

# What is the Problem Represented to be?

## A problematisation on two child policy in China

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# ABSTRACT

In September 2015, China ended the one child policy and opened the two-child policy. However, the focus on fertility and family in public and government discourse is still links to issues of national survival and economic development. This means that women's social roles are still defined according to the needs and interests of the state, and scripted, first and foremost, as familial. Women are marginalized in the process of government policy formulation and become the recipients of government discourse and/or policy initiatives which continue to define them as mothers and constrain them into family roles. This paper focuses on the two-child policy in China and uses Bacchi's framework – 'What's the Problem Represented to be?' (WPR) to problematize the two-child policy from a feminist theory perspective.

*Keywords:* Two child policy; WPR approach; women

# PREFACE

The journey of writing this thesis began when China released two child policy last year. I found my opinions on this new policy were different from mainstream media and friends in China. My thesis supervisor Annika Pissin suggested me use WPR approach to analyze this policy. In this way, the thesis gradually evolved from a simple curiosity to a complete manuscript.

I would like to thank my thesis supervisor Annika Pissin for providing me with invaluable intellectual guidance throughout the process of writing this thesis.

To all my friends in Lund, thank you for your warm friendship, support, and inspiration when it was most needed during these two years. I wish you all the best in your future endeavors.

Finally, I would like to thank my parents for their continued support.

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# **1 INTRODUCTION**

## **1.1 Genesis of the study**

Management of populations in the modern era has led to the adoption of various complicated policies and strategies to control and manage people's life. It is assumed that management of the population plays a remarkable role in the economic growth process. But interference in the life affairs of people and its most private aspects as an integral part of population management can not be achieved simply in the form of Top-Down Planning unless it takes the form of a prevalent discourse.

In the late 1970s, the Chinese government Launched what is called 'one child policy'. The Communist Party leadership ended this decades-old one child policy in 2015 and opened the two child policy, announcing that all married couples would be allowed to have two children (Buckley, 2015).

However, the focus on fertility and family in public and government discourse is still linked to issues of national survival and economic development. This means that women's social roles still be defined according to the needs and interests of the state, and scripted, first and foremost, as familial. Women are marginalized in the process of government policy formulation and become the recipients of government discourse and/or policy initiatives which continue to define them as mothers and constrain them into family roles. This paper focuses on the two-child policy in China and uses Bacchi's framework – 'What's the Problem Represented to be?' (WPR) to problematize the two-child policy from a feminist theory perspective. Through the texts analysis on government records, official party documents, legislation that related to two child policy, the main themes of the thesis has been identified, they are sex ratio, labour market, reproduction right, state's economy and politic situation etc.

## **1.2 Research questions**

This thesis aims to problematise the two child policy from a feminist theory perspective: how and what is the changing of the problem represented to be after China switched the population policy from one child policy to two child policy and how this constitutes the eventual framework of everyday conducts and effects on women.

In order to answer those question, I divide them into a set of smaller questions: what problem does this policy want to represent? Why this policy focus on solving the certain problem other than other problems? What assumptions underpin this representation of the problem? What is silenced in the policy? What effects will be produced?

### **1.3 Limitation of the study**

Given little research on the topic since two child policy is still very new, this study is more like an exploratory research. In fact, a major task of the study is to contribute to challenging the current discussions on the two-child family policy, whether in public media or in academic settings, which predominantly center on the policy implications for addressing structural problems such as population aging, economic growth and labor shortage. Hence, this study adopts a gender equity perspective to understand family planning policies and fertility behaviors in China.

Moreover, Since the main themes of the thesis (sex ratio, labour market, reproduction right, state's economy and politic situation etc.) has been identified through the texts analysis on government records, official party documents, legislation that related to two child policy, There is a risk that other themes might have emerged if other sources had been consulted.

### **1.4 Disposition**

The *Theory, approach and method* chapter (chapter 2) presents the theoretical framework, as well as the methods I chose to use in this study and a short presentation of the data selection process and criteria. The *Historical background* chapter (chapter 3) present the history of population control policy in the China and literature review of one child policy. In the *Analysis* chapter (chapter 4), I apply WPR approach to analysing two child policy. Finally, the findings of the study are summarised and presented in the *Conclusion* (chapter 5).

## **2 THEORY, APPROACH, AND METHOD**

The thesis combines the Bacchi's "What's the problem represented to be" approach to policy analysis with a feminist perspective in general.

## **2.1 What is policy?**

The policy pays close attention to the principles and practices of pursuit by government of social, political and economic outcomes (Fawcett, 2010). It consists of a range of government actions and inactions, including laws, policy statements, programs, statements of principle, processes, and performances. Policy analysis focuses on government action trying to distinguish between the different relationships between knowledge and politics. There are three different perspectives: positivism, where knowledge purports to replace politics; the critique of positivism, where politics purports to replace knowledge; and post-positivism, where knowledge and politics attain a measure of reconciliation (Torgenson, 1986, 43). As policy has a neutral connotation, the language and rhetoric of “policy” are the main instruments of political rationality (Parsons, 1995, p. 16). In this understanding, policy analysts serve the role of ‘speaking truth to power’ (Wildavsky, 1979).

## **2.2 From Rationalist policy analysis to critical policy analysis to the new policy sociology**

Before applying problematisation analysis to the two child policy case, this paper will review the historical development of policy analysis from a rationalist approach with a prevailing view of policymaking as relatively orderly and the shift to the interpretive approach that analyse meaning and symbolism in policy-related interactions. It also explains the purpose and implications of “What’s the problem represented to be?” (WPR) approach.

Rationalist policy analysis dominated the field of policy studies up until the 1970s. In rationalist policy analysis, policymaking is believed to be relatively orderly (Blackmore, 2005, p. 98). As a result, any failures were blamed on technical problems rather than the assumptions underlying the policy (Blackmore, 2005, p. 98). In summary, these rational models view policy analysis as a tool, based on rationality and processes capable of reaching objective conclusions, in order to solve problems.

However, these rational models were coming under increasing criticism as the period of postwar reconstruction and ‘consensus’ was challenged by new sociologies of knowledge, the rise of critical social science and the emergence of feminism. Critical policy analysis questioned the value neutrality of the research methods underpinning the rational model and



its claims to generalisability (ibid.). As a result, the policy came to be seen as the product of contestation between stakeholders with unequal power and the state was seen as complicit with the power of entrenched interests (ibid.), and policy analysts became more concerned with demonstrating how different interests are mobilised through policy.

During the 1980s to 1990s, with the development of globalisation and democratic demands, social theorists began to conceptualise the state as a contested site of political action. This led to the appearance of the new policy sociology, itself a product of the critical tradition, concerned from the production, reception and effects of policy to how discourse, language and text set the context for how policy questions are framed (ibid.).

### **2.3 Policy-as-discourse**

Recently, post-structuralist and social-constructionist theories have extended understandings of policy analysis. In particular, the ways in which discourses regulate knowledge of the world and our shared understandings of events have been highlighted. While there are different strands within the turn to discourse in policy analysis, most draw to some extent on Foucault (1997)'s theories of discourse: discourses are 'practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak; they do not identify objects, they constitute them and in the practice of doing so conceal their own invention'. Policy analysts who learn from Foucault, have taken to describe policy as discourse (Bacchi, 2005, p. 200).

Policy-as-discourse sees policy as part of a wider system of social relations, framing what is said and thought. Policy texts simultaneously emerge out of, but also produce, particular policy discourses. Groups and individuals position themselves, and are positioned by, these texts and discourses, and their acceptance, rejection or modification is shaped by them (Blackmore, 2005, p. 98). A policy-as-discourse approach 'frames policy not as a response to existing conditions and problems, but more as a discourse in which both problems and solutions are created' (Goodwin, 1996, p. 67). Hence, the focus for policy-as-discourse theorists is not 'problems', but problematisation.

## **2.4 Feminist social policy analysis**

Based on the different theoretical assumptions and different positions argued by feminists. There are at least four competing normative-ontological positions: liberal feminism, socialist feminism, radical feminism and postmodern feminism (Campbell and Wasco, 2000)

Feminist analyses of social policy mirror the multifaceted nature of feminist scholarship. In practice, two alternative approaches are being followed in feminist policy studies. The first one, associated with liberal feminism, aims to include women into analysis where they have been left out by mainstream research, while radical, socialist, postmodern feminists argue that feminism has to formulate new frameworks (Pascall, 1997). Thereby it can challenge implicit as well as explicit androcentric assumptions, and scrutinise carefully methodologies and methods.

Feminist scholars have argued that even supposedly gender-neutral measures can be gendered, privileging men over women (Charles, 2000). Moreover, they tried to demonstrate that not only individual policy measures and instruments, but also the entire area of social policy, is gendered (Pascall, 1997). This way, feminists have exposed the gender-blindness of traditional policy research, which has never questioned the alleged gender-neutrality of social policies.

