

**Lund University
2003**

School of Social Work

Master's Programme SOA 203

Autumn 2002

Report from a Minor Field Study

"I will follow the Law of my country"

- A study of young Shanghainese women's view on their future in the light of the one-child policy

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Abstract

The objective of this thesis was to reveal how young and well-educated Shanghainese women see their future in the light of the Chinese one-child policy and why. The questions were elaborated in depth through a qualitative interview study. They were contextualised through an analysis of historical data and applicable theory. The questions were how do young well-educated Shanghainese women view the Chinese one-child policy and how do these women foresee their future concerning family and career? The data was created mainly through interviews with eight Shanghainese students studying at the Fudan University in Shanghai. The main conclusions of our findings were that all interviewed women supported the family-planning policy and that they believed it as a necessary measure for the nation. However, the majority were not appealed to live in compliance with the policy themselves. Further, the women had a limited knowledge about the family-planning policy. The young Chinese women are facing a new era, where individuals' preferences gradually become a characteristic, resulting in great ambivalence to future family life. Making a career and a good standard of living were priorities above all to the majority of the women in our study.

Key words: China, Shanghai, Family planning, one-child policy,

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Acknowledgement

We would like to express our gratitude to our interviewees at the Fudan University in Shanghai. The women have in various ways shared their opinions and have in that way given us insight into the thoughts of the younger generation in Shanghai. Thank you for giving your time and your favourable greeting. We are especially thankful to Ms. Qin Yan for your help concerning our study, as well as providing us with a pleasant stay in Shanghai. You facilitated our work considerably and introduced us to the Chinese way of living. We do not know how to make this up to you!

Further, we would like to thank our supervisor in field, Ms. Maria Henoeh at the Nordic Centre at Fudan University. Thank you for making practical arrangements and introducing us to teachers and researchers at Fudan University. In addition, we are thankful to our supervisor Mr. Lars Harrysson at the School of Social Work in Lund for your support and guidance. Finally, we are appreciative to Mr. Beynon Price for proofreading our thesis.

Last but not least, we are also very grateful to the Swedish International Development Co-operation Agency (SIDA) that financed this study within the framework of their Minor Field Study Programme. Additionally, we would like to thank the MFS-committee at the School of Social Work in Lund for believing in our study and us.

Lund, March 2003

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1. Introduction

1.1. Problem area

China is the most populous country in the world with 1.27 billion¹ and Chinese authorities have claimed the population growth cannot continue escalating. Therefore authorities have encouraged couples to have only one child during the past two decades. An one-child policy emerged in 1979, due to a young and rapidly growing population. The natural population growth has ceased all through China due to the population policy. The policy has attained more success in some areas than others and since 1993 Shanghai has been the first province in China to have a negative fertility growth rate in its registered population, although the total number of registered people is still increasing due to internal migration². Most people around the world are agreeing with the Chinese authorities it is necessary to control the world's largest population, even though the way the one-child policy is transformed into practice is criticised by many people.

The one-child policy is a unique Chinese phenomenon, because of the authoritarian way the population issue has been handled and the success it has achieved. There has never been another nation, trying to control and regulate its population in the same way and with the same success as China. This is the reason why we have decided to examine this area. Nevertheless, the birth control policy comprises the whole nation, even though it has reached a greater success in Shanghai than in any other place in China. Shanghai is the economic centre and the largest city in China and it is the most developed area in the country. Shanghai represent the collision between Western and Chinese civilisations and is a city of inconsistencies and paradoxes. During the last century Shanghai has been transformed from a third-class local town to a flourishing and leading metropolis of the world. A long cultural tradition blended with pioneering thoughts and influences makes Shanghai face a new era. In Lonely Planet China one can read:

“The booming metropolis of Shanghai is evolving at the pace so unmatched by any other Chinese city that even the morning ritual of flinging open one's hotel curtains reveals new facets to the skyline and new sounds on the streets. Shanghai is racing full-speed towards the future and has little time for yesterday”³.

During the last two decades, several reforms have taken place and by that means China has become more open to the outside world and globalisation is pervading the society. The new epoch in China makes new thoughts of individualism influenced by Western values collide with traditional thoughts of collectivism. The Chinese people are affected by their long history including their view upon the State and the Government as a protector. The nation's history has a major effect on people's way of living and their behaviour in contemporary China and therefore we find it interesting to hold a historical perspective in order to understand our findings.

In rural China women are still struggling for higher status in the society whereas in Shanghai there have been radical changes concerning women's status during the last decades. Naturally the role of the women in families has been modified. In Shanghai, women have satisfactory

¹ www.cpirc.org.cn/eindex.htm

² www.unescap.org/pop/database/chinadata/shanghai.htm

³ Lonely Planet, 2000 p 370

opportunities of education, which results in a better chance to be employed. At the same time, the Family-Planning Policy with its unique concept contributes to women's partaking in society and gives less time for bringing up children. This situation makes young Shanghainese women facing a new dilemma concerning family life versus career.

1.2. The Objective of the Thesis and Research Questions

The objective of this thesis is to reveal how young and well educated Shanghainese women see their future in the light of the Chinese one-child policy and why. The following two questions are elaborated in depth through a qualitative interview study. They are contextualised through an analysis of historical data and applicable theory

- How do young well educated Shanghainese women view the Chinese one-child policy?
- How do young well educated Shanghainese women foresee their future concerning family and career?

1.3. Method

Our first major interest was to focus on the consequences of the Chinese one-child policy in the form of unwanted baby girls. We were interested in women's ways of handling this situation, mentally as well as practically. We were corresponding with Mr. Henning Kristoffersen, who was the programme coordinator of Nordic Centre at the Fudan University in Shanghai. After a while Ms. Maria Hensch, who became our supervisor in field, replaced him. During our first days, we had in mind to conduct our interviews with women living in the outskirts of Shanghai. By that time, we imagined these women were negative towards the Family-Planning Policy. Further, we believed these women belong to a vulnerable group in society and the women are struggling against the idea of the Government. This was a main-interest of ours.

However, after a few days we realised this target group was difficult for us to reach. In addition, we started to understand the unique phenomenon of Shanghai. New thoughts appeared to us and we decided to focus on the Shanghainese woman instead of examining the opinions of women from the outskirts. Walking on Nanjing Lu and Huaihai Lu in central of Shanghai we started to realise the unique wonder of this Chinese city compares to the rest of China. We were surrounded by couples and families with only one child. All around there were neon signs and we found ourselves in a real centre of commerce. The thought of conducting interviews with women from the outskirts were fading away. Instead we were interested in Shanghainese women's view on the Chinese one-child policy as well as how they foresee the future concerning family life.

We began visiting the State Library as well as different libraries in the Campus area of the Fudan University. We found most of the literature to be in Chinese and the range in English was extremely limited. In addition, it was problematical for foreigners to borrow literature and the library required a deposit of 1000 Yuan (1 Yuan = 1,02 SEK⁴). However, we found some useful primary information. Ms. Hensch introduced us to some people working at the Institution of Population Research and a meeting was arranged. Apart from two teachers and one researcher, two students were present. The students study Population Studies and were majored in either Law or Economics. During the meeting our newborn ideas made us realise the students learning population studies would be a perfect target group. The reasons why these women would be a good target group to us are mainly due to the professional field they

⁴ www.xe.com/ucc/convert.cgi

have chosen. Therefore, they are familiarised with Chinese family planning, they are women in a fertile age and they have been born and brought up influenced by the one-child policy. Additionally, they are familiar with the English language, which would result in less need of an interpreter.

The choice of conducting interviews with the students at the Institution of Population Research brought about the requirement of evading letters of recommendation. Letters of recommendation were needed everywhere in order to take possessions to enter libraries, establish contacts with people at different levels in society etc. In order to conduct interviews, we needed an approval from the Director of the Institution of Population Research. The Director also requested to review our interview guide. Fortunately, we established a close relationship with one of the students, Ms. Qin Yan, who turned out to play an important role for us. As a Chinese citizen and a student of Fudan University, she was aware of the Chinese culture and was easily capable of establishing contacts with important people of our concern resulting in a quicker realisation of our research. Ms. Yan arranged the interviews with her eight classmates, as well as acting as an interpreter during the interviews, when it was needed. The interview guide was gradually modified and after the perusal of Mr. Harrysson and Ms. Yan the final version was developed.

In our thesis we have utilised primary as well as secondary data. The primary data consists of interviews with eight students and one teacher at the Institution of Population Research at Fudan University. The secondary data consists of a literature, but also newspapers, periodicals, and Internet sources.

We have conducted qualitative, semi-structured but non-experimental interviews. Qualitative interviews aim for discovering or identifying not yet known or dissatisfied known phenomenon, characteristics or meanings. The eight interviews have been half-structured, which in this case means the interview questions have been put forward in subject areas with a number of minor questions below each subject.⁵ (*The interview guide is attached in appendix 1*)

The study is carried out in an inductive way. I.e. an approach where our limited knowledge on a specific reality does not allow any strict hypothesis, but a fairly unbiased and rather vague presentation of the problem. Further, we have developed concepts to describe an analyse diverse phenomenon in order to create an overall picture.⁶

The interviews were conducted in English within a week during the turn of the month October-November 2002 and they took place in the students' dormitories. The female students are between 23 to 25 years of age. They are all coming from different backgrounds and provinces, rural as well as urban areas. Due to the limited number of female students attending the second year of the Master Programme in Population Studies, we did not have the privilege selecting the interviewees. The advantage with conducting the interviews in the students' home was the students probably felt safe and secure in a familiar surrounding. The interviews lasted between 40-70 minutes, depending on the students' language skills and how talkative they were. During all the interviews we used a tape recorder and after all the interviews were conducted, we transcribed them for further analysis.

⁵ Svensson & Starrin, 1996

⁶ Eneroth, 1984

During all the interviews we were both present as interviewers asking half of the questions each. Ms. Yan was present during all the interviews with the students, except the last one. The other seven students preferred Ms. Yan attending the interviews both as an interpreter as well as a social supporter. The advantages with being two interviewers were the person interviewing was able to focus completely on the conversation, while the other person focused on taking notes. Additionally, we were able to back up each other when needed. The disadvantages with being two interviewers might have been the students felt insecure. On the other hand, when Ms. Yan attended the interviews this problem seemed less pronounced. Even though the students seemed to be secure with Ms. Yan, one possible negative outcome might have been the student felt exposed and left out because of the relationship as room- as well as classmates. After the interviews we received a positive feedback from all the participants. However, we are not certain how honest and straightforward they were speaking and how secure they actually felt. Additionally, we are not aware to what extent we managed to read the students' codes. Finally, we did not find the language as a barrier but there is always a risk of misunderstanding due to confusion of languages.

Svensson & Starrin claim it is of great importance to read interpersonal codes in order to fully understand each other during an interview. They argue in all kinds of communications the respondents and the interviewer must share linguistic as well as non-verbal codes in order to make the interpretation meaningful.⁷

The advantages with the literature used in our thesis are we have utilised Chinese as well as Western authors. This gives a broad perspective and contradictory point of views, which on the other hand sometimes also makes a confusing picture of the Chinese society and the one-child policy. In addition, we have used a limited and accurately selected number of websites as secondary data. The data from Internet are fresh and updated. On the contrary, it has not necessary been quality checked and perhaps not as reliable as other printed information. Further, Internet is a faltering information source since it is uncertain for how long the information will be available on the site.

During our interviews we have had the possibility to assure and control whether the questions and information given to the students have been correctly understood or not. Contradictory answers have been elucidated resulting in a better understanding for us as well as the interviewees, which has enabled a reinforced validity⁸. Pleading for a high reliability is the interviews took place in the students' dormitories. In other words, the students had a secure base during the interviews. However, the use of a tape recorder might have been restricting the respondents⁹. In the very beginning of each interview we noticed a certain brace being recorded, but after a short while the distraction was gone.

Other factors supporting a high reliability are there might have been less imbalance of power since both parts are female students and we are around the same age. However, the fact we are coming from a Western society and are not part of the Chinese society might have led to not fully correct answers and could possibly be a component of the interviewing effect. In addition, the interviewees might have replied in a certain way in order to seem neither ignorant nor make a bad impression. Precisely speaking, they might have answered in a way they consider appealing to us. Finally, being critical to the Government and the laws of the nation is a sensitive subject making it a difficult issue to discuss. This might have contributed

⁷ Svensson & Starrin, 1996

⁸ Denscombe, 2000

⁹ *ibid.*

to dishonest answers. Since the interviews did not take place directly one after another, the interviewees were able to discuss the interview questions and this might have run the risk of strategic answers.¹⁰

Nevertheless, when we noticed the respondents were following an illogical reasoning we confronted them and tried to make them express themselves in a different and clearer way. Most likely our contact with the students during the interviews, was facilitated by our good relationship with Ms. Yan. If there has been an interviewing effect, surely it has been minimised.

Since we have a limited number of interviewees the possibility of generalisations is diminutive and we have realised the limitations of our thesis. However, we do not lay claim to make comprehensive generalisations.

Kvale argues it is of importance in the beginning of the research to take some ethical grounds into consideration. Before conducting the interviews we have informed the interviewees about the object of the thesis. Further, we informed about the confidentiality as well as not having to answer questions being sensitive to them. We notified the interviewees assumed names would be used in the thesis. We asked for permission to use the tape recorder and if both of us could be present during the interviews as well as asking them if we could turn to them again if necessary.¹¹

Eliasson argues it is of importance to possess an inside as well as an outside perspective in order to understand the interviewees' situation from their point of view and at the same time be able to analyse the findings in a critical and objective way¹². In a nation like China, we consider it is even more of importance to keep these concepts in mind, since the Chinese society differs tremendously from the Western society. To a great extent we have tried to understand the women's thinking as much as we possibly could, while at the same time adopting an objective attitude.

In order to create as fair picture as possible of the interviewees and also enabling the reader to form an opinion of our primary information, we have used quotations. Additionally, we have kept our own interpretations and answers from the interviewees separated.

