

BACKGROUND

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An Economic and Humanitarian Case for Pressing China to Rescind the Two-Child Policy

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Abstract

Nearly 35 years in the making, China's population-control policies—including the recently reconsidered one-child policy and its replacement, the two-child policy—remain the world's largest social and demographic experiment. As a result, China is now facing demographic disaster. The one-child policy and the subsequent two-child policy led to human rights abuses and helped fuel China's serious sex ratio imbalance. China can, however, forge a better way forward. The U.S. should help China explore, and, ultimately implement, new, humane solutions to China's current and prospective demographic challenges.

Nearly 35 years in the making, China's one-child policy was the world's largest social and demographic experiment. At its inception, Chinese policymakers claimed that after 30 years of implementation, the one-child policy would be reconsidered—possibly even rescinded.¹

Facing a demographic collapse, China has reconsidered the one-child policy and replaced it with a two-child policy, a solution the Chinese claim will add an additional 30 million workers to the workforce by 2050.² The transition to the two-child policy is expected to add 3 million births to the current 16 million Chinese births annually.³

China's decision to shift from a one-child policy to two, however, may not have as large an effect as predicted, in large part because China's demographic history, cultural trends, and foreseeable future have already been written by the one-child policy. In 2011, China's working-age population—people between the ages of 15 to 59—began shrinking for the first time.⁴ China's elderly population

KEY POINTS

- Nearly 35 years in the making, China's one-child policy remains the world's largest social and demographic experiment.
- The starvation and poverty during the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution were the result of poor policy and government redistribution—not large families.
- In addition to economic challenges, the one-child policy has led to serious human rights abuses and helped fuel a significant gender imbalance that could mar China's future.
- If Beijing chooses to rescind its current two-child policy, the U.S. and China should work together to formulate and enact policies that address the economic impact of demographic dislocation through ever greater market liberalization.
- Economic liberalization, not population control, is the key to unleashing China's full economic potential.

This paper, in its entirety, can be found at <http://report.heritage.org/bg3146>

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will increase 60 percent by 2020, even as the working-age population decreases by nearly 35 percent, resulting in a “demographic inversion.”⁵ Studies suggest that as a direct result of the one-child policy, China’s annual projected gross domestic product (GDP) growth rate will likely decline from 7.2 percent in 2013 to around 6.1 percent by 2020.⁶

Demographic inversion and macroeconomic slowdown are not the only negative side effects of China’s one-child policy. The elderly will have fewer children to care for them in old age, the sex ratio has been significantly skewed due to sex-selective abortion stemming from a cultural preference for boys, and economists reckon that China will get old before it gets rich. The Chinese people have already been subjected to significant human rights abuse resulting from the policy, including forced abortion, forced sterilization, forced marriage, and human trafficking.

Even the two-child policy will not enable China to avert the impending economic strain that will result from a smaller and aging workforce. It also cannot erase the painful past of human rights abuse. China can, however, forge a better way forward. The U.S. should help China explore, and ultimately, implement, new, humane solutions to China’s current and prospective demographic challenges that include eliminating coercive population-control policies. Such changes are not only in the moral interest, but also in China’s, and therefore, the global economic interest.

History of the One-Child Policy

China has a long history of artificially manipulating fertility. Under the reign of Mao Zedong, large families were encouraged. Mao manipulated family growth by outlawing birth control and conducting a large propaganda campaign encouraging women to have more children. The more children a family had, the more food rations and resources they received—aid that, in the midst of famine and economic strife, was much needed.⁷

The impetus behind increasing the size of the population was not just to increase the size of the Chinese workforce, but as part of preparation for an all-out war with the West. Under Mao’s population policies, the Chinese population grew from around 500 million in 1949 to close to a billion in 1978.⁸

The next generation of Chinese leadership under Deng Xiaoping saw the aftermath of a China ravaged by the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution, and assumed that China’s extremely large population was among, if not the major cause, of poverty and strife. According to Wang Feng, “The leaders who succeeded Mao Zedong after his death in 1976 tended to associate political legitimacy with birth control, as a paramount goal of increasing per-capita income hinged on the rising ability of the government to provide food, education and employment, and on limiting the number of people sharing in the fruits of economic growth. The one-child policy was seen as key.”⁹

The one-child policy, however, was not the Chinese government’s first attempt at limiting the

1. Wang Feng, “Can China Afford to Continue Its One-Child Policy?” East-West Center *Asia-Pacific Issues* No. 77, March 2005, <http://www.eastwestcenter.org/sites/default/files/private/api077.pdf> (accessed August 20, 2015).
2. Te Ping Chen and Olivia Geng, “Two-Child Policy Will Boost China’s GDP Growth by .5%, Government Says,” *The Wall Street Journal*, November 10, 2015, <http://blogs.wsj.com/chinarealtime/2015/11/10/two-child-policy-will-boost-chinas-gdp-by-0-5-govt-says/> (accessed July 23, 2016).
3. Nicholas Eberstadt, “China’s Coming One-Child Crisis,” *The Wall Street Journal*, November 26, 2013, <http://www.wsj.com/news/articles/SB10001424052702304791704579216630468814424> (accessed August 20, 2015).
4. Ibid.
5. Nicholas Eberstadt, “The Demographic Risks to China’s Long-term Economic Outlook,” American Enterprise Institute, January 24, 2011, <https://www.aei.org/publication/the-demographic-risks-to-chinas-long-term-economic-outlook/> (accessed July 23, 2016).
6. Fang Cai and Yang Lu, “Population Change and Resulting Slowdown in Potential GDP Growth in China,” *China and World Economy*, Vol. 21, No. 2 (2013), <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1749-124X.2013.12012.x/pdf> (accessed August 20, 2015).
7. David Howden, “China’s One Child Policy: Some Unintended Consequences,” *Economic Affairs*, Vol. 34, No. 1 (October 17, 2014), <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/ecaf.12098/abstract> (accessed August 20, 2015).
8. Mi Jian, “China’s Barbaric One-Child Policy,” *The Guardian*, May 6, 2013, <http://www.theguardian.com/books/2013/may/06/chinas-barbaric-one-child-policy> (accessed August 20, 2015).
9. Wang Feng, “Bringing an End to a Senseless Policy: China’s One-Child Rule Should be Scrapped,” *The New York Times*, November 19, 2013, http://www.nytimes.com/2013/11/20/opinion/chinas-one-child-rule-should-be-scrapped.html?_r=0 (accessed August 20, 2015).

population. Adopting Malthus's central claim that agricultural production could never keep up with uncontrolled population growth, the Chinese leadership embarked on an ambitious attempt to curtail population growth in the early 1970s by implementing the "later, longer, fewer" policy.¹⁰ This policy required later marriages, longer birth intervals, and fewer children. Under this policy, birthrates dropped dramatically—from 5.8 children per couple in 1970 to 2.7 in 1979—just before the one-child policy was instituted.¹¹

The one-child policy was implemented as an attempt by the Chinese government to further reduce China's population. The policy also sought to spur Chinese economic growth, diffuse what the Chinese saw as a pressing national security concern, and subvert unexpected social, economic, and environmental challenges.¹²

Interestingly, the man credited with developing the one-child policy was neither a demographer nor an economist, but rather a multi-talented missile scientist: Song Jian.¹³ Combining cybernetics with Malthusian economic premises, he and his colleagues created a model that suggested that China had far exceeded its optimal population size.