Patriarchy and capitalism both played an important role in the oppression of women (Pascall, 1997), emphasising the relationship between the capitalist economic system, patriarchy, and the welfare state and perceiving the interconnectedness of the public sphere of production and the private sphere of reproduction. Biological differences are not at the root of women's oppression. Moreover, it keeps the category of women, sharing some basic features of life, while being able to recognise their diversity.

## **2.5 WPR approach**

Despite the growing appeal of understanding policy-as-discourse, there is no unitary 'method' for analyzing policy-as-discourse. In that case, Bacchi developed a useful framework for analyzing the discursive aspects of policy and claimed that policy problems are socially constructed, arising at specific times and in specific policy spaces (Goodwin, 2012). In her book "Analyzing Policy: What's the Problem Represented to be?", Bacchi sets out the policy

analysis – ‘What’s the Problem Represented to be?’ (WPR) in detail. The WPR draws on four intellectual traditions: social construction theory, post-structuralism, feminist body theory and governmentality studies. Bacchi’s approach provides a conceptual ‘checklist’ that guides the analytic process, using set of six questions to probe how ‘problems’ are represented in policies:

1. What’s the ‘problem’ represented to be in a specific policy or policy proposal?
2. What presuppositions or assumptions underpin this representation of the ‘problem’?
3. How has this representation of the ‘problem’ come about?
4. What is left unproblematic in this problem representation? Where are the silences? Can the ‘problem’ be thought about differently?
5. What effects are produced by this representation of the ‘problem’?
6. How/where has this representation of the ‘problem’ been produced, disseminated and defended? How has it been (or could it be) questioned, disrupted and replaced?

This approach analyzes policy not from a problem-solving perspective but from a problem questioning perspective: “It presumes that some problem representations benefit the members of some groups at the expense of others. It also takes the side of those who are harmed. The goal is to intervene to challenge problem representations that have these deleterious effects.” (Bacchi, 2009, p. 44) Therefore, the aim of WPR analysis is not to find the ‘real’ problem and the ‘right’ solution, but rather to interrogate how representations come about, and how these shape solutions and subjectivities (Bacchi, 2012, pp. 21-24).

The concerns in a WPR analysis extend beyond the 'problem of government' to embrace a 'wider conceptualization of politics as including struggles around identities and "difference", including issues around gender, sexuality, ethnicity or "race", and everyday life' (Mottier, 2001, p. 332). For instance, in the context of gender mainstreaming and gender equalities such an approach allows us to go beyond documentation of barriers to gender justice, to explore the ways in which gender policies unwittingly recreate and reinforce the equalities they purport to address through their representation of the problem. It also allows a different interpretation of the failure of gender mainstreaming to challenge existing gender relations of power.

Because problem representations tend to be embedded within multiple layers of meaning, the approach involves more than a ‘one-off’ exercise. It requires the repeated application of the six questions at different stages of the analysis. In this paper, I will focus on Bacchi’s six questions to analyze the problem representations within the two child policy.

## **2.6 Data gathering**

This paper uses the document of both two child policy, including policy statement, community campaign materials, media release and legislation, trying to interrogate how dominant or marginal representations of gender and gender inequality appear in two child policy, and how these shape solutions and subjectivities.

The WPR approach recommends ‘working backwards’ from concrete policies, programs and policy proposals to reveal what is represented to be the ‘problem’ within them. Thus, the work of the analyst begins with texts. This means the various forms of written, verbal and nonverbal communication from the recent or distant past that are subjected to study and interpretation. Textual analysis can not only be applied to documents, such as organizational files and records, legislation, judicial decisions, speeches, interview transcripts, media statements, organizational charts, budgets, program contracts, research reports and even statistical data (Goodwin, 2011, p. 171), but also uses the non literally textual and objects, such as ceremonies or organizational culture.

I will make a comparison between compare policy statement and legislation about one child policy and policy statement and legislation about two child policy to analyze the changing of problem representation and how this constitutes the eventual framework of everyday conduct and effects on women.

## **2.7 Reliability and validity of data**

In this study, I use government records, official party documents, legislation and news report to answer the research questions. The primary data for government records, official party documents and legislation, like Marriage law, are in the original Chinese finding on the official website of China government. The Secondary data like news and are also in the original Chinese finding on the official website of China’s official media and the other famous news website in mainland China, like Fenghuang. These data were chosen because

they stand for the position of government toward two child policy or the position of media toward two child policy. It is essential to carefully analyse these dominant representations, the discourse of power.

## **2.8 Ethical considerations**

Bryman (2012, p. 135) lists a number of guidelines to determine if a given research strategy imposes ethical problems, including whether or not it harms participants in any way and whether it requires their informed consent, invades privacy or deceives its participants. As no interviews were conducted nor any participants observed during the research process, none of these concerns arise here. The data consists of formal documents and news reports, posing very few potential ethical problems.

# **3 A BRIEF HISTORY OF POPULATION CONTROL POLICY**

## **3.1 Building a population policy**

Population policies have emerged because of the unexpected changes in the population dynamics as a result of development in the first post-war decades (Tomasevski, 1994, p, 15). A population policy is a governmental intervention in human reproduction (Tomasevski, 1994, p, 16), tries to increase or to decrease the population rate.

Developments of population policy in China in the context of political economy can be demarcated into four stages over the past 60 years: (1) the harbinger of population planning in the 1950s, (2) the chaotic decade of the 1960s and the establishment of the birth control institution in the 1970s, (3) a policy experiment followed by a decentralization since the early 1980s, and (4) a new era that changed the policy into two child policy.

The Chinese population policy originates from 1978-79, but population growth has been an item on the Chinese political agenda since the Peoples' Republic of China was founded in 1949. But at that time, a large population was seen as production. "Even if China's population multiplies many times, she is fully capable of finding a solution; the solution is production," Mao Zedong (1991, pp. 1511-1522) proclaimed in 1949. "Of all things in the world, people are the most precious." The government took the population growth as the mark of victory of

communism. It not only condemned birth control, but also banned imports of contraceptives (Peng, 1997, p.59).

Before long, the population growth rate rose to 2.8%, leading to some 250 million additional people by 1970 (Kane, 1999). Population growth was taking a toll on the nation's food supply and the existing resources were not enough to feed the growing population. Mao Zedong began to admit that “if we still let the population grow rapidly in an unplanned manner, it will not be a good thing anymore” (Nathansen, 1997, p. 32). In that case, some family planning campaigns began to appear (1956-57 and 1962-66). However, all those campaigns did not last long. Until to 1970s China launched a third birth planning campaign. The slogan “Late, Long and Few”, popularized from 1973, embodied the three fundamental planks of the campaign: late marriage and childbearing, birth spacing, and fertility limitation (Banister, 1987). The results of the planned-birth campaign was very obvious since the decline of the crude birth rate nationwide from 33 per thousand in 1970 to 18 per thousand in 1980 and the total fertility rate (average number of children per woman) was reduced from 5.8 in 1970 to 2.2 in 1980 nationwide (Poston, 2006. p. 14). But it soon leveled off since China found out reduce population rate was of high importance for the development of the Four Modernization and set a goal not to exceed 1,2 billion people by the year 2000 (Scharping, 2003, p. 51) prompting officials to seek more drastic measures. In 1979 China introduced the one child policy requiring couples from China's ethnic Han majority to have only one child (the law largely exempted ethnic minorities).

Moreover, in connection with the government's reforms beginning in 1980, a new marriage law was legislated in the People's Congress, which stipulated the minimum age of marriage at 20 for females and 22 for males. The new marriage law was oblivious of the population control policy: “(...) birth planning shall be practiced” (Article 2); “Both husband and wife shall have the duty to practice birth planning.” (Article 12)

## 3.2 Implementation

Although fertility control became a constitutional duty in 1982: "The State promotes birth planning<sup>1</sup> so that population growth may fit the plans for economic and social development" (Article 25); "Both husband and wife have the duty to practice birth planning" (Article 49); "The State Council exercise the following functions and powers (...): to direct and administer the affairs of (...)birth planning" (Article 89), China lacked of coherent laws regulations nationwide, but setting out in a series of Communist Party Committee and State Council resolutions and directives, and provincial regulations. Therefore, it is difficult to outline a general description of the implementation. The National Family Planning Bureau sets the overall targets and the family-planning committees at provincial and municipal levels enacted its own self-contained family-limitation regulations to accommodate local conditions (Short, 1998, p.373-387), specifying rewards for fulfilling and the penalties for not complying (Hesketh and Zhu, pp.1685 - 1687). At that time, one child policy was strictly implemented. Couples with two or more children were mandatorily sterilized, out-of-plan pregnancies were strictly aborted, and women who had already borne a child were forced into IUD insertions.

