate and the fact that females account for only 33% of college graduates (MacLeod, 2003).

This basic comparison to the United Kingdom shows that controlling China's population without resorting to the persecutory measures of CPCs is possible. However, China must be willing to subsidize education for females past the nine years of compulsory education that are currently offered. If China is able to incentivize education such that females are afforded the opportunity to become highly literate with a 20% increase in university graduations, it is likely that China may successfully replace harsh CPCs strategies with the less repressive approach of advancing female educational opportunities. Done correctly, this should be a fair policy trade that is not likely to lead to the population explosion that Chinese officials fear is an inevitable consequence of abolishing the one-child policy.

Moreover, educating females does not carry with it the same concerns as the alternatives suggested in previous parts. Specifically, offering compulsory education to females does not require harsh enforcement techniques, and therefore may help improve China's human rights record. Also, unlike compulsory birth control practices, education does not run contrary to religious beliefs, and will not cause Chinese citizens to choose between their loyalties to the church and the state. Furthermore, the education can change the convention belief that more children are better or boys are better than girls. Because it is a policy that does not condone a specific allotment of children, the major issues concerning female gendercide and gender ratio disparities should also be alleviated.

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