[T]he Song group first performed calculations showing that the "ideal" target population 100 years in the future was 650 to 700 million (two-thirds China's 1980 population of 1 billion). Despite its shaky basis, this target was crucial, for it implied that China had already exceeded its "carrying capacity," that below-replacement fertility was imperative to achieve sustainabil-

ity, and that the longer China waited for fertility to decline the more environmental damage it would sustain. The mathematics of optimization showed that the "optimal" fertility trajectory by which to keep population within that target was to reduce fertility rapidly to one child so that by 1985 all couples would have but one; maintain fertility at that level for the next 20 to 40 years; and then gradually raise it to replacement level of 2.1 children per woman. The solution was, in the Song group's term, rapid one-childization (yitaihua) country-wide.¹⁴

Thus, the one-child policy was eagerly adopted and implemented countrywide. The policy was inaugurated in 1979 in an open letter to the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and the Communist Youth League.¹⁵ Ironically, it was never made into law, but was instituted through a series of measures implemented by the CCP.¹⁶

The population-control regime runs due to an integrated local and regional system ultimately controlled by the CCP, including a National Population and Family Planning Commission comprising more than 500,000 individuals devoted almost exclusively to implementing the one-child policy.¹⁷ Through a series of population-control workers, codified sterilization and birth allotment quotas, and a network of informants among the common population, the Chinese have engineered the equivalent of a "population control army."¹⁸

Those that violate the stringent requirements of the one-child policy are not only socially ostracized, but also face steep fines, possible demotion

10. Ran Abramitzky and Fabio Braggion, "Malthusian and Neo-Malthusian Theories," Stanford University, <http://web.stanford.edu/~ranabr/Malthusian%20and%20Neo%20Malthusian%20for%20webpage%20040731.pdf> (accessed August 22, 2015).
11. Feng, "Bringing an End to a Senseless Policy: China's One-Child Rule Should be Scrapped."
12. Howden, "China's One Child Policy: Some Unintended Consequences."
13. Susan Greenhalgh, "Missile Science, Population Science: The Origins of China's One-Child Policy," *The China Quarterly*, Vol. 182, June 2005, pp. 253-276, http://journals.cambridge.org.mutex.gmu.edu/download.php?file=%2F4147_BD1B96E9D9284ED0933E9A0C24792515_journals_CQY_CQY182_S0305741005000184a.pdf&cover=Y&code=e96da5cb5d30bf8ad36eebf438633b36 (accessed August 22, 2015).
14. Ibid.
15. Wang Feng, Yong Cai, and Baochang Gu, "Population, Policy, and Politics in China: How Will History Judge China's One-Child Policy?" *Population and Development Review*, No. 38 (2012), pp. 115-129, <http://www.brookings.edu/research/articles/2013/02/china-one-child-policy-wang> (accessed August 22, 2015).
16. Ibid.
17. "Has China Outgrown the One-Child Policy?" *NewsFocus*, September 16, 2010, <http://image.sciencenet.cn/olddata/kexue.com.cn/upload/blog/file/2010/9/2010917535739887.pdf> (accessed August 20, 2015).
18. Steven Mosher, *A Mother's Ordeal: One Woman's Fight Against China's One-Child Policy* (New York: Harper Collins, 1993).

in their jobs, and other serious repercussions.¹⁹ Beyond financial constraints, many women are forcibly sterilized and are subjected to immense social and political pressure to abort their child. Although China has transitioned from a one-child policy to a two-child policy, the heart of the policy remains the same: the government, not individuals, decides family size. And Beijing uses coercive, often brutal, methods to impose its dictate.

Why the Two-Child Policy Will Not Work

Among experts, calling for China to eliminate the one-child policy were proponents of a two-child policy, a strategy piloted in some of the rural areas in China.

Historical analysis of birth rates in areas where China already tacitly implemented a two-child policy found a disturbing trend: an incredibly skewed sex ratio for second, third, and higher order births. Gender ratios were already skewed under the one-child policy. Analysis of 2010 census data shows that the sex ratio for only children was 114 boys for every 100 girls.²⁰ Recent studies based on China's 1990 census suggest that manipulation of the gender of the second child and higher order births skewed the sex ratio as much as 120 boys for every 100 girls born.²¹ Hence, the two-child policy has the potential to further skew gender ratios.

Now China has a population with an estimated 33 million more men than women.²² This has led to a phenomenon that many call the “bare branches”—or Chinese men that are increasingly violent, restless, and unable to find wives.²³ This phenomenon has contributed to human trafficking of women as mail-

order brides from surrounding countries in South-east Asia and North Korea.²⁴ The negative cultural and societal impacts of China's sex-ratio imbalance are also likely to continue (if not increase) under the two-child policy—especially if sex-selective technologies remain in use.²⁵

The two-child policy is no less draconian than the one-child policy. In fact, the two-child policy previously implemented as a pilot project in Yicheng County placed even more stringent requirements on the permissible marriage age and requirements for birth spacing than the one-child policy. The architect of the two-child policy in Yicheng, Zhongtang Liang, apparently took his cues from the predecessor to the one-child policy: the “later, longer, fewer” policy.

One scholar described Liang's stringent framework that influenced the two-child policy implemented in Yicheng:

- (1) at least 30 per cent of couples should have one child only;
- (2) urban women should marry at 25 on average, and space births by eight years;
- (3) rural women should marry at 23, and wait ten years before having their second child;
- (4) third or higher-order births were not allowed.²⁶

Studies suggest that fertility rates in Yicheng were actually lower than the Chinese average: 109 births for every 1,000 couples, as opposed to the national average of 112 per 1,000 couples in the rest of China. This is very similar to the results from later, longer, fewer policies. The finding also corroborates Chinese preferences for fewer children,

19. Ma Jian, “China's Brutal One-Child Policy.”

20. Nicholas Eberstadt, “Population Control in China: State Sponsored Violence Against Women and Children,” testimony before the U.S. Congressional-Executive Commission on China, April 30, 2015, <https://www.aei.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Prepared-Statement-Eberstadt-April-29-2015-Final.pdf> (accessed May 4, 2016).

21. Ibid.

22. Justin Parkinson, “Five Numbers that Sum Up China's One-Child Policy,” BBC, October 29, 2015, <http://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-34666440> (accessed May 4, 2016).

23. Valerie M. Hudson and Andrea M. den Boer, “Bare Branches and Security in Asia,” *Harvard Asia Pacific Review* (Winter 2007), http://www.hcs.harvard.edu/~hapr/winter07_gov/hudson.pdf (accessed May 4, 2016).

24. U.S. Department of State, Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, *2015 Trafficking in Persons Report: China*, 2015, <http://www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/countries/2015/243415.htm> (accessed May 4, 2016).

25. Kate Gilles and Charlotte Feldman-Jacobs, “When Technology and Tradition Collide: From Gender Bias to Sex Selection,” Population Reference Bureau, September 2012, <http://www.prb.org/pdf12/gender-bias-sex-selection.pdf> (accessed May 4, 2016).

26. Yan Wie and Li Zhang, “Re-Examination of the Yicheng Two-Child Program,” *The China Journal*, No. 72, <http://search.proquest.com.proxy.library.georgetown.edu/docview/1555378163?pq-origsite=summon&accountid=11091> (accessed May 4, 2016).

which experts contend is attributable to the inextricable link in Chinese propaganda between wealth and having fewer children.

Chinese citizens have been told for years that having only one child is ideal. A flip of the switch in government policy will not immediately transform people's thoughts on family size—as has been suggested by recent polling and data that demonstrate Chinese fertility preferences for only one child.²⁷ Additionally, Chinese who desire additional children often consider it cost prohibitive under present economic conditions. Hence, the two-child policy is unlikely to resolve demographic challenges, but will still be accompanied by the heavy handed and oppressive population control apparatus that exacts human rights abuse against the Chinese people.

The Yicheng experience is informative. Although the Chinese government has only begun to lay out the specifics of its plan to implement the two-child policy nationwide, it is not entirely unlikely that it will be modeled after Yicheng. Even more telling, Liang, the architect of the two-child policy in Yicheng, has in fact abandoned his original two-child policy proposal and instead believes that Chinese families should be able to make their own decisions about fertility.²⁸

If China nationalizes the Yicheng precedent, China's two-child policy may not have any real impact on birth rates compared to the one-child policy. But even if the two-child policy leads to some increase in fertility, there are still long-term economic impacts from the one-child policy that cannot be immediately overcome by the government's transition to two children. In either case, it is important to understand China's experience with its one-child policy.

Short-Term Economic Impacts of the One-Child Policy

The one-child policy has impacted China's economy in several different ways—some of which China is already experiencing, others of which China will almost certainly experience in the future. Deciphering and understanding correlation and causation related to the one-child policy is a difficult, yet not impossible task.

Economists have found that the one-child policy offers a few short-term benefits, including increased household savings and debatable, but still relevant, improvements to individual treatment and value placed on only children.²⁹ Other studies have found that the implementation of the one-child policy correlated with an increase in life expectancy and a decrease in mortality.³⁰

However, some of these benefits, especially a decline in mortality, may not be linked only to the one-child policy, but also to improvements in Chinese health care availability, for example. Other benefits, including increases in household savings and improvements in child education, are likely at least in part the result of the one-child policy.

Between 1979 and 2009, China's economy averaged a 10 percent annual growth rate, and some economists project China to quadruple its GDP by 2030.³¹ Economic benefits derived from the demographic dividend, or the "increase in the proportion of the working age population in the total population and a decline in the dependency ratio," as a result of the one-child policy may have enabled China to reap certain short-term economic benefits and rapid economic growth.³²

Many of these benefits, however, will be short-lived, and will later yield to more severe and negative economic and demographic outcomes.