Soon after the adoption of the one child policy, however, popular resistance forced the government to relax its most stringent rules. For most urban families, almost one member would be employed in the state sector and susceptible to government direction. If you chose not to follow the rules, you would lose your jobs. As a result, it was not long before 90% of couples in urban areas were persuaded to restrict their families to a single child. Rural families, however, were more difficult to convince. Peasants with limited savings and without pensions believed children can support them in old age. As married daughters moved into their husbands' families, a son was essential—and preferably more than one. In that case, Policy eased in 1984 with the release of Central Document 7, and conditions permitting couples two children were expanded (Greenhalgh, 1986, 491-515). Also, rather than forcing all communities to adhere to a single state-derived policy. In 1988, policy loosened further and took son preference into greater account. Rural communities moved to institute a two

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<sup>1</sup> I will use the term "birth planning" even if the term in Chinese (计划生育) often is translated as "family planning". This is to avoid confusion with the international definition of family planning as a human right.

child policy and many more communities adopted an exception that was previously uncommon, one allowing couples whose first child was a girl to have a second child (Zeng, 1989, pp. 33-337). Although ethnic minorities also are affected by birth control policy, the rules are, by and large, less strict for them than for the general population. They are allowed to have three children (Merli and Raftery, 2000, pp. 109-126).

In 1992, China enacted the “Law of the People’s Republic of China on the Protection of Rights and Interests of Women”. It says: “Women have the right to child-bearing in accordance with relevant regulations of the State as well as the freedom not to bear any child.” (article 47) This law also mentioned the discrimination against women giving birth to girls and the wide practice of infanticide and maltreatment of baby girls. Art 35 says: “Women's right to life and health shall be inviolable. Drowning, abandoning or cruel infanticide in any manner of female babies shall be prohibited; discrimination against or maltreatment of women who give birth to female babies or women who are sterile shall be prohibited (...)” (article 35).

It is important to note that in China Communist Party directives are equivalent or superior to legislation and codified laws. The Party dictates lawmaking; its directives can change existing laws or supersede them, determining whether a particular law is to be enforced. The Central Party Committee has no legal or judicial limits on its powers and it makes policies as it sees fit. Since the family-planning policy itself had never been codified during 1979 to 2001, it is implemented not according to the rule of law, but according to rule by party directives. Government officials are assigned to handle all cases and mete out punishments. Few opportunities are provided for legal representation, hearings, appeals, or judicial review. Brutality and violence were not accepted at upper-level organs, but directives condoning violent implementation were often only circulated internally within institutions without any public report. These violence includes physical brutality and property destruction, detention, beatings, and the demolition of residences by local officials, militia acting in a governmental capacity, and the police (Li, 1996, p. 145)

In 2001, one child policy was codified in the form of the Family Planning Law. Families with unauthorized births are required to pay a "social compensation fee". This new measure is



meant to reflect the collective cost rather than punish individual couples for bearing children, and is considered a step towards a more gentle family planning policy.

### **3.3 Two child policy**

This one child policy has been implemented on a national scale until 2013. In that year, Chinese government eased some restrictions, allowing couples to have two children if one of the spouses was an only child. This Finally, on 29 October 2015, the Communist Party leadership ended this decades-old one child policy and opened the two child policy, announcing that all married couples would be allowed to have two children (Buckley, 2015).

On 27 December 2015, the newly revised Law on Population and Family Planning, passed at the bi-monthly session of the National People's Congress Standing Committee, which governs country's laws, effective from 1 January 2016. This is the first time the Population and Family Planning Law was revised since its promulgation in 2001. The amendment covers full implementation of two-child policy, cancellation of forced contraception, change of certain leave entitlements – marriage leave, maternity leave and paternity leave, as well as the single-child encouragement benefits.

In the 2015 Law, late marriage and late childbearing are no longer encouraged; the wording in article 18 that the state “encourages late marriage and late childbearing” was removed. Couples used to be rewarded with extended leave or other benefits for late marriage or late childbearing pursuant to the old article 25. The new article 25, however, provides that all couples who bear children in compliance with laws and regulations may be granted extended leave or other benefits.

### **3.4 Literature reviews**

There is now a wealth of literature on the one child family policy and its impact on women. Many studies have excessively emphasized the suffering of girls and women, including the abortion of female fetuses, female infanticide, smuggling of infant girls, discrimination against daughters, and maltreatment of women’s bodies (Croll, 2000). There is still some literature presents an alternative perspective on the policy. Keng (1997) views several effects the one child policy has had on women and children. The paper looks at issues such as the implementation of laws geared toward the protection of women, the precautions China has

taken towards preservation of women's safety and health, and the other effects involving women and children. It claims that when China begins to adopt remedial measures such as encouraged to couples use contraceptives for reasons on their own agenda as well as for the needs of their society, regulating and equalising the implementation of the one-child family planning policy, will women begin to disengage themselves from their traditional subordination in society.

Fong (2002) has drawn our attention to the fact that previous studies gave us a somewhat unbalanced, one-sided, and negative view of the effects of the one-child family policy. Her own fieldwork study of Dalian city in Northeastern China concludes that this policy actually empowers urban daughters. Lee (2013) chose to reappraise one-child family policy. By using adopt an alternative perspective through critical analyses of China's official documents, contemporary media reports, she analysed both the benefit and suffering that girls and women have had as a result of the policy. Sudbeck (2012) focused on the benefits of China's One-Child Policy. Especially for women. She claimed that since this policy's implementation. China has experienced changes in filial piety and patrilineality. Singleton daughters are now experiencing greater parental investment and consequently greater gender equality within their society. In a country that has been traditionally dominated by males. China's One-Child Policy has indirectly benefited the role of women in society.

Also, some research focused on the impact of one-child family policy on the population level. Bulte (2011) explored the contribution of China's one child policy in distorting sex ratios. The results imply that preference for boys is the main driver of the gender gap, and that the one child policy is responsible for about half of it. Bulte concluded that interaction between one child policy and ultrasound technologies has contributed to the gender gap.

Greenhalgh is interested in the politics of population. Her three books written between 2000 and 2010 ask different questions about the governance of China's society. *Just One Child: Science and Policy in Deng's China* (Greenhalgh, 2008) uncovers the origins of the notorious one-child policy in early reform-era population science and politics. *Governing China's Population: From Leninist to Neoliberal Biopolitics* (Greenhalgh and Winckler, 2005) traces the "governmentalisation" of China's population – how since around 1980 population has been brought under rationalised control – and the attending rise of a vast new field of vital

politics involving power over the production and cultivation of life itself. *Cultivating Global Citizens: Population in the Rise of China* (Greenhalgh, 2010) traces the connections between the state's massive project to govern its population and foster its society, and the nation's rise to global power.

Two child policy in China is still a new topic. The discussions on the two-child family policy, predominantly center on the policy implications for addressing structural problems such as population structure, economic growth and labor shortage, rather than adopts a gender equity perspective as their analytical framework or in their evaluations of the policy implications. Xu and Pak (2015) examined the effects of allowing parents to have to children on the gender ratio. They a model of parental decision-making, in which parents choose between letting nature decide the gender of their child and manipulating the birth process to increase the likelihood of obtaining a son, and identify the optimal behaviours in this framework. By investigating the equilibrium level of gender imbalance under both one child and two child policy settings, they argued that the gender imbalance need not improve under the two child policy.

Based on the current research, this thesis adopts a gender equity perspective to understand the changing of problem representation after China switched the population policy and how this constitutes the eventual framework of everyday conduct and effects on women.

## **4 ANALYSIS**

This thesis tries to figure out the women's position underly two child policy by using the WPR approach. Although two child policy relates to families rather than to individuals, it still impacts on women directly.

Pascall (1997, p. 32) argued that male dominance is still evident in family, labour market, and state. In family level, two child policy is modelled on a particular version of family life that is 'one pair of man and wife' and one child is not enough, two child in family seems the best (Xinhua, 2015a). This related the issue of who control the reproductive decision making in the family, who will take care of household affairs. Since "the family remains an arena of men's power over women, in which women work more than men, share less fully than men in

money and key decision making and in which many suffer men's violence" (Pascall, 1997, p. 31), women undertake the effects of two child policy directly.

In labour market, two child policy is under the assumes that men's need for family income, women's homemaker and dependent status. Since women could not easily earn enough to say no to family responsibility or particular family situations, family responsibility hung heavily on them in the competition for jobs (Pascall, 1997, p. 31), women undertake the effects of two child policy directly. Women employees need to have a long maternity leave for about 4 to 6 months (Xinhua, 2016), while male employees paternity leave only few days (ibid.). This related the issue of inequality at work. Women still in subordination position.

In state level, two child policy emphasises the women's role in the reproduction of the labour force, laying stress on increasing birth rate to solve population aging problem. State uses power to modify the reproduction of labour power and reproduction is related to production. Moreover, as China special political situation, discursive change in official level is also responsible for the shape of women's role in society and family. Through this process, media has also played an important role through this process, specially in China, as media is the mouthpiece for the government.