1.4. Outline of the Thesis

As a starting point, an introduction to China will be presented, followed by an introduction to Shanghai. In order to create an understanding of traditional as well as pioneering population thoughts and the Chinese society as a whole, firstly we give an account of a historical view of the Chinese population. Thereafter, we describe the development of the Chinese Family-Planning Programme resulting in the Law of 2001 and its consequences. To facilitate the understanding of the phenomenon of the Chinese Society, next section describes the Chinese people's relation to their Government, the view of individualism versus collectivism and finally a section about women's status. After giving a comprehensive view of the Chinese society, we present our findings. Firstly, we give an account of the students' opinions of the Chinese Family-Planning Policy. Secondly, we describe the students' thoughts and ideas about their own future. Both sections of the findings are followed by a conclusion including

¹⁰ Halvorsen, 1992

¹¹ Kvale, 1997

¹² Eliasson, 1995

our own reflections. Finally, we summarise our own reflections and give an analysis of the primary data in the light of relevant theories in a discussion, ended by a final summary.

2. Introduction to China

China is a country, which is located in East Asia. It is the third largest country in the world and it is the largest by population. In 2003, China has an estimated population of 1,27 billion¹³, which is distributed in an uneven way throughout the country. Inland mountainous regions of China are sparsely populated, while the majority of the people live in the eastern part of the country. 92% of the Chinese population belong to the Han majority, but China is considered as a multi-ethnic nation with 55 minority groups, which are officially recognized^{14, 15}.

China has a long cultural tradition, and out of this, one of the world's earliest and most advanced civilisations came into being about 4,000 years ago. For centuries the Chinese society was dominated by Confucian ideology. However, in the nineteenth century China had become a politically and economically weak nation. This situation made it easy for foreign powers to invade, as well as dominate the nation. The Chinese people were seen as "*unbound as loose as sand*", according to existing revolutionary movement. After many years of struggle for independence and self-esteem, the People's Republic of China was founded in 1949. This is a historic event in Chinese history and it transformed China into a more modern nation. Nevertheless, endeavouring for modernization included ups and downs. The Great Leap Forward and its attendant crisis and the Great Cultural Revolution were among the most influential events during this process.¹⁶

Various reforms have taken place and during the past two decades China is more open to the outside world and globalisation is on the way. However, the rural areas in the country have not been able to keep up with the modernisation in the urban areas. As a consequence the difference between rich and poor people has increased both between and within regions. This is one of the reasons why the urbanisation process has accelerated. The big cities have become the centre of the national economy today, attracting many inhabitants from the rural areas, and in that way this group of people are becoming a part of the "floating population". This group is estimated to be around 100-150 millions.¹⁷

In China, works have been assigned by the state to individuals for many years. Neither workers nor enterprises have had any possibility to object in this matter. A factor, which has made the labour force increasingly mobile, is the transformation of the centrally planned economy towards a market-oriented one; Nowadays people have much more freedom to choose a work suitable for the individual. Many years of discussion and experiments has conducted to a comprehensive social security system, including pensions, medical insurance and unemployment benefit. At this stage the social security system has mainly been successful in urban areas.¹⁸

Education is another field, which has been given advantage from the reform process. A nine-year compulsory education has been introduced, as well as a tuition-fee on higher level. This

¹³ www.cpirc.org.cn/eindex.htm

¹⁴ Wang, 1999

¹⁵ Xizhe, 2000

¹⁶ ibid.

¹⁷ www.ldok.siv.se/netacgi/nph-brs?d=LD

¹⁸ Xizhe, 2000

fee is expected to improve the human resources and make an addition to China's prevailing development.¹⁹

The Chinese Government had two strategic goals in the late 1970s, when China started its economic reform. One goal was to increase the Gross National Product (GNP) four times. The second goal was to control and regulate the population, mainly through population programme. The population plan has made, in a rather short time, great impact on people's fertility behaviour and diminished China's fast population growth. The economic reforms and development in China have been welcomed by the outside world. Other countries, however, have rarely praised the population control.²⁰

As already mentioned, economic reform in China has resulted in enormous improvement in the Chinese people's quality of life, and remarkable changes in freedom and opportunities possible to individuals. Yet, the goal of decreasing the population to 1.2 billion by the end of last century has been far more complex, and even though the population growth has been significantly curbed, still the set goal is not reached. This shows the width of the population problem, since the latter goal is not reached while China's previous backwards economy has succeeded to reverse its trend. Both China's achievements in controlling its population as well as social and economic improvements are playing important roles on the world's population, politics, economy, environment and development as a whole.²¹

3. Introduction to Shanghai

Being the fifth largest metropolitan area in the world, Shanghai has undergone great changes in its population since the 1980's at a vivid background of economic reform and social structural transformation. New trends have shown various changes in Shanghai's population, such as serious population ageing, negative natural population growth, rapid increase of floating population, accelerated urbanisation and a new regional distribution of population. Since 1993, Shanghai has been the first area in China to have a negative fertility growth rate in its listed population, even though the total number of registered people is still increasing due to internal migration^{22, 23}.

Since the founding of the People's Republic in 1949 the demographic development of Shanghai can be divided into different periods: the blooming period, the period of gradual increase, the period of shrinking, the period of increase, and the period of low increase²⁴. During the blooming period, a baby boom was recorded in Shanghai. The population reproduction pattern shifted from "high birth, high death, low natural growth" to "high birth, low death, high natural growth" which resulted in a higher proportion of children in Shanghai's total population. After this period the high increase changed into a stable lower increase in the beginning and slowly the period of shrinking started due to the implementation of the Family-Planning Policy starting from the end of 1950s in Shanghai. At the beginning of the 1980s, there was a slight increase in birth rate, as the baby boomers born in 1950s entered the childbearing age, and many young people were also allowed to return to Shanghai from the countryside as they had migrated there during the Cultural Revolution. Since 1993, Shanghai started to have a negative fertility growth and this trend seems to continue for the

¹⁹ *ibid.*

²⁰ Wang, 1999

²¹ *ibid.*

²² www.unescap.org/pop/database/chinadata/shanghai.htm

²³ Peiyun et al, 1997

²⁴ www.unescap.org/pop/database/chinadata/shanghai.htm

decades to come in Shanghai. Family size in Shanghai has become much smaller and in the late 1990s the average family size was 3.06 per household²⁵. The fact that it only took 40 years to finish reproduction transformation from traditional to modern model is one of the major characteristics of Shanghai's demographic transition.²⁶

Due to rapid social and economic development, people's living standard and health condition have enhanced. The life expectation of Shanghai has increased continuously. With the development of medical science and health care system, and the improvement of living and environmental sanitation, life expectancy of Shanghai's population will most likely continue increasing, but in a slower speed due to physical and health care standard limit.²⁷

The education level of Shanghai is the highest in China. On the other hand, if Shanghai is compared with other developed countries, the education level of Shanghai is still lower, resulting in disadvantageous for Shanghai's competition internationally.²⁸

In Shanghai, the education has changed partly due to its economical development. In the past, the tradition was to treat students as a uniform mass, but this phenomenon is apparently gradually fading. In these days individual difference is more and more tolerated and accommodated, which is not typical in a culture, which normally disapproves of individuality. However, the students are told time and again of the importance of putting the interest of the nation and the collective above those of the individual. For instance, students are often encouraged to choose fields of study, which are unpopular but which are crucial to the long-term well-being of the nation. Due to the one-child policy, some analysts are claiming there is an additional obstacle concerning this. In present Shanghai, children are so used to being spoiled that they have little consideration for others, and if possible, even less for the collective.²⁹

4. Traditional Thinking on Population in China

Gabe T. Wang is a professor of Sociology at William Paterson University in USA. Wang received his Master and PhD from Brigham Young University in USA and under-graduate education from Yunnan University in China. In his book "China's population problems, thoughts and policies"³⁰, Wang provides a historical, comprehensive and futuristic understanding of China's population problems, thoughts and policies. In order to understand the existing population thought today, we think it is necessary to have knowledge as well as comprehending the traditional population and policy. This is why we have chosen Wang as a source in this area since he is explaining this in a comprehensible way:

China has a long history and it is a nation of a very strong tradition. In addition, present China is very closely related to the past China. Some scholars even claim answers for today's problems can be found in books written two thousands years ago. One can state today's population thought is based on the development of population thought in China over many dynasties. Likewise, it can be clarified the population policy, which has been implemented by

²⁵ *ibid.*

²⁶ Peiyun et al, 1997

²⁷ *ibid.*

²⁸ *ibid.*

²⁹ Yeung & Yun-wing et al, 1996

³⁰ Wang, 1999

the preceding governments, has not only laid the foundation for the present population policy but also paved the way for today's government to carry out the policy.

The awareness of the historical development of China's population thought will not only make a major contribution to our understanding of the particular population and social dynamics in China, but will also increase our understanding of the role of population in social and economic development on the whole. Similarly, it will not only add to our understanding of the role of government policy in the population distribution and growth, but also in social and economic development.

Gabe T. Wang writes in his book "China's population problems, thoughts and policies":

China's traditional population thought was derived from her population growth by scholars and politicians. The population thought then influenced the adoption of population policy which consequently affected population growth. Therefore, it is reasonable to believe that a study of the traditional population thought and policy is conducive to understanding China's present population theories and policy as well as the historical population development.³¹

The literature about China's population thought and policy is widely spread among various history books in China. This creative writing seems precise and reliable. It shows what ancient Chinese scholars and officials thought about the Chinese increasing population, population problems, and how the government in each dynasty regulated the population growth and distribution. Generally speaking, literature about population thought and policy, as well as official population records seem to be unique in the world in the sense of their intensity and their long history. Even though historical population data is not exact enough for careful data analysis, they are still sufficient to make population trends obvious.

4.1. Population Thought and Policy before 221 B.C until 1949

On a whole, the population thought has been developed for more than 2,500 years in China, either encouraging or discouraging population growth or altering population distribution depending on the considerations of politics, national security, or economic development. Something to keep in mind is these encouragements and discouragements not necessarily benefited the individual's well being. As a matter of fact, politicians and scholars rarely paid attention to an individual's interest in the traditional China. Looking back at China's history, the Government has never let the population grow on its own. Something else, which distinguishes the population growth, is the use of awards and punishment to encourage or discourage population growth. Knowing what we know today, most likely the control of population growth will continue being a concern for the Government.

Before 221 B.C. China's population was very limited and increased very slowly. At that time politicians and scholars claimed a large population was essential for political power as well as economic development. This is the reason why population policies more or less always encouraged population growth and immigration.

Two exceptions are known before 221 B.C. The first exception is the Emperor Lao Zi, the founder of Taoism, who believed in governing by doing nothing against nature. He believed a peaceful life could only be reached by having a small population.³²

³¹ *ibid.* p 17

³² Zhang, 1982

The second exception is Emperor Han Feizi, who believed that increase of population did not automatically mean the increase of wealth. On the contrary, Feizi meant population growth could decrease the share of resources and lower the standard of living of the people and he worried about the fast population increase in his State.³³

The Chinese society developed gradually through a recurring manner between 221 B.C. and 1644 A.D. The population started to grow on a large scale during the Song Dynasty (960-1279). On the whole, politicians and scholars argued a rapid population growth, particularly the growth of a farming population, was important for the development of the society. The population growth continued experiencing an explosive growth, between 1644 and 1949, to some extent due to the Qing Dynasty's remarkable efforts to develop agriculture and support population increase. Many politicians and scholars blamed the fast growing population as the cause of China's degradation, when the Chinese society declined during the eighteenth century. There were two different ideas in society how to deal with population growth in the nation at that time. One was strongly advocating controlling the growth, while the other idea was the development of Science and Technology, which would solve the population problem. Still, some politicians, mainly with a nationalistic point of view, claimed the population growth should be encouraged instead of controlled, since the key problem was not overpopulation but the invasion of foreign powers. Eventually, population was often regarded as blocking social development or even cause social disorder and poverty. This is the reason why China's leading population thought has gradually changed from encouraging population growth to population control.

5. A Gradual Change Towards a New Policy

China's population growth is closely related to its social situation, similarly to other countries in the world. Nevertheless, differently from many other countries, China's population growth has most often been very influenced by the population thought held by government officials, which is the origin of population policy. Since China has been an agricultural nation with an agricultural economy, cultural ideas encouraging population growth have existed for a long time. These ideas have led to an explosive population increase. This is the reason why it is logical to summarise it as follows; China's massive population today is the combined result of a long period of agricultural economy and the government's encouragement of population growth.³⁴

As mentioned above, the traditional population thought has a fundamental effect on presenting population debate in China. The concept, since the 1970s, the population blocked China's development and that it must be regulated has become the dominant idea, and it has given rise to a resolute birth control policy. Likewise, the present government population policy is a consequence of the traditional population policy. For example, the Chinese government policy on migration in the 1950s and 1960s is comparable to the ancient government policies. On one hand, people were moved from the central China to the border areas, as well as from cities to the rural areas by the Government. On the other hand, the Government did their best to make the farmers stay in the countryside.³⁵

³³ Zhang et al., 1984

³⁴ Wang, 1999

³⁵ *ibid.*

Even though the Government has never adopted any policy in the past in order to control China's population increase in the same way as today's government does, still the way the previous governments administered the population growth has fundamentally paved the way for the contemporary population policy. Similarly, Gabe T. Wang expresses this as follows:

If people in the past were used to the governments' using various measures to encourage population growth or redistribute the population for the sake of economic development, political stability, and national security, it is easy for people today to accept the population control policy for similar purposes.³⁶

5.1. China's Population Growth and Development

During the past three decades, there has been an outstanding fertility transition from around six children to less than two children per woman. Dr Peng Xizhe describes the fertility transition in China. Xizhe received his PhD in Population Studies from the University of London in 1988 and currently he is a Professor and Director of the Institute of Population Research at Fudan University in Shanghai. Xizhe is discussing the fertility transition and even though we understand his view is not exhaustive in any way, we still think his presentation of the different periods is enough for the understanding of the fertility transition in this thesis. According to Xizhe the fertility transition can coarsely be separated in to six phases from 1949 until today:³⁷

Initial high fertility period (1949-1957)

The peaceful climate in the nation after the foundation of the People's Republic in 1949 resulted in a period of high fertility and deteriorating mortality. The total fertility was approximately six children per woman and it was not much difference in urban-rural fertility.