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27. Gretchen Livingston, "Without One-Child Policy, China Still Might Not See Baby Boom, Gender Balance," *Pew Research Center FactTank*, November 20, 2015, <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2015/11/20/will-the-end-of-chinas-one-child-policy-shift-its-boy-girl-ratio/> (accessed July 23, 2016).
 28. Mei Fong, "China's Quiet Two-Child Experiment," *The Wall Street Journal*, November 13, 2015, <http://www.wsj.com/articles/chinas-quiet-two-child-experiment-1447431615> (accessed May 4, 2016).
 29. Taha Choukmane, Nicolas Coerdacier, and Keyu Jin, "The One-Child Policy and Household Savings," *London School of Economics*, September 18, 2014, http://personal.lse.ac.uk/jink/onechildpolicy_ccj.pdf (accessed August 22, 2015).
 30. Wang Feng, "The Future of a Demographic Overachiever: Long-Term Implications of the Demographic Transition in China," *Population and Development Review*, Vol. 37 (2011), pp. 173–190, http://www.brookings.edu/~media/research/files/articles/2011/3/demographics%20china%20wang/03_demographics_china_wang.pdf (accessed January 10, 2015).
 31. Eberstadt, "The Demographic Risks to China's Long-term Economic Outlook."
 32. Fang Cai and Yang Lu, "Population Change and Resulting Slowdown in Potential GDP Growth in China," *China and World Economy*, Vol. 21, No. 2 (2013), <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1749-124X.2013.12012.x/pdf> (accessed January 10, 2015).

Long-Term Economic and Demographic Impacts

The long-term impacts of the one-child policy are known. Without a significant recalibration of the policy, China's youth population will continue to decline, its labor force will continue to shrink, and China's elderly population will significantly increase.

Even if Beijing were to eliminate its coercive policies today, Chinese economic growth would still decline in the 2020s, because the next generation's working-age population is already so small.³³ Opportunities to increase the next generation's working-age population size are limited, because 100 percent of participants in the labor force in the 2020s and 2030s have already been born.³⁴ As a result of the one-child policy, Credit Suisse predicts China will experience a four million–six million person labor shortage each year during the 2020s, reaching its height of 6.2 million in 2024 and declining after that.³⁵

The size of the Chinese workforce will decline rapidly as the population ages. Some studies predict a drastic outcome: a Chinese population one-half the size of its current population by the end of the century.³⁶ Roughly every 30 years, the elderly, as a percentage of total population, will increase in relation to the declining number of babies born. If current projections are any indication, China's elderly population will increase by 60 percent between 2010 and 2030, as the working-age population decreases by nearly 35 percent.³⁷

Economist and demographer Nicholas Eberstadt, explains this explosion of the elderly population:

In 2010, about 115 million Chinese were 65 or older; by 2030, the corresponding number is pro-

jected to approach 240 million—meaning that China's cohort of senior citizens would be soaring at an average rate of 3.7% per year. Over just those twenty years, the fraction of Chinese 65 or older is set to double from 8.6% to 17.2%.³⁸

There are a number of unforeseen costs associated with a Chinese society dominated by the elderly. Chinese society is now stratified in a 4-2-1 family structure—four grandparents, two parents, and only one child. In Chinese culture, the primary caregiver to the elderly is the family. This is even codified in the Chinese constitution. With so few children to care for parents and grandparents, the burden is significant.

The Chinese do not have a national public pension system and China's welfare and social security equivalents are underdeveloped.³⁹ Chinese persons that receive pensions are typically privileged and former employees of state-owned enterprises. Chinese grandparents, particularly those living in rural areas, are limited by their societal status through the *hukou* system, which prevents individuals from permanently leaving their province of residence and, therefore, changing the welfare package they receive.⁴⁰ Thus, government assistance is limited, and unprepared to provide for a rapidly aging population. One study suggests that “if aging brings with it higher pension costs, this will lead to fewer low income jobs, wage depression, slowing economic growth and job creation, declining interest from foreign investors, lower entrepreneurship and higher budget deficits.”⁴¹

A smaller, aging workforce will affect the health of China's economy. Projected GDP growth rate is

33. Eberstadt, “The Demographic Risks to China's Long-term Economic Outlook.”

34. *Ibid.*

35. Dong Tao, Weishen Deng, Amlan Roy, Sonali Punhani, and Angela Hsieh, “China: Abolishing the One Child Policy,” Credit Suisse, December 6, 2013, https://doc.research-and-analytics.csfb.com/docView?language=ENG&format=PDF&document_id=1026365421&source_id=emrna&erialid=L89qJjuQudU4RGN2rSYjeGe71598fa1PvxmKGU5Jg%3d (accessed August 22, 2015).

36. Feng, “The Future of a Demographic Overachiever: Long-Term Implications of the Demographic Transition in China,” pp. 173–190.

37. Eberstadt, “The Demographic Risks to China's Long-term Economic Outlook.”

38. *Ibid.*

39. *Ibid.*

40. Cory Lam, “Hukou System Reform Key to China's Economic and Social Stability,” China Briefing, July 12, 2011, <http://www.china-briefing.com/news/2011/07/12/hukou-system-reform-key-to-chinas-economic-and-social-stability.html> (accessed August 22, 2015).

41. Valerie M. Hudson and Andrea Den Boer, “China's Security, China's Demographics: Aging, Masculinization, and Fertility Policy,” *Brown Journal of World Affairs*, Vol. 14, No. 2 (Spring/Summer 2008).

driven by three factors: labor, capital, and total-factor productivity. The one-child policy has affected two of these three factors by reducing the labor supply and inadvertently decreasing the ratio of working-age population to the elderly population.

The dependency ratio bottomed out around 2010 at 44 percent, but is forecast to rise to 75.3 percent by 2040—and to a stratospheric 90.7 percent by 2050. (A higher percentage means more working-age people are required to support people not of working age.) This implies that by mid-century, approximately 1.1 working-age people will be supporting just one non-working-age person.

In the absence of the one-child policy, the dependency ratio would become significantly smaller starting around 2020. Without the one-child policy, the dependency ratio is estimated to reach 56 percent in 2035, 16 percentage points below current estimates.

Due in large part to the one-child policy, the working-age population is expected to drop by approximately 200 million between 2015 and 2050. As a result, China's annual projected GDP growth rate will likely decrease from 7.2 percent in 2013 to around 6.1 percent by 2020.⁴²

These unintended consequences of the one-child policy outweigh the short-term benefits experienced by the limited opening of the demographic dividend, if for no other reason than that the Chinese are missing out on their most valuable asset: the Chinese people.

China Without Coercive Population Policies

Research confirms that the one-child policy will have negative long-term ramifications, but few studies have examined what China's economy and demographics could have been like had the one-child policy not been implemented.

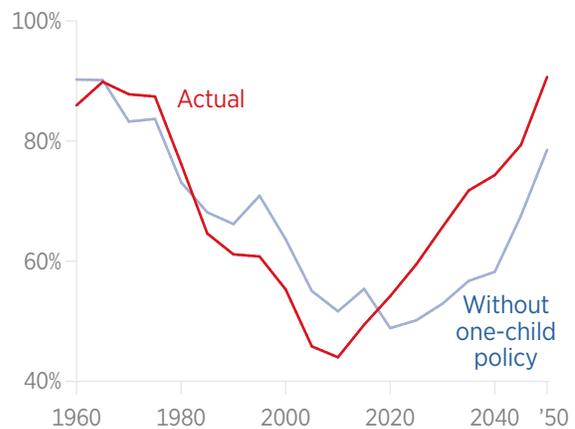
Heritage Foundation economist William T. Wilson applied a fertility model to estimate how China's birth control policies would have impacted the nation's demographic profile if the one-child policy had never been implemented. To simulate what China might have looked like, the fertility rates of three other middle-income East Asian developing countries—Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand—are averaged for each year.

CHART 1

Growing Dependency on Working Adults in China

A side effect of China's one-child policy has been a decline in the working-age population. By 2050, almost every working-age adult will have one person dependent on them.

PERCENT OF NON-WORKING POPULATION DEPENDENT ON WORKING POPULATION



NOTE: Figures show non-working population (ages 0-14 and 65+) divided by working-age population (ages 15-64).

SOURCE: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, "World Population Prospects: The 2012 Revision," http://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/publications/Files/WPP2012_HIGHLIGHTS.pdf (accessed June 6, 2016).

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The research found that assuming China's fertility rate had averaged that of Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand, China's population would be 326 million people larger in 2015 (approximately 1.7 billion versus today's actual 1.37 billion). China's National Population and Family Planning Commission claims the one-child policy prevented more than 400 million births. The 326 million figure is roughly equal to the 400 million figure.