In this whole section, I will focus on three levels: family, labour market and state and go through 6 questions in Bacchi's WPR approach to analyse the problem representations within the two child policy and how this constitutes the eventual framework of everyday conduct and the effects on women.

#### **4.1 What's the 'problem' represented to be in two child policy?**

This first question is straightforward - if a government proposes to do something, what is it hoping to change? And, hence, what does it produce as the 'problem'?

In the Fifth Plenum of the 18th CPC Central Committee, China release Communique of the Fifth Plenum of the 17th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, mentioning all couples can have two child:

(The entire Party and the people of all ethnicities in the entire country need to) stimulate the balanced development of the population, persist in developing and producing basic

government birth planning policies, perfect population development strategies, comprehensively implement the policy that one pair of man and wife can raise two children, and vigorously launch activities to respond to the problem of population aging<sup>2</sup> (Xinhua, 2015a).

This policy statement was the first time that China mentioned applying two child policy in nationwide. The 13th five-year plan development plan in 2016 also mentioned state's population policy plan in 2016 to 2020. That is

Adhere to the basic state policy of family planning, the full implementation of a couple can have two child policy. (···) Comprehensive treatment of high sex ratio of birth population. The country's total population is planned to be about 1 billion 420 million people. Improve the population development strategy, establish and improve the population and the development of integrated decision-making mechanism. Comprehensive response to the decline in the working age population<sup>3</sup> (Ifeng, 2016).

Although both the two document is very vague, we can still analyze the 'problem' in two child policy represented is three part: 1) do against the problem of aging populations; 2) fix the serious imbalance in sex ratios and 3) control the population within 1 billion 420 million people, which means state continue to carry out birth planning.

## **4.2 What presuppositions or assumptions underpin this representation of the 'problem'?**

Question 2 asks which presuppositions or assumptions underlie an identified problem representation. The term 'presuppositions' (or assumptions) in Question 2 refers to background 'knowledge' that is taken-for-granted. It includes epistemological and ontological assumptions (Bacchi, 2009, p. 5). Through examining presuppositions, therefore, we can

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<sup>2</sup> The Chinese version is “促进人口均衡发展，坚持计划生育的基本国策，完善人口发展战略，全面实施一对夫妇可生育两个孩子政策，积极开展应对人口老龄化行动”。 I translate the Communique into English.

<sup>3</sup> The Chinese version is “坚持计划生育的基本国策，全面实施一对夫妇可生育两个孩子政策。综合治理出生人口性别比偏高问题。全国总人口14.2亿人左右。完善人口发展战略，建立健全人口与发展综合决策机制。综合应对劳动年龄人口下降”。 I translate it into English.

identify the conceptual logics that underpin specific problem representations. Question 2 questions what is in people's heads to consider the shape of arguments, the forms of 'knowledge' that arguments rely upon, the forms of 'knowledge' that are necessary for statements to be accorded intelligibility.

I will focus on two presuppositions underlie the problem that two child policy claims. The first one is that women's reproductive bodies are not only about the interests of individual women and families as well as the health of the nation-state's economy. The second one is that one child policy is the main reason for the imbalance sex ratio in China.

### **Women and state**

The first presuppositions underpin this representation of the problem is that the whole birth control policy is based on the thinking that women's reproductive bodies are not only about the interests of individual women and families as well as the health of the nation-state's economy. State transforms people into "biological citizens" to foster progress toward the attainment of the national well-being and modernisation (Rose and Novas, 2004).

In China, the focus on fertility and family in public and government discourse has been linked to issues of national survival and economic development since Mao era. This has meant that women's social roles have been defined according to the needs and interests of the state. Women have been marginalized in the process of government policy formulation. Just like one child policy, two child policy is still about an authoritarian regime in the name of national modernisation and development requires people to control their fertility behavior coercively. In fact, the Law on Population and Family Planning argued that the two-child policy is "the essential precondition to achieve the simultaneous development of population with the economy, society, resources and environment." (Article 1). But the different part for two child policy is that in Chinese official discourse, the main urgent problem for China's population is not the large population, but the population aging and the cashing out of demographic dividend (Xinlang, 2012). This means the main goal for people is getting a second child to raise the birth rate.

In Marxist analyses, there are two key areas for women: their role in the reproduction of the labour force and their place in the industrial reserve army (Pascall, 1997, p. 16), which means

women become the recipients of government discourse and policy initiatives which define them as both mothers and workers. Consequently, women's actions, concerns, and political agency have been of secondary importance to researchers and policy-makers. In one child policy era, because state force individuals to have one child (not all the cases), women's role in the reproduction is limited. As a result, women can be aided in the pursuit of their careers and focus on work. However, since the population aging and the cashing out of demographic dividend become the main goal to solve, women's role in the reproduction of the labour force becomes more important than their role in the industrial reserve army. Under this discourse, women under the pressure from strong state and patriarchal system to get a second child. The end result will be that women continue to define them as mothers and constrain them into family role.

In a word, state took enforcement action on birth controls and the reason for government to promote this population control efforts simply boiled down to this: the contemporary masculine-state population policies is a part of China's modernisation construction and state can justifiably control women's bodies in the name of societal needs or national priorities. Under the circumstances, women are often excluded from the centrality of reproduction by the power of strong state and patriarchal system (Yoon, 2015), even though female bodies are inseparable from the domain of reproduction and fertility.

### **Sex ratio**

Through the analysis of the preceding context of question, we can see one of the aims of two child policy is stimulating balanced development of the population, one of the which means to fix the serious imbalance in sex ratios. This shows a presupposition underpin this representation of the problem that the one child policy brings to the imbalance in sex ratio, which can be fixed after the implementation of two child policy.

As we know, a key value in demography is the sex ratio at birth (male births per female ones) which is generally set to 1.05/1.06 men per woman (Vandana and Robert, 2014, p. 555). This value is often used to analyse demographic phenomena which might be influenced by the social construct of gender. Unlike UN says the standard biological level of sex ratio at birth is between 102 and 106, China has a grossly unequal ratio of about 119 males for every 100

females (National Bureau of statistics of China, 2010). The unequal sex ratio in China is mainly due to sex selective abortion, high female child mortality rates and some underreporting of female births. But it can hardly be sure that the one-child policy is unequal sex ratio is highly attributable to the one child policy. In fact, the root cause of unequal sex ratio is the tradition of son preference combine with the rapidity of fertility decline (Bulletin, 2010).

One of the best evidence on this point is that many other Asian countries with declining fertility rates and a traditional preference for males were also having sex-ratio imbalances in 1980s. As we can see in Table 1, all those three countries had a high sex ratio at birth in 1980s. According to Park and Cho's (1995, p. 60) research about the recorded sex ratios of children by single year of age through age four for China, Taiwan and South Korea, all the three populations's the sex ratio at birth began to rise "after about 1985". The reason for the raise sex ratio at birth of these three countries, that have quite different social, economic and political contexts populations, is that 1) they share the traditional cultural trait of son preference and 2) the rapidity of fertility decline in the these populations in 1980s.

Table 1: Sex ratio at birth and total fertility rate: China,Taiwan,Korea, 1980-1992

	China		Taiwan		South Korea	
	Sex ratio	fertility rate	Sex ratio			
<b>1980</b>	107.4	2.24	106.4		103.9	
<b>1981</b>	107.1	2.63	107.0		107	
<b>1982</b>	107.2	2.86	106.9		106	2.7
<b>1983</b>	107.9	2.42	106.7	2.16	107.7	
<b>1984</b>	108.5	2.35	107.3		108.7	2.1
<b>1985</b>	111.4	2.20	106.6		110.0	
<b>1986</b>	112.3	2.42	107.2	1.68	111.9	
<b>1987</b>	111.0	2.59	108.3	1.70	109.0	1.6
<b>1988</b>	108.1	2.52	108.2	1.85	113.5	1.6
<b>1989</b>	107.4	2.35	108.6	1.68	112.1	
<b>1990</b>	114.7	2.31	110.2	1.81	116.9	
<b>1991</b>	116.1	2.20	110.0	1.72	112.9	1.6
<b>1992</b>	114.2	2.00			114.0	



