

CHINA'S ONE-CHILD POLICY: IS IT HARMING OR BENEFITTING THE
CHILDREN

A Project

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by

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Division of Social Work

Abstract
of
CHINA'S ONE-CHILD POLICY: IS IT HARMING OR BENEFITTING THE
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by
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Araceli Alicia Vega

This study examined the content of various sources, including books, movies, scholarly journal articles, and periodicals at an attempt to answer the question of whether China's one child policy is harming or benefitting the countries children. In conducting the study, the researchers identified several variables to gather frequencies for. In gathering frequencies the researchers emphasized pinpointing, examining, and recording themes within the data. The themes were in turn used as indicators of the benefits or harms the policy is having for children in China. The researchers concluded that the harms outweigh the benefits of the policy. The researchers recommend that changes be made to policy to eliminate some of the unintended consequences brought on by the policy that are negatively impacting the children of China.

_____, Committee Chair
Serge Lee, Ph.D

Date

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

There are over 400,000,000 abandoned children throughout hundreds of cities worldwide who struggle to survive the day (International Street Kids, 2014). Abandonment of children is occurring everywhere in the world, but especially in China. In 1979 China's leader, Deng Xiaoping, introduced the one-child policy as a short-term measure to slow the country's growing population, and to promote a voluntary small family culture (Nakra 2012). Since then, China's one-child policy has become a controversial issue of discussion in other nations, but causes very little controversy within China. In addition to the one-child policy, it is well known that the adoption process in China is also extensive, expensive, and difficult to complete. The country's one-child policy history not only affects the adult population who want more children, but also affects the children placed in orphanages. As this policy comes to the attention of other countries, drastic measures for transnational adoptions have been viewed as establishing better lives for internationally adopted children and providing financial support for orphanages where the majority of unwanted children remain (Dowling & Brown, 2009).

Background of the Problem

According to Hesketh and Zhu (1997), population growth escalated in China during the 1950s, growing from 540 million people to 850 million by the 1960s, which led to the creation of the "*late, long, few*" policy in the mid 1970s, this policy minimized the average number of children born in China from 5.90 in 1970 to 2.66 in 1979, but this was still considered too high by the family planning committees. Along with "*late, long,*

few,” couples were permitted to try for a second child if the first born was a girl, while ethnic minorities were given the privilege to have a third and even a fourth child (Hesketh & Zhu, 1997).

Following “*late, long, few*” China enacted the one-child policy in 1979. The policy prompted researchers to study both negative and positive outcomes it would bring to the people. China’s one-child policy established good, bad, and ugly consequences within Chinese society. The policy has benefitted the country in terms of curbing population growth, aiding economic growth, and improving the health of the people (Hesketh & Zhu, 1997).

Since the enactment of the one-child policy, both urban and rural Chinese couples receive rewards for abiding by it. For instance, urban couples receive a monthly stipend, are given priority when applying for housing, receive an increase in maternity leave, the child’s health care and education needs are a high priority, and they receive a supplementary pension (Hesketh & Zhu, 1997). Hesketh and Zhu stated further that in rural areas, families are allocated an increase to their farming plot, and no longer see large families as an asset.

Chinese women and children have received direct benefits under this policy. As discussed above, Hesketh and Zhu explained that children have benefited from the increased resources dedicated to them, particularly girls, since their families place all their investments in them, while at the same time not creating any competition between siblings. Additionally, mothers are freed from the cycle of continuous pregnancies associated with morbidity and mortality.

In contrast to benefits, there are numerous problems associated with China's one-child policy. One concern was in regard to demographics and sex ratio imbalances, as it was later discovered that there were significant under registered births within rural areas, where the policy is mostly misapplied (Hesketh & Zhu, 1997). Chinese women who became pregnant for a second time were expected to terminate the pregnancy. The government imposed penalties for "illegal" pregnancies at the discretion of local family planning officials (as cited in Ebenstein, 2010; Hesketh & Zhu, 1997). Penalties included, but were not limited to, losing benefits for the child, fines, loss of jobs, and seizure of possessions. To avoid penalties brought about by discovery of illegal pregnancies by provincial authorities, women would travel outside their community to deliver their child.

An unintended consequence of the policy is the excess number of boys. Data from 1979-84 showed the male to female ratio was high in rural places such as Hebei at 115:100 and Shaanxi at 116:100, creating an average ratio of 106:100 for China (Hesketh & Zhu, 1997). The reasons behind the sex ratio imbalance are related to underreported female births, sex selective abortions, female infanticide, and unreported adoptions of baby girls. Another concern caused by the policy is the lack of support for elderly people by their children, which is a traditional practice in Chinese society.

Li, Yi and Zhang (2011) found that in spite of the policy, the locals nevertheless are willing to have daughters, though sons are preferred, a custom rooted in traditional Chinese society. Male children are favored and valued more highly than females because sons will carry the family name, and are expected to care for their parents in old age, compared to daughters who normally care for their husband's parents (Dowling &

Brown, 2009). This shows how Chinese society emphasizes and supports gender inequality and a preference for males.

Study Purpose. Our research is aimed at providing both pros and cons of China's one-child policy, and how it affects the following issues: gender subordination and inequality, cultural values and their affect on family systems, and an insufficient focus on social welfare needs for the people. Both authors view the one-child policy as a problem; therefore they strongly believe the policy negatively affects the previously mentioned factors.

International social issues are of great interest to the authors, both as individuals and future advanced generalist social workers. As the authors researched various topics of interest, this one particularly stood out as it would provide the ability to share the information discovered with others in hopes of increasing awareness and creating a greater understanding of international social issues. Although the U.S. has its own social issues to resolve, the authors felt the need for increased attention to be paid to international social issues, specifically international adoption as it relates to China. Exploring another culture and another country's social dilemmas allowed the authors to become mindful of differences that exist when compared to their own culture.

Theoretical Framework. This research project used two theoretical frameworks that assisted in describing and providing a resolution for the research problem of how China's one-child policy is benefitting and harming the children in China. The first theoretical framework used to support the research problem was systems theory. Johnson & Rhodes (2010) described systems theory in terms whereby each system has a structure,

and the parts of that structure have a relationship to each other, thereby creating connectivity. For instance, systems theory may try to emphasize the relationships among individuals, groups, communities, organizations, and factors influencing the environment in which people live. Johnson and Rhodes illustrated that these items can be seen as parts of a structure that make a whole.

China is a country that exemplifies the use of systems theory as seen China by how the country expects individuals to act and respond. If Chinese people follow regulations and policies, they are working toward a structured government rather than contributing to its collapse. For example, if Chinese couples abide by the one-child policy they are rewarded with monetary and intangible incentives, however, if they do not comply they are punished with fees. As the individuals work together, create groups and establish communities and organizations, the governing bodies can better perform their duties throughout the country to provide safe and suitable living conditions for the people.

The second framework guiding this research project was feminist theory. According to Van Den Bergh and Cooper (1989) feminist theory's main focus is grounded in male domination of the major social institutions, while aiming to understand the essence of gender inequality. Not only does the feminist theory center its attention on women's inequality in society and amongst men, but also how minorities struggle with discrimination, oppression, and stereotyping.

Status is a socially defined position in a group or society characterized by certain expectations, rights and duties (Kendall, 2008, as cited in Johnson & Rhodes, 2010). An

ascribed status is a social position that is conferred at birth based on characteristics over which individuals have little or no choice or control, with sex being an example (Johnson & Rhodes, 2010). The terms sex and gender are commonly used interchangeably, even though sex refers to biological differences and gender to culturally constructed differences. The significance of gender is that it is a device by which society controls its members (Johnson & Rhodes, 2010). China is a patriarchal society, where women are subordinate to men.

Women are a minority group. A minority group is a group in the population that shares a distinctive identity and is subjected to stigma, prejudice, discrimination, and oppression (Johnson & Rhodes, 2010). Minority in this sense does not connote small numbers; rather it refers to a subordinate position in society (Johnson & Rhodes, 2010).

Through fear men are able to control women's behavior, keep women out or confine their participation in society, and thereby maintain control of social institutions (Yodanis, 2004). When men dominate familial, political, economic, and other social institutions in number and in power, the policies and practices of those institutions are likely to embody, reproduce, and legitimate male domination over women (Yodanis, 2004), with China's one-child policy being a prime example. The policy aligns with a widely held belief of male superiority and bias against children who are female. China's one-child policy highlights the preference of a son over a daughter, because even before birth girls appear to be at a disadvantage (Atwood, 2001).

The policy illustrates how feminist theory can be applied to China's society, government, and politics. Chinese women are subordinate to men, and are seen as a commodity rather than as an individual. The more unequal women are compared to men in a society, the more likely men are to be violent toward women (Yodanis, 2004). Infanticide or abortions of baby girls can be seen as a type of violence to maintain male dominance.

Definition of terms:

Policy: A plan of action adopted and pursued by individuals, governments, or political parties.

China's one-child policy: China implemented this policy in 1979 in order to decrease the population growth, forcing the population to follow a protocol that limits couples to having only one-child.

Family values: The ethical and moral principles traditionally passed down by elders in the family, such as dignity, loyalty, trustworthiness, and faith.

Abortion: The process of terminating a pregnancy via operation or induced medically per the woman's choice of not giving birth or a mandate enforced by government.