China's government has traditionally used the 400 million figure to legitimize its continued implementation of coercive policies. If a population boom

42. Fang Cai and Yang Lu, "Population Change and Resulting Slowdown in Potential GDP Growth in China," *China and World Economy*, Vol. 21, No. 2 (2013), <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1749-124X.2013.12012.x/pdf> (accessed January 10, 2015).

occurred without the policies, officials fear that China would return to a Mao-like state, thereby increasing poverty rates, and reducing China's ability to provide for an increased population size.

According to Heritage analysis, however, the preferred fertility rate in China has dropped significantly, making post-coercive population-control policies unnecessary. Polling has shown that Chinese couples' preferences before the one-child policy may be quite different than fertility preferences now.⁴³ Many Chinese prefer to have only one child due to the immediate financial burdens associated with having a child. Additionally, artificial drivers, like Mao's food incentives based on family size, no longer exist, so the likelihood that a massive boom would occur seems unlikely.

Even if China's population were to explode after rescinding the one-child policy, the poverty experienced during the Great Leap Forward and Cultural Revolution under Mao are not primarily attributable to growth in population size. Rather, this economic strife was fueled by poor communist policies, including agricultural collectivization and economic repression, which, in turn, resulted in mismanagement of food and monetary resources.⁴⁴

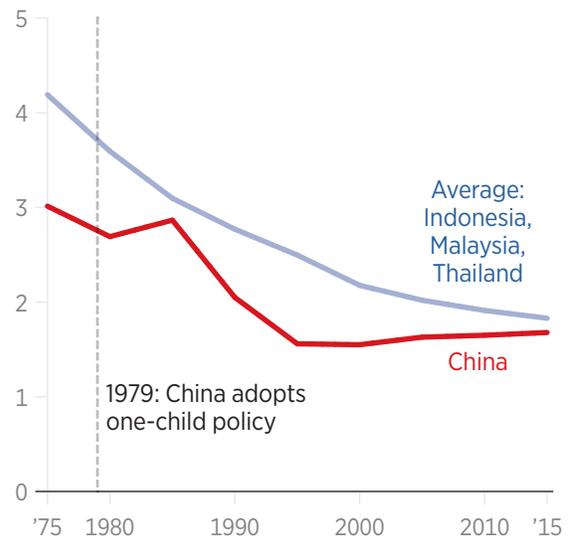
Indeed, the Chinese government did not need to implement coercive population control policies at all, and should not continue its deadly, discriminatory, and harmful experiment. Without the one-child policy, the overall fertility rate for China would have likely followed the same trajectory of many other countries over the past three decades, declining close to what it is today. Instead, the Chinese government chose to artificially manipulate its population, trampling on the rights of its citizens, and creating the conditions for a country with age and sex ratios that are much more skewed than they otherwise would have been.

The one-child policy has led to a population today that is not only markedly elderly, but also much more masculine. The combination of a cultural preference for boys, combined with draconian population-control policies, has led to a significantly skewed gender imbalance. In 2015, China's estimated male population exceeded its female population by 51 million. More critically, among the

CHART 2

China's Birth Rate Lower than Comparable Asian Countries

BIRTHS PER WOMAN



SOURCE: Heritage Foundation research using data from the United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, "World Population Prospects: The 2012 Revision," http://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/publications/Files/WPP2012_HIGHLIGHTS.pdf (accessed June 6, 2016).

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current child-bearing population (20–39), young males outnumber their female counterparts by 17 million.

China's unprecedentedly skewed gender-ratio imbalance and dependency ratio will have real consequences for the Chinese family structure and has already led to humanitarian challenges.

Human Rights Impacts of One-Child Policy in China

Coercive enforcement of the one-child policy has perpetuated some of the worst human rights abuses in the world, causing untold physical and emotional suffering for women and men throughout China. As discussed above, the recent announcement that

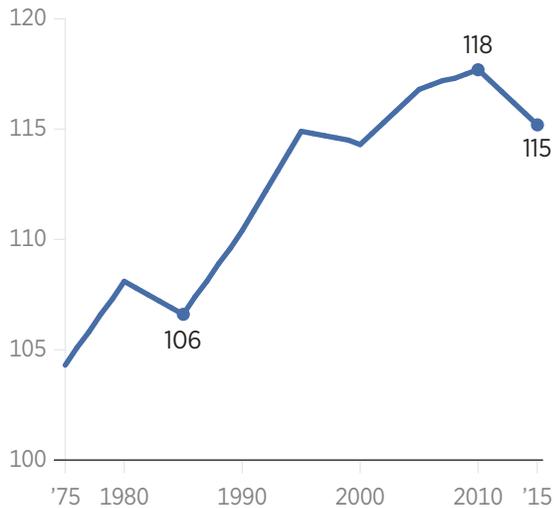
43. OutgrownNewsFocus, "Has China Outgrown the One-Child Policy?"

44. Jean-Louis Panne, Andrzej Paczowski, Jean-Louis Margolin, Nicolas Werth, Stephane Coutois, Mark Kramer, and Jonathan Murphy, *The Black Book of Communism: Crimes, Terror, and Repression* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999).

CHART 3

China's Gender Imbalance

MALES PER 100 FEMALES



SOURCE: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, "World Population Prospects: The 2012 Revision," http://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/publications/Files/WPP2012_HIGHLIGHTS.pdf (accessed June 6, 2016).

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China will move to a two-child-per-couple policy will not end the tight control that government officials maintain over the number, spacing, and legality of births in China. The fear, however unfounded, is that China would experience a population boom.

"A large population is China's basic national condition so we must adhere to the basic state policy of family planning," warned Wang Peian, Vice Minister of the National Health and Family Planning Commission, at a December 2015 press conference on the new policy.⁴⁵ Regrettably, that "basic state

policy of family planning" has included use of brutal and draconian enforcement mechanisms. Although China technically prohibits violations of the "legitimate rights" of its citizens, family-planning officials routinely use forced abortion, involuntary sterilization, and intimidation tactics to ensure compliance with population policies.

According to the 2015 Annual Report of the U.S. Congressional-Executive Commission on China (CECC): "Many provincial-level population planning regulations explicitly instruct officials to carry out abortions, often referred to as 'remedial measures' (*bujiu cuoshi*), for 'out of plan' pregnancies, with no apparent requirement for parents' consent."⁴⁶

While there are reportedly about 23 million abortions performed in China each year, there is no authoritative estimate of how many forced abortions, sterilizations, and other coercive measures have occurred in China since the beginning of the one-child policy.⁴⁷ As with other instances of human rights abuses in China and elsewhere, foreign commentary and research relies on reports from Chinese and other media, as well as eyewitness accounts from those who have escaped the often oppressive state. A few examples of such coercion from the past few years include:

- **Forced abortion.** In late September 2013, 20 family-planning officials broke into the home of Liu Xinwen. After detaining her husband, officials dragged the six-month pregnant woman to a hospital for a forced abortion. Before Liu's husband could find her, officials forced her to sign a consent agreement for the procedure and injected her with an abortion-causing drug. The child was delivered stillborn two days later.⁴⁸
- **Coercion of ethnic minorities.** In December 2013, four Uyghur women were reportedly forced

45. "2-child policy 'to fuel growth by 0.5%,'" *China Daily Asia*, November 10, 2015, http://www.chinadailyasia.com/nation/2015-11/10/content_15342620.html (accessed July 19, 2016).

46. Congressional-Executive Commission on China, *2015 Annual Report*, October 8, 2015, p. 145, <http://www.cecc.gov/sites/chinacommission.house.gov/files/2015%20Annual%20Report.pdf> (accessed July 19, 2016).

47. U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2015*, April 13, 2016, <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/#wrapper> (accessed May 2, 2016).