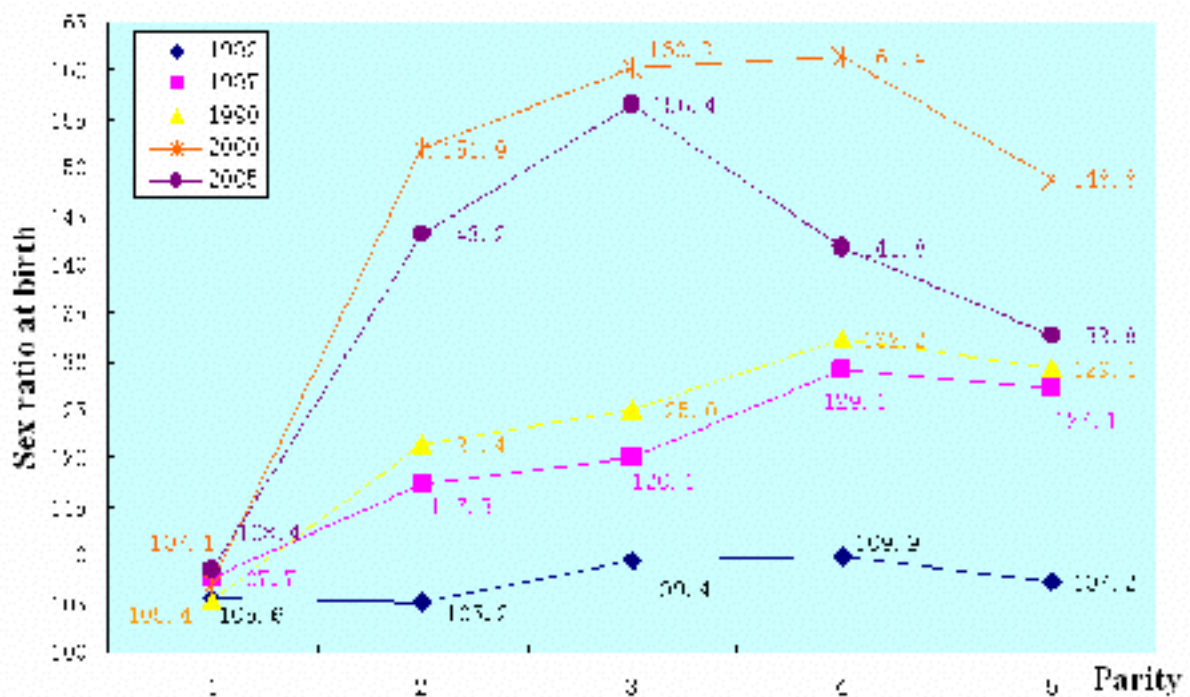
(source: Gu and Roy, 1995)

Just like South Korea, Taiwan, China is a patriarchal society and has a rigidly patrilineal and patrilocal kinship system, the desire for families to conceive a son and the discrimination against daughters has been deeply rooted in the Chinese tradition (Das Gupta, Monica, Jiang, Li, Xie, Chung and Hwaok, 2003, p. 156). There is evidence to suggest that a shortage of females was a pervasive feature of the Qing dynasty (Lee 1994) and there was a high rates of female infanticide in the 1930s and early 1940s (Chen 2002). Even in modern China, many people still believe sons have a higher wage-earning capacity, especially in agrarian economies; sons carry on the family name and continue the family line; sons are generally recipients of inheritance and support them in their old age and host their funeral ceremonies, while girls are often considered an economic burden because the bride's family has to pay a high amount of money or material as dowry, which many cannot afford; after marriage girls typically become members of the husband's family, ceasing to have responsibility for their parents in illness and old age. In China, not only men, but also women take part in the abortion of female fetuses. In fact, many women in China proactively get illegal fetus gender checks and abort female fetuses. The reason of son-preference among women is that women within patriarchal households make deliberate compromises like abort female fetuses in order to protect their own present or future interests (Kandiyoti, 1988). They do not want to fail the expectation of expectation from husband's family. Also this action maximizes women's self-interest that they do not want to become pregnant again and affect their personal life and working.

When fertility is high, people may satisfy their sex preference for sons through the number of children they are going to have, some of whom will continue to have children until they have a boy. However, when fertility declines, whether involuntary because of a strict population policy or voluntary due to social and economic constraints, people will not be able to have the number of children they would like to have (Gu and Peng, 1991; Gu, 1992). Therefore, when they know the limited number of children they are going to have, it is very likely that they would seek various means to ensure that they get the sex of child they most desire (Gu and Li, 1995). In the other words, the distorted sex ratio at birth is a new demographic phenomenon that accommodates both the parents' sex preference for children and the small-

family norm (Park and Cho, 1995). In fact, Another important data set is that of sex ratio at birth by parity, from Figure 1 we can see that Sex ratio at birth tends to increase with parity, or birth order; in other words, the higher the birth order, the higher the Sex ratio at birth. Normally, Sex ratio at birth would decline very slightly from low to high parities (Banister, 2004), but this is reversed in China. Sex ratio at birth at first parity has been normal in all the censuses, but has far exceeded the normal value at second parity and above.

Figure 1: SRB by birth order (parity), 1982-2005



(source: China population censuses in 1982, 1990 and 2000; and 1 per cent population sample surveys in 1987 and 2005)

Although the two child policy is less draconian than the one-child policy, it still a birth control policy that only allows people to have two children. Since the family size is still small under the two child policy and the cultural setting of son preference still exist, the imbalance sex ratio at birth in China will be continued.

### 4.3 How has this representation of the ‘problem’ come about?

The third question goes beyond the text or texts to explore how a particular representation of the problem has come about. It is interested in how key concepts in the texts have become legitimate and highlight the political and cultural conditions 'that allow a particular problem representation to take shape and to assume dominance' (Bacchi, 2009, p.11). In this part, I will trace China's political and cultural conditions to analyze the power relations involved in the problem representation.

The release of two child policy was in 2015. In that year, China's official growth rate was 6.9%, the slowest pace in more than two decades, allowing the government to hit its target of around 7% (Li, 2016). In fact, many researchers claimed that China's annual growth is actually in the 4% to 6% range (ibid.).



(Source from National Bureau of Statistics)

According to the figure of National Bureau of Statistics see above, we can see the downturn of China's economy, and it is far worse than many had expected: in 2012, the International Monetary Fund forecast that China's annual growth above 8% would continue until 2017 (S.R, 2016).

In the long run, growth is a function of changes in labour, capital and productivity (Baily, Gordon and Solow, 1981). Of these three, the most unique advantage for China is labour. But it is slowing now. Because of 30 years population control policy, China run out of its demographic dividend. With the peak of China's working-age population passed in 2012

(Xinlang, 2012), China needs to find a way to keep the growth of economy. One of the solutions are raising the birth rate to ensure more labour force in the future. In this process, women role in the reproduction is important than their role in the industrial reserve army. State justifiably controls women’s bodies in the name of societal needs or national priorities. Under this discourse, women under the pressure from strong state and patriarchal system to get a second child at the risk of career success.

After Deng era, both Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao followed Deng’s rule performed the function of faithful implementer, holding the banner of reform up towards the end and focusing on growth and faster structural reform. In political area, they chose to ‘Do-nothing politics’ to avoid huge political changes (Brown, 2013).

Xi Jinping, China’s president since 2013 and the most powerful leader in the post-Mao era less emphasizes on growth and faster structural reform. Unlike previous leaders propped up growth whenever it slowed, he is more focus on anti-graft effort, which has felled more than 150 senior officials with vice-ministerial rank or higher plus thousands of other low-ranking figures, are popular with the Chinese public (Mitchell, 2016). More importantly, a series of government policies adopted during after Xi took power have effectively reversed the course set for China by Deng Xiaoping in the post-Mao era.

We can see the change of strategy through the 13th five-year plan (2015). I compared the two plan and made a form below.

Table 2: The comparison between 12th FYP and 13th FYP

	12th five-year plan (In Hu’s era)	13th five-year plan (In Xi’s era)
<b>Part 2: Marxism-Leninism, Mao Zedong Thought is the theoretical guidance for the country</b>	×	✓
<b>Part 2: Under the leadership of CCP center of which comrade Xi Jinping is the sectary general</b>	× Hu’s name never mentioned in the theoretical guidance.	✓
<b>Part 1.1: Fully unleash the fundamental function of market in the allocation of resources</b>	✓	×

	12th five-year plan (In Hu's era)	13th five-year plan (In Xi's era)
<b>Part 44.11: Actively and safely push the reform of political system</b>	✓	×

Through a comparative reading between the 11th five-year plan, 12th five-year plan and 13th five-year plan, we can see the 13th five-year plan's theoretical guidance add two things. One is Marxism-Leninism, Mao Zedong Thought which were removed from the 11th five-year plan and 12th five-year plan, is reappeared in 13th five-year plan's theoretical guidance. In fact, Xi resurrect long-discarded Maoist symbols and revolution-era sloganeering. Fear has again become a key instrument of political and social control. Since taking power, Xi Jinping has shown no mercy in his crackdown on dissidence and protest movements, including women movement. In March 8th, 2016, Chinese police detained a number of women's rights activists, which was the first time in modern Chinese history people was arrested for championing women's rights (Chang, 2015). The other one is “under the leadership of the CCP center of which comrade Xi Jinping is the secretary general” (13th five-year plan, Part 2). The party's collective leadership has been replaced by strongman rule again. In Deng's era, he set up a system of power sharing at the top. However, after Xi took power, big decision was made by Xi himself (Hatton, 2014).