Female Infanticide: The act of killing a female infant for the sole reason of being born a female.

Gender Inequality: The act of placing females at a lower rank or position than males based solely on gender.

Family planning committees: Committees created in local provinces to interpret and enforce the one-child policy as mandated and to provide guidance in contraceptive use.

International adoption: The process and requirements of both sending and receiving countries, where an individual or couple become legal and permanent parents of a child from a country other than the one they reside in.

Social Status: The position or rank of a person or group within a society. A person or group may earn their social status via accomplishments, or inherit it through birth.

Gender Preference: The active decision of preferring a male child over a female child.

Contraceptive Methods: Methods such as pills, IUD, sterilizations, and condoms used for birth control purposes.

Abandonment: The active process of leaving a child and forgoing responsibility for its care.

Statement of collaboration: Araceli Alicia Vega and Hugo Licea collaborated as joint authors on this project. Both researchers worked collectively during the process of this study. Topic selection, data analysis, writing, and formatting was completed congruently throughout the research project.

Assumptions: One of the assumptions the authors made was that international adoption is in the best interest of the children being adopted. If it were not for adoption, the children would be left in their country of origin where the opportunities to thrive and reach their full potential would not be afforded. In addition, the children's quality of life would most likely improve with their adoptive parents compared to the quality of life they would receive in an institutional setting. Both the child and the adopted parents mutually benefit from international adoption.

The authors are also assuming that the agencies and social workers involved in international adoptions are practicing with up-to-date and best practice standards and intentions. Social workers benefit highly from understanding the meaning of adoption, international adoption policies, procedures, and regulations from both sending and receiving countries. Another assumption is that the one-child policy is oppressive to women because of the amount of pressure that is put on them to give birth to a boy due to only having one chance to do so and the benefits associated with the only child being a male.

Social Work Research Justifications: The findings in this study have the potential to help social workers around the globe understand social welfare policies that other countries have in place, and come to a conclusion on whether China's one-child policy is either harming or hindering Chinese children. Furthermore, the findings in this research project will contribute to the researchers' personal and career development. Specifically, this study's findings will further inspire the author to commence the adoption process.

Findings from this study will contribute greatly to the social work profession both nationally and internationally, as they will provide recommendations on working with Chinese families living in the U.S and families that have adopted children from China in relation to cultural competency. The researchers are aware that social services is growing rapidly in China; therefore, the researchers will provide suggestions as to how best to work with the Chinese population advocate on behalf of the Chinese people. This research project is not intended to intimidate or criticize the Chinese government, but

rather, seeks to understand and provide recommendations for social services programs and Chinese social workers.

Study Limitations. Both researchers have the limitation of not being able to conduct in-depth interviews with families who have adopted Chinese children, or adoptees themselves, to gather first hand information of their experience with transnational adoption and developing their identity within a mixed race family. Another limitation is not being able to interview girls residing in China who have been abandoned or their parents to know their perspective on the matter. We are also unable to speak with officials from orphanages to ask about their experience with undesired children and their thoughts on the one-child policy and adoption protocols of both China and foreign countries.

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Families are intended to provide a safe environment for children. The child's life depends on the family; children are vulnerable and unable to care for themselves. A loving and financially stable family is ideal for any child. The child is not at fault for the occurrences in his or her life. Both biological and adopted children should be able to prosper with their family. Adopted children may be from their adoptive parent's native region, or from a different country. Adoptive parents might select children that are undesired in their country of origin, but who nevertheless will be wanted and welcomed in their adoptive family. We all come from various walks of life, and some of us have the ability and opportunity to share our lives with others who accept and acknowledge us for who we are. China's one-child policy is contributing to the number of children that are available for adoption. This review of the literature will highlight the following themes: (1) historical background of China's one-child policy, (2) the abandonment of Chinese children as a consequence of the policy, and (3) the availability of children for transnational adoption because of the policy.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

One role of government in any country is to provide order and enforce the laws to keep its citizens safe. As discussed by McLoughlin (2005), the role of the national government is generally accepted to include regulation of the lives of its individual citizens to benefit the interest of all its citizens. The reason for this regulation is to prevent the portion of the population that has a large amount of power from taking

advantage of those who lack power. Under Deng Xiaoping rule in China, the government took control of its citizen rights. During the 1970s Deng was concerned with population projections as China was launching its economic reform and shared his view on how to curb population growth. Essentially, Deng wanted to minimize the Chinese people's living standards and economic expansion.

The approach taken by the government of any country depends on the needs of its population. During the course of social and economic expansions, China took a different route compared to democratic governments. What China undertook during the leadership of Deng Xiaoping was unprecedented. While governments of other countries implemented inducement policies encouraging their citizens to have more babies, China's newly established social policy took the Chinese people by surprise because of the limitations on reproductive capacity in conjunction with their traditional dependence on extended and multi-generational family systems (McLoughlin, 2005). The establishment of the one-child policy is an example of how the government hindered and influenced family structures and systems (Zhang, 2006). Chinese couples must decide whether to obey the new policy and be rewarded with promising incentives, or disobey and risk punishment.

China is a country that has set an unusual standard with a strict family structure plan. China's one-child policy, enacted in 1979, aimed to decrease population expansion in order to prevent their population from exceeding 1.2 billion by the year 2000 (Kane & Choi, 1999). The person who is credited with authoring China's one-child policy is Song Jian. Jian belonged to a class of elite scientists, deemed "super scientists" who could

speak with originality and authority on any subject and command attention (Greenhalgh, 2005). Based on his previous work on military science, Jian was able to transfer his expertise to the social sciences and was granted authority in that field. Jian's work had facilitated the construction of personal networks of political decision makers, given him exceptional influence in the policy arena, and rewarding him handsomely in cultural prestige (Greenhalgh, 2005).

When the state planning of births was made a constitutional obligation, Jian was busy developing a different approach based on foreign models and rooted in the physical science of cybernetics in hopes of helping to solve the country's population problems (Greenhalgh, 2005). Jian's team projected a frightening scenario of how the population could grow in the future if the one-child policy was not put into place. According to Greenhalgh, China's leaders could neither understand the science nor challenge the scientific authority of its authors, as they were awestruck by the mathematics, shocked by the projections, and convinced that a one-child policy was the only option.

Jian was counting on his reputation and political influence as a defense scientist and in policy-making bodies to make his population policy the leading contender for adoption (Greenhalgh, 2005). The other scientists who were developing plans to combat the growing population problem were using conservative approaches and lacked prestige compared to Jian, which in turn resulted in their policy proposals not standing a chance. The unconventional skills that Jian's team possessed enabled them to develop models that were both different from, and more sophisticated than, any demographic model available in China at the time (Greenhalgh, 2005).

The original purpose of the single child policy was to help future generations cope with scarce resources (Mcloughlin, 2005). Currently, Chinese nationals must acquire permission not only to marry but also to have a child (Nakra, 2012). Hvistendahl (2010) revealed that Chinese officials have argued that three decades of birth planning has prevented 400 million births; however that figure is contested as an advocacy group that researched the problem has suggested that the number of avoided births is closer to 100 million.

The policy was enacted in both urban and rural areas of China. This draconian policy was met with strong resistance, especially in china's rural areas, where the peasant family remains the primary locus of economic activity and old age support (Baochang, Feng, Zhigang & Erli, 2007). Limiting the number of children a rural family could have hinders their chances of economic prosperity. China's one-child policy specifies that each couple be prearranged with birth quotas, which enables them to have only one-child (Li et al., 2011). There are both rewards and consequences if the couple succeeds or fails in fulfilling China's one-child policy. Chinese inhabitants who respect the country's policy are rewarded with a package of financial and other incentives such as preferential access to health services, schooling, housing, up to three years of paid pregnancy leave, and an increase of about five to ten percent of their salary (Richards, 1996). The individuals who have a larger family are sanctioned with financial charges for each additional child, and those who hold a government job are in danger of losing it (Kane & Choi, 1999).

The policy is enforced by family planning committees at county and provincial levels, who strategically enforce the one-child policy by administering rewards for

Chinese couples that took the One-Child Pledge, and penalties for those who failed to comply (Hesketh & Zhu, 1997). The strategic plan varies from rural to urban areas, and its implementation differs from location to location contingent on local conditions (Hesketh & Zhu, 1997). The policy is strictly applied in urban areas, with the following exclusions: if the first child has a birth defect(s), in the case of a remarriage if one partner did not have children from their previous marriage, if the parent(s) belong to certain group of workers deemed high risk occupations, and if both parents are themselves from one child families (Hesketh & Zhu, 1997).

While population control remains basic state policy, the central government has refrained from implementing a set of uniform policies across the country (Baochang et al., 2007). China's one-child policy is not exactly a one-child policy. The government wanted to take into account differences across regions and among its citizens. The many provinces can be grouped into three major categories, reflecting the number of children couples are allowed to have. Six provinces follow a one-child policy, nineteen provinces are allowed an average of 1.5 children, and five provinces are allowed two children (Baochang et al., 2007). These exceptions are what accounts for allowing multiple births. Regulations regarding birth control were made in accordance with local conditions to recognize the diversity in demographic and socioeconomic conditions across China (Baochang et al., 2007). The one-child policy can be seen as an overall goal with numerous exceptions. Exceptions to birth control regulations can be grouped into four categories: gender/demographic, economic, political/ethical/social, and entitlement/replacement (Baochang et al., 2007).