48. Sarah C. Nelson, "Pregnant Liu Xinwen Forced Into Abortion at Six Months Because She Already Has a Child," *Huffington Post UK*, January 23, 2014, http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/2013/10/04/pregnant-liu-xinwen-forced-abortion-six-months-_n_4042156.html (accessed August 22, 2015), and Mark Stone, "China Couple Speak of 'Forced Abortion,'" *Sky News*, October 4, 2013, <http://news.sky.com/story/1150016/china-couple-speak-of-forced-abortion> (accessed August 22, 2015).

to undergo abortions. One of the women, who was six months pregnant, delivered a living baby boy following an injection of an abortion-inducing drug. Despite attempts by the child's father to get the baby medical care, the boy died an hour after his birth from the abortion-inducing drug family-planning officials had injected into his mother. Although the Uyghurs, as an ethnic minority, are subject to more relaxed population-control policies (allowed three children if they reside in rural provinces and two if they live in cities) they still face coercion and forced sterilization for exceeding birth limits.⁴⁹

- **Unwarranted detainment.** In November 2014, family-planning officials allegedly detained Zhang Younglin, her husband, and their 10-month-old child for failing to pay a 140,000 yuan (\$22,365) fine for having a third child. Another man who also lived in the village was detained at the same time for failing to pay a penalty for his third child. After negative media coverage about the detainments, the officials in charge were suspended and local police began an investigation into the incident.⁵⁰
- **Coerced sterilization.** In January 2014, more than 20 government officials in Yuqing, Guizhou province reportedly dragged Tan Kaimei to a local family-planning office, where she was forcibly sterilized against her will and in contradiction to her doctor's recommendations. She now suffers from extreme pain and difficulty walking,

which she attributes to the unwanted and medically unnecessary sterilization procedure.⁵¹

Other punishments, the CECC has noted, include "job termination, expulsion from the Communist Party, destruction of personal property, [and] arbitrary detention." These and other human rights abuses have continued even after Chinese officials announced the first relaxation of the one-child policy to allow couples where both parents are only children to apply for a second birth permit.⁵² For instance, in May 2015, international media reported that a five-month pregnant Chinese woman, who had been given a birth permit for a second child, was later told by officials that she would lose her teaching position unless she aborted her unborn child.⁵³ Only after widespread public outcry did government officials rescind the "termination of pregnancy" order and allow the woman to give birth to her second child.⁵⁴ In order to monitor the local population and stay within birth quotas, local family-planning officials subject married and single women to periodic pregnancy tests. Pitting neighbors, family members, and co-workers against each other, officials also reportedly rely on informants to alert them when a woman is pregnant with an out-of-plan birth.⁵⁵

Mei Shunping, a victim of five forced abortions, described her time as a factory worker in China where routine checkups for women were used to guard against unlawful pregnancy. "When discovered, pregnant women would be dragged to undergo forced abortions—there was no other

49. Shohret Hoshur, "Four Uyghur Women Forced to Abort Their Babies in Xinjiang," Radio Free Asia, December 30, 2013, <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/abortion-12302013050902.html> (accessed August 22, 2015).

50. Nectar Gan, "Chinese Villagers and Infant Illegally Detained for Days After Violating One-Child Policy," *South China Morning Post*, December 11, 2014, <http://www.scmp.com/news/china/article/1660313/chinese-villagers-and-infant-illegally-detained-days-after-violating-one> (accessed August 22, 2015).

51. "Guizhou Family Planning Official Says Woman Should Have Forced Sterilization 'Because He Told Her To,'" ChinaAid, January 27, 2014, <http://www.chinaaid.org/2014/01/guizhou-family-planning-official-says.html> (accessed August 22, 2015).

52. Congressional-Executive Commission on China, *2014 Annual Report*, October 9, 2014, p. 104, http://www.cecc.gov/sites/chinacommission.house.gov/files/2014%20annual%20report_0.PDF (accessed August 23, 2015).

53. "Chinese Teacher Given Permission for Another Child Forced to Have Abortion," *Toronto Star*, May 19, 2015, <http://www.thestar.com/news/world/2015/05/19/chinese-teacher-given-permission-to-have-another-child-forced-to-have-abortion.html> (accessed August 22, 2015).

54. "Pregnant Teacher Out of Dilemma Between Job and Abortion," *China Daily*, May 20, 2015, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2015-05/20/content_20771771.htm (accessed July 19, 2016).

55. Ping Liu, testimony before U.S. House of Representatives, September 22, 2011, http://chrissmith.house.gov/UploadedFiles/Testimony_of_Ping_Liu.pdf (accessed September 17, 2015).

choice,” Mei testified before the U.S. House of Representatives in 2011. “We had no dignity as potential child-bearers.”⁵⁶

Couples or single mothers who manage to escape the careful watch of officials to have a child without a birth permit face high “social maintenance fees,” sometimes totaling more than one or both parents’ annual income.⁵⁷ In some localities, officials have also denied household registration to children born without birth permits.⁵⁸ Without such identification, individuals face great difficulty obtaining health care, pensions, housing, and other welfare benefits.⁵⁹

The merciless implementation of the one-child policy is also affecting other basic rights, like free speech and free association, as evidenced by the detention of human rights activist Chen Guangcheng. Before his arrest in 2006, the blind, self-taught lawyer had held meetings with members of the Linyi community, recording heart-wrenching stories from women forced to undergo third-trimester abortions, men sterilized against their will, and individuals tortured and harassed because a family member was pregnant with an unauthorized child.⁶⁰ According to Chen’s records, during a six-month period, officials performed more than 130,000 forced abortions and sterilizations in Linyi alone.

When he attempted to publicize his findings and seek justice for some of the victims of China’s family-planning regime, Chen was immediately arrested. After four years in prison and another year and a half under house arrest, he dramatically escaped in 2012 and eventually found asylum for himself and his family in the United States. Chen is one of many

brave individuals who have attempted to stand up to China’s ruthless family-planning machine, but one of only a few who have escaped to tell of the government’s gross human rights violations.

“This brutality and these crimes against women and their families have wrought irrevocable physical, spiritual and psychological harm. Many families have lost hope and ended up broken,” Chen testified before Congress in April 2015.⁶¹ Such harm is likely to continue even under the newly tweaked population-control rules. The Chinese government reportedly began implementation of the two-child policy on January 1, 2016.⁶² While the Standing Committee of China’s National People’s Congress eliminated the requirement for couples with fewer than two children to obtain a birth permit, the details of enforcing the continued population-control policy were left to local provincial governments.

If current regulations in many Chinese provinces are any indication, it is likely that coercive enforcement will continue. As the U.S. State Department *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2015* notes, the majority of provinces in China still explicitly or implicitly require forced abortions of women who are believed to have violated family-planning policies.⁶³

With no plans to disband its large army of government population-control officials, the Chinese government seems intent on maintaining a strong and coercive grip on couples and families. As Nicholas Eberstadt explained in a December 2015 hearing of the Congressional-Executive Committee on China:⁶⁴

56. Mei Shunping, testimony before Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, and Human Rights, Committee on Foreign Affairs, U.S. House of Representatives, May 15, 2012, <http://foreignaffairs.house.gov/112/HHRG-112-FA16-WState-ShunpingM-20120515.pdf> (accessed August 23, 2015).

57. U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2013*, 2013, <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/#wrapper> (accessed August 23, 2015).

58. Congressional-Executive Commission on China, *2014 Annual Report*, pp. 108-109.

59. *Ibid.*

60. Philip P. Pan, “Who Controls the Family?” *The Washington Post*, August 27, 2005, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/08/26/AR2005082601756.html> (accessed August 23, 2015).

61. Chen Guangcheng, testimony before the Congressional Executive Commission on China, U.S. House of Representatives, April 30, 2015, <http://www.cecc.gov/sites/chinacommission.house.gov/files/CECC%20Hearing%20-%20Population%20Control%20-%20Chen%20Guangcheng%20.pdf> (accessed August 23, 2015).

62. U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2015*.

63. U.S. Department of State, “Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2015.”

64. Nicholas Eberstadt, “China’s New ‘Two-Child Policy’ and the Continuation of Massive Crimes against Women and Children,” testimony before the Congressional-Executive Commission on China, U.S. House of Representatives, December 3, 2015, <https://www.aei.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/Testimony-Eberstadt-Prepared-Statement-CECC-Dec-2015-Final.pdf> (accessed June 3, 2016).

Beijing is not relinquishing its claim that the state, rather than parents, is the proper authority for deciding how many children China's families may have. Instead, the Chinese Communist Party is merely preparing to recalibrate the limit that it will impose on its subjects. By all indications, the sorts of ugly human rights violations that other witnesses will be describing here this morning—up to and including criminalizing out-of-quota pregnancies and forcibly compelling abortions against the will of the mother—will still be very much part and parcel of China's population policy agenda.

By disregarding the human dignity and fundamental rights of the Chinese people and tipping the country's population toward troubling demographic trends, the country's coercive population-control policies are hindering China from becoming a free and prosperous society.

One-Child Policy and China's Shortage of Women

Coupled with a strong cultural preference for sons, the one-child policy has helped lead to significant gender imbalances throughout China, the effects of which could have long-lasting consequences for the country's stability and national interests.