The Great Leap Forward (1958-1961)

During this time the nation experienced an extensive decline in fertility and a large number of surplus deaths. The decline of the Chinese population during this period was mainly due to nationwide calamity and political errors.

The Great Leap Forward was launched in 1957 after a period of starvation of agricultural resources. In order to end this trend, the main aim for China was to increase agricultural production. Large campaigns were commenced to build irrigation systems and water reservoirs. The mobilisation of massive numbers of people resulted in immense demand for labour. The issue of controlling births was subsided and the population was regarded as an access rather than an impediment to the development of the economy.³⁸

Post-famine recovery (1962-1970)

In this period the total fertility rate reached a peak in 1963. Fertility remained high during this period except for the urban areas, where fertility dropped quickly. Prominent differentials now appeared and increased between urban and rural areas.

Rapid fertility decline (1971-1979)

The Chinese Government introduced the Family-Planning Programme during this period and promoted a policy of later births, fewer births and longer spacing between births. The total

³⁶ Wang, 1999 p 50

³⁷ Xizhe, 2000

³⁸ Nathansen-Milwertz, 1997

fertility rate declined brusquely from 6 in 1970 to 2.8 in 1979. The differences between urban and rural areas were still large during this period but decreased in some degree.

Stagnation period (1980-1989)

The fertility decline decreased during this period, in spite of the one-child policy from 1979 and several family planning campaigns.

Below-replacement fertility period (1990-)

Fertility dropped more and reached the below-replacement level around 1991. Fertility in urban and rural areas started to unite.

The fast fertility transition is generally attributed to a strong and insistent commitment by the Government to the control of population growth, socio-economic development and social and institutional changes. Local governments at all levels have, with direction from the central government, developed population plans matching their specific socio-economic conditions. However, socio-economic conditions have resulted in a reduction in fertility as well. In the past four decades there have been noticeable changes in attitudes towards childbearing and the request for children.

Since the foundation of the People's Republic, the traditional family role has been changed and weakened. The costs and benefits for children have been altered too. Since the foundation of the People's Republic, China has been successful in mass education of the population. The illiteracy rate has decreased remarkably. The education improvement has challenged the traditional value-system, which for instance, prevented demographic change. Also education has brought about new behavioural and ideological norms playing a significant role in fertility transition.

6. The Population Policy and the Family-Planning Programme

China had its first population explosion in the year 1700. Thereafter China's total population has increased from 175 million to 1.27 billion³⁹ today in the year of 2003. In recent decades, fast socio-economic development has led to higher population awareness amongst Chinese leaders. China decided to join the international trend of population activities by promoting family-planning among its population. A result of this was the Family-Planning Programme that was made to cover practically the whole nation. Without the Family-Planning Programme, there would have been another 100 million births in China during the past decade.⁴⁰

The aim of China's population policy is "*controlling population quantity and improving the quality of life*"⁴¹ Wide-ranging the population policy focuses on controlling the number of births as well as improving the quality of life primarily by trying to bring about better physical health and education. "*The premise is that the higher the quality of the "producers", the better the human resources become that are available for economic development*"⁴²

³⁹ www.cpirc.org.cn/eindex.htm

⁴⁰ Xizhe, 2000

⁴¹ *ibid.* p 52

⁴² *ibid.*

The core of the national population programme is the Family-Planning Programme, which focuses on regulating the number and spacing of births. The national population programme also contains other population related issues like marriage, urbanisation, migration and population census and data collection. There are lots of special programmes implemented by several government agencies and NGOs supporting the national population programme. These special programmes address different areas related to population and development such as maternal and child health, poverty alleviation, human resource development, old-age support and environmental protection etc. These programmes will play more and more important roles in the future with the integration of the population programme into socio-economic planning.⁴³

The present Family-Planning Policy was taking place in the early 1970s. The national policy of delaying marriage and childbearing, having fewer children and spacing births was implemented in 1973.⁴⁴

A two-child norm was promoted and it was recommended to have a birth interval of at least four years. For males, the lowest age set for marriage was 25 and 23 for females. This policy was replaced by the one-child policy in 1979. The one-child policy met strong resistance from couples with one child and more strongly if the only child was a girl. This brought about amendments of the policy and the policy of “opening a small hole” was implemented in 1984. This new policy allowed couples to have a second child under certain circumstances.⁴⁵

To put up with the gap between national and collective interests, individual’s preferences and the major variations in economic, social and cultural conditions across regions and among different groups of people, the local authorities have been given some flexibility in adapting the national policy to local conditions when formulating local family planning policies and regulations. Local population policies can be grouped into four categories:

1. A one-child policy with very few exceptions is practiced in Beijing, Shanghai, Tianjin, Jiangsu province, and part of Sichuan province as well as in all urban areas across China. The population in these regions makes up about 17 % of the national total.
2. A two-children policy if the first one is a girl. This policy was implemented in rural areas in 18 provinces accounting for 70 % of the total population in China.
3. Two-children-with-a-four-year-spacing policy was adopted among the rural population in Hainan, Yunnan, Guangdong and parts of Hebei and Hunan provinces. The people included in this policy and living in these areas is estimated to about 10 % of the total population of China.
4. A two-or-three-child policy was implemented in autonomous regions inhabited by ethnic minority groups such as Tibet, Inner Mongolia, Xinjiang, Ningxia and parts of other provinces.⁴⁶

As mentioned above among the different regions of China, there are various exceptions of the one-child policy. There are strict regulations in the urban areas about having only one child while ethnic minority people in some regions may have up to three children. By 1991 there were 28 provinces and autonomous regions where local family planning policies had been

⁴³ *ibid*

⁴⁴ Nathansen-Milwertz, 1997 p 49

⁴⁵ Xizhe, 2000

⁴⁶ *ibid*.

formulated and promulgated. However, Xinjiang and Tibet adopted their own specific fertility regulations.⁴⁷

Although couples in Shanghai are encouraged to have only one child and out of plan birth is prohibited, there are some conditions under which couples can have a second child in Shanghai. For instance, couples who are infertile but become pregnant after adopting a child can legally have a child of their own. Also, if the first child is diagnosed of having non-genetic defects and unable to grow up to be a normal labourer, couples are allowed to have a second child. If both parties are only children in their family or if both parties are returned overseas Chinese and live in China for less than six years they can have a second child. Ethnic immigrants who receive a second birth permit before moving to Shanghai from local family planning authorities above country level and are already pregnant, may have this child. Couples who are remarried and have the total number from previous marriages being only one can have a second child.⁴⁸

Rural residents where either party has a disability preventing him/her from working and taking care of himself/herself or is a veteran soldier with second-class second-degree and above disability can have a second birth. If either party is the only child in their family or if either party is engaged in ocean fishing for more than five years in a row and still does the same work the couple can have a second child. Finally, if the husband is married into a family without a son and takes care of his parents-in-law and each of the woman's siblings have only one child.⁴⁹

6.1. The Law of 2001

The People's Congress appointed a Law on family planning and population in December 2001 that came into force in September 2002. This is China's first law of this kind, but does not constitute any change of the previous one-child policy. The aim of the new law is to improve family planning service and reproductive health as well as stabilise and maintain the previous Family-Planning Policy by "*avoid misunderstanding that might lead to erratic family-planning work*" Further the aim of the law is to guarantee family happiness and improving the population quality.⁵⁰

The law of 2001 represents political and practical compromises between stability and change. The main theme of the law, however, is stability; preserving China's recently attained low birth rate by reconfirming the existing birth policy and improving its implementation. "*Stability of policy is important because the public tends to overreact to any signs of relaxation*"⁵¹. The law represents neither a tightening nor loosening of policy. Improvement of implementation is viewed as very important in order to maintain morale within the birth planning system. The change from State demands toward client service, is a basic change to which the programme's many workers need time to regulate. The law emphasise citizens' privileges, but those privileges are mostly to receive services and not to refuse them.⁵²

According to the law, urban couples are allowed to have only one child. Though urban couples are allowed to have two children if both of them are the only children in their families

⁴⁷ *ibid.*

⁴⁸ www.unescap.org/pop/database/law_china/ch_record073.htm

⁴⁹ *ibid.*

⁵⁰ www.ldok.siv.se/netacgi/doknlink?7469

⁵¹ Greenhalgh, 1986

⁵² Winckler, 2002

or if one of them belongs to an ethnic minority group. Rural couples are, however, allowed to have two children if the first one is handicapped or is expected not to be fully capable of working. People with especially dangerous work are also allowed to have two children. In 19 of China's 31 provinces couples are allowed to have a second child if the first one is a girl. Ethnic minorities are allowed to have as many as four children. In rural Tibet, there are no restrictions about family planning at all.⁵³ (*The Law of 2001 is attached in appendix 2*)

6.1.1. Rewards and Punishments

All married couples are obliged to take part of the family planning, which is for free. Both punishments and rewards, mostly economical, are aimed to make people follow the law. The punishment for having a second child is normally a "social compensation fee" that will cover the costs, which the child will give the society. The fee is taken as a percentage from the family's income.⁵⁴

The social compensation fee differs from place to place and is often not collected, when the couples involved are very poor. Rich farmers reason the compensation fee is a small price to pay for the advantage of having a large family. Officials, however, argue the social stigma should be as much a repulsive as the amount of the fine.⁵⁵

The law assumes only married couples have children and it is the only thing discussed in the law. Having children outside marriage is not illegal, but the single parent has to pay a social compensation fee, although, it is a bit lower than the fee couples pay for their second child.⁵⁶

Sanctions can also directly affect the children born outside the family planning plan by authorities refusing to register them. This is resulting in the child will have no birth certificate, which brings a worse access to social services, health care and education.⁵⁷

People working for the Government can be punished in an administrative way by for instance decreased salary or by dismissal. Beijing families with only one child only receive a small reward of about 10 Yuan a month until their child will turn 18 years old. Persons obtaining sterilisations can also get some kind of economical reward. The most fundamental part of family planning is, however, voluntary and is based on information, education and the use of contraceptives.⁵⁸

Citizens who postpone marriage and childbearing may obtain longer wedding leave, longer maternity leave and other beneficial treatment. Parents with one child who promise to have no more children, can apply for a "one-child certificate". The State shall issue a "Certificate of Honour for one-child parents" who voluntarily decides to have only one child during their lifetime. Parents receiving this certificate shall enjoy a reward in accordance with the relevant national, provincial, autonomous region or municipal stipulations.⁵⁹

⁵³ www.ldok.siv.se/netacgi/doknlink?7469

⁵⁴ *ibid.*

⁵⁵ Kane, 1997

⁵⁶ www.ldok.siv.se/netacgi/doknlink?7469

⁵⁷ www.ldok.siv.se/netacgi/nph-brs

⁵⁸ www.ldok.siv.se/netacgi/doknlink?7469

⁵⁹ Winckler, 2002

The local authorities are responsible for the law being transformed into practice. Different administrative levels share the costs for the family planning. The principle is the local authorities interpret and implement the law, according to local circumstances.⁶⁰

Media information has made clear population workers distribute other punishment like coercive abortions and sterilisations. One of the aims of the new Law is to get rid of illegal punishments. According to the Law, population workers can be responsible if they violate the rights and interests of the individual. The Law clearly states what is allowed and what is not, as well as what kind of punishment can be given. The individual is also guaranteed the right of reviewing a decision or sue the administrative unit, responsible for the family planning.⁶¹

6.1.2. Consequences of Family-Planning Policy

China's age structure is expecting a quick transition from a very young age structure in the recent past to an old age structure in the near future. The age structure is influenced both by socio-economic changes and the Family-Planning Policy. In 1990, life expectancy in China was 70 years. In elderly age groups, there were more surviving females than males. Child age groups, however, have more males than females. The abnormally high sex ratios at birth and among infants are mainly related to under reporting and adoption of infant girls, selective abortion of girls and differential high mortality for female infants and girls. Right now, there is no imbalance of gender in the marriage market, but previous sex and age structures imply through a strict imbalance in the near future.⁶²

6.1.2.1. Imbalance of Gender

The Law stipulates the Chinese citizens right of having a child. "*Citizens' have the right to give birth to a child*". The main aim of the Family-Planning Law is to guarantee the individual's right to have a child. According to the law, population workers are not allowed to use ultra-sound scanning, in order to make sex-selective abortions of female foetus to fulfil the local population quota. It is clear something is wrong in this matter, when looking at the statistics of newborn babies in the year of 2000. In 2000, there were 117 boys born per 100 baby girls in China, which can be compared with international statistics of 106 boys born per 100 girls. It is most likely these statistics also is a result of many parents do not register their baby girls, since this can bring a new chance of having a boy. On the other hand some analysts claim, the real imbalance has been exaggerated by statistical error⁶³. According to some analysts, the law does not successfully forbid these kinds of actions. Sex discriminating ultrasound scanning is the only case where abortions are strictly forbidden. In practice, abortions are made in a steady stream and the decision whether they should be made or not, are made by the individual. There are recommendations about the implementation of abortions, but there is no law in this matter.⁶⁴

The one-child policy still meets strong resistance from the rural population. In rural areas, it is primarily the sons staying in their parent's house as labour and they are responsible for taking care of their parents when they get old. The daughters, however, get married and move to their husband's house. In other words, the son is seen as a guarantee for a safe and secure old age. To acquire this son, couples have been prepared to use all the means at their disposal

⁶⁰ www.ldok.siv.se/netacgi/doknlink?7469

⁶¹ *ibid.*

⁶² Xizhe, 2000 p 74

⁶³ Xizhe & Juan, 1999

⁶⁴ Xizhe, 2000

such as: sex selective abortions, fail to register or even leave their baby girls, bribe someone to get ultrasound scanning etc.⁶⁵

*“Sex-selective abortions account for most of the remainder of missing females”*⁶⁶. In other words, traditional Confucian son preference is one of the major problems working against the one-child policy⁶⁷.