Contraception allows a sexually active person to prevent a pregnancy. In China, women are highly recommended, if not mandated, to utilize contraception to prevent unauthorized births. Intrauterine devices (IUD) and birth control pills are two of the most preferred methods of contraception in urban cities, typically distributed to married women in their job settings (Hesketh & Zhu, 1997). In rural areas, most women have the intrauterine device placed around the sixth week postpartum check, and sterilization becomes necessary, mostly in the countryside, after the second or third child (Hesketh & Zhu, 1997).

In rural areas, Chinese families are allowed to have two children, as long as the first child is a daughter (Zhang, 2006). Families in rural areas prefer multiple children so they can assist in agricultural work, which creates a preference for male children. According to Nakra (2012), an urban family can conceive another child only if the following are true: the first child has a disability, both parents work in high-risk occupations, and both parents are from one-child families. According to Baochang et al. (2007) belonging to an ethnic minority, couples in an uxorilocal marriage, if the first child dies, being given an initial diagnosis of infertility, remarriage after divorce or being widowed, and being the only fecund son in a family of multiple children can be considered as exceptions to the one-child policy. If the conditions are met for bearing multiple children, exceptions can be made to the one-child policy.

Along with exceptions, every five years the government revisits the policy to conduct minor adjustments as needs may arise (Pearson, 2009), allowing the opportunity to include new ideas or information as they become available. Modifications to the state

policy of population control have been left to each province, under the general principle of slowing down population growth and encouraging only one child per couple (Baochang et al., 2007). Although multiple children may be allowed depending on exceptions, one child is preferred. There is a difference in implementation both across and within provinces in China. Baochang et al. stated that China's fertility and population control policy has evolved to contain highly localized features.

THE ABANDONMENT OF CHINESE CHILDREN

Family

The term family may have a structural definition around the globe, but the definition might vary among individuals, groups, communities, and societies. This section will emphasize the importance of family values as they pertain to Caucasians and the following ethnic groups: Asians, Latinos, and African Americans. The researchers sought to examine the differences and similarities these groups have in regards to family values.

Chinese Families

Family is the most fundamental social and cultural unit in traditional Chinese culture, and children are highly valued by their families and in their communities (Giskin & Walsh, 2001). This country follows the norm of emphasizing the nuclear family, which consists of a husband, wife, and children, but also involves extended family such as the maternal and paternal grandparents and great-grandparents. According to Giskin and Walsh, Chinese families consider extended family members, even well after their death,

still present in their lives by devotedly keeping their memories alive by practicing, and setting examples of how they lived their lives with their own nuclear families.

Traditional China was patriarchal, patrilineal, and patrilocal, meaning that men had formal power in society, inheritance and descent were through male lines, and newly married couples were required to reside in the husband family's home (Giskin & Walsh, 2001). Giskin and Walsh also mentioned that, throughout their lives, a Chinese woman's are subject to the authority of men, obeying her father when young, her husband after marriage, and later her son in her old age. Furthermore, in traditional China a woman's parents were the ones who arranged the marriage, without her own input, because her parents expect her to obey their wishes. Additionally, the authors state that once the woman was married, her natal and childhood home was closed off, and when she visited her family's home, the visits were strictly regulated by law. Similarly, women were not allowed to inherit land, however the division of labor geared them toward domesticity. Many changes have occurred in China's political scheme, familial structure, and ideological beliefs, though several traditions continue today that promote familial orientation via achievement and habitual gender duties within home life.

Latino Families

Latino families tend to be strong, and united during good and bad times. Besides children and family member relationships, the general concept of family cohesiveness is immense within the Latino community. Latino groups oppose the orientation of individual independence, and heavily emphasize practicing interdependence, which aids in highlighting the importance of cultural values such as familism (Harkness & Super,

2002). Familism is important to the Latino community as it is attributed to attaining family solidarity, togetherness, and respect for family members based on a hierarchical order (Sotomayor-Peterson, Figueredo, Christensen & Taylor, 2012). For instance children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren must respect their elders, which are their parents, grandparents and great-grandparents. Sotomayor-Peterson et al. shared how people who are native Spanish speakers know when someone is practicing familism by the way they express the idea that family comes first, show deep respect for his or her parents, and support their family psychologically and economically.

Marriage in the Latino culture is significant because it is seen as not just a union of two individuals but rather of two families, allowing for the expansion of family networks and support systems (Frevert & Miranda, 1998). Once the marriage becomes official, the couple are subjected to gender roles with existing values. Women, now wives, are encouraged to practice the cultural tradition of *marianismo*, in which women are encouraged to be submissive and passive primarily with their spouse, and be devoted to the home (Garcia-Bravo, 2008). Garcia-Bravo defines *machismo* in the Latino culture as male dominance and superiority, arrogance, and being sexually aggressive, but, on a positive note also stresses the importance of the man's role of being head of the household and protector. In modern times, the cultural roles of men and women are evolving and women are becoming less submissive, and the men are decreasing their domineering ways.

African American Families

African Americans make family reunions essential rituals in their lives because it allows for the preservation of the past and reinforcement of positive patterns for future generations (McCoy, 2011). McCoy stated that family reunions have contributed to the health, endurance, and survival of African American families, allowing them to maintain cultural heritage through turbulent times. McCoy also attributed family gatherings with the creation of power amongst the elders, who are the keepers of the African American legacy. Family reunions served a purpose for African American individuals in the past that have carried over to present times, and established foundations for the future. “Family reunions surfaced as vehicles through which cohesiveness could be restored and culture revitalized” (McCoy, 2011, p. 16). Family reunions are a means of transmitting social values, facilitating communication and supporting the well-being of others, assisting in shaping personal and group identity, identifying who are the role models, and sharing educational opportunities for all relatives (as cited in McCoy, 2011).

In African tradition, marriage is not only seen as the union of two individuals, but also between groups of people (Billingsley, 1993). Children and the role of mothers are highly valued in the African American culture (Hines, 1990). African American women are frequently seen as the strength of the family, and usually work outside of the home (McGoldrick & Garicas-Preto, 2005). McGoldrick and Garicas-Preto defined African American males’ traditional gender role as the ability to provide for their family, in good and bad times. The African American community focuses on the importance and meaning of family, and goes to great extents to be there for one another.

Caucasian Families

According to Heinemann (2012), in the United States family has been observed as the most important social unit in an individual's life. Heinemann describes a nuclear family model, which has gained popularity in becoming the nation's ideal family structure, which consists of two generations, the parents and children, incorporating the father as the breadwinner in the family, and the mother as the homemaker. Extended family members are not identified as being significant or an extension to the nuclear family. In present day America, women are not solely homemakers, they also work outside the home, with an annual salary reaching or exceeding the husband's. Family unity is expected in Caucasian families, however, the support toward family members varies from family to family. Society sets high standards for Caucasian families to attain and represent the ideal nuclear family, which is sometimes not feasible.

Family Conclusion

Asian, Latino, African American, and Caucasian families have similarities and differences in their cultural values, whether within their families or communities. Asian and Latino families have often been characterized as placing greater importance on familial duty and obligation than families of European backgrounds (Fulgini, 2001). Latino families are higher in family cohesiveness and reported higher levels of family relationship satisfaction than their European-American counterparts (as cited in Miranda, Estada, & Firpo-Jimenez, 2000). Caucasian and ethnic groups are prime examples of the variance in definition of the term family by individuals, groups, communities, and societies.

In China, there is a traditional folk belief that it is a blessing to have a lot of children (Chan, Yip, Ng, Ho, Chan & Au, 2002). This belief leads to the abandonment of the first-born child if she is a girl. Chan et al. mention the strong sense of shame and blame for not being able to bear a male descendent to the extended family. So if a family is only going to be able to have one child they want him to be a boy. As a result of policy, cultural traditions, and perceived needs, families of infant girls and handicapped boys have been faced with devastating choices (Vonk et al., 1999).

Children that reside in orphanages may or may not be diagnosed with psychological, physical, or social ailments. Abandoned children in China are left where parents hope they will be found, for example at the steps of a hospital or police station, a marketplace, or a well-traveled road (Volkman, 2003). When discovered, abandoned children are placed in state-run orphanages that are poorly equipped to deal with the numbers of children that fill them (Vonk et al., 1999). For these children, living in an orphanage is certainly a better alternative than being killed because of their gender. Children are not at fault for being born into a Communist society that believes in sex discrimination and this belief is held not just by the government, but also by their own families. Chinese wives are pressured by their husbands and extended family members to give birth to sons, and become a great disappointment if they fail to do so. This can result in infanticide of female children (Johnson, 1993).

In the book *Messages from an Unknown Chinese Mother*, author Xinran wrote about the many encounters she had with mothers who lost a child because of China's one-child policy. Although the stories told have individual features, they also have

similar themes. Xinran used the term “tummy mummy” to refer to the birth mother’s telling their stories of how they were unable to keep their child because of the child’s gender. Those mothers shared the impact the one-child policy had in their lives. Mothers who did not want to willingly give up their children are left with a void for the rest of their lives in response to their child’s whereabouts and well being.