Skewed Sex Ratios. The natural ratio of males to females at birth ranges from 103 to 105 baby boys for every 100 baby girls.⁶⁵ Statistics that deviate from that ratio suggest human intervention to eliminate a particular sex. Declining fertility rates, cultural and legal systems that favor men, and the advent of prenatal sex-determination tests and sex-selective abortion all fuel gender imbalance. For those and other reasons, sex ratios at birth in a num-

ber of primarily Asian countries have begun to tip toward boys.⁶⁶ China, unique for its long-standing and coercively enforced population-control policies, has reported some of the highest ratios of males to females at birth in the world.⁶⁷

The country's official sex ratio at birth in 2014, the latest year available, was 115.2, meaning there were approximately 115 boys born for every 100 girls.⁶⁸ While the sex ratio at birth has declined slightly over the past few years from an all-time national high of about 118 boys for every 100 girls, China still boasts one of the world's most extreme ratios. Gender imbalance is apparent throughout most of China, with some provinces having reported an imbalanced ratio of boys to girls as high as over 126 to 100.⁶⁹

The Chinese government prohibits "non-medically necessary" sex-selective abortion and has, at times, cracked down on illegal sex-determination testing. But many couples still rely on the practice, facing pressure from family and friends to ensure that what is likely to be their only child is a boy, since the government so tightly controls family size.⁷⁰ "Persistent emotional pressure, estrangement from the extended family, threat of abandonment or divorce, verbal abuse, and domestic violence often overpower women who otherwise would choose to keep their daughters," explains Reggie Littlejohn, President and Founder of Women's Rights Without Frontiers, an organization working to expose the human rights abuses of the one-child policy.⁷¹

China's population-control laws have not, in themselves, caused the country's devastating gender imbalance, and the full impact of the one-child policy on Chinese demographics is difficult to ascertain.⁷² Yet, many researchers believe the one-child policy has played a role in exacerbating the country's skewed sex ratios. Despite a centuries-long preference for boys,

65. Nicholas Eberstadt, "The Global War Against Baby Girls," *The New Atlantis*, Fall 2011, p. 4, <http://www.thenewatlantis.com/publications/the-global-war-against-baby-girls> (accessed August 23, 2015).

66. *Ibid.*

67. Nicholas Eberstadt, "China's Family Planning Goes Awry," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, December 2009, <http://www.aei.org/publication/chinas-family-planning-goes-awry/> (accessed July 19, 2016).

68. National Bureau of Statistics of China, "China's Economy Realized a New Normal of Stable Growth in 2014," January 20, 2015, http://www.stats.gov.cn/english/PressRelease/201501/t20150120_671038.html (accessed August 23, 2015).

69. Isabelle Attané, *The Demographic Masculinization of China: Hoping for a Son* (Switzerland: Springer International Publishing, 2013), p. xv.

70. Congressional-Executive Commission on China, *2014 Annual Report*, p. 107

71. Reggie Littlejohn, "China's One-Child Policy: Pro-Choice and Pro-Life Must Work Together to End Forced Abortion and Gendercide," *Public Discourse*, October 10, 2014, <http://www.thepublicdiscourse.com/2014/10/13903/> (accessed August 23, 2015).

72. Eberstadt, "China's New 'Two-Child Policy' and the Continuation of Massive Crimes against Women and Children."

Chinese sex ratios appeared relatively normal in the 1970s and early 1980s.⁷³ In 1982, just a few years after the policy's implementation, the sex ratio at birth in China was already 108.5 to 100, and climbed to a high of nearly 120 over the next three decades.⁷⁴ Such a sharp increase in the number of boys at birth following implementation of the population-control policy suggests a causal link between the population-control rule and China's current shortage of females.⁷⁵

The government has even reinforced the devaluation of female children through its implementation of, and subsequent changes to, the one-child policy. In 1984, Chinese officials began allowing rural families whose first child was a girl to have a second child, expressly because the government was taking "into account the difficulties (such as shortage of household labor) of peasants who have one daughter."⁷⁶ While sex ratios for the first child in many rural areas are closer to normal, those for the second and third children are grossly skewed. According to one study of the Chinese 2005 intercensus, rural provinces exhibited sex ratios at birth of second and third children reaching as high as 146 to 157 boys for every 100 girls in some provinces.⁷⁷ A separate analysis of the broader 2010 Chinese census data, likewise, shows sex ratios of second-order and third-order births of 130 and 161, respectively.⁷⁸

The consequences of such deadly discrimination, fueled by the one-child policy, are serious and could mar China's future social progress.

"Bare Branches" and Increased Violence. As a result of decades of choosing boys over girls, about 17 million young women (ages 20–39) are "missing" from China's population.⁷⁹ The flipside of that shortage of women means that for a roughly equal number of young men now coming of age, it will be difficult to find spouses. By some estimates, as much as 25 percent of Chinese men in their late 30s could be unmarried by 2040, compared to only about 5 percent in 2009.⁸⁰

While the consequences of so many bachelors are difficult to predict, tens of millions of men being demographically prohibited from settling down into the socializing institution of marriage may not bode well for China's social stability and national interests.

Many of those unmarried men, colloquially referred to in Chinese as "bare branches," are likely to be unemployed and undereducated, as their more affluent peers will have had the means to attract wives from a limited number of women.⁸¹ Often facing scorn from a culture that encourages marriage and continuation of family lineage, "bare branches" can suffer from increased rates of depression, suicidal thoughts, and aggression.⁸²

According to some researchers, an excess number of unhappy and hopeless bachelors could lead to greater social conflict and violence in China. As Andrea den Boer, a lecturer at the University of Kent, and Valerie Hudson, professor at Texas A&M, explain:

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73. Zeng Yi, Tu Ping, Gu Baochang, Xu Yi, Li Bohua, and Li Yongpiing, "Causes and Implications of the Recent Increase in the Reported Sex Ratio at Birth in China," *Population and Development Review*, Vol. 19, No. 2 (June 1993), pp. 283–302, <http://www.jstor.org/discover/10.2307/2938438?sid=21105212651841&uid=2&uid=70&uid=4&uid=3739256&uid=2129> (accessed July 19, 2016).
 74. Eberstadt, "The Global War Against Baby Girls," p. 4.
 75. Hongbin Li, Junjian Yi, and Junsen Zhang, "Estimating the Effect of the One-Child Policy on the Sex Ratio Imbalance in China: Identification Based on the Difference-in-Differences," *Demography*, Vol. 48, No. 4 (November 2011), pp. 1535–1557, <http://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s13524-011-0055-y> (accessed July 19, 2016).
 76. Andrea den Boer and Valerie M. Hudson, "China's Security, China's Demographics: Aging, Masculinization, and Fertility Policy," *The Brown Journal of World Affairs*, Vol. 14, No. 2 (Spring 2008), p. 188, citing Zeng Yi, "Options for Fertility Policy Transition in China," *Population and Development Review*, Vol. 33, No. 2 (June 2007), pp. 215–246, <http://www.jstor.org/discover/10.2307/25434606?sid=21105156729801&uid=70&uid=4&uid=3739256&uid=2&uid=2129> (accessed August 23, 2015).
 77. 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," *The BMJ*, <http://www.bmj.com/content/338/bmj.b1211.abstract> (accessed August 23, 2015).
 78. Attané, *The Demographic Masculinization of China: Hoping for a Son*, section 2.1.4.
 79. See Heritage research above.
 80. Eberstadt, "China's Family Planning Goes Awry."
 81. Valerie M. Hudson and Andrea M. den Boer, *Bare Branches: The Security Implications of Asia's Surplus Male Population* (Cambridge, MA: Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, Harvard University, 2004), pp. 189–190.
 82. Susan Scutti, "One-Child Policy Is One Big Problem for China," *Newsweek*, January 23, 2014, <http://www.newsweek.com/2014/01/24/one-child-policy-one-big-problem-china-245118.html> (accessed August 23, 2015).

A surplus of 40–50 million bachelors throughout the mid- to late 21st century will have a significant effect on China’s stability and development as a nation: Male criminal behavior drops significantly upon marriage, and the presence of significant numbers of unmarried men is potentially destabilizing to societies. In the case of China, the fact that a sizeable percentage of young adult males will not be making that transition will have negative social repercussions, including increased crime, violent crime, crimes against women, vice, substance abuse and the formation of gangs that are involved in all of these antisocial behaviors.⁸³

Den Boer and Hudson surmise that the rising ranks of bare branches could lead the Chinese government to take even more authoritarian action to maintain relative social peace.

Trafficking, Bride Commoditization, and Adoption Abuses. China’s shortage of potential wives, fueled by the coercive one-child policy, has led to an increasing demand for females. In turn, this demand is fueling increased sex trafficking, bride commoditization, and forced marriages.