Unregistered children do not have the same access to health care, vaccinations and education as those who are registered. However, they can use health care and education, but to a much higher price than registered children. If the charges for unregistered children are much higher, it will most likely be a large population that will not be able to use these kinds of privileges. Consequently this may lead to a large and growing population, mostly women with no education and in many cases having health problems.⁶⁸

6.1.2.2. Rapid Ageing and Decline of Quality

One of the major issues resulting from the rapid fertility decline is the challenge of the large ageing population, facing Chinese society in a short period of time. In other words, China is going to face a crucial conflict control of its population and optimisation of its population age structure. China has to keep the fertility low, in order to reach a zero population growth and in that way obtain a smaller population total. This will bring an intense decline in the child dependency ratio in the short run, but will eventually lead to an exceptionally high elderly dependency ratio in the long run. On one hand, higher fertility is necessary to create a relatively good population age structure and to avoid too rapid population ageing in the future. On the other hand, that will lead to a growing population for a long period of time and an immense pressure on the country's environment and resources.⁶⁹

Another potential problem caused by the restrictive population control is the quality of the population may become poorer rather than better. The Chinese Government has stated, the Chinese families would have fewer but better quality children according to the one-child policy. China would have a population of less quantity, but much better quality. The population policy, however, seems most successful among well educated people and in economically more developed areas than amongst people in less developed areas. As a result of this, people with best opportunities to provide their children with a good living environment and a good education will have only one child, but families who are less able to provide their children a good living environment and a good education will have more children. Consequently, the rich people become richer and the poor people are having more children and the gap between rich and poor areas will probably intensify.⁷⁰

6.1.2.3. Only Child Dilemma

Another consequence of the Family-Planning Policy is the only children, often labelled “Little Emperors”. Some people are concerned about the fact that China will bring up a generation of only children, which are likely to be selfish, spoiled, unable to co-operate with others and reluctant to take care of their old parents etc. The Chinese family is in a stage of transition from traditional to modern. Children are regarded as important either as a security for the

⁶⁵ Grahn-Hinnfors, 2001

⁶⁶ Kane, 1997 p 233

⁶⁷ Nathansen-Milwertz, 1997

⁶⁸ Bogg, 2001

⁶⁹ Xizhe, 2000 p 80

⁷⁰ Wang, 1999

future or to continue the family line, but parents are becoming more child-centred than before.⁷¹

Parents put a lot of money, and especially mothers focus a huge deal of time and energy, on developing the perfect only child. Cultivation of the perfect only child is a way, for single-child mothers, of coping with the consequences of the Family-Planning Policy. Their prospect of satisfying the objectives of childbearing and breeding has been undermined by the one-child policy. In cultivating the perfect only child, women modify their behaviour to accommodate the new situation.⁷²

7. Chinese People's Relation to Government

In China, there is no established religion. Instead, Confucian philosophy has been the greatest influence on the Chinese people for more than two thousand years. Confucius has never become a God and rather he wanted to be seen as a teacher. Confucius was highly respected, since his teachings were considered as the standards for people's behaviours forever. However, the Emperor in the old days seemed to have the highest power.⁷³

According to Confucianism, human society was considered as a huge collection of families under the emperor. In addition, “ /.../ *natural order on earth depended on virtuous conduct leading to an orderly human society, in which everybody had a place under Heaven...*”⁷⁴

Unlike the Western countries where many people believed in God, Chinese people were instead worshipping the Emperor who was regarded as the Son of Heaven. The Emperor's announcements were never supposed to be questioned. In these days when the Chinese Empire is not existing anymore, the government leader, or the Government, enjoys the highest power to influence and have an effect on people's behaviour. In addition, people are also likely to accept the ideas and values suggested by the Government. Mao Zedong, can be set as an example. During the Cultural Revolution, Zedong became the God of the Chinese people, and no matter what he said, his ideas were accepted. The quotations from his works were committed to memory and recited, but also people prayed and worshipped in front of his picture.⁷⁵

Many researchers have chosen to enter deeply into different leaders of China and their political system trying to explain their position in the society. Kenneth Liebertal is one of them and he describes the Maoist system. He writes of one of the most amazing features of the Maoist system and how powerful Mao himself remained during his twenty-seven years as the leader of China. “*In a country of such enormous size, with national and provincial leaders who had climbed the rungs of power by dint of courage, skill, and ruthlessness, it is remarkable to note the extent to which Mao was able to overwhelm his colleagues and set the broad agenda*”⁷⁶. Further, Lieberthal states this must partly be seen as a product of China's long tradition of imperial rule. In addition, Mao often combined his control over the existing

⁷¹ Xizhe, 2000

⁷² Nathansen-Milwertz, 1997

⁷³ Wang, 1999

⁷⁴ Kane, 1987 p 6

⁷⁵ Wang, 1999

⁷⁶ Liebertal, 1995 p 119

ideology with great tactical political skill, callousness in dealing with enemies, and the power derived from his personality cult.⁷⁷

When a society's values of unselfishness, equality and collectivism are combined with the traditional emphasis on order and obedience, like in China, the people show a tendency to follow whatever instructions issued by the Government. Any social values and ideas, which are different to the current values and ideas, are generally banned. Even though somebody is not agreeing to the ideas and values recommended by the Government, the values and ideas essentially discipline the majority of people's behaviour, which have eventually become norms. The Government's power to influence and affect people's behaviour, values and norms has been very beneficial to the adoption and implementation of the Chinese birth control policy these days.⁷⁸

On the other hand, the introduction of the market economy and the fast economic development seem to have improved the progress of individualism and democracy. This new progress has decreased the Government's influence on people's personal ideas. Some people argue, this will lead to a reducing influence of the Government and instead, encourage the population to hold on to what they believe, even though their beliefs differ from the Government's policies. Therefore, the Government implementation of the birth control policy may be affected.⁷⁹

However, the new progress in the nation has also resulted in turning some people into hedonists. The nation's new economy has increased competition between individuals and this makes more people educating themselves. After a higher degree, they are more likely to give priority to a career rather than raising children. At the same time the importance of family and children has been declined, which is basically favourable to family planning. To sum up, the growth of individualism will not essentially lead to that population control will be more difficult.⁸⁰

7.1. Individual and Government

As mentioned above, the relation between Government and the people differs between China and the Western countries. Gabe T Wang explains the relationship between the individual citizens and the elected Government in the West, in some way similar to the relationship between employers and employees. The Government is only meant to have the power to do what they are elected to do. This means that both its power and responsibility are restricted. Sometimes this can result in that Government does not want to do something, which is unpopular even though this might be in the best interest of the society. If Government still does, they might not be re-elected.⁸¹

Gabe T Wang compares the relationship between Government and the people in Chinese society similar to the relationship between parents and children. The family was the base in the traditional Chinese society, and the society was like an extended family. Also, this is revealed in the use of the language, where an individual's family is called 'jia' (family) and the nation is called 'Guo Jia' (state family). In traditional China, citizens were often called 'Zi Min' (child citizens) and state officials were often referred to 'Fu Mu Guan' (parental

⁷⁷ *ibid.*

⁷⁸ Wang, 1999

⁷⁹ *ibid.*

⁸⁰ *ibid.*

⁸¹ *ibid.*

officials). As a result, the Chinese society and Government operated like a family system and Government's responsibility and power is often unlimited in such a parent-child relationship.⁸²

In the past two decades, such tradition as above has been decreased to a large extent, since China has started to take on Western values and behaviours. Still, the family relationship has been a kernel in the Chinese society. This is the reason why the relationship between the citizens and the Government still is similar to what it was during the traditional China. The Government has a large influence on its citizens and is fully in charge for their well being. The Government feel that it is its responsibility to make a suitable and good decision, which is also expected by the citizens. As a result, it is more likely citizens are more supportive and obedient to the regime. This might give an explanation to why most Chinese people put up with and accept the birth control policy. This might also explain why people tolerate the way the policy is carried out in certain ways.⁸³

7.2. Freedom of Speech and Press

In actual fact, what are the Chinese people's possibilities to express their opinions?

The Constitution states freedom of speech and press are fundamental rights, which should be enjoyed by all citizens. However, the Government limits these rights in practice and has maintained tight restrictions on freedom of speech and of the press. For example, demonstrations are generally tolerated, assumed they are small-scaled and apolitical, such as demonstrations concerning salaries, which has failed to come or plans to demolish houses.⁸⁴

The Chinese Communist Party, CCP, does not allow citizens to publish or broadcast criticisms of senior leaders or opinions directly challenge the Communist Party rule. The Government and CCP continue to control almost all print and broadcast media tightly and use them, instead for propagating the current ideological line. All media employees are under specific, public orders to follow CCP directives and "guide public opinion", as directed by authorities. Both formal and informal guidelines continue to require journalists to avoid coverage of many politically sensitive topics. There is a law called The State Security Law, which forbids journalists from exposing "state secrets". These public orders, statutes, and guidelines greatly limit the freedom of speech and press for Chinese citizens and this leads to a high degree of self-censorship.⁸⁵

In China there does not exist any privately owned or independent media, but a number of smaller newspapers and periodicals have started to raise issues, which have not been discussed earlier, such as prostitution, corruption and assaults made by the police. However, excessive critical reports will result in intervention. Journalists have been imprisoned, editorial staffs have been warned or replaced, and periodicals have been forced to close down. In addition, there are no privately owned television or radio stations, and the Government must approve all programming. Nevertheless, commercial programme producers are seeking to expand the limits of broadcast content.⁸⁶

In spite of tighter government control of the press, information about the nation and the world is continuing to flow into the nation at a growing rate. Additionally, a small but rapidly

⁸² *ibid.*

⁸³ *ibid.*

⁸⁴ www.ldok.siv.se/netacgi/nph-brs

⁸⁵ *ibid.*

⁸⁶ *ibid.*

growing segment of the population has access to the Internet, despite licensing requirements and other restrictions. The Government encourage expansion of the Internet and other communications infrastructure and continue to put more official information online. However, the Government has increased monitoring the Internet as well as placing restrictions on information available on the Internet, which is slowly leading to self-censorship and has a chilling effect. Recently a number of pro-democracy web sites were closed, Internet cafes were shut down, and web site operators were arrested. The Government has specially trained police units to observe and increase control of Internet content and access.⁸⁷

Additionally, the Government does not fully respect academic freedom and continues to impose ideological controls on political discourse at colleges, universities, and research institutes. Scholars and researchers have varying degrees of control, regarding the issues they may examine and the conclusions they may draw. Censorship of written material comes at the time of publication. The Government is also ordering university groups to obtain permission before inviting outside speakers. Also, the Government continues to use political attitudes as criteria for selecting people for government-sponsored study abroad.⁸⁸

7.3. Citizens' Right of Changing Their Government

Citizens of the Chinese society have limited possibilities to change their regime. They do not have the right to change their Government serenely and cannot freely choose or change the laws and government officials governing them. Citizens vote directly for local non-governmental village committees and among party-reviewed candidates for delegate position in town and township and nation-level Peoples' Congresses. Nevertheless, People's Congress delegates at the provincial level are selected by county-level People's Congresses, and in turn provincial-level People's Congresses select delegates to the National People's Congress. Even though the ruling party The Chinese Communist Party, CCP, vets all candidates at least to some extent, many county and provincial elections are competitive, with more candidates running than seats available.⁸⁹

In October 1998, new regulations came into force concerning non-governmental associations, requiring these associations must be registered and conformed to the existing organisation establishment proved by the. This means political groups and unions are not given any possibility to work in the political system.⁹⁰

8. Individualism and collectivism

In the Chinese society, dominated by collectivism, it is not acceptable for an individual to put his or her interest first, and if he or she still will do so, others would most likely consider this individual as selfish. In addition, in the Western countries individuals are pushed to fight for their individual rights and interest. There is not a major obstacle to openly show and fight against something, even though it might be in conflict with others. In China, things work differently. It is not appropriate for individuals to be in conflict with others or the society's interests, and people are pushed to make sacrifices and compromise their individual rights. In other words, self-sacrifice is encouraged in China.⁹¹

⁸⁷ *ibid.*

⁸⁸ *ibid.*

⁸⁹ *ibid.*

⁹⁰ *ibid.*

⁹¹ Wang, 1999

In Chinese culture it is important to get along with others, as well as being accepted by others. It is more significant to be cooperative than to be competitive. If a person is having different opinions from others, he or she is rarely gained by sharing these opinions. A friendly relationship is more important than expressing one's ideas in Chinese culture.⁹²

Family planning, marriage, giving birth to a child, or abortion are to some extent a social phenomena and related to other people as well as the society's interest in a collective-oriented society, such as China. In traditional China, if a person failed to have a son and in that way did not continue the family line, he also failed his ancestors. This can be shown as an example and demonstrate how collective interest and the nation's interest always are more important than the interest of an individual family.⁹³

Penny Kane describes this fact in a similar way and writes the family unit was the basis of Chinese society. "*The individual's loyalty towards the family transcended all his other social obligations /.../ the family was the determining factor in the total pattern of social obligation*".⁹⁴

Likewise, Nathansen-Milwertz, explains the same fact. Each member of the family and of the society was strictly bound by the obligations and obedience owed to other members. In addition, at that time Confucianism was a protocol regulating all social relations in the family and in society taken as a whole, based on a patriarchal family system.⁹⁵

A person, deciding not to follow the Family-Planning Programme, has put his or her individual interest ahead of the collective and national interest and this is, needless to say, not appropriate. Citizens are expected to make sacrifices for the national interest and have only one child if that is the State's policy, and each person should share the sacrifice. If somebody still is rebellious and does not follow the social norms in a collective-oriented society, it is necessary for that person to be pressured back in line in one way or another.⁹⁶

9. Women's status

Since 1949 the Government has made gender equality a policy purpose. The Constitution states: "*...women enjoy equal rights with men in all spheres in life, political, economic, cultural and social including family life*".⁹⁷

The Law on the Protection of Women's Rights and Interests provides for equality in inheritance rights, ownership of property and admission to education. Women's political and economical influence has increased. The Government as well as social organisations have made attempts to educate women about their legal rights.⁹⁸