Also, we can find that something is missing in the 13th five-year plan that exist in the 11th and the 12th five-year plan. That is “fully unleash the fundamental function of market in the allocation of resources” (12th five-year plan, Part 1.1) and “actively and safely push the reform of political system” (12th five-year plan, Part 44.11), which implies that changing goal of Xi's era, he focus on greater centralization at home and less global integration in abroad.

Xi also exhorts women to promote family virtues and cultivate good family traditions. In 2013, Xi claimed about the important role of women and require women to shoulder the responsibilities of the upbringing (Xinhua, 2013). Xi also pressed the point in his Lunar New Year speech in 2015. He emphasized women's role in “an understanding wife and loving

mother”<sup>4</sup> and “the primary caregivers for husbands, children”<sup>5</sup> (Xinhua, 2015b), propagating the beliefs that the value of segregation within the house: women stays in home while men go to work. Women are required to be loyalty and devotion to fulfill the duties of their roles.

We can see China’s global ranking on gender gap index in Table 3. After Xi took power in the late 2012, China’s global ranking on gender gap index decrease rapidly, especially in economic participation and opportunity area, health and survival area and political empowerment area.

Table 3: China’s The Global ranking on Gender Gap Index 2006-2015

Years	Overall rank	Economic participation and opportunity rank	Educational attainment	Health and survival	Political empowerment
2006	63	53	77	114	52
2007	73	60	91	124	59
2008	57	43	87	126	54
2009	60	38	87	130	80
2010	61	46	88	133	56
2011	61	50	85	133	57
2012	69	58	85	132	58
2013	69	62	81	133	59
2014	87	76	89	147	72
2015	91	81	83	145	73

(Source: world economic forum, <https://www.weforum.org>)

In conclusion, after Xi took the power, economic growth looked stranded and the ideology became important again and more counsel on women role to promote family virtues and cultivate good family traditions. Xi’s dominant discourse alters the old principles and policies in different realms and promotes new ones. Based on this, it could be claimed that government’s attitude toward population and its management and related issues have been

<sup>4</sup> The Chinese version is 贤妻良母

<sup>5</sup> The Chinese version is 相夫教子

constituted by these discourses. In other words changes in governmental attitude toward population and its management could not simply be attributed to some economic conditions, population explosion or other population facts. Discursive changes are also responsible for changes in such policies. In that case, the relaxation of China's one-child policy, which unveiled at the third plenary of the 18th Communist party congress in 2013, and two child policy released in 2015 is not only because of the concern of economic condition and population situation, but also a part of Xi's ambitious change of strategy since those launched by Deng almost 40 years ago.

#### **4.4 What is left unproblematic in this problem representation? Where are the silences? Can the 'problem' be thought about differently?**

It is common to highlight the conditions that allow particular problem representations to take shape and to assume dominance, whilst others are silenced. Question 4 focuses on possible gaps or limitations in this representation of the 'problem'.

##### **Population aging and social security system**

The predominance of two child policy drowns out the promise that gave by Chinese government 30 years ago that government will take care of elders (Open letter, 1980). The discourse of two child policy represents that two child policy is, in large part, intended to mitigate the adverse demographic trend plaguing China's social security system: the rapidly declining ratio of active to retired workers. However, two-child policy is not likely to have a big impact on the worker-retiree ratio. China's retirement system will remain under stress (Pozen, 2015)

To solve the population aging problem, China seems has been putting the cart before the horse. The key to stabilizing social security is ensuring that pension contributions are used to fund the retirement benefits of people. Chinese government begs the problem that government fail to establish a viable pension system for everyone. Instead, it uses two child policy as an excuse to shift the pension responsibility to individuals and their families (ibid.).

In the initial stage of one child policy government promised that government will solve the population aging problem in the future. In fact, on 25th September 1980, China released the

document: “The Central Committee of the Communist Party of China's open letter about the problem of population growth control to all the Communist Party members and the Communist Youth League member”. In this document, CCP claimed:

one couples are only allowed to have one child, after 40 years, some families will face the problem that no one takes care of elder people. This problem is not new since many countries have the same concern. We just need to solve it. In the future, productivity will be increased and people’s living standards will be improved; social insurance and welfare will definitely be improved to make every elder people have a pension scheme (open letter, 1980).

However, after 36 years, uniform national security system still has not been established. In rural area, old-age support is largely provided by the family. Since the 1990s, some regions have implemented an old-age insurance system of personal accounts and total accumulation, based on the principle of “individual payment as the mainstay, collective assistance as the supplement, and government provision of policy support” (Hua, 2009, p. 187). Although in some places after 2004, those couples in rural areas with only one child or with two girls get an average of not less than 600 yuan a year per person from the age of 60 until their death (ibid.), the great majority of farmers have no old-age insurance. As for urban residents, only urban working age population can be covered by old-age security system. Among the 293 million working people in urban areas, more than 100 million are not covered by the old-age insurance system due to their job instability and low income (Hua, 2009, p. 188). Others are not entitled to draw pensions because of their discontinuous participation in the insurance system.

It is very interesting to notice that in the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China's Open Letter in 1980, to advertise and promote one child policy, Chinese government encouraged people to get rid of the Chinese tradition that take a son as an investment to ensure they are taken care of in old age. And claimed that it is the common path for many countries. However, all of sudden, the government begins to emphasize that individuals need to figure out how to deal with the old age security issue by themselves and government is just only takes subsidiary functions. The importance and unique of family value comes up again and again. Giving the reason that the transformations of Chinese families during the social



and economic development may have unique patterns and trajectories and there is no need to have a governing system based on Western democratic ideology. China implies that unlike western countries China relies on families rather than a sophisticated social security system to care for the elderly, and values collectivism more than individualism (Xi and Xia, 2014).

Therefore, the promise in 1980 is totally not delivered. Chinese government still be silence about the old-age insurance system, and the problem of population aging is linked to one child policy, other than the incomplete old-age security system in China. The implement of two child policy not only implies that there is no excuse for people to blame they lack of old-age security for the Government since couples can have more children that will assume a shared pension responsibility, but also can get more newborn to balance the population.

### **The silence in labour market**

On 27 December 2015, China passed the Population and Birth Planning Amendment Law. The Amendment, which is effective from 1 January 2016, ended the three-decade-old one-child policy. This is the first time the Population and Family Planning Law was revised since its promulgation in 2001. The amendment covers full implementation of two-child policy, cancellation of forced contraception, change of certain leave entitlements – marriage leave, maternity leave and paternity leave, as well as the single-child encouragement benefits. The key changes relevant to employers are as follows:

Table 4: Compare old and new Population and Birth Planning Law(sources from

	<b>Before</b>	<b>After</b>
<b>ARTICLE 18</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The State encouraged late marriage and late childbirth. A couple could only give birth to one child, but may apply for giving birth to more children if they could fulfill certain legal and regulatory conditions.</li> </ul>	<p>The State advocates each couple to give birth to two children. A couple may request to give birth to more children if they meet certain legal and regulatory conditions.</p>

	Before	After
<b>Marriage Leave</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An employee getting married may enjoy 3 days marriage leave as stipulated by the State. An additional 7 days leave would be granted to those qualified as late marriage. A female having first marriage at the age of 24 or above or a male having first marriage at the age of 26 or above is defined as late marriage by the State.</li> </ul>	Late marriage and late childbearing are no longer encouraged; the wording in article 18 that the state “encourages late marriage and late childbearing” was removed. The late marriage leave (7 days) is cancelled. However, the local government may extend the length of marriage leave as stipulated by the State. The exact length of marriage leave is regulated by each individual local government.
<b>Maternity Leave</b>	A female employee could enjoy 98 days maternity leave as stipulated by the State. If a female gave birth to her first child at the age of 25 or above, she would be considered as late childbirth, and an additional 30 days maternity leave would be granted	The wording in article 25 that “couples are rewarded with extended leave or other benefits for late marriage or late childbearing pursuant was removed. The additional maternity leave (30 days) for late childbirth is cancelled. However, the State allows longer maternity leave to the female employees who give birth to children in compliance with the regulations. The exact length of maternity leave is regulated by each local government.
<b>Paternity Leave</b>	A male employee could enjoy paternity leave. Exact day of paternity leave was regulated by each local government.	A male employee can still enjoy paternity leave. Exact length of paternity leave is regulated by each local government.

(sources from Xinhua, 2016b)

We can see the eligibility for extended maternity leave and paternity leave is expanded. Previously, extended maternity leave was only granted to a married woman who gave birth to her and her husband's first child after she turned 24. But the new law allows longer maternity leave to the female employees who give birth to children, regardless of their age. Moreover, the Amendment removed the language around extended marriage leave for eligible couples. Previously, extended marriage leave was granted to a person who got married for the first time at or above a certain age (23 for women and 25 for men). In the new law, late marriage and late childbearing are no longer encouraged. The late marriage leave (7 days) is cancelled. However, the local government extended the length of marriage leave as stipulated by the State. The exact length of marriage leave is regulated by each individual local government.