As the 2013 State Department *Trafficking in Persons Report* notes:

The Chinese government’s birth limitation policy and a cultural preference for sons, create a skewed sex ratio of 118 boys to 100 girls in China, which served as a key source of demand for the trafficking of foreign women as brides for Chinese men and for forced prostitution. Women from Burma, Malaysia, Vietnam, and Mongolia

are transported to China after being recruited through marriages brokers or fraudulent employment offers, where they are subsequently subjected to forced prostitution or forced labor.⁸⁴

It is difficult to determine just how many women are trafficked into China for forced marriages or prostitution. The CECC cites reports that foreign women from Cambodia, Laos, Mongolia, Myanmar (Burma), North Korea, Thailand, and Vietnam were trafficked into China over the last reporting year. According to reports from the Chinese government, more than 5,800 trafficking victims from Vietnam alone have been identified since 2008, most of whom were sold in China.⁸⁵ By some reports, Vietnamese girls and women are regularly sold for up to \$5,000 to enter forced marriages or prostitution.⁸⁶

Severely restrictive birth limits in China, combined with a preference for sons, has also led to baby kidnapping, infant trafficking, and fraudulent adoptions. In January 2015, for instance, Chinese news outlets reported that police had arrested more than 100 individuals suspected of running an infant trafficking ring across multiple provinces. Police found trafficked children living in squalid conditions in a former hospital building and, in Shandong province, one gang was suspected of housing pregnant women specifically to sell their infants after birth.⁸⁷

There have also been reports of family-planning officials abducting children born without birth permits and illegally selling them to orphanages.⁸⁸ Some parents, unable to pay the high social maintenance fees for having an out-of-plan child, have attempted to sell their child to adoption brokers.⁸⁹

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83. Andrea den Boer and Valerie M. Hudson, “The Security Risks of China’s Abnormal Demographics,” *The Washington Post*, April 30, 2014, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/monkey-cage/wp/2014/04/30/the-security-risks-of-chinas-abnormal-demographics/> (accessed August 23, 2015).
84. U.S. Department of State, *Trafficking in Persons Report 2013*, p. 129, <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/210738.pdf> (accessed August 23, 2015). The U.S. Department of State continues to note the role that China’s population control policies have played in creating increased demand for trafficked women. U.S. Department of State, *Trafficking in Persons Report 2015*, p. 121, <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/243558.pdf> (accessed July 19, 2016).
85. Duong Phan, “Vietnam Sentences 4 Traffickers of Women to China,” *Thanh Nien News*, August 7, 2014, <http://www.thanhniennews.com/society/vietnam-sentences-4-traffickers-of-women-to-china-29635.html> (accessed August 23, 2015).
86. Cat Barton, “Brides for Sale: Vietnamese Women Trafficked to China,” *Yahoo News*, June 25, 2014, <http://news.yahoo.com/brides-sale-vietnamese-women-trafficked-china-045146327.html> (accessed August 23, 2015).
87. Agence France-Presse, “China Police Bust Baby Trafficking Rings: Report,” *Channel NewsAsia*, January 14, 2015, <http://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/asiapacific/china-police-bust-baby/1589440.html> (accessed August 23, 2015).
88. Barbara Demick, “Some Chinese Parents Say Their Babies Were Stolen for Adoption,” *The Los Angeles Times*, September 20, 2009, <http://articles.latimes.com/2009/sep/20/world/fg-china-adopt20> (accessed August 23, 2015).
89. Congressional-Executive Commission on China, *2014 Annual Report*, p. 107.

Saving Girls by Eliminating the Two-Child Policy

Reversing China's gender imbalance and alleviating the inevitable consequences for the country's civil society will not be easy. Eliminating the country's coercive population control policies would be a good first step. Indeed, the freedom to have more than two children is not only a basic human right, it is integral to a balanced population.

Merely "relaxing" the one-child policy to a two-child policy, however, is unlikely to rectify China's gender imbalance. As discussed above, even within those families who are currently permitted to have more than one child, the sex ratios for second or third births are still skewed.⁹⁰ China can learn a lesson from Vietnam, which has seen its sex ratios at birth fall precipitously out of balance over the past two decades, as the government more broadly enforced a two-child-per-couple policy and did little to crack down on illegal sex-selective abortions. Plagued by similar cultural pressures to choose sons over daughters, even Vietnam's less stringent population-control policies have placed the country in danger of overtaking China as the country with the worst sex imbalance.⁹¹

There is some hope. During roughly the same time period that Vietnam's two-child policy has helped skew sex ratios in that country, South Korea has been able to turn around its gender imbalance. In addition to legal and cultural changes that have increased the rights and status of women, researchers note that enforcement of a ban on sex-selective abortion and an absence of stringent population-control policies, in addition to other policies promoting the rights of women, have been integral factors in normalizing South Korea's sex ratios at birth.⁹²

The same long-term results may be possible in China—if the government eliminates its coercive policies and more strictly prosecutes doctors who perform sex-selective abortions.

U.S. Involvement in One-Child Policy Through UNFPA Funding

The human rights violations stemming from the one-child policy should be of grave concern to the United States, not only because it strips the Chinese people of their basic freedoms, but also because the U.S. may be financially complicit in the policy's enforcement through continued contributions to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

As a founding member of the UNFPA, the United States began sending taxpayer dollars to the family-planning organization in 1969. And through much of the following decade, the U.S. was one of the top contributors to the UNFPA, at times agreeing to match other governments' contributions.⁹³

In the early 1980s, however, investigative reports delivered to Congress provided evidence that China's newly enacted one-child policy was being coercively enforced through forced abortions and involuntary sterilization.

In response, Congress sought to prohibit funding to any organization abetting Chinese family-planning officials by passing the Kemp–Kasten Amendment. First enacted in 1985 and included in every foreign appropriations bill since, the amendment gives the President the authority to withhold federal funding from any organization that "supports or participates in the management of a program of coercive abortion or involuntary sterilization."⁹⁴ What followed was a decades-long argument over whether the UNFPA would continue receiving U.S. contributions.

Under Presidents Ronald Reagan and George H. W. Bush, using the Kemp–Kasten Amendment, the U.S. withheld contributions to the UNFPA. Funding was then reinstated under President Bill Clinton (except for fiscal year (FY) 1999). In 2002, the U.S. Department of State, under President George W. Bush, conducted a study of the UNFPA's role in China's population-control program writing, in part:

90. 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*, Vol. 338, No. 7700, April 18, 2009, (accessed July 23, 2016).

91. Andrea M. Den Boer, Valerie M. Hudson, and Jenny Russell, "China's Mismatched Bookends: A Tale of Birth Sex Ratios in South Korea and Vietnam," paper prepared for the annual meeting of the International Studies Association, New Orleans, February 2015, <http://www.cecc.gov/sites/chinacommission.house.gov/files/CECC%20Hearing%20-%20Population%20Control%20-%20Valerie%20Hudson.pdf> (accessed August 23, 2015).

92. *Ibid.*

93. "Funding Timeline," Friends of UNFPA, <http://www.friendsofunfpa.org/netcommunity/page.aspx?pid=216> (accessed September 17, 2015).

94. Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2015, Public Law 113-235.

The PRC's [People's Republic of China] coercive law and practices amount to a "program of coercive abortion" and are an integral part of the comprehensive population-control program that PRC officials at all levels of government work to advance. Regardless of the size of UNFPA's budget in China or any benefits its programs provide, UNFPA's support of, and involvement in, China's population-planning activities allows the Chinese government to implement more effectively its program of coercive abortion.

UNFPA provides millions of dollars in financial support for PRC family-planning activities in the 32 counties in which it operates. These outlays include expenditures for equipment such as computers and data-processing equipment designed to strengthen management capacity at the county level, surgical and other medical equipment and project vehicles. Although such equipment has legitimate uses, it also facilitates the imposition of social compensation fees and the performance of abortions on those women who are coerced by the social compensation fees to undergo abortions that they would otherwise not undergo.⁹⁵

For FY 2002, the State Department cited the Kemp–Kasten Amendment as reason to withhold funding from the UNFPA. The State Department's report was in addition to private, independent investigations in 2001 that showed the UNFPA programs supportive of China's family-planning policies.⁹⁶ President Bush continued to prohibit funding to the organization under Kemp–Kasten for the remainder of his terms in office.