Xinran showcased the perspective of the “unknown mothers,” and probed their thoughts and feelings of giving up their children, having their children taken away, or having their children killed on the basis of their gender. The mothers talked about having a void in their sense of being that could never be filled because they lost a child. Xinran used the term “waiter,” not as a noun but as a verb, to wait, to refer to those mothers who have lost a child. The waiting turns into longing for the child they no longer have. The opportunity to parent was taken abruptly from these mothers.

Losing the opportunity to parent because of a child’s gender takes many forms. The people came up with different ways of getting rid of unwanted babies. Xinran writes about “doing” baby girls to death, and “putting it out of the way” to refer to female infanticide. Different terms are used in the different provinces, but ultimately they refer to the same actions. The use of language plays an important role in understanding events and ideas. A euphemism changes how an event is perceived. For example, “doing” and “putting out of the way” minimizes the severity of the problem. These terms do not give a proper description of what takes place. These terms were coined and have evolved as consequences of implementation of the one-child policy.

In coming to terms with the policy and the repercussions that are associated with it, some women came to the conclusion that it is in the best interest of the child to be killed rather than endure a lifetime of oppression because of their gender. Mothers have endured the pain of oppression first hand and they refuse to expose their children to such a lifestyle. Abandonment is another attempt to help provide a better future for a child; although there is a chance the child might die before someone can rescue her. Abandonment is an alternative to killing the child abruptly after birth or having an abortion. Mothers have had to resort to drastic measures to try and provide for the wellbeing of their children.

Measures that mothers resort to in order provide for their children's well-being are often scrutinized and often judgment is cast upon them. There is a difference in perspective between lived experiences and being provided with information. Those who have lived experiences are faced with the consequences of the decisions made, while others only hear about it. There is no way of finding out what a child's life would have been like if they were not killed at birth, and there is no way to see what the future holds for those daughters who do have the opportunity to live. "They spend their whole lives anxiously fearing for their daughters" (Xinran, 2011, p.119) was how a woman described the lives of mothers who were not able to keep their children. Whatever decision a mother has made, it is what she deems appropriate and in the best interest of her child, whether it be infanticide or abandonment.

Abandonment provides the opportunity for a child to end up in an orphanage. Johnson described how the Wuhan orphanage in China mostly houses infant girls who

suffer from minor birthmarks to severe retardation, and a miniscule amount of boys who have severe disabilities and are in need of institutional care. China illegally accepts abandoned children. Volkman (2003) identified that it occurs in secrecy due to fear of punishment by provincial authorities. Hollingsworth (2003) noted that China has no official policy for the relinquishment of children for adoption, leaving parents with abandonment as an option (as cited in Vonk et al., 1999). Baby girls are abandoned because if parents do not register the child, they are still able to use the childbearing permit to make a second trial and hope for a boy (Chan et al., 2002). Couples can pretend the first birth never occurred, as it was never registered. Chan et al. write about abandonment as another option to get rid of unwanted children as Chinese laws prohibit the use of technologies for gender selection for social reasons. Abandonments are seen as a form of gender selection because the abandoned child is most likely a girl. With the amount of pressure placed on parents about their child's gender, they take extreme measures to get rid of unwanted children.

In some instances midwives attempt to help families cope with unwanted children as hope to provide a better life for those children. Xinran (2011) mentions that some midwives cannot bring themselves to kill a baby so instead they take the baby to a hospital or an orphanage. Another strategy the midwives resort to is making arrangements with couples to give them a baby that was not wanted by the family. It is as if they were running an undercover adoption service. In this instance, the midwives are contributing to the subordination of women in enabling parents in helping them get rid of unwanted children on the basis of gender.

There are numerous countries that subordinate, oppress, and discriminate women. Examples of discrepancies in the labor market show that women are more likely to be in lower paid jobs, less likely to be promoted, and more prone to be laid off (Chan et al., 2002). In Chinese society, women cannot attain any property rights and have minimal education, while sons are preferred over daughters due to the son's responsibility of caring for his parents in old age, and having the capacity of carrying the family's name (Johansson & Nygren, 1991; Johnson, Banghan & Liyao, 1998; Evans, 2000; Buchanan, 2005; Dowling & Brown, 2009). In addition, Hesketh and Xing (2005) stated that China's preference for males has increased the sex ratio to 120 males to every 100 females in the country.

INTERNATIONAL ADOPTIONS

All children should have a warm bed to sleep in, a place to call home, and a family to provide unconditional love and support. In reality, many children do not have these essentials. A child's current residence may be a shelter or foster home. In the documentary *China's Lost Girls* (Myers, 2004), journalist Lisa Ling explores the consequences of the one-child policy, how this legislation has brought tens of thousands of girls into orphanages across China, and how American families are adopting Chinese girls. "The concept of an orphanage didn't exist outside of cities;" in the countryside killing baby girls was taken for granted (Xinran, 2011, p. 113). Xinran writes despite the Chinese government encouraging families in China to adopt, few are able to do so because of social attitudes and the influence of the one-child policy. Although in recent years there has been an increase in both domestic and international adoptions in China.

Not until the 1990's, after the liberalizing of government policies on adoption and western family involvement, did Chinese orphanages emerge from obscurity (Xinran, 2011). In her interviews Xinran talked with previous orphanage employees, who spoke of how difficult it was to obtain documentation about the children being housed in orphanages; even orphanage employees were not informed about the operations of the orphanages.

“Since opening its doors to adoption in 1992, China has been a leading country for parents looking to international adoption as a way of forming a family” (Selman, 2002, pg. 458). It is presumed that the Chinese government had to turn to international adoption in the 1990s to find more adoptive homes for the growing numbers of predominantly female orphans living in overcrowded Chinese orphanages (Johnson, 2002). As a whole, China has nearly 1,000 state-run institutions for orphans, and most of those institutions are inaccessible to foreign observers (Human Rights Watch/Asia, 1996). Children adopted from China normally spend their first year in an institution under conditions of poor stimulation, and most display developmental delays and growth retardation (Krakow, Tao, & Roberts, 2005; Miller & Hendrie, 2000; Pomerleau et al., 2005).

The appalling conditions in the orphanages also contribute to the deaths of the children placed there. These children comprise the “missing children” of China. Thurston (1996) discussed how no one is certain what happens to the missing girls of China. All of the child deaths, the unregistered children, the abandoned children, and the children who spend a significant part of their lives in orphanages all make up the missing girls of

China. Thurston added that Chinese police officers are supposed to search for the parents, but most searches prove to be unsuccessful. Some of the girls may be aborted soon after an ultrasound reveals a female fetus, even though this practice is declared illegal (Thurston, 1996).

Parents who are adopting children are aware that the younger a child is at the time of adoption the lower the risks for medical, developmental and psychosocial problems which increases the demand for Chinese children since most are about one year old when they join their adoptive family (Cohen et al., 2008). Cohen et al. describe the adopted Chinese children as smaller physically, and presenting more developmental delays compared to other children; however, physical, mental, and language development delays improved around six months post-adoption.

Human Rights Watch/Asia (1996) received calls from multiple Western adoptive parents declaring that the conditions they witnessed in Chinese orphanages where they adopted children from were deplorable. The orphanages were understaffed and the children were living under negligent conditions because the orphanage staff did not have enough money or time (Xinran, 2011). These institutions have struggled with inadequately heated buildings and unhygienic conditions, so children are wrapped or wear multiple layers of clothing, which inhibits motor exploration (Cohen et al., 2008). In 2004, United States health officials discovered a measles outbreak from Chinese children adopted by American couples; Centers for Disease Control investigators believed the illness was contracted from the Zhuzhou Child Welfare Institution located in the Hunan Province of China (Kaye, 2004). Although the conditions in Chinese

orphanages have improved in the past ten years, the caregiver to child ratio is high, and stimulation levels are low, and insufficient nutrition is common (Cohen et al., 2008).

Some institutions use part of the adoption fees to improve orphanage conditions and raise inclusive standards of childcare, although some orphanages have indicated that many of the fees are sent off to corrupt officials (Human Rights Watch/Asia, 1996). To improve the quality of life for the children residing in the orphanages, there must be an urgent shift towards adequate funding by the central government (Human Rights Watch/Asia, 1996). The perceptions people had about orphanages were negative, they were seen as embarrassments towards society and dumps for unwanted children, but there has been changing views on orphanages and international adoptions (Xinran, 2011).

There is a multitude of reasons why people choose to adopt internationally. Unavailability of infants of European descent, increased infertility, public controversy over domestic transracial adoption, and public acceptance of international adoptions have all contributed to the increased interest in international adoptions (Vonk et al., 1999). International adoption represents the only viable immediate solution to the suffering of children globally (Hollingsworth, 2003). Both parents and child benefit from the adoption, as the child is provided with a caring family and the parents a child to love. If it were not for international adoption some children would otherwise not be able to achieve their full potential in their country of origin. International adoption can also relieve children of the poverty and institutionalization they would otherwise be destined for. The controversy over domestic transracial adoption may also be related to the increase in

international adoption, as there is disagreement whether Caucasian parents can provide ethnic children a healthy ethnic identity (Vonk et al., 1999).

Parents seek international adoption both to avoid having to compete for the limited number of infants available domestically and the low risk of birth parent interference in the adoption (Hollingsworth, 2003). Parents who can afford international adoption increase their chances of adopting a younger child, which is what most couples strive for. There has also been a decrease in the number of children available for domestic adoptions because of the increase in readily available contraceptive methods (Vonk et al., 1999). Supply and demand has played a role in international adoptions as it relates to sending and receiving countries.

In 2005, Johnson reported that about one out of every three internationally adopted children in the United States were from China. As presented by Volkman (2003), China became the leading country sending children to the United States and the rest of the world, with 30,000 adopted Chinese children, mostly girls. In 1996 the adoption of children from China represented the largest number of adoptions of children from a single country (Hollingsworth, 2003). American families have received the most attention from the media in regards to international adoptions.

In their study, Chou, Browne and Kirkaldy (2007) performed an internet search which yielded 116 adoption agencies that promoted international adoption services online, with China being one of the top 5 countries where adoptions were conducted. The study investigated whether these agencies adhered to the principles that govern the practice of moving children across borders as outlined in the 1993 Hague Convention,

which is based on the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights to the Child (UNCRC), the international legislation that promotes children's rights, as well as the cost associated with international adoption services. In talking about international adoption the cost of such services is a factor that has to be considered.

Chou et al. (2007) broke down the cost of international adoptions based on average fees associated with the process. Of the agencies selected, 48.3% of them charged an application fee, which ranged from \$50-1,000 U.S. dollars, with the average cost being \$274 U.S. dollars. 37% of the agencies had an agency fee to facilitate the adoption ranging from \$1,700-9,400 U.S. dollars, with an average of \$4,327. The total cost ranged from \$7,500- 35,000 U.S. dollars with an average cost of \$20,338. Chou et al. also report that The National Adoption Clearinghouse estimated the total cost of an international adoption in 2004 to range from \$7,000-30,000 U.S. dollars.

In looking at current fees for 2013, the National Adoption Clearinghouse estimated the total cost ranging from \$12,000-40,000 U.S. dollars. These figures represent the fees associated with the adoption process, they do not include travel expenses or other unanticipated fees. Such figures represent a huge variation for essentially the same services. When there is financial profit, international adoption inevitably becomes part of a market economy as there is a consumer driven 'export' of children from less economically developed to more economically developed countries like the U.S. (Chou et al., 2007). Chou et al. also point out that financial gains for sending countries may hinder development of domestic family services as adoption agencies normalize international

adoption rather than considering it a last resort when domestic solutions cannot be found for the care of a child.

With adoptions being shaped by a market economy, some of the principles of the UNCRC are not being taken into account. Chou et al. (2007) highlight factors contributing to a lack of adherence to the UNCRC principles including the number of discrepancies in the regulations between domestic and international adoptions, a lack of comprehensive assessment of prospective adopters, and the poor regulation of services offered on the internet. In serving the best interest of the child, matching the skill and capacity of adopting parents to the needs of the child is essential and common practice for domestic adoptions; however, international adoptions seem to work on the principle of having adopting parents select a child to satisfy their needs, which is a violation of the UNCRC principles (Chou et al., 2007). Along with conducting proper adoptions there has to be proper support services for post adoption needs as they arise.

Adequate post-adoption follow-up and support for the child and adoptive family are needed to make sure the child is thriving and in a stable environment (Chou et al., 2007). For example, adopted children go through a significant number of changes in a short period of time. They often go through changes in culture, language, caregivers, and others. These changes will have an impact on their lives, with only time telling how each child will react. Chou et al. also mentions possible issues with self-identity and disclosure of the child's adopted status and the psychological or social impact it may have.

In general, adopted children wonder why they physically look dissimilar to their parents. Xinran (2011) writes that a common question she would be asked was, "why

didn't my Chinese mummy want me?" (p.106) Adopted children are faced with the decision of how they want to incorporate their family of origin and their adopted family into their identity. A child has to adapt to a new life with an adopted family and process the loss of the family of origin. During this process parents can discuss the adoption process and provide the children with answers to questions they might have. In receiving answers, children are able to develop a healthy identity. According to Volkman (2003), adoptive parents yearn to know their adopted child's birthplace; however they are only given information of where the child was found. Both the children and parents can navigate the process of acquiring information together to help piece an identity together.

The adoptive parents' perspectives on adopting a Chinese child, most likely a girl, tend to run along the lines of being seen as a positive intervention. Not only are the parents adding a member to their family, but they are also providing a safety net for a child who may have otherwise had their life jeopardized in their country of origin. To help set a positive stage for the family, it is important to take both the child's and parents' needs and capacities to ensure they are a good match. Support services to help during the adoption process and post adoption services are essential in helping the family attain a successful outcome.

Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

Study Objectives

Using secondary data sources we conducted an exploratory research study that examined and analyzed data related to China's one-child policy and implications it has had on families among China's population. The method of sampling used was selective sampling, which allowed the researchers to focus their attention on a specific theme and criteria for analysis among a specific subset of the Chinese population. The research focused on the following criteria for determining inclusion for selective sampling: families with children, children's gender, family's socioeconomic status, and family's physical residence. The goal of this study was to highlight how Chinese families are impacted by the implementation of the country's one-child policy. The use of these findings can assist policy makers and leaders in international policy development and utilization. The conclusion from the analysis revealed the repercussions the policy has had on Chinese families.

Research Design

The research was conducted through an exploratory research design being quantitative and qualitative in nature. Exploratory research allowed the authors to learn how people get along in their natural environment, what meanings they give to their actions, and what issues concern them, which allows for investigating social phenomena without expectations (Engel & Schutt, 2013). This study examined information available

from peer-reviewed articles and other data sources in regards to the impact of the one-child policy on the people of China.

Instrumentation and Data Collection Procedures

The researchers gathered information for analysis from multiple sources including scholarly journals, online periodicals, newspaper articles, books, and documentaries. The journal articles and periodicals were obtained by performing an online database search from the CSU Sacramento's library website. In using online search engines (i.e. Google, BBC), obtaining books, searching for research articles in the university's online catalog, and watching documentaries (i.e. Netflix, the University's Films On Demand Database). The researchers applied a systematic approach in deciding what information to consider for inclusion in the study. The terms "China's one-child policy," and "Chinese families," were searched and the results were used as they related to the following themes outlined in the study; historical background of China's one-child policy, the abandonment of Chinese children as a consequence of that policy, and the availability of children for transnational adoption because of the policy.

The researchers compiled articles that contained similar themes such as gender inequality and subordination, cultural values and how they impact family systems, child welfare policies, and the insufficient focus on the people's social welfare needs.

California State University of Sacramento provides student access to databases from which the researchers acquired articles to successfully fulfill the purpose of this study.

The researchers abided by copyright regulations in handling articles, books, online periodicals, newspapers, and documentaries. The researchers sought help from

Sacramento State librarians when needed. The researchers initiated their research on China's one-child policy during the 2014 spring semester.

The researchers searched for the terms "China's one-child policy" using the ProQuest database which yielded one hundred and fifty-seven articles, of which fifteen were related to our major themes and were selected for inclusion in the study. These fifteen articles were divided into subcategories, which included topics such as: pros and cons of China's one-child policy, the increase in abandonment and international adoption of Chinese girls, and the alarming rate of female infanticide.

Some findings that were relevant to our study were the high frequency in variables that were included for analysis. The high frequency resulted in a substantial amount of evidence to support the gender inequality prevalent in China. Abandonment and sex ratio imbalance are some of the many elements that have impacted family dynamics, which have led to continuous injustices against women. The high demand for male children, has driven the disproportionality in sex ratio; creating an alarming rate of female infanticide.

Once the data collection process was completed, the data obtained was entered into Microsoft Excel for analysis. The frequencies of the variables that were included in the study were grouped together and graphs were created. The findings are presented in bar graphs, which compared and contrasted variables.

Human Subjects Protection

In collaboration, the researchers and their thesis advisor completed the application for the protection of human subjects. Upon approval by the advisor, the first submission

of the application was on October 17, 2013. The researchers received a rejection letter on November 6, 2013, with recommendations provided to improve the application. The required modification made by the Research Review Committee was to include empirical data analysis in the research study to make the study findings and discussions more than a second literature review. The recommendations made by the Research Review Committee were taken into consideration, and incorporated in a new version of the application. The researchers needed to justify the nature of data analysis so that the proposed research is beyond a simple literature review. With the approval of their thesis advisor, the researchers submitted the application a second time on November 8, 2013. The application, with protocol #13-14-026, was approved on November 25, 2013. This research study is considered exempt, as the researchers conducted a content analysis on China's one-child policy and how it affects the well being of families and children. The researchers sought guidance from their thesis advisor on December 5, 2013 to continue with their thesis process.

Data Coding

The researchers' performed content analysis using a qualitative method approach to analyzing the data. Information gathered was organized, tabulated, and analyzed using Excel or manually when deemed appropriate.

The following Data Collection Protocol details the major themes searched:

Data Collection Protocol

- I. Governmental policies on:
 - a. One-child policy (past and present, from 1980 to 2013)

- b. Social and cultural development
 - c. Sanctions and punishments for policy violators
 - d. Incentives for policy compliance
- II. Empirical evidence on:
- a. Gender inequality and subordination
 - b. Impact of cultural values on family systems

Limitations

This study did not include participants as research subjects. Informed consent was not required for this study, as the researchers did not use human participants as research subjects. The rights to privacy and safety of human subjects are not applicable to this study. The researchers did not administer tests, questionnaires, interviews, surveys, or other types of instruments in the study. There is no harm or discomfort involved in this study, as the researchers did not use human subjects. There is no equipment or instruments used for this study. There were no devices, drugs, or pharmaceuticals used in this study.