From the latest regulations on marriage leave, maternity leave and paternity leave for certain provinces data in Table 5, we can see the although the leave are different in each provinces. Maternity leave is longer than before. And paternity leave is very short, compared to maternity.

Table 5: marriage leave, maternity leave and paternity leave for certain provinces

Province	Marriage leave	Total Maternity Leave	Paternity leave
<b>Shanxi</b>	30 Days	158 Days	15 Days
<b>Fujian</b>	15 Days	158-180 Days	15 Days
<b>Shanghai</b>	10 Days	128 Days	10 Days
<b>Ningxia</b>	3 Days	158 Days	25 Days
<b>Guangxi</b>	3 Days	148 Days	25 Days
<b>Sichuan</b>	3 Days	158 Days	20 Days
<b>Guangdong</b>	3 Days	128 Days	15 Days
<b>Hubei</b>	3 Days	128 Days	15 Days
<b>Jiangxi</b>	3 Days	158 Days	15 Days
<b>Shandong</b>	3 Days	158 Days	7 Days
<b>Tianjin</b>	3 Days	128 Days	7 Days
<b>Zhejiang</b>	3 Days	128 Days	15 Days
<b>Anhui</b>	3 Days	158 Days	10 Days (20 Days if living in other cities)

(sources from Xinhua, 2016b)

The Amendment still leaves many issues unanswered for employers. Such issues include whether employees' pay during maternity leave for the second child will be paid out of social insurance, whether social maternity insurance contribution will be adjusted, and whether employees will still be entitled to extended marriage leave as a result of the removal of the relevant wording in the law. In addition, the Amendment add that A couple may request to give birth to more children in Article 18. However, it does not explain what the employer can do if the employee who has more than 2 children.

More importantly, the Amendment still be silence on the adding cost of employers under two child policy. As we can see, under two child policy, the employer need to pay more cost to hire a female employee than to hire a male employee, due to longer leave for women to have a body than men and employers do not need to pay maternity insurance for men. If a male employee has a newborn, he just needs one or two weeks as paternity leave and then return to his work. However, if a female employee is going to have a child, she will get maternity leave for almost half years, the enterprise need to a new employee to replace her job at that time which will cost extra money. Also, this female employee's maternity insurance is fully paid for by employers under current rules. Moreover, this experience can happen twice for a female employee since the government allow the couples to have the second child.

Since employers make contributions on the maternity insurance fund and additional allowances that some local governments require employers to provide for employees earning more than the average wage, employers choose to use different situations to deal of this cost. Including, asking prospective female workers about their family plans or require them to agree to illegal contract conditions, such as taking pregnancy tests or signing guarantees they will not get pregnant; finding ways to coerce pregnant workers into resigning by requiring them to work unreasonably long hours or by assigning them heavy or dangerous workloads; refusing to grant maternity leave and then fire employees on the grounds of absenteeism; Other employers simply choose not to hire female employees.

### **Environmental issues**

Two child policy that focusing on the current concern to population aging and sex ratio has effectively drowned out earlier warnings about the possible deleterious environmental consequences of an increased population.

During the period of one child policy, China argued that the importance and urgency of birth control policy because of environmental pressure and the one child rule would result in less damage to natural resources. They estimated it saved between 300 and 400 million people off the expected growth of its population, which will slow down the pace of environmental destruction. For example, Chinese negotiators have said that reduced annual emissions by as much as 1.8 billion tons of carbon dioxide and other gases (Smith, 2015).

However, China placed a big bet on its environmental future in 2015 by getting rid of its decades-old policy that limited most urban families to one child. The policy is a reaction to these trends: because of its need to support an aging, healthier population, it is laying the groundwork for more workers. Hence, the policy appears to be gambling that the demographic problem is more worrying than social unrest from industrial pollution and climate change and the population impact will not have a big impact on the environment.

In fact, China still faced the fundamental challenge that how to sustain 10 billion people by the mid-21st century without destroying the planet, including climate change, resource pressures. Just about air pollution, Chinese people suffer from huge air pollution, which kills 1.6 million Chinese a year (Yuhua, 2016) It is obvious that the environment issue is not disappeared but just under the shadow of the demographic problem.

#### **4.5 What effects are produced by this representation of the ‘problem’?**

A WPR approach to policy analysis starts from the presumption that some problem representations create more difficulties for members of some social groups than for members of other groups (Bacchi, 2009, p. 15). Question 5 is considered the assessment of how identified problem representations limit what can be talked about as relevant — discursive effects, shape people’s understandings of themselves and the issues — subjectification effects, and impact materially on people’s lives — lived effects.

Although two child policy is a nationwide policy and does not indicate its targets, we can still find out the policy’s subjectification effects is that it aims that women are attributed responsibility for problem.

According to the Population and Birth Planning Amendment Law in 2015, maternity leave is expanded to about 128-158 days (The detail information can see in Table 5 in 4.4 part about the Population and Birth Planning Amendment Law). Previously, a female employee could enjoy 98 days maternity leave. Only a part of the female that gave birth to her first child at the age of 25 or above can get 128 days. Compared with women, men only get 10-15 days leave if his wife has a child. The uneven leave about having a child between men and women implies that there is a greater obligation for women to reproduction and children than for men. Women perceive themselves as ‘natural’ caregivers to their children. The discourse of

the Amendment law exacerbates women's dilemma that women are expected to fulfill two roles at the same time: worker and caregiver, while the discourse does not give the same expectation to men. This brings lives effects that women will face gender inequity inside the family and in the labour market.

The discourse in two child policy not only does not address the domestic division of labour between women and men, but deepens the gender stereotype that women are 'natural' caregivers in the family and her job can make concession to family. Therefore, the existing traditional division of labour is reinforced. Again, men are more likely to benefit from this than women. Because of long maternity leave and cost for employers, women will face aggravated discrimination from employers in the labor market. Before two child policy, Although China has laws and regulations against blatant discrimination against women, enforcement is lackluster. Chinese job portals carry hundreds of posts that read "male only" or "prefer married female with child." For those women who are around marrying and child-rearing age, but have not had kids, will face the problem that employees have gender preference that are willing to hire men, even if she is more excellent than him. After the wide implementation of two child policy, women who plan to have a second child will face the gender discrimination at work. They may be passed over for promotions or have their positions taken away by others while they are on maternity leave.

Moreover, the Amendment removed the language around extended marriage leave for eligible couples. That shows the government attitude on late marriage is changed. The idea of "late marriage and late childbearing" is against the Chinese traditional family value which emphasised on the continuation of the family line. To carry on one child policy, government encouraged late marriage and late childbearing to control population. Previously, extended marriage leave was granted to a person who got married for the first time at or above a certain age (23 for women and 25 for men). In the new law, the late marriage leave is cancelled (Xinhua, 2016b). This new discourse implies the government' changing attribute on late marriage, which will also influence on people's attitude on late marriage, the decision making of people who under the marriageable age and how they think about themselves. The Combined with the recent concerns about Chinese leftover women, It probably comes as no surprise that women in China are under more pressure of getting married. In fact, with policy

guidance, women will be under more pressure than before to choose a marriage partner in a harsh time. Due to societal pressures, Their parents will push her marry at a "decent" age. Society will also highlight the harmful of being single in marriageable age (Chen, 2016). As a result, ordinary people follow the social rule and it becomes the opinion of everyone around. When they see other people marrying off their daughters early on, it can be a pressuring thing and they feel the need to find a suitor for their daughter too. They will also gossip about their neighbours or far-off relatives's marriage, talking ill of leftover women.

In addition, with two child policy divided family sizes into one child family and two child family and the single-child encouragement benefits is not exist, implying that government began to believe that one child per family is not enough, two children are more reasonable. Government encouragement will also influence on individual's fertility desire and childbirth decision. In China, childbirth is not decided by women or couples, is about the husband's family's business. The reproductive right is controlled by both patriarchal family and the patriarchal state, in which women's particular interests are often submerged (Pascall, 1997, p. 8). The right of women to make a free choice about fertility control is restricted by the patriarchal system. Women face a curial expectation from patriarchal family that their needs to get birth and ensure the continuation of the family line across generations. Although feminist suggest that reproductive rights constitute an essential element for women's empowerment and can be meaningful only if they are a source of autonomy for women in making choices relating to their own bodies and welfare (McIlwaine and Datta, 2003, p. 378), the concept of reproductive rights is quite vague and reproduction is still taken to be a woman's responsibility rather than her right. Under the one-child policy, state is the dominant role in controlling the reproductive right which make women at some level get rid of the patriarchal family's pressure: bargaining within the limits imposed by the patriarchal state, they have an excuse and just need to get birth once even if paterfamilias are satisfied with the sex of the child. Low fertility enabled mothers to get work and, thus, gain the ability to have economic independency and have more power than ever before to defy disadvantageous gender norms.