Towards the end of the Bush Administration, the State Department completed a final investigation into the UNFPA's activities in China, again concluding that U.S. dollars should be withheld from the organization. The over 260-page report, transmitted to Congress on June 26, 2008, reads in part: "[B]y providing financial and technical resources...to the National Population and Family Planning Commission and related [Chinese government] entities, UNFPA provides support for and participates in the management of the Chinese government's program of coercive abortion and involuntary sterilization."⁹⁷ The same report further stated: "[A]ll UNFPA programming related to contraception and reproductive health incorporates, and defers to, Chinese law and regulation. The national law and the provincial regulations are a framework for China's coercive birth policies."⁹⁸

Yet, in 2009, without providing evidence that the UNFPA had ceased cooperation with Chinese officials in implementation of the one-child policy, President Barack Obama announced his Administration would again approve reinstating funding to the family-planning organization.⁹⁹ Since then, Congress has appropriated over \$220 million in taxpayer funding to the UNFPA, with the most recent appropriation providing \$35 million to the organization.¹⁰⁰

As detailed in a 2009 report published by the UNFPA, the organization has maintained a close working relationship with the Chinese government since the UNFPA started working in the country in 1979, particularly with the National Population and Family Planning Commission that oversees enforcement of the one-child policy.¹⁰¹ Indeed, in December 2010, Vice Minister Zhao Baige for the

95. "Analysis of Determination that Kemp-Kasten Amendment Precludes Further Funding to UNFPA under Pub. L. 107-115," U.S. Department of State, Released by the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration, July 24, 2002, <http://2001-2009.state.gov/g/prm/rls/12128.htm> (accessed July 19, 2016).

96. "Full Report on UNFPA's Involvement in China," Population Research Institute, December 12, 2001, <https://www.pop.org/content/full-report-on-unfpas-involvement-in-china> (accessed July 19, 2016).

97. To Prohibit Funding to the United Nations Population Fund, H. Rep. 2059, 112th Cong., 2nd Sess., January 7, 2012, p. 7, <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CRPT-112hrpt361/pdf/CRPT-112hrpt361.pdf> (accessed July 19, 2016), citing "Analysis of Determination that Kemp-Kasten Amendment Precludes Funding to UNFPA, transmitted with cover letter by Deputy Secretary John D. Negroponte on June 26, 2008."

98. Letter to President Barack Obama from Representative Chris Smith (R-NJ) and other Members of Congress, October 7, 2011, <http://www.lifenews.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/chrissmithunfpaletter.pdf> (accessed July 19, 2016).

99. Macon Phillips, "Statement Released After the President Rescinds 'Mexico City Policy,'" The White House Blog, January 24, 2009, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2009/01/24/> (accessed July 19, 2016).

100. UNFPA Annual Reports 2009–2014, and Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act.

101. United Nations Population Fund, "China and UNFPA: 30 Years of Cooperation on Population and Development," *UNFPA Report*, 2009, p. 13, <http://www.unfpa.cn/en/publication/china-and-unfpa-30-years-cooperation-population-and-development> (accessed August 24, 2015).

National Population and Family Planning Commission reportedly offered “thanks to UNFPA for its constant support to China’s population and family-planning undertakings during the past thirty years and more.”¹⁰²

The UNFPA claims to have helped change the government’s policy on birth spacing in some Chinese counties and “looks forward to working side-by-side with the Chinese Government in addressing current and emerging population and development challenges in its future programmes in China, in accordance with of the ICPD [International Conference on Population and Development] Programme of Action,” a U.N. agreement to promote *voluntary* family planning, among other things.¹⁰³ Yet, the Chinese government still coercively enforces draconian population-control measures and repeatedly violates the very ICPD protocols the UNFPA claims to promote. Moreover, according to recent private investigations, at least some of the UNFPA’s “model birth control counties” in China, where the U.N. organization claims to be intimately involved, continue to use abusive tactics to ensure compliance with family-planning regulations. Testifying before Congress in 2012 on his organization’s investigations into five UNFPA model counties from 2009 to 2012, Stephen Mosher, president of the Population Research Institute, concluded, “the UNFPA is directly responsible for forced abortions and forced sterilizations in China.”¹⁰⁴

Supporters of U.S. contributions to the UNFPA point to conditions on U.S. funding that prohibit the family-planning organization from directly using any U.S. tax dollars for its programs in China. But, as a 2011 congressional report on such funding points out: “These approaches conveniently ignore the basic fact that money is fungible. Providing substantial new resources to an entity—even if ostensibly earmarked for a specific purpose—frees up organizational resources for unrelated (and objectionable) purposes.”¹⁰⁵

With sustained allegations that the UNFPA is complicit in violating the human rights of Chinese women and men, the United States should stop sending taxpayer dollars to the organization.

International aid is often better provided through private organizations where stakeholders demand transparency and accountability. Congress should eliminate all federal contributions to the UNFPA, and end that aspect of the United States’ involvement in China’s untenable family-planning regime.

The Real Problem

The real problem in China is not the size of its population, but China’s poor policies.

The population explosion under Mao was not, in and of itself, a problem. Rather, starvation and poverty during the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution were the result of poor policy. Specifically, by redistributing resources such as wealth and food, the government inflicted untold suffering on the Chinese people.¹⁰⁶ Indeed, collectivization of fiscal, monetary, and food resources was the root cause of poverty and strife in China, as it has been in so many other communist and post-communist nations.

Unfortunately, Deng Xiaoping and others in the CCP failed to learn from Mao’s mistakes. This new era of leadership continued to take family matters into their own hands—first through the implementation of the “later, longer, fewer” policies, and then through the establishment of the one-child policy, and now the enactment of a two-child policy. These policy decisions were made with little or mistaken regard for the social, economic, and demographic impacts of the Chinese government dictating private, family matters.

In short, poor governance during the Mao era and beyond was the cause of Chinese economic, political, and social strife—not the Chinese people. Fortunately, resolving issues of poor governance are much

102. To Prohibit Funding to the United Nations Population Fund, citing “National Population and Family Planning Commission account of remarks by Vice Minister Zhao Baige at December 12, 2010 retrospective on UNFPA’s 6th China Country Program.”

103. “China and UNFPA: 30 Years of Cooperation on Population and Development,” *United Nations Population Fund*, http://www.unfpa.cn/sites/unfpa/files/media/China%20and%20UNFP%2030%20Years%20of%20Cooperation%20on%20Population%20and%20Development_0.pdf (accessed July 23, 2016).

104. Steven Mosher, “China’s One-Child Policy and UNFPA: A Silent But Deadly Partnership,” *LifeNews.com*, July 10, 2012, <http://www.lifenews.com/2012/07/10/chinas-one-child-policy-and-unfpa-a-silent-but-deadly-partnership/> (accessed August 24, 2015).

105. To Prohibit Funding to the United Nations Population Fund.

106. Howden, “China’s One Child Policy: Some Unintended Consequences.”

simpler than massive social re-engineering. In fact, the Chinese have the power to change their economic future for the better by rescinding the two-child policy.

Recommendations

- **Create U.S.–China Working Groups to eliminate the two-child policy.** The United States and other governments should work together with their Chinese counterparts toward a complete end to the coercive population-control policies that are endangering China’s economic progress and violating human rights.
- **Use all diplomatic means to address human rights abuses under the one-child and now two-child policies.** Until such time as Chinese authorities have **eliminated** the two-child policy, U.S. public officials—at all levels of the federal government—should highlight reports of coerced abortion, forced sterilization, and other abuses committed under China’s brutal population-control programs. The attention of Western media and U.S. aid organizations and other non-governmental organizations has at least caused the Chinese government to investigate and punish family-planning officials for some of the more grotesque human rights abuses. U.S. officials should refrain from advertently or inadvertently condoning the two-child policy.¹⁰⁷
- **End U.S. contributions to the UNFPA.** Congress should eliminate all U.S. funding to the United Nations Population Fund as long as the organization continues to aid the Chinese family-planning program. The President can also use his authority under the Kemp–Kasten Amendment to end federal taxpayer contributions to the UNFPA.

Conclusion

China has the ability to change its economic future for the better by reversing the two-child policy. Indeed, it is in the best interest of the Chinese people, the Chinese economy, and the Chinese government to do so.

If Beijing chooses to rescind the two-child policy, the U.S. and China should work together to formulate and enact policies that address the economic impact of demographic dislocation through ever greater market liberalization.

Economic liberalization, not population control, is the key to unleashing China’s full economic potential. Poor policies have hampered the Chinese economy before, and they can do it again.

While it is difficult to estimate the precise impact of a complete elimination of the two-child policy, it is possible to predict with some degree of certainty the state of the Chinese labor force and the impact that a shrinking labor force will have on China’s economy if the two-child policy remains in place. Thus, Beijing has a decision to make—does China continue down a path that will almost certainly hamper its long-term economic growth, or pursue reform by rescinding the two-child policy and forge a new way forward? China, for the good of its people as well as its long-term economic stability, should choose reform.

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107. Vice President Joe Biden, “Remarks on U.S.–China Relations,” at United States of America Embassy, August 22, 2011, <http://iipdigital.usembassy.gov/st/english/texttrans/2011/08/20110821131809su0.2135279.html#axzz1VmAAsnbj> (accessed July 19, 2016).