Many employers prefer to employ men to avoid the costs of maternity leave and childcare. According to the law, there should be equal pay for equal work. However, in practice women are paid 70-90 % of the salaries of their male counterparts. Men still continue to constitute the

⁹² *ibid.*

⁹³ *ibid.*

⁹⁴ Kane, 1987 p5-6

⁹⁵ Nathansen-Milwertz, 1997

⁹⁶ Wang, 1999

⁹⁷ Xizhe, 2000 p 150

⁹⁸ www.ldok.siv.se/netacgi/nph-brs?d

majority of the relatively small percentage of the population, that receives a university-level education in spite of the gap between men and women is narrowing. In 1997, women constituted 36 % of all university students and 30 % of all graduate students. However, educators in the large cities have reported there is a trend toward greater balance in universities.⁹⁹

In Shanghai, women have the equal chance to be educated meaning they have the same ability to be employed. At the same time the Family-Planning Policy results in reduced bearing ratio, which is useful to women to participate society activities and economic construction.¹⁰⁰

The one-child policy has two positive effects on girls living in urban areas: the first is it helps raising daughter's status since it removes structural conditions for gender discrimination. The second positive effect is the single child will be the only person responsible for the care of parents, which results in her academic achievement becomes a main family concern. Since parents have no choice in the gender of their only child, their expectations of the child's academic attainment is high regardless of child's sex. In other words, the one-child policy has benefited females in urban China and will favour gender equality in the future.¹⁰¹

Likewise Jufen Wang, researcher in Women's Studies at the Institute of Population Research at Fudan University in Shanghai, argues Family-Planning Policy is very good for women's development and will make the Chinese society a better place for women. Families having only one child will give the best to their child no matter if it is a son or a daughter, according to Wang. Further, she claims the sex ratio on university level is equal between men and women. In other words, the education level for women has reached very high. Education is important to women's independence.¹⁰²

The core to women's economic status in the family is their income. If a woman has no income of her own or has a little income, it is often a natural matter she will only have little power in making family decisions, controlling family resources, managing and using financial income, making consumption decisions as well as her right to property inheritance. She will, in other words, be subordinate in all cases. Nevertheless, since the founding of the Peoples Republic in 1949 an increasing number of women have been taking part in economic activities and achieve an independent income of their own. The amount of their financial income has connection on their status in the family.¹⁰³

Even though the one-child policy is viewed as something positive for Chinese women, some feminists are negative to the policy. They mean although the one-child policy is defended on the grounds, future generations of Chinese women will enjoy enhanced social and economic treatment and women have the choice not give birth to multiple children, the negative consequences of the policy outweigh its supposed advantages. The feminists claim, true change must emanate from women themselves and not from the State Birth Planning Commission.¹⁰⁴

⁹⁹ *ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ Peiyun et al, 1997

¹⁰¹ Tsui & Rich, 2000

¹⁰² Interview Nov 5, 2002

¹⁰³ Peiyun et al, 1997

¹⁰⁴ Greenhalgh, 2001

10. Findings

We have chosen to conduct interviews with eight young Shanghainese women aged between 23 and 25, studying at the Fudan University in Shanghai. At the moment they are studying their second year at the Institution of Population Studies. At the Institution of Population Studies students choose either to have a major in Economics or a major in Law. Five of the women in our study have chosen a major in Economics, while three have chosen a major in Law. We think it is of importance, before we go any further, to describe the aim of the Master Programme in Population Studies at the Institute of Population Research, in order to understand the following data.

The aim is to cultivate high-level fully developed students specialised in demography, facing the modernisation, the world and the future. The three years of education require Master students to learn and further study fundamental principles of Marxism, love our country, obey the laws, have good morals and serve for the great project of socialist modernisation.

As for the major and related subjects, obtain good Master of basic theory and knowledge in population control, population administration, decision-making in population issues and so on. After three years of studying, the students should be able to do scientific research, teaching and be able to do technical work, such as macro and micro population analysis. Besides good professional ability in research, skilful in computer practice and survey analysis, the students should also be good Masters of a foreign language.¹⁰⁵

We consider the students' backgrounds, to some extent, influence their opinions about the Chinese Family-Planning Policy and their goals in life. This is the reason why we want to give a brief introduction of the students. We call the students Wu, Zhao, Jia, Tang, Han, Liu, Feng and Zhang, in order to distinguish them. None of the students are married but half of them have a boyfriend. Half of the women are from a rural background and the other half are from an urban background. The women have 17 years of education total. Six of the women have one sibling; one is an only child and one has three stepsiblings. The majority of the women have had a similar environment in which they have grown up, even though some women come from homes with an academic history and some women do not. Following below we will give an account of the eight women's thoughts and opinions about the Chinese Family-Planning Policy and their goals in life and their ideas for the future:

10.1. The Students' Opinions of Chinese Family Planning

As Chinese citizens and highly educated students in the city of Shanghai the women have various knowledge, thoughts and ideas about the birth regulation policy of their nation.

10.1.1. Knowledge about the Family-Planning Policy

All students are aware of why the Chinese Family-Planning Policy has been implemented. Quotations such as: "*The population must be controlled to get a better standard of living*", "*With too many people in the country the economic growth will not be very high*" and "*The Family-Planning Policy advocates for having fewer children with better quality of life*" are examples of this knowledge. All of them, except one, know couples in general are allowed to

¹⁰⁵ Conversation on Nov 7, 2002

have only one child. However, all of them except one, know rural couples are allowed to have a second child if the first-born is a girl. One of the women claims the Family-Planning Policy asks people to have two children, with the exception of the big cities, where couples are allowed to have only one child. In other words, she argues it is more of a two-child-policy prevailing in China. Five of the women argue there is an exception, which includes couples are allowed to have two children if both of them are the only children in their families. Two of the women know there are special regulations among ethnic groups and one of them knows ethnic groups are not included in the Family-Planning Policy and can have as many children as they want. One out of eight women is aware, there are also special regulations for couples having disabled children.

One woman knows regulations differs from one province to another, as well as there might be a regulation in the future saying highly educated couples can have two children. Two of the women claim this regulation already exists. Six of the women are aware couples are fined if they decide to have a second child outside the birth regulation plan. One of the women does not know but *believes* couples not included in the exceptions, still wanting to have more than one child, have to a pay fine to the Government. One of the women claims penalties and fines no longer exist after the implementation of the Law 2002, but instead a “fee for social cultivation”. One states that several years ago, couples could lose their job if they had more than one child. However, she claims those are not the circumstances anymore.

10.1.2. Understanding of the Family-Planning Policy

All of the women are sympathetic to the policy and all think it is necessary for the nation, which has a very large population already. All the women support the policy and consider the policy as something favourable for the whole nation. Liu considers it is not good for children growing up with many siblings making it impossible to be educated. In addition, Liu argues boys are very important to peasants today because the sons are their social security. Nevertheless, this is not the way it has to be according to Liu; the Government has to provide a social security system to peasants.

Han says the policy is necessary and it makes it possible for people to live a richer and wealthier life. According to Han *“having one child is very natural and good”*. Similarly, Jia argues the Government helps the people and it’s a good policy. To follow the policy is very wise, she says. Additionally, Jia clarifies there is an economical view of following the policy: *“People can have a higher standard of living... people can have a better education and will be healthier and live a happier life”*.

Tang considers *“it is good of the Government to help the people”*. Further, she argues the young population should be moderate because China has too many people. *“We do not have another choice /---/ if there would not be a Family-Planning Policy, all people will starve to death”*. Tang thinks penalties are necessary to make the birth control policy successful.

Wu considers it is necessary to control births. She thinks the whole world will be affected by this problem. *“Mistakes made by former generations have to be solved now”*. *“We cannot just leave this problem to the next generation”*. *“Our generation should do this for the country and for coming generations”*. However, Wu argues she does not like the idea of fining people who want to have more than one child, but at the moment she cannot see another way of controlling.

Feng says Family-Planning Policy is very good and necessary for China and for the whole world, even though foreigners think it is a cruel plan. If couples are not following the policy accordingly, it is necessary to punish them in order to make citizens to understand. To pay a fine between 20-30 thousand Yuan is reasonable.

Zhang thinks “*it is good for the country that couples have only one child, but not for the families*”. On one hand, Zhang supports the policy because it is essential, on the other hand she also agrees with her boyfriend, who does not think that the policy is decent. Instead, he believes the most important thing is the human resource is fully used and not the amount of people. Zhang feels confused and admits she is not sure about her own opinion.

10.1.3. Equality or inequality

Liu pities couples who want to have more than one child and have to pay the fines. However, she argues people in the city usually do not want to have more than one child. Equality is the most important thing to Liu and she is not fond of the regulation concerning well educated couples being allowed to have more than one child, which perhaps will come into force in the future. “*It is not fair that well educated people have the right to have more than one child*”. Likewise, Wu claims nobody should have a second child even if they would like to. “All people should have the same rights, we should think about the country”.

Tang claims couples should not have more than one child, because it is not good for the nation. “*We have to make sacrifices*”. However, she argues, “*If both parents in a couple are well educated, they will have excellent children, this is natural*”. These children will have many chances and opportunities to be trained in different fields and will become more skilful. Tang thinks even a child from a poor family can succeed depending on the child’s own effort. Nevertheless, a child from a poor family will not have the same opportunities and the quality of life will decrease. Tang is not from a poor family herself and therefore she does not know if poor people should decide for themselves over their own lives.

Feng agrees with Tang and believes it is right that rich people are able to have more than one child, since they are able to pay the fine, but if you are poor you should not have more than one child, since you do not have the economical capacity. On the other hand, it is always an individual’s choice to decide how poor they are willing to become. “*People can always choose to not have more children than they can afford*”, Feng argues.

Zhang argues it is not right, richer people are able to have more than one child, even though they are able to pay the fine. According to Zhang, this is not fair. In addition, she says successful men on TV are talking and bragging about their capability of having more than one child, but this is not good and fair to other people to listen to. Even though this is possible in Chinese society with the current policy, it should not be talked about. Zhang thinks: “*People do not feel good about hearing this...*”.

On one hand Zhao claims if a couple have the economical ability; they should be allowed to have as many children as they wish for. On the other hand, she argues some people should not have the right to have as many children as they want to, just because they have the economical means.

10.1.4. Connection Between Acceptance and Education?

Seven of the women reason high education connects with acceptance of the Family-Planning Policy. However, they have different point of views why people are accepting the policy.

In general, Zhao believes people with high education accept and share the Government's ideas. People understand better and also realise the good for the nation. Also, in rural areas people have started to realise this, even though it can be harder in these areas due to tradition.

Jia argues the reason why people with higher education accept the policy easier is they have other possibilities in life and a higher salary and are therefore not in need of many children for working purpose. Likewise Liu says high education will lead to a good job, which means those people are a part of the social security system. Also high-educated people understand having only one child is necessary for the nation.

It is easier to accept the policy because with high education people want to have a high standard of living, according to Feng. In addition, people think the Government is doing something good for the nation. Han argues it is easy to accept the policy with high education because most people want to have only one child and want to create a better quality of life. People with education will realise, understand, and accept the policy according to Wu. Educated people will understand what has caused this situation today and that something has to be done. Further, Wu claims with high education people become more conscious about their own rights but also what is best for the nation. She considers it is not necessary education and understanding of the policy connects with acceptance of the policy. However, in this case many educated people share the Government's goal because it will also benefit them and provide them with a higher standard of living. Finally, Tang maintains well educated people have a better ability to understand the policy.

On the contrary, Zhang considers there is no connection between high education and special opinions about the policy. She argues highly educated people do not have to care. People are able to have a better life if they have a higher education. Zhang thinks these people often wish for more than one child because they can afford this: *“On one hand educated people accept the policy, on the other hand they still want to have more than one child /.../ if people have the chance to have more than one child, they will use this chance”*.

Nevertheless, all of the women claim they have had the same ideas about Family-Planning Policy as long as they can remember. They consider their education has not influenced them in any way.

10.1.5. Conclusions

The women had a limited knowledge concerning the Family-Planning Policy. It seems like some of the women had no idea about the most fundamental characteristics of the policy. For instance, Wu does not know if people in rural areas are allowed to have a second child if the first-born is a girl. Zhao claims a couple, where both parts are holding a Masters' and/or Doctors' Degree, is allowed to having more than one child according to the law. Jia knows fines and penalties do not exist anymore in the Chinese society, instead there is a fee for social cultivation. When the women answered the questions, they answered on the basis of their knowledge about the policy. It is possible these women may have answered in a different way if they would have a broader knowledge of the policy. Then their positive attitudes towards the policy may have been modified. Their limited knowledge was unexpected to us since they are women in a fertile age becoming Masters in Population Studies.

On one hand all of the women are positive toward the policy and willingly to obey the policy. They believe the policy is set up in favour of the whole population and will by that means benefit everybody. This involves having only one child. On the other hand, the majority of the

women want to have more than one child, if they are capable of realising this even though the policy continue to exist.

There are other factors, which most likely have affected these women's opinions about the Family-Planning Policy. Naturally, everybody is affected by his or her background, but it is more obvious in some cases. Han, who is the only child in her family, has a clear opinion of having only one child, which she considers is very good and natural. It does not seem like thoughts of having a second child even exist to her. Most likely Liu is very affected by her rural background having parents who are peasants. Being brought up in a rural area among people who are not naturally part of a social security system, social security seems to be a major concern to Liu. She has a broader understanding of this complex of problems etc. Zhang distinguishes from the others by expressing her boyfriend has affected her opinion about the Family-Planning Policy. In addition, she shows even more ambivalence towards the policy than the others.

10.2. The Students' View of Their Own Future

Naturally, the policy affects the young women's thoughts and ideas of their own lives and future. Following below, we will give an account of the women's goals in life. In contrast to the presentation above, we will portray the women's opinion individually under the headline "Family Life and Career" in order to understand similarities and differences in their way of thinking as well as giving a multi-faceted picture.