Some limitations with the current study were: sample size, the accessibility and availability of published articles for the researchers to use for analysis, and the extent of the findings from this study that can be incorporated by policy makers.

The authors strongly believe that conducting an actual research project on this topic will create a more profound understanding of international policies, especially legislation that hinders family systems.

Chapter 4

STUDY FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

This chapter discusses the findings from the secondary data, retrieved from articles, books, and documentaries. The overall findings of this study demonstrated a high frequency use of words chosen as variables as they relate to substantial amounts of gender inequality. This inequality is ingrained in both individual beliefs and societal policies. Abandonment is a result of gender inequality in China, and it continues to happen today. The policies also perpetuated the cycle of gender inequality on a societal level. The specific findings of this study were that there were some obvious phrases that had a high frequency, including adoption, sex ratio imbalance, and gender preference.

Overall Findings

The researcher's interpretations of the findings are that the tactics used by the Chinese government are coercive in nature as opposed to them being persuasive as they claim. Some of the variables that were chosen for analysis elucidate the preconceptions the researchers had about the implications of the policy. The policy has had beneficial implications for the people of China, as well as some negative unintended consequences.

This study aimed at analyzing the content of various sources including books, movies, and scholarly journals as they pertain to China's one-child policy and the impact it has had on the Chinese people in relation to cultural and family values, gender inequality, international adoption, and social welfare issues. The tables below reflect the frequencies of the times each author mentioned a specific term, idea, or phenomenon.

SPECIFIC FINDINGS

Narratives of Documentaries

The following summary is a description of events portrayed in the documentary *China's Only Child* (NOVA, 1984), which demonstrated the ups and downs five years after the enforcement of the one-child policy in China, and the impact it has had on the people. In various provinces there are local educators within rural and smaller urban areas that inform families, especially newlywed couples of the importance of following the one-child rule. They highly encourage couples to routinely use contraceptives in order to prevent births and avoid being reprimanded for violating the policy.

The film, *China's Only Child*, illustrated the importance of a “birth permission card” that authorizes couples to conceive a child. If the couples endure the restrictions of the one-child policy, they are compensated with a “glory certificate,” which rewards them with the following incentives: three extra months of maternity leave, free childcare, free schooling for the child, \$30 USD per year, future priority in securing the child a job, and the child is guaranteed entrance to college (NOVA, 1984). Chinese women shared in the film how the policy benefited the government and all individuals, but, in reality, it shows the viewer how the women are not encouraged to practice individuality or value oneself, but rather focus on group consensus and thinking. The local educators or family planning committees are not persuading the people of China, rather they are coercing them into thinking the one-child policy is correct and the best option for the country.

A more current view of policy implementation and gender perspectives is portrayed in the recent documentary *It's a Girl* (Davis, 2012). China's one-child policy

is analyzed and criticized to reveal both the leniency and strictness of the policy over the last 34 years. The film depicted the reflections from people in China regarding how the policy has shaped and impacted their public and personal lives, both in positive and negative ways. Much of that impact has been on the individual's way of thinking which has been influenced by living in a Communist country and being forced to abide by the one-child policy.

China has prevented 40 million births in part due to 14 million abortions a year, 35,000 abortions per day and 1,500 abortions an hour, which in turn generates about 1,100,000 more boys than girls being born in China and translates to 37 million more men than women in the country (Davis, 2012).

The video *The Dying Rooms* (Blewett & Woods, 1995) by Human Rights Watch is a grim portrayal of some of the conditions children, mostly abandoned girls, face in orphanages in China. The orphanages are overcrowded and understaffed, and the odds of the children being adopted are not in their favor. "At some orphanages, one in every five children admitted died" (Blewett & Woods, 1995). To address overcrowding and manage the number of children housed at any point in time, the orphanage workers devised a method known as "summary resolution" to do so. This method meant that orphanage staff and caregivers decided which children would be cared for and which were going to be left to die at intake. The movie showed the children facing double abandonment, first by their parents and then by the orphanage workers.

In the movie *China's Lost Girls* (Myers, 2005), the narrator follows a group of families making the trip to China to complete the international adoption process and be

united with their new daughters. The families share a multitude of obstacles along the way with their adoption process. The families are more likely to adopt a female child, due to China's one-child policy and the preference for sons as carriers of the family name and the supporters of parents in old age.

Excitement builds up to the day the family meets their new daughter. The families coined the term "gotcha day" in reference to that particular day. There is symbolism at the moment the childcare worker hands the baby over to the parents as the baby breaks out in tears, which is similar to birth when a baby cries when the doctor is handling them. Some of the parents also draw a connection between the nine months of pregnancy and the duration of the adoption process. There are both similarities and differences in creating a family using different strategies, like adoption or having biological children.

Key Variables

The following table (Table 1) depicts the frequencies gathered from the variables (n=20) found in the books used as sources. Some of the variables that had high frequencies were: gender preference (i.e. preference for sons n=42 or 27.1%), family planning (n=37 or 23.9%), abandonment (i.e. abandonment of girls n=36 or 23.2%), and birth control (n=30 or 19.4%). Some variables with low frequencies were: birth control methods (i.e. IUD, female sterilization n=4 or 2.6%), family composition (i.e. resorting to international adoption as first choice, second choice, both n=3 or 1.9%), and sex ratio (n=3 or 1.9%). The frequencies show that the books' primary topics were gender preference, family planning, abandonment, and birth control.

Table 1

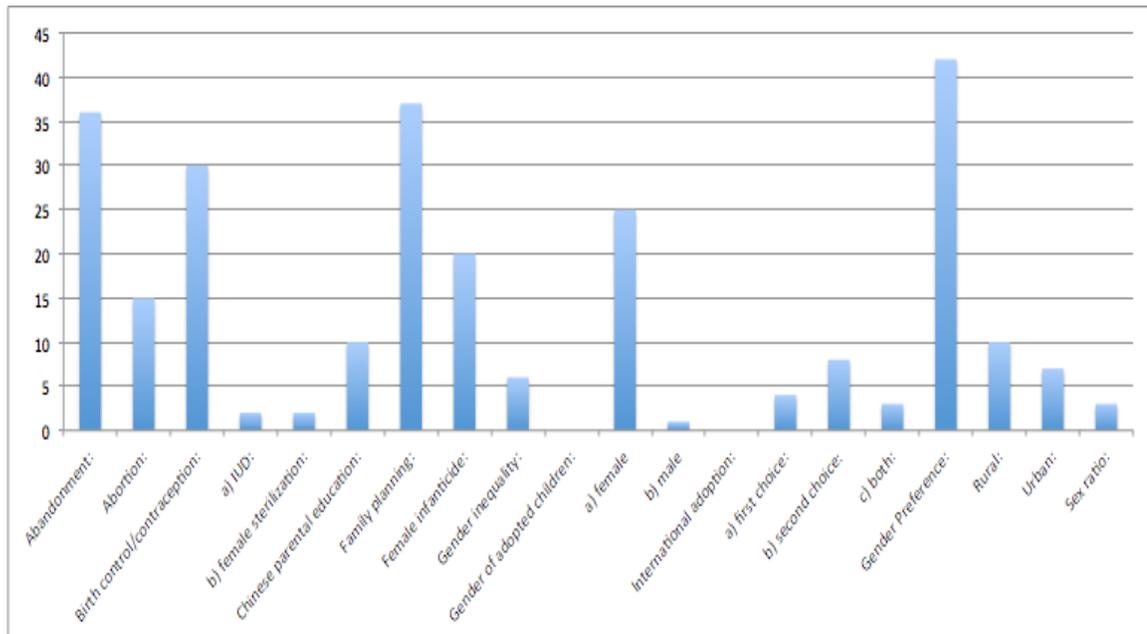
Variable Frequencies in Books

Table 2 represents the frequencies obtained based on the collected variables (n=21) from viewed documentaries. The following variables had higher frequencies: abandonment (n=56 or 23.2%), gender preference (n=56 or 23.2%), orphanages (n=37 or 15.4%), and adoption (n=31 or 12.9%). The films all shared a common theme throughout of gender preference, family planning, abandonment and orphanages, but they also emphasized topics such as birth control (n=28 or 11.6%) and female infanticide (n=28 or 11.6%). Summary resolution (n=2 or 0.8%) and IUD (n=3 or 1.2%) as a birth control method had the lowest frequencies in the table.

Table 2

Variable Frequencies in Documentaries

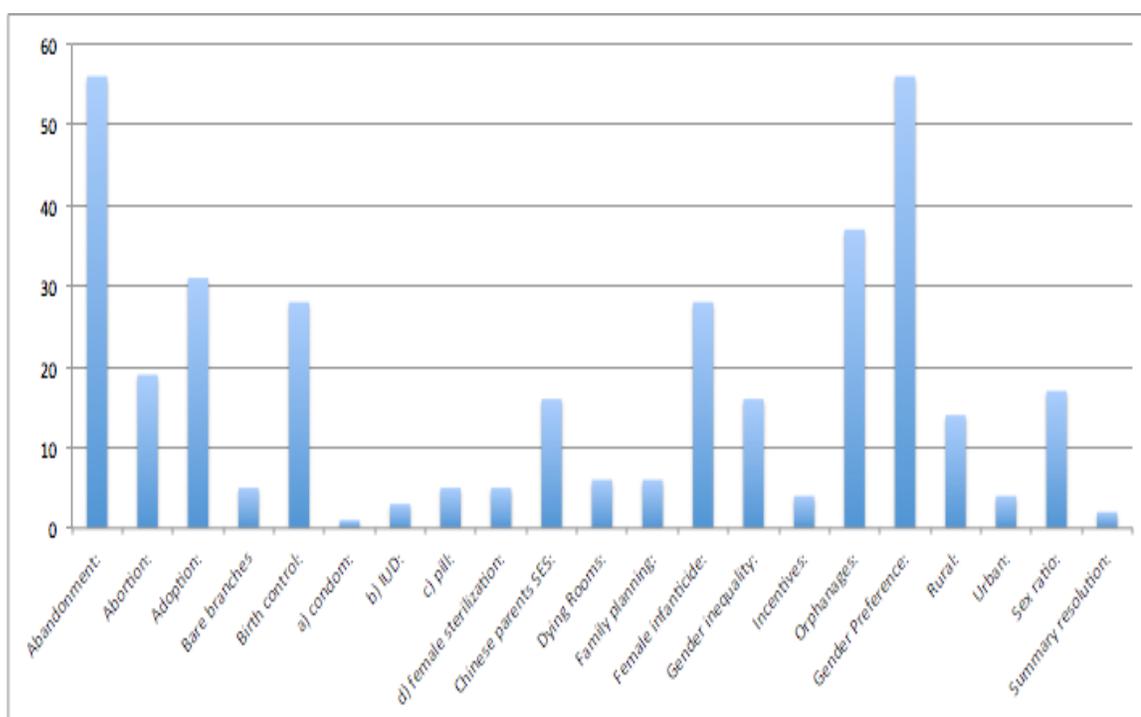
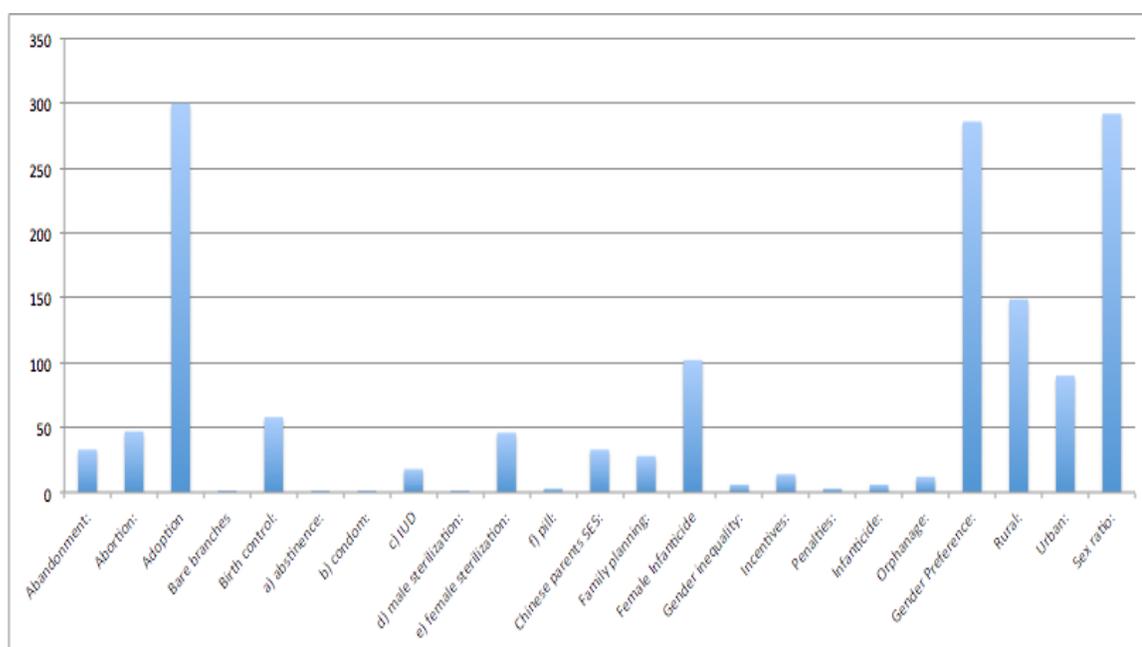


Table 3 shows the frequencies of the variables gathered from the scholarly journals included in the study. Some of the variables with high frequencies were: gender preference (n=286 or 32.4%), adoption (n=300 or 33.98%), and sex ratio imbalance (n=292 or 33.1%). Some of the variables that had low frequencies were: bare branches, not continuing their family tree (n=1 or 0.1%), penalties (i.e. fines, restriction of services n=3 or 0.3%), and certain type of birth control (condoms, male sterilization, and abstinence n=1 or 0.1%). The frequencies show that the articles focus on gender preference, adoptions, and the sex ratio imbalance.

Table 3

Variable Frequencies in Articles



The following graph (Table 4) showed the frequency of abandonment (n=125 or 31.3%), compared to the urban (n=101 or 25.3%) and rural (n=173 or 43.4%) areas of China. The graph displays the commonality of abandonment of girls prevalent in rural areas versus urban areas in China.

Table 4

Frequencies of Abandonment within Urban and Rural areas

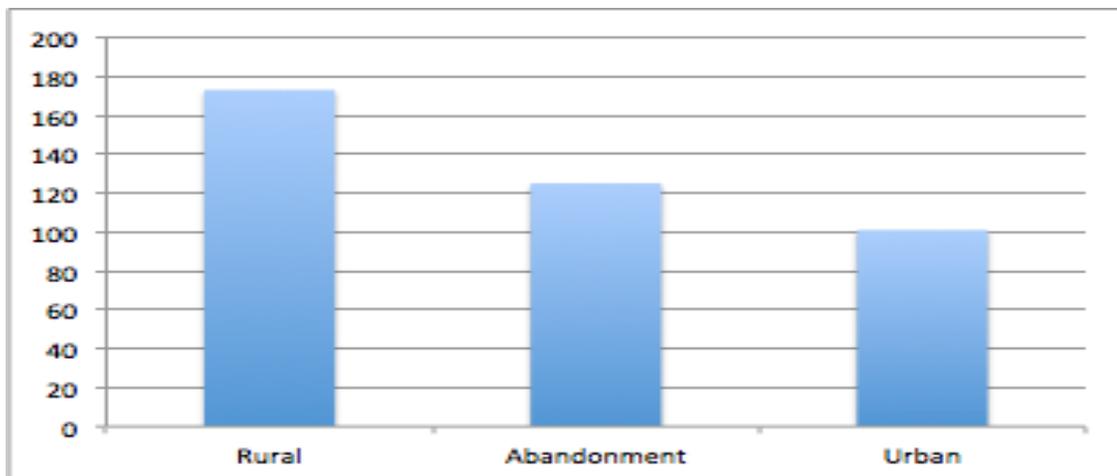
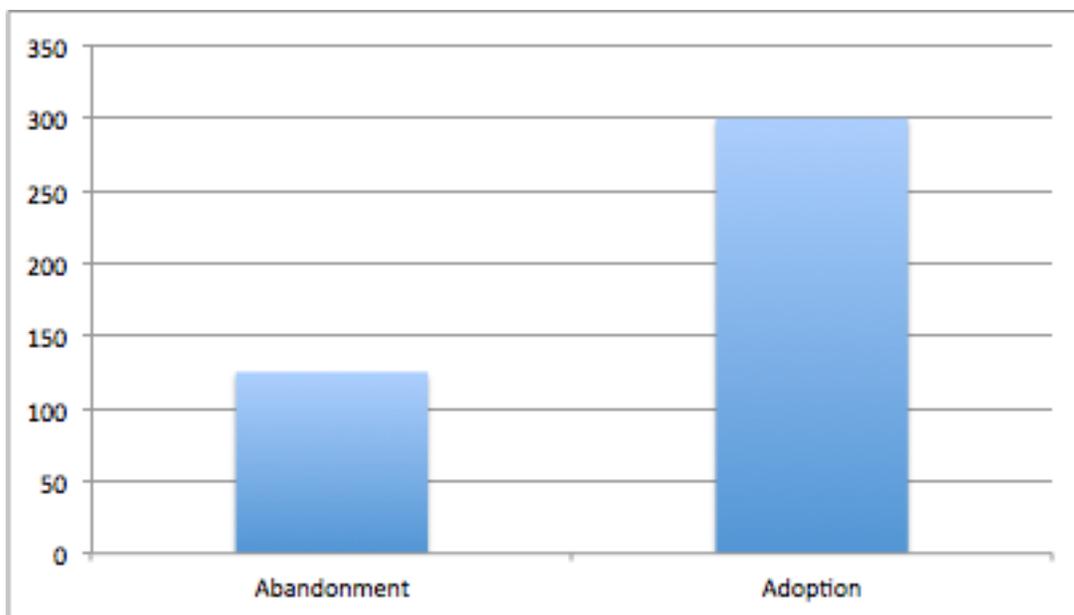


Table 5 is a comparison of frequencies between abandonment (n=125 or 29.4%) and adoption (n=300 or 70.6%) and how many times they are mentioned in the sources used. In comparing these terms, the authors mentioned adoption more often than abandonment.