However, After the change of population policy, patriarchal state gives more power to patriarchal family which has more power to control the women's reproduction rights. Many

women faced a new problem that they are forced to get another child under the patriarchal family's pressure. Because of the two-child policy, family that was satisfied with one child before will reconsider their decision to have one more child. Especially for many families that have a girl, they will choose to get another one due to the traditional preference for boys. The one-child 'excuse' that used before cannot use anymore. Moreover, the two-child policy does not mean that the state gives up their power on controlling women's reproductive rights. Women will remain at risk of coerced or forced abortions, and "intrusive forms of contraception" to implement the new policy (Nee, 2015).

The two-child policy brings women into the fight with both patriarchal family and patriarchal state, but this does not mean that we need to look backward to the one-child policy and lead to path dependency. Women cannot expect to use state power to liberate women from patriarchal family. In fact, under the patriarchal system, patriarchal state and patriarchal always join to oppress women. Both the one-child policy and two child policy not only persecuted and deprived of women's reproductive rights, but also has caused many harmful outcomes for the female population.

Furthermore, couples who were satisfied with one child before will reconsider their decision to have one more child. This will lead to lives effects on their current child. Especially for the girl who used to be the only child in the family. Urban daughters have benefited from the demographic pattern produced by China's one-child policy. In the system of patrilineal kinship that has long characterised most of Chinese society, parents had little incentive to invest in their daughters. Singleton daughters, however, who are not systematically excluded from familial resources can enjoy unprecedented parental support because they do not have to compete with brothers for parental investment. They are more likely to be encouraged to pursue advanced education and demanding career. As a result, they have more power than ever before to defy disadvantageous gender norms while using equivocal ones to their own advantage.

However, because of two child policy, the benefits enjoyed by singleton daughters will may not exist any more. Just like daughters in rural China, they will share the resources with their siblings. Their parents will be reluctant to spend money on daughters' education and even make daughters drop out of school to do work to fund their brothers' education (Greenhalgh,



1985, 304). Moreover, for the generations 90s, their parents who were used to be limited by one child policy and just have one child. With the release of two child policy, those who still under child-bearing age will have one more child. Because most of their parent are in the middle age, they may not have enough money and energy to take care of their second child. Hence, their first child will bear more responsibility: they not only need to support their parents, but also need to support their sibling to grow up.

#### **4.6 How/where has this representation of the ‘problem’ been produced, disseminated and defended? How has it been (or could it be) questioned, disrupted and replaced?**

This question links to question 3 in drawing attention to ‘the practices and processes that allow certain problem representations to dominate’ (Bacchi, 2009, p. 19), and looks specifically to the ways in which this representation of the ‘problem’ reaches their target audience and achieves legitimacy through dissemination and repetition, and seeks to uncover contesting views.

Through this process, media has played an important role in the dissemination of the contemporary representation of the ‘problem’. In China, media is mouthpiece for government. All their speech is properly directed, in order to preserve social and political stability. Questioning publicly about an official policy like two child policy seems to impossible.

To help government carries on two child policy and achieves legitimacy, media focuses on the problem of surplus because of one child policy, claiming that two child policy can solve imbalance sex ratio, which helps surplus men. Framed in Chinese official thought and media, for a long time and will be continued, men were more value than women, couples only have one girl or two girls were defined by the government “sacrificers for the nation” who deserve state support. This implication is that girls are not as good as boys. Furthermore, men were deemed innocent victims of the one-child policy. Media announced that there are 32 million more marriage-age men than women because of strict birth control policy. However, more number of missing girls simply did not appear in that discourse. Media likes to propagandise about the tendency of unmarried males to be more violent, a large mass of potentially violent

unmarried men is described as a “social time-bomb.” (Xinhua. 2007). Under this discourse, women become the solution to fix men’s problem. Massive propaganda campaigns focus on the issue of unmarried females who often stigmatised as leftover women, trying to urge single women to marry, to offset a huge gender imbalance. Just like Pascall (1997, p. 8) described, “the farmer wants a wife’, we sing, never The farmer wants a husband’.” Ideas of women’s dependency are thus built into language use, and are operationalised by those who draw the world for us. With this propaganda, two child policy becomes the new remedy to solve imbalanced sex ratio and is good for surplus men.

To reach their target audience of two child policy, media also emphasises the family responsibility of women to persuade them to have the second child. In 2013, China began to have selective two-child policy allowing couples to have two children if one of the spouses was an only child. Almost at the same time, Xi Jinping claims about the important role of women and require women to shoulder the responsibilities of the upbringing (Xinhua, 2013). Moreover, After Xi took power, there is a trend about the revive of traditional culture. Government propaganda and indoctrination focus on Confucianism, which includes the beliefs that the value of segregation within the house: women stays in home while men go to work. Women are required to have loyalty and devotion to fulfill the duties of their roles. After the implementation of two child policy, numerous newspaper reports ensure that women know the message that it is their duty to have children. Media underlines the traditional gender role of women at home and the powerful cultural traditions that value men over women return in force. Numbers of reports in China praised women’s action that returning to their families and being house-wives. For example, Xinhua, the official mouthpiece in China, argued that, for women, having a good family is better than having a great career (Xinhua, 2016a). Even scholar in china serves the needs and appeal to the interests of state, claiming that the phenomenon women back to family need to be encouraged, it can help their children to grow better and is good for the stability of family and society (Xinhua, 2016a). With this propaganda, women faced a lot of pressure to choose between their family life and career, while men did not appear in the upbringing responsibility.

Media emphasises the family duties and responsibility to deal with old age security issue. As I mentioned before, two child policy is a way for government to let go or detach itself from the social security and let people solve elderly problem through families. As the mouthpiece of government, Chinese media also highlights the importance of children responsibility that supports their aged parents. Newspaper raise the importance and unique of traditional family value in China, showing that have one more child can solve the old-age security problem, implying that there is no excuse for people to blame their lack of old-age security for the government. Like media claims that “if you do not have a second child, no one will afford your old-age security in the future.” (Tencent, 2016)

## **5 CONCLUSION**

This thesis focuses on the changing of problem representation after China switched the population policy from one child policy to two child policy, and how this constitutes the eventual framework of everyday conduct and effects on women. By following 6 questions of Bacchi’s WPR approach and using discourse analysis and textual analysis, this thesis tries to figure out how dominant or marginal representations of gender and gender inequality appear in two child policy, and how these shape solutions and subjectivities. The main focus are three levels: family level, labour market level, and state level.

From analysing government document, we can see two child policy is aimed to deal with population aging and imbalanced sex ratio. However, the key to stabilising social security and solving population aging problem is ensuring that pension contributions are used to fund the retirement benefits of people. Chinese government begs the problem that government fail to establish a viable pension system for everyone. Instead, it uses two child policy as an excuse to shift the pension responsibility to individuals and their families.

Two child policy also cannot fix the problem of imbalanced sex ratio. Through the comparison of sex ratio between China, Taiwan and South Korea, this thesis argues that the distorted sex ratio at birth is a demographic phenomenon that accommodates both the sex preference for children and the small-family norm. Since two child policy is still control the number of childbirth, the imbalanced sex ratio at birth will still exist.

The raise of two child policy is under a special political and economic circumstances. China has a low growth rate and loses the advantage of demographic dividend. As a result, China hopes to raise the birth rate to keep the advantage of labour force. However, it cannot address the fundamental causes of low growth rate. What China really needs to do is establishing a modern industrial system and giving impetus to industrial transformation and upgrading.

Two child policy is also related to Xi Jinping's ambitious changing of a set of reforms since those launched by Deng. Xi's reforms on population policy is a part of the dominant discourse alters the old principles and policies in different realms and promotes new ones.

Although two child policy relates to families rather than to individuals, it still impacts on women directly. As male dominance is still evident in family and labour market and state. In family level, two child policy is modelled on a particular version of family life that is one pair of man and wife and two children. Women undertake the effects of two child policy directly due to she need to take care of two children to make her family achieve the particular version of family life that government promoted. Women also under the propaganda of state and media that women need to follow family virtues, take the responsibility of the upbringing and become an understanding wife and loving mother and the primary caregivers for husbands, children.

In labour market, two child policy assumes men's need for family income, women's homemaker and dependent status. Since women could not say no to family responsibility, family responsibility hung heavily on them in the competition for jobs, women undertake the effects of two child policy directly. Under two child policy, the employers need to pay more cost to hire a female employee than to hire a male employee. As a result, employers prefer to hire a male employee rather than a female employee. women will face aggravated discrimination from employers in the labor market and still in subordination position.

In state level, two child policy emphasises the women's role in the reproduction of the labour force, laying stress on increasing birth rate to solve population aging problem. State uses power to modify the reproduction of labour power and reproduction is related with production. Moreover, as China special political situation, discursive change in official level is also responsible for the shape of women's role in society and family. Through this process,

media has also played an important role through this process, especially in China, as media is mouthpiece for government.

Through the analysis of how dominant or marginal representations of gender and gender inequality appear in two child policy, we have a new impactation about two child policy

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