10.2.1. Family Life or Career?

For Tang, work and career are the most important things. She wants to reach success in her life by working hard. "*It is the way to realise yourself*". She wishes to work in a big marketing- or accounting company, where she can be a part of the outside world and have a special lifestyle. Tang is not sure whether she will get married or not. She does not know if she wants children but perhaps she wants to have one child. In future time, Tang wants to become a "*white-collar class*". She wants to work in a tall building and does not want to do any practical work. She wants to live in Shanghai, because it is the financial centre of China and she considers the higher salary the better. Possibly she will have one child and a husband.

For Wu, career is the most important thing. To live happily and do whatever she likes to do is also important to Wu. Wu thinks it is necessary to get married, since she does not want to live alone. However, she does not want to get married if she does not find the right person. Wu wishes to live close to the people she loves, including her sister and her friends. At first Wu says she wants to have one child no matter if there is a one-child policy or not. Later during the interview she claims she would like to have two children if there was no policy. Wu says it does not matter if she will have a boy or a girl but later she says she prefers a boy. In the future Wu will continue her studies and perhaps become a High-School teacher. Later she thinks teachers' salaries are too low and therefore wants to work in a company. "*High salary is more important than satisfaction*". Wu thinks she might change her mind about this when she becomes older.

The most important thing to Feng is love and money. Feng wishes to work as a researcher in a consultant company because this profession is related to her major, and it will also give a high salary. However, she is not certain she will be fond of her job as a researcher, but a priority for Feng is a high salary and this will probably come true being a researcher. For time being the thought of marriage is not appealing to her. According to Feng, the reason is that her parents are divorced and therefore she does not believe in marriage. In the beginning of the interview, Feng says she might have one child but during the interview she is changing her

mind and says she plans to have two children in the future, and at least she wishes one child to be a son. Further, Feng declares it is much easier for men to live in this world and Feng thinks it is more difficult being a woman. For a woman it is hard combining work and taking care of a family and the burden is heavy.

For Liu work and career are the most important things. “*With work you can realise yourself and your dreams can come true*”. At first, Liu argues being happy with work is more important than a high salary. However, a bit later she means high salary is the most important thing being able to realise oneself. Liu wants to get married in a few years, even though she thinks it will be difficult. “*Being a woman means you have to do two things – taking care of the house as well as having a job*”. Liu argues if she can provide a good environment she would like to have two children. At first she says the gender does not matter but later she considers she wants a daughter first and secondly a son. In future time, Liu will be married and probably have a child. “*I must have a child, because a child is an important part of the family and otherwise the family is not complete*”. Liu would like to be a social worker. She will make money to support herself, buy a house and travel, but also in order to be able to help her parents. Right now career and a high salary are the most important things, but Liu claims family life probably will be more important when she grows older. Nevertheless, Liu thinks high salary and family life can be combined.

Zhao’s priorities in life are education and making a career. After her Master’s Degree, Zhao would like to continue studying abroad and then work abroad as well. She believes it is of importance to be economically independent and therefore she wants to make a career of her own. Further, Zhao thinks in order to become a good parent, it is important to be satisfied with one’s work and be happy with life in general. Zhao argues all women are facing the dilemma of combining career and family life, but she is certain she does not wish to give up her career. A high salary is the most important thing to Zhao. If a suitable man will emerge, Zhao has the wish to get married to him and have two or three children. She wishes for at least two sons and she admits her father, who is from a rural area, where the tradition says boys are preferred, influences her. Finally, she declares her parents are not expecting anything from her; instead she can focus on her own future and happiness.

For the time being, Zhang states her career is the most important thing, but in the future Zhang thinks family life will become more important. Zhang would like to become a Middle Level Manager and work for the United Nations. She wants to become a successful person and with her knowledge achieved from education, she would like to help other people. Zhang would like to get the chance to work in various fields and in different countries in order to realise herself. A work where she can use her knowledge is more important to Zhang than a high salary. In the future Zhang would like to have two or three children. She wants to have at least two daughters.

For Han, personal and family health is most important. Freedom and love are also important to Han as well as being a happy woman. In order to achieve this, Han wants to have both a family and make a career. Han wants to get married within two to three years and she wishes to have one child. It does not matter if that child is a boy or a girl. A good and safe job is also essential to Han. Most important is to feel good about herself and secondly is a high salary. In the future, Han would like to be a teacher, live in Shanghai, be married and have a child. She also wishes to travel and to go abroad to live in another country for some years.

Family life is the utmost importance in life, according to Jia. Living close to her family is also valuable. Jia would like to have two children, but still will have only one child due to the nation's policy. She believes it is not a decision of her own and the gender of the child does not matter. A stable life is of a major concern, which is also including Jia's career. She prefers not having a competitive work, but instead a work with low pressure and less stress. For Jia, career is less important than family life, and even though a high salary can make a person happier, still Jia does not think a high salary is a priority.

To sum up, career is important to all of the eight women and this includes both/either a high salary and self-realisation. Freedom, health, happiness, satisfaction, independence and a stable life are other conceptions appealing to the women. However, to the majority of the women, career is a priority above all. Some of the women think they might change their mind in the future, but for time being career, high salary and self-realisation are the main concerns.

10.2.2. Advantages and Disadvantages with Having One Child

One in eight of the women considers there are no disadvantages having only one child. Han thinks one child is enough and claims it is easier for a mother to become happy with only one child. One child brings about a wealthier and richer life with more free time, she will be able to take care of her parents, go shopping, do sports and listen to music. Han states: "*If people are having more than one child, they would have to give all their time to the children*".

Six of the women mention it is expensive bringing up children, and they also consider one child makes it possible to save more money. Three of the women argue it is also expensive to pay the fees of children's education and the standard of living ought to be higher if a couple chooses to have only one child. Further, Zhao asserts grandparents have more time to take care of only one grandchild. Jia emphasises if having only one child "...*you can put your heart in that child as well as have more time and energy for that child...*". All women consider having one child benefits the whole nation, which is already too crowded, and one of them maintains this is the *only* advantage having one child

However, the women also consider there are numerous disadvantages having only one child. A single child run the risk of being lonely with no other siblings in the family, according to the majority of the women. In addition, Zhao says: "*It is not safe having only one child /.../ if the child dies there are no children in the family's house*", and Wu states: "*when parents pass away the child will be alone*". Additionally, some of the women are concerned a single child easily becomes spoiled and selfish and they will not know how to interact with other children.

Wu argues it is better to have two children, having the best for the child in mind. It is important to have siblings "*Even though a person has good friends it will never be the same as having a brother or sister /.../ a brother or sister will always be the closest person*".

Similarly, some women state the advantages in having more than one child are the siblings can play and communicate with each other, as well as influence, help and learn from each other, which will result in a better atmosphere in the family. Also, Zhang thinks it is interesting to have more than one child in order to raise children with different personalities.

10.2.3. Different Ways to Achieve Set Goals

All of the women have different goals in life and ways of achieving them. Below we have chosen to present the most characteristic features in their answers.

According to Tang, most women have the wish to marry a rich man and by that means find a secure economical base. However, this is not the situation for Tang who wants to become

economically independent through working in a big company with marketing or accounting. Jia plans to get married, have one child and find a stable work. This will be achieved by finding a work, which is not stressful and competitive. In addition, she will spend lots of time with her family. Health, happiness and freedom are Han's goals in life and this will be achieved through marriage, having one child, finding a good and safe work, lots of spare time and Han would also like to go abroad to travel and work there for some time. Money is the most important thing to Wu; therefore she wants to find work with a high salary. Also, it is important to Wu to live happily and this she will achieve by living close to people she loves as well as getting married. Wu thinks it is necessary to get married; otherwise life will be awfully lonely.

If Liu would have the opportunity to go abroad, she would like to do that. However, she does not think she has enough money to be able to go abroad, since Liu comes from a family, not able affording this. Instead, she is planning to continue her studies in order to make lots of money to support herself and her parents. Liu thinks it is necessary to provide a good environment, therefore it is depending on her economical ability whether she will be able to have two children or not. Liu has a strong wish to have two children, but if she does not have the finance, she has to relinquish those children. Liu says "*children have to bring happiness to me*".

Since Feng wants to have two children, she hopes the Family-Planning Policy will change by the time she wants to become a mother. Another possibility is to go abroad and give birth to a second child. If Feng does not have the chance to go abroad, she will accept the policy and have only one child. "*This is reality*," she says. A bit later she changes her mind and says she will still have a second child and accept the fine regardless of the policy.

To Zhang career is important but also having three children. Living in a country where only one child is allowed, Zhang is planning to go abroad in order to give birth to her children. Zhang argues it is unfair rich people are able to act like this but it is reality. Having more than one child is important to Zhang and she will do what is necessary in order to realise her goal. At the same time, she will feel sorry for other people who do not have the same possibility.

Zhao considers the Family-Planning Policy should not be strict for all people. She welcomes exceptions. If there would not be a Family-Planning Policy, Zhao would like to have two or three children of her own. Still her wish for more than one child is very strong and Zhao says: "*...perhaps I will give birth abroad*". By any chance if Zhao does not have the opportunity to go abroad, she makes clear: "*I will follow the Law of my country*".

10.2.4. Conclusions

We asked the women if they thought they were representative of young educated women of their age and the answers varied. All of the women consider they are not representatives among young women in general since they are soon becoming Masters. Half of the women believe they are representatives among well educated women of their age, while the other half believe they are not.

A high salary and a successful career are the most important things in life among majority of young educated people today, according to Feng, Zhang, Han and Wu. All four of them share this point of view and therefore consider themselves as representatives among this group of people. "*The youth of today want to feel happy about themselves, realise themselves, have more freedom*", Han says.

However, Liu does not think she is a representative, because she is from a rural area and other people in her surroundings are from cities. In addition, her parents are peasants and she has not the same possibilities as other students. She states many classmates are planning to go abroad. This cannot be the case for Liu, even though she would like to if possible. Tang does not consider herself as a representative, since other people including herself think she is special in many ways. In view of the fact that she is seen as special, she thinks her opinions are also special and therefore she is not representative. Jia does not think she represents women of her age, because others prefer good job and career. Family life is more important to Jia. Zhao believes everybody has their own ideas and thinks she might differ from most women in her age. Zhao claims it is not very common among women in her age to have a Master Degree and having the wish to study abroad.

The women have neither a habit nor experience of speaking about the family planning issue related to their own lives. Some of the women have expressed they are not used to discussing this issue and a few have even admitted they are talking about this subject for the very first time. Sometimes their opinions about the policy do not correlate with their own plans for the future. They do not have any straight answers and it does not seem like they have a clear opinion of this issue. This can be exemplified when some of them argue they want and plan to have more than one child, even though they are still supporting the one-child policy, which they claim is good for the whole society. The women choose different ways to conduct themselves towards the policy. Jia and Zhao are examples of people who handle the situation differently. Jia gives priority to family life and children, and she understands the value of having a sibling, still she adapts to the prevailing law and has made the decision to have only one child. "*It is not my own decision to decide...*", Jia says. On the contrary, Zhao claims having only one child is the best for the nation. However, Zhao wants in spite of this to have two or three children and if she does not have the ability to realise this in China, Zhao will go abroad giving birth and then return after some years.

One woman has a definite opinion, she will give birth to one child or no children at all. Three of the women have made the decision having only one child. The other women would like to have two or three children. Three of the women prefer having a son while two prefer having daughters and the gender of the child is unessential to three of the women. We have not noticed any connection between the three women who prefer sons nor among the other five women.

11. Analysis

A new generation is gradually growing up in China and our interviews verified this trend. A generation facing a new era has to deal with new and different obstacles. In traditional China, family was *very* important, family bonds were strong and people were helping each other between generation gaps. Similarly, Kane describes the importance of family in traditional China. Family members were loyal to other members of the family and the family loyalty went beyond all other social obligations¹⁰⁶. This tradition is weakening progressively, but this development is more outstanding in the urban area, such as Shanghai. As China continues to develop socially as well as economically, people will become more independent and individual preferences will become more of a distinguishing feature¹⁰⁷. Zhao is an example of this, uttering her parents do not expect

¹⁰⁶ Kane, 1987

¹⁰⁷ Wang, 1999

anything from her. Instead, their main concern is Zhao's focus on her own future family. However, in rural areas traditional values remain more inflexible. For instance, Liu expresses she will make lots of money in order to partly support her parents, which is an expectation of her parents.

During our interviews we noticed a great amount of confusion and ambivalence among the women. One area where we obviously found the perplexity, was how they related to an individual's and collective's interests. All of the eight women were clear the Family-Planning Policy is of everybody's interest and is favouring the nation as a whole. On the contrary, many of the women claim having one child is neither good for the family, nor the only child. A single child is running the risks of being lonely and spoiled. Seven of the women have siblings of their own and are all aware of its positive effect. In other words, this results in a confused wish of having only one child according to the policy. All of the women support the one-child policy and consider it is good for the whole Chinese population, even though they are not fond of resigning themselves to the policy. Some of the women wish for more than one child and conduct themselves in different ways towards the policy. The ways vary in how the women will proceed in order to have them. Some women, who want to have more than one child, are planning to go abroad and give birth to their children. Others wish the policy would change by the time they want to become mothers. A small number are prepared to pay fines in order to be able to have more than one child. It seems as illogical stands, but Gary S Becker in his *Theory of Fertility and Economy* provide a partial explanation.¹⁰⁸ Becker's theory is constructed on the idea about individuals' self-interest and how family planning is done according to that self-interest. It can be understood as that self-interest has the characteristic of a lack of solidaric logic in the view of oneself in relation to others. Becker's analysis aids us in understanding how these women positioned themselves when having a particular opinion about others and another of themselves in respect to the one-child policy. However, the women's stands and ideas can be further explained structurally and below we intend to follow such reasoning.