Table 5

Comparison of Frequencies Between Abandonment and Adoption



In comparing both preference (n=384 or 75.4%) and abandonment (n=125 or 24.6%) in Table 6, preference for sons was discussed more than abandonment in the sources we collected. This graph shows that throughout the decades Chinese society blatantly prefers boys over girls.

Table 6

Comparison of Frequencies Between Preference and Abandonment

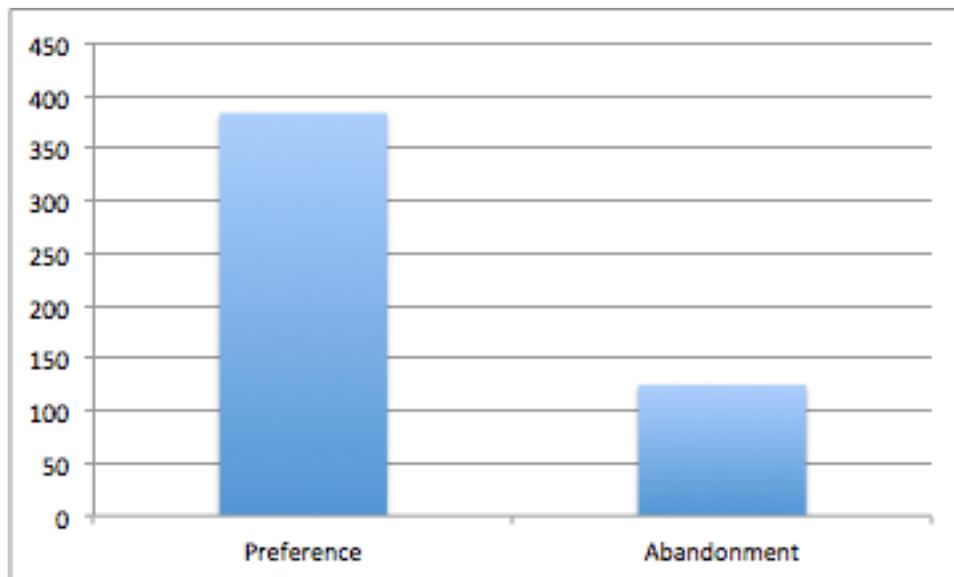


Table 7 shows the frequencies of birth control (n=204 or 57.6%) and female infanticide (n=150 or 42.4%), meaning that in the sources used there is extensive mention of birth control as it relates to the implementation of China’s one-child policy and female infanticide as a consequence of the policy.

Table 7

Frequencies of Birth Control Use in Contrast to Female Infanticide

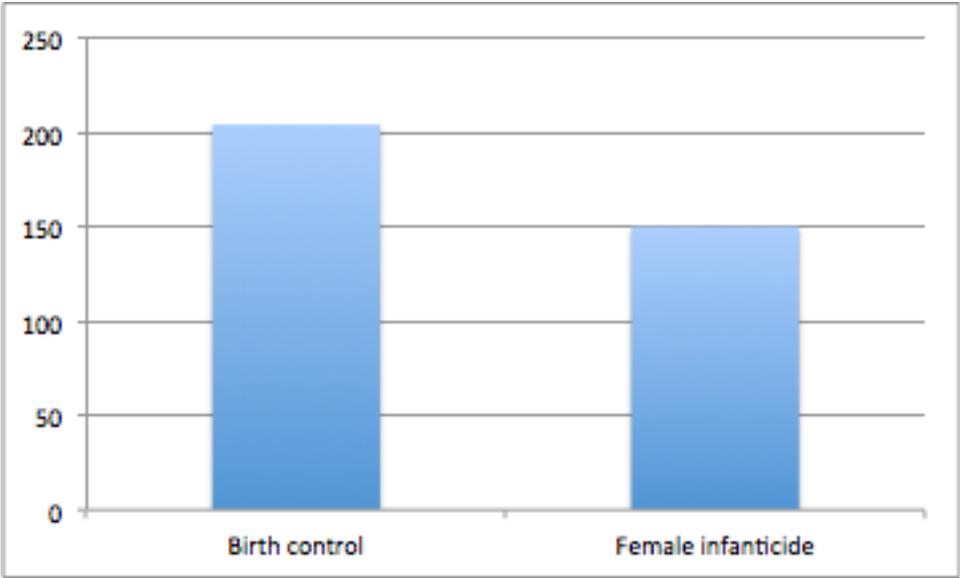
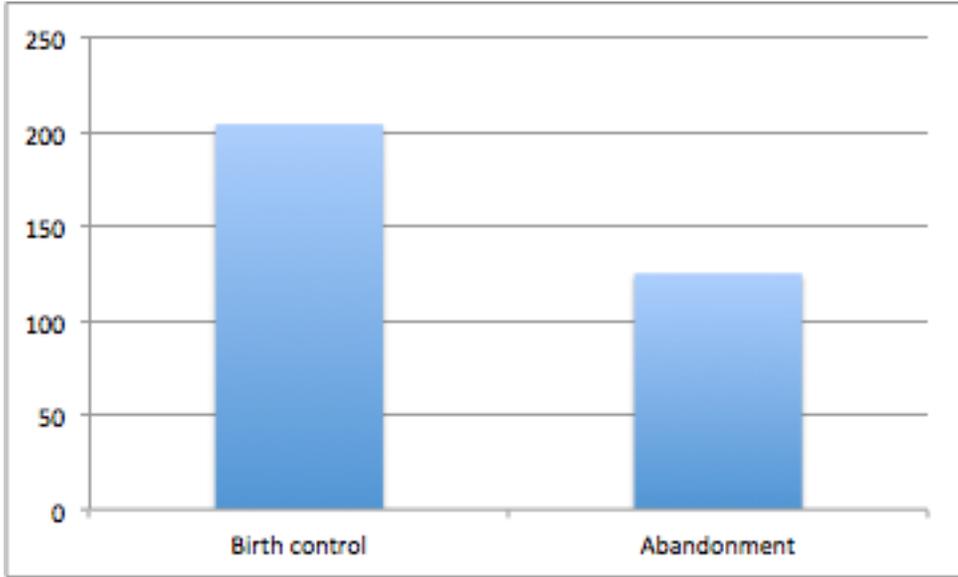


Table 8 portrays the comparisons in frequencies of birth control (n=204 or 62.01%) and abandonment (n=125 or 37.99%). This is an example of how prevalent the ideas of birth control methods and abandonment of children, primarily girls, are used in China is due to the enforcement of the one-child policy. Both frequencies are high in that they are interrelated as contributing factors to the welfare of children in China.

Table 8

Frequencies of Birth Control Use in Contrast to Abandonment



The following graph (Table 9) displays the frequency of adoption (n=300 or 66.67%) and female infanticide (n=150 or 33.33%) as they relate with China's one-child policy, and processed international adoptions for international parents of Chinese girls. International adoptions of Chinese girls are in popular demand, and female infanticide was cited less in the sources.

Table 9

Frequencies of Resorting Between Adoption or Female Infanticide

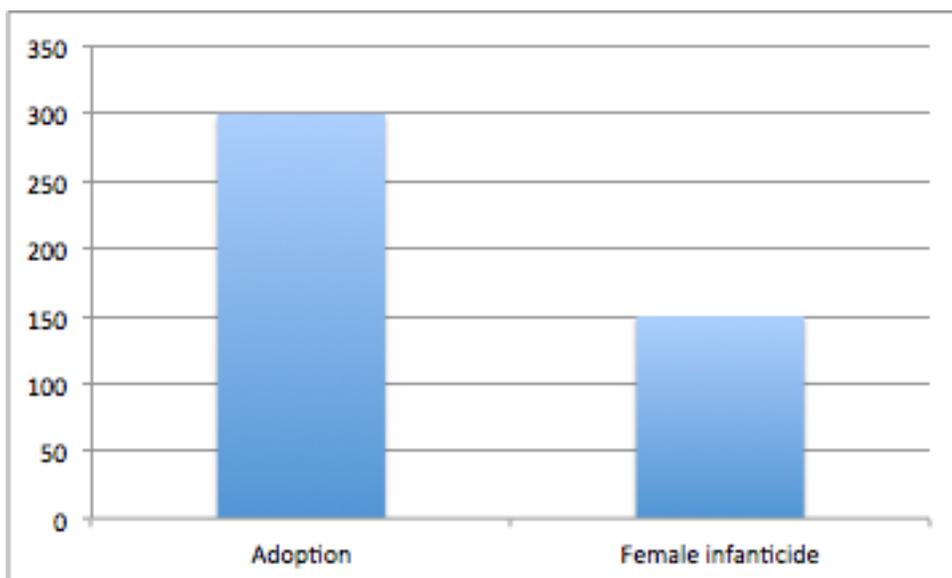


Table 10 illustrates the frequencies in gender preference (n=384 or 56.1%) and adoption (n=300 or 43.9%). Both frequencies are high because topics are commonly discussed in China. Historically there has been a strong gender preference for boys over girls. China is a high contributor of children involved in international adoptions.

Table 10

Frequencies of the Comparison Between Gender Preference and Adoption