The ambivalence towards the policy is shown in different ways. Wu states mistakes made by former generations have to be solved now. The problem cannot be left to the next generation, but the generation of today should obey the laws of the nation. On the other hand, Wu believes people should have the right to choose how many children they want. Similarly, Tang argues if a couple want to have more than one child it is not good for the nation. "*We have to make sacrifices*", Tang says. Further, astonishing to us is the women's tendency to place the interest of the whole nation on level with their personal interests. An obvious example of this phenomenon is when we asked the women why it is good having only one child; they replied it would benefit the nation as a whole. Their answers show a utilitarian point of view and Mill's characterisation of utilitarianism is as following:

"The creed which accepts as the foundation of morals, Utility, or the Greatest Happiness Principle, holds that actions are right in proportion as they tend to promote happiness, wrong as they tend to produce the reverse of happiness. By happiness is intended pleasure, and the absence of pain; by happiness, pain, and the privation of pleasure"¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁸ Becker, 1976

¹⁰⁹ Scarre, 1996 p 2

Utilitarianism is a moral theory judging the goodness of outcomes by the extent to which they secure the greatest benefit to all concerned¹¹⁰. Having only one child will result in a long-term better standard of living for the whole population of China. The women's thoughts and ideas are connected with a utilitarian view of life. In this way their own wishes become neglected in favour of the benefit of the nation as a whole. According to utilitarianism, an individual's pleasures are comparable and the pleasures of different subjects can be added together¹¹¹.

The gain for all concerned causes sacrifices, to some individuals in different ways. Jia is an illustration of this, talking about it is not a decision of her own to have a second child, even though she has the wish to have two children. She chooses to follow the law of the nation and her contribution benefits the population as a whole in long terms. Scarre argues: "*It is sometimes necessary to sacrifice smaller benefits in order to secure larger ones; occasionally even quite painful things may need to be endured as the price to be paid for really valuable goods*"¹¹².

Further, Wu states her generation has to face and solve the population problem caused by former generations and not leave it to the next generation. Her statement is in agreement with the utilitarian theory meaning individuals balance present and future gains against present and future losses. In the same way a society balance satisfactions and dissatisfactions between different individuals and through that procedure reaching the principle of utility in a natural way¹¹³.

The majority of the interviewees stated a high salary and a successful career are of highest priority to them. Nearly every one of the women argues the young Chinese generation of today value career and a high salary the highest. Family life including having children has become less important and the desire to get married and have children has been postponed. "*Survival analysis shows that place of residence, level of education, age at first marriage, & marriage cohort affect the first birth interval*"¹¹⁴. Most of the women have adapted to the thought of having only one child and the traditional value of wishing for a son is fading. The majority of our interviewees do not have any son preference and some even claim they prefer having daughters.

According to some analysts, there is a strong negative connection between women's education and son preference. Fading traditional values is another factor contributing a negative son preference. Women working in non-agricultural occupations are noteworthy less concerned about having sons. One reason might be it is becoming more acceptable in China for women with income to make remittances to their parents and in that way one of the causes of son preference is removed.¹¹⁵

The women had a limited knowledge concerning Family-Planning Policy. All the women are becoming Masters of Population Studies and currently they are attending the same classes. Even though we did not notice any difference in knowledge among the women, still their major in Economics or Law *may* have a connection with their knowledge and understanding

¹¹⁰ Goodin, 1995

¹¹¹ Scarre, 1996

¹¹² *ibid.* 20

¹¹³ Rawls, 1971

¹¹⁴ Zhenzhen, 2000

¹¹⁵ Peiyun et al, 1997

of the Family-Planning Policy. Another aspect of the women's limited knowledge, might be they are a part of the Chinese society. The Chinese culture advocates collective interests in front of individual interests. Members of this society seem to be very modest and do not willingly show off their knowledge. In other words, their limited knowledge might originate in the women's tendency to belittle their knowledge, which is distinguished in the Chinese society. We also noticed a way of belittling themselves through the language. The words "perhaps" and "maybe" were commonly used.

In a similar way, Wang argues it is common in China to reduce the importance of oneself to show courtesy. This is also exposed in the Chinese traditional language. In the English language "I" has always been written with a capital letter, which importance is clear. However, Chinese people have often used a self-belittling word before "I". This remains in the form of using "we" and "our" in Chinese, instead of "I" and "mine" in the English language.¹¹⁶

Historically the Chinese people regarded the Emperors as gods. Later, after the existence of the Chinese Empire, the power was taken over by the Government. It enjoys the highest power and therefore people are likely to accept the ideas and values suggested by the Government.¹¹⁷

Hereby, we might have another explanation to the students' limited knowledge concerning the Family-Planning Policy. The relation of trust and faith between the Chinese people and the Government, might result in a high reliance in the Government's will to do good for the people. Precisely speaking, there is no need of questioning the Government's actions and therefore they do not have to know the features of the policy.

During the interviews, it came to light the students had no habit and experience of speaking about the family planning issue and the advantages and disadvantages with this policy. They are neither used to speaking about this subject with family and friends nor in the classroom.

When interviewing Wang, she confirmed this by saying she has never spoken to her students about their opinions of the family planning issue. Further, she has never asked questions about the students' personal view of the policy. Additionally, Wang is not aware of such kind of surveys.¹¹⁸

The students were unaccustomed and ambivalent, when speaking of the family planning issue. It seems like they are unfamiliar reflecting on their own opinions of this subject. The majority of the women consider they have always had the same opinion about the Family-Planning Policy and cannot think of many factors affecting their opinions. They consider their education has not influenced them at all. It is important to have in mind, the women have been brought up with the policy, which came into force in 1979. However, it is hard to imagine from our point of view, their education has not influenced them in some way especially looking at the aim of the Master programme in Population Studies: "*The three years of education require Master students to learn and further study fundamental principles of Marxism, love our country, obey the laws, have good morals and serve for the great project of socialist modernization*"¹¹⁹

¹¹⁶ Wang, 1999

¹¹⁷ Wang, 1999

¹¹⁸ Interview Nov 5, 2002

¹¹⁹ Conversation Nov 7, 2002

People sharing the Government's fundamental principles and thoughts of Marxism, are benefited among other things through advantages in education. The Government continues using political attitudes as criteria for selecting people for government-sponsored study abroad. Precisely speaking, the Government does not fully respect academic freedom and continues to impose ideological controls on political discourse at for instance universities.¹²⁰

12. Summary

Our starting points in this thesis were to obtain an increased understanding of the Chinese one-child policy and how the young generation reason in relation to this phenomenon. During our study we were stationed at the Fudan University in Shanghai, where we established contacts leading to the realisation of interviews with eight well educated young Shanghainese women studying their Master in Population Studies. Two questions were elaborated in depth through a qualitative interview study in order to reveal how the young and well educated see their future in the light of the Chinese one-child policy and why. The questions were how young well educated Shanghainese women view the Chinese one-child policy and additionally, how they foresee their future concerning family and career. The conclusions of our findings are the women's limited knowledge about the Family-Planning Policy. All the women are supporting the Family-Planning Policy and they believe it is a necessary measure for the nation, even though the majority were not appealed to live in compliance with the policy. The young Chinese women are facing a new era, where individuals' preferences gradually become a characteristic, resulting in a great ambivalence in future family life concerning the wish for children. Making a career and a good standard of living are priorities above all to the majority of the women in our study. These opinions differ from thoughts and ideas in traditional China and illustrate the new trend among young well educated Shanghainese women.

¹²⁰ www.ldok.siv.se/netacgi/nph-brs

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- Zhang Zhen, (Teacher in Human Population Ecology, Institution of Population Research, Shanghai) Conversation on November 7, 2002.

Appendix 1 – Interview guide

IDENTITY

Name / Age / Province and city of Origin / Parents' occupation / Number and gender of siblings / Status

BACKGROUND

Education and Line / Work experience / Time in Shanghai

GOALS IN LIFE

What is the most important thing for you in life?

Marriage / Family life / Children / Gender / Advantages and Disadvantages / Career / Representative of Chinese women in your age?

PERSONAL VIEW OF FAMILY-PLANNING POLICY

What do you know about Family-Planning Policy?

How do you understand Family-Planning Policy?

Any changes in your opinion / Factors influencing changes / Connection between special opinion and higher education / Any exceptions

FUTURE

Describe your possible life situation in ten years?

Appendix 2 – The Law of 2001

Källa: Winckler, Edwin A (2002) Population and Development Review

DOCUMENTS

People's Republic of China Law on Population and Birth Planning

Plans by the Chinese government for drafting and passing a national law on population and birth planning were first reported in 1978. Progress toward that politically sensitive goal has been, however, very slow. During the past two decades, the legal basis of China's birth planning program was limited to provincial legislation. By the late 1990s, birth planning was the only major national policy area that did not have national enabling legislation.

In January 2000 the State Birth Planning Commission sent a draft of the law on population to the State Council for interagency review and party approval. At the end of 2000, the National People's Congress placed the law on its 2001 agenda. After the required multiple reviews, and with some changes, the Standing Committee of the NPC passed the Law on Population and Birth Planning on 29 December 2001, and on the same day President Jiang Zemin signed and promulgated the Law. The Law is to come into effect on 1 September 2002.

The background and significance of this legislation are discussed in detail in the opening article in the present issue of this journal. The author of the article, Edwin A. Winckler, also prepared an English translation of the Law on Population and Birth Planning. This translation is reproduced below. It is followed by a note by the translator.

Chapter One General principles

ARTICLE 1 This Law is enacted on the basis of the Constitution, in order to achieve coordinated development of population on the one hand, and the economy, society, resources, and environment on the other; to promote birth planning and safeguard citizens' legitimate rights and interests; and to advance family happiness, national prosperity, and social progress.

ARTICLE 2 China is a populous country, [so] practicing birth planning is a basic national policy of the State.

The State shall employ comprehensive measures to control population quantity and improve population quality.

In developing (*kaizhan*) population and birth planning work, the State shall rely on propaganda and education, scientific and technological progress, comprehensive services, and the establishment and improvement (*jianli jianquan*) of rewards and of a social security system.

ARTICLE 3 The development of population and birth planning work should be mutually linked with increasing the opportunity of women for education and employment, improving women's health, and raising women's status.

ARTICLE 4 While carrying out the work of promoting birth planning, people's governments and their functionaries at all levels should conduct administration strictly in ac-

cordance with the law (*yangge yifa xingzheng*), should enforce the law in a civilized manner (*wenming zhifa*), and must not infringe upon citizens' legitimate rights and interests.

In lawfully discharging official duties, birth planning administrative departments and their functionaries shall receive the protection of the law.

ARTICLE 5 The State Council shall lead (*lingdao*) the work of population and birth planning in the whole country.

Local people's governments at all levels shall lead the work of population and birth planning within their administrative jurisdictions.

ARTICLE 6 The birth planning administrative departments of the State Council shall be responsible for (*fuzhe*) national birth planning work and [national] population work that is related to birth planning.

The birth planning administrative departments of local people's governments at and above the county level shall be responsible for the work of birth planning, and for population work related to birth planning, within their administrative area.

Other relevant departments within local people's governments at and above the county level shall be responsible for related population and birth planning work, within the scope of their responsibilities.

ARTICLE 7 Social organizations (such as Trade Unions, Communist Youth Leagues, Women's Federations, and Birth Planning Associations), [as well as] business and public-service organizations (*qiye shiye zuzhi*) and citizens, should assist (*xiezhu*) the people's governments in developing population and birth planning work.

ARTICLE 8 The State shall reward organizations and individuals having outstanding achievements in population and birth planning work.

Chapter Two Formulation and implementation of population development plans

ARTICLE 9 The State Council shall formulate (*bianzi*) a national population development plan and incorporate it in the national economic and social development plan.

Local people's governments at and above the county level—based on the national popu-

lation development plan and the population development plan of the people's government at the next higher level, and according to their actual local conditions—shall work out a population development plan for their administrative jurisdictions, and incorporate it in the [local] economic and social development plan.

ARTICLE 10 Local people's governments at and above the county level, based on the [local] population development plan (*guihua*), shall formulate an implementation plan (*fangan*) for population and birth planning and shall organize its implementation.

The birth planning administrative departments within local people's governments at and above the county level shall be responsible for implementing the day-to-day work of the [local] implementation plan for population and birth planning.

People's governments of townships, nationality townships, or towns, and urban neighborhood administrative offices, shall be responsible for the work of population and birth planning in their administrative jurisdictions and shall thoroughly carry out the [local] implementation plan for population and birth planning.

ARTICLE 11 The implementation plan for population and birth planning should stipulate measures (*guiding...cuoshi*) for controlling population quantity, for strengthening maternal and child health, and for improving population quality.

ARTICLE 12 Villagers' committees and residents' committees should do a good job of (*zuohao*) birth planning work, in accordance with the law.

Administrative organizations, military units, social organizations, and business and public-service organizations [all] should do a good job of their units' birth planning work.

ARTICLE 13 [Government] departments—such as birth planning, education, science and technology, culture, public health, civil affairs, news and publication, and radio and television—should organize propaganda-and-education for developing population and birth planning.

Mass media have a duty to [carry] social public-service propaganda (*shehui gongyixing xuanquan*) for developing population and birth planning.

Among students, schools should develop education on physiology and health, educa-

tion on puberty, and education on sexual health, in a planned way and using methods that are appropriate to the characteristics of those receiving the instruction.

ARTICLE 14 Birth planning work for the migrant population shall be the joint managerial responsibility of the people's government of the place where their household is registered and of the place where they currently reside, with [the government of] the current residence playing the main role.

ARTICLE 15 The State shall, based on the situation of national economic and social development, gradually raise the overall level of funding (*jingfei touru*) for population and birth planning. People's governments at all levels should guarantee the funds necessary for population and birth planning.

People's governments at all levels should give targeted assistance (*zhongdian fuchi*, literally "keypoint support") for the development of population and birth planning work in poverty-stricken and minority-nationality districts.

The State shall encourage social organizations, business and public-service organizations, and individuals to provide support for population and birth planning.

No unit or individual whatsoever may withhold, deduct, or misappropriate [funds for] population and birth planning work.

ARTICLE 16 The State shall encourage scientific research and international exchange-and-cooperation that develop the field of population and birth planning.

Chapter Three Regulating reproduction

ARTICLE 17 Citizens have the right to have a child (*shengyu*, "give birth") and also have a duty to practice birth planning according to the law. Husbands and wives bear joint responsibility in practicing birth planning.

ARTICLE 18 The State shall stabilize currently implemented birth policies, encouraging (*guli*) citizens to postpone marriage and childbearing (*wanhun wanyu*, literally "late marriage and late birth") and advocating (*tichang*) that each couple have one child. Those who meet the conditions stipulated in laws and regulations can request the arrangement of the birth of a second child. Specific [administrative] measures

(*juti banfa*) shall be stipulated by the people's congresses of provinces, autonomous regions, or directly subordinate municipalities, or by their standing committees.

Minority nationalities too must (*ye yao*) practice birth planning, with the specific measures to be stipulated by the people's congresses of provinces, autonomous regions, and directly subordinate municipalities, or by their standing committees.

ARTICLE 19 The practice of birth planning should take contraception (*biyun*) as the main [method].

The State shall create conditions guaranteeing citizens informed choice of safe, effective, and appropriate measures for preventing pregnancy and controlling birth (*biyun jieyu cuoshi*). [Personnel] performing operations for preventing pregnancy and controlling birth should protect the safety of the person undergoing the operation.

ARTICLE 20 Couples of childbearing age should conscientiously practice birth planning measures for preventing pregnancy and controlling birth and should accept guidance on birth planning technical services.

[Couples] should prevent and reduce unwanted pregnancies.

ARTICLE 21 Couples of childbearing age who practice birth planning shall enjoy, free of charge (*mianfei xiangshou*), the technical services that the State stipulates as basic items (*guojia guiding de jiben xiangmu*).

The funds necessary for the items stipulated in the above provision shall be listed in the financial budget or guaranteed from social insurance, in accordance with relevant national stipulations (*guiding*).

ARTICLE 22 [It is] forbidden to discriminate against or mistreat women who give birth to female infants and women who do not give birth [i.e., are infertile].

It is forbidden to discriminate against, mistreat, or abandon female infants.

Chapter Four Incentives and social insurance

ARTICLE 23 The State shall reward couples who practice birth planning, according to the [relevant] stipulations.

ARTICLE 24 [In order to] promote birth planning, the State shall establish and improve various social insurance systems, such

as basic pension insurance (*yanglao*, literally "care for the old"), basic medical insurance, childbirth insurance, and social welfare.

The State shall encourage insurance firms to introduce insurance items that are beneficial to birth planning.

Localities with the [necessary] conditions can, based on the principle of government guidance and farmers' willingness, implement various forms of pension-guarantee methods in villages.

ARTICLE 25 Citizens who postpone marriage and childbearing may obtain (*keyi huode*) longer wedding leave, longer maternity leave, and other beneficial treatment (*fuli daiyu*).

ARTICLE 26 During the period of pregnancy, birth giving, and breastfeeding, women shall enjoy special labor protection (*teshu laodong baohu*) and can obtain assistance and compensation (*buchang*), in accordance with the relevant State stipulations.

Citizens undergoing a birth planning surgical operation shall enjoy State-stipulated leave. Local people's governments may give [them] rewards.

ARTICLE 27 [To] couples who voluntarily decide to have only one child during their lifetime, the State shall issue a "Certificate of Honor for One-Child Parents."

Couples who obtain a "Certificate of Honor for One-Child Parents" shall enjoy a reward for one-child parents, in accordance with the relevant national, provincial, autonomous region, or municipal stipulations.

[A couple's unit] should provide [the couple] with [any rewards] that are provided by their unit, among the [many possible] measures that are stipulated by laws, regulations, or rules for rewarding couples who voluntarily decide to have only one child during their lifetime.

[If] an only child suffers accidental disability or death, and [if] its parents do not have another [child] or adopt [another] child, the local people's government should give [any] necessary aid.

ARTICLE 28 People's governments at all levels shall give—to rural households that are practicing birth planning [and that wish to] develop [their household] economies—support and preference (*zhichi youhui*) in the area of funds, technology, and training. Impover-

ished households that practice birth planning shall be given priority treatment in the area of poverty relief loans (*fupin daikuan*), work relief (*yigong daizhen*), poverty relief items (*fupin xiangmu*), or social relief (*shehui jiuji*).

ARTICLE 29 Specific implementation methods for the reward measures stipulated in this chapter may (*keyi*) be formulated by the people's congresses or their standing committees of the provinces, autonomous regions, directly administered cities, or relatively large cities, in accordance with this Law and the stipulations of [other] relevant laws and administrative regulations, and according to actual local conditions.

Chapter Five Birth planning technical services

ARTICLE 30 The State shall establish systems for premarital health care and for health care during pregnancy and childbirth, [in order] to prevent or reduce birth defects and improve the standard of health of newborn infants.

ARTICLE 31 People's governments at all levels should take measures to guarantee that citizens enjoy birth planning technical services, in order to raise the standard of citizens' reproductive health.

ARTICLE 32 Local people's governments at all levels should rationally allocate and comprehensively utilize health resources, establishing and improving a birth planning technical service network (formed from birth planning technical service organs (*jigou*) and from medical and public health organs that provide birth planning technical services), improving technical service facilities and conditions, and raising the standard of technical services.

ARTICLE 33 Birth planning technical service organs and medical and public health organs that provide birth planning technical services, should—within their respective area of responsibility and targeting people of childbearing age—conduct propaganda and education on basic knowledge about population and birth planning. [They should also] develop pregnancy checkups and follow-up (*suisfang*) service work for married women of childbearing age. [They should also assume

the burden of providing (*chengdan*) information, guidance, and technical services for birth planning and reproductive health.

ARTICLE 34 Birth planning technical service personnel should guide citizens practicing birth planning to select safe, effective, and appropriate contraceptive measures (*biyun cuoshi*).

[It is] recommended (*tichang*) that couples who have already had a child choose long-term (*changxiao*, literally "long effective") contraceptive measures.

The State shall encourage research, utilization, and dissemination of new birth planning technologies and products.

ARTICLE 35 [It is] strictly forbidden to use ultrasound technology or other technological means to conduct examinations of the sex of fetuses, other than as medically necessary. [It is] strictly forbidden to terminate a pregnancy [for the purpose of sex selection], other than as medically necessary.

Chapter Six Legal responsibilities

ARTICLE 36 [Anyone who] violates this Law by one of the acts listed below shall—by the birth planning or public health agency, based on their authority (*yijiu zhiquan*)—be ordered to rectify the situation (*zeling gaizheng*), given a warning, and have illegal income confiscated.

If the illegal income is 10,000 yuan or more, a fine shall be imposed of no less than two times and no more than six times the illegal income. If there is no illegal income or the illegal income is less than 10,000 yuan, a fine shall be imposed of no less than 10,000 yuan and no more than 30,000 yuan. If the case is serious, the license to practice shall be revoked by the issuing agency. Acts constituting a crime shall be referred for criminal prosecution according to the law.

(1) Illegally performing a birth planning surgical operation for [the benefit of] another [person] (*wei taren* or *tuoren*)

(2) Using ultrasound technology or other technology for [the benefit of] another [person] to detect the sex of a fetus other than as medically necessary, and artificially terminating a pregnancy [for the purpose of] sex selection

(3) Conducting a fake (*jia*) birth planning surgical operation, conducting a fake medi-

cal appraisal (*jianding*), and issuing a fake birth planning certificate.

ARTICLE 37 [If there is] forging, altering, or trafficking (*maimai*) in birth planning certificates, any illegal income shall be confiscated by an administrative department in charge of birth planning. If the illegal income is 5,000 yuan or more, a fine shall be imposed of no less than two times and no more than ten times the illegal income. If there is no illegal income, or the illegal income is less than 5,000 yuan, a fine shall be imposed of no less than 5,000 yuan and no more than 20,000 yuan. Acts constituting a crime shall be referred for criminal prosecution according to the law.

Anyone obtaining a birth planning certificate by improper means shall have the birth planning certificate revoked by an administrative department in charge of birth planning. [If] the unit that issued the certificate was at fault (*yu guozuo de*), an administrative punishment shall be imposed on the supervisory officials directly responsible and on other directly responsible personnel, according to the law.

ARTICLE 38 Birth planning technical service providers who, with serious [medical] consequences, act against the rules (*weizhang caozuo*) or delay emergency response, diagnosis, or treatment shall assume corresponding legal responsibility (*chengdan xiangying de falu zeren*), according to the relevant stipulations of laws and administrative regulations.

ARTICLE 39 A State functionary who commits one of the acts below in the course of birth planning work, if the act constitutes a crime, shall be prosecuted according to the law. Or, if the act does not constitute a crime, [the functionary] shall be given administrative punishment according to the law. Any illegal income shall be confiscated.

(1) Infringing upon a citizen's rights of person, property rights, or other legitimate rights and interests

(2) Abuse of power, dereliction of duty, or graft

(3) Demanding or accepting a bribe

(4) Withholding, deducting, misappropriating, or embezzling birth planning funds or social compensation fees

(5) Distorting, underreporting, fabricating, altering, or refusing to report population and birth planning statistics.

ARTICLE 40 Anyone [unit or person] who violates this Law or does not perform the duty to assist in the management of birth planning shall be ordered by the relevant local people's government to correct the situation and shall be criticized in a circular [by that government]. Administrative punishment shall be given to supervisory personnel directly responsible, and to other directly responsible personnel, according to the law.

ARTICLE 41 Citizens who give birth to a child in violation of Article 18 of this Law should pay a social compensation fee (*shehui fuyang fei*, literally "social bringing-up fee").

Those who do not pay the full amount of the social compensation fee within the stipulated time period shall, from the date of default, be levied a late-payment penalty according to relevant State stipulations. [In the case of] those who still do not pay, the birth planning administrative department that decided to levy [the social compensation fee] shall petition the people's court for enforcement (*qiangzhi zhixing*, literally "forceful implementation"), according to the law.

ARTICLE 42 Among personnel (*renyuan*) who pay a social compensation fee in accordance with Article 41 of this Law, those who are State staff (*guojia gongzuo renyuan*) should also be given administrative punishment (*xingcheng chufen*) according to the law. Other personnel [who are not State staff] should also [in addition to the social compensation fee] be given disciplinary punishment (*jilu chufen*) by their own unit or organization.

ARTICLE 43 Anyone who refuses or obstructs (*jujue zu-ai*) a birth planning admin-

istrative department or its personnel while they are lawfully performing their official duties shall be given criticism-and-education and be stopped by the birth planning administrative department. Anyone whose conduct constitutes a violation of public security management (*weifan zhian guanli*) shall be given public-security-management punishment. Anyone [whose acts] constitute a crime shall be referred for criminal prosecution.

ARTICLE 44 Citizens, legal persons, and other organizations which deem that an administrative agency has infringed on their legal rights and interests in the process of implementing birth planning management may appeal for administrative reconsideration or may initiate administrative litigation.

Chapter Seven Supplementary provisions

ARTICLE 45 The State Council shall formulate specific management methods for birth planning work among migrants, specific management methods for birth planning technical services, and management methods for collecting social compensation fees.

ARTICLE 46 Specific measures for implementing this Law by the Chinese People's Liberation Army shall be formulated by the Military Commission [of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party] based on this Law.

ARTICLE 47 This Law shall go into effect from 1 September 2002.

Translator's note: This translation is based on the official Chinese text, as published by the China Population Publishing House. In making it, I consulted two other translations (see Law 2001a and Law 2001b in the References to the article at the beginning of this issue). One was published by the Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS) at the time the Law was promulgated. The FBIS translation conveys the general sense of the Law but evidently it had to be done quickly and it contains language that would permit significant misreadings on crucial points. The other was an early draft of a translation, some form of which was later adopted by the State Birth Planning Commission (SBPC), some form of which reportedly was in turn endorsed by the National People's Congress (NPC). The translation process for this version was slow and thoughtful, but with revisions by a succession of agencies and individuals, so that some key Chinese terms are not translated consistently or precisely. In any case, to the best of my knowledge, neither the SBPC nor the NPC has yet issued an official English version to the public, so no final official version is available.

For a matter as controversial as Chinese birth planning, translation should avoid the problem of saying one thing in one language and something else in another, inadvertently or otherwise. This problem is aggravated for this Law by the fact that Chinese terminology and syntax are often cryptic and by the fact that the Law is often deliberately vague and sometimes poorly drafted. Moreover, understanding the intent of many of the terms in the Law requires knowledge of birth program policies and practices, of the commentaries that the SBPC has published separately to explain this Law, and of other current Chinese public programs or administrative practices. Therefore on many crucial points even a perfect literal translation would fail to convey what the Law is intended to mean in practice, unless accompanied by annotations. Accordingly, this translation adds English words in brackets to clarify or explain the Chinese original where necessary. (All instances of "shall" and "shall be" are only implicit in the Chinese but, for readability, have not been placed in brackets.) This translation also adds Chinese words in parentheses to identify the Chinese original of terms that are particularly important, controversial, ambiguous, or technical (usually only on first occurrence, in the official pinyin romanization).

In addition, throughout, the following conventions apply. Because the Chinese birth limitation program remains poised between state planning of births and family planning of births, jihua shengyu (literally "planned birth") is translated as "birth planning," not "family planning." The "work" of population and birth planning, referred to throughout the Law, usually means administrative work by state agencies. In "protecting citizens' legitimate rights and interests" (weihu gongmin de hefa quan yi), the rights and interests might be narrower or broader depending on whether "hefa" is construed literally as "legal" or generously as "legitimate" (Articles 1, 4, and 39). "Improving population quality" (tigau renkou suzhi) means not just avoiding unhealthy births but also increasing individuals' education and well-being and even avoiding macro-demographic distortions (Articles 2 and 11). "Technical services" include not only physical treatment but also information and counseling. "Measures for preventing pregnancy and controlling birth" (biyun jieyu cuoshi) strongly emphasize contraception, they include sterilization as a voluntary option, and they include safe abortions only as a last resort, after contraception fails (Articles 19, 20, and 34). I am grateful to Jason Wang of the Public Media Center, San Francisco, for providing relevant materials and discussing translation issues.—E.A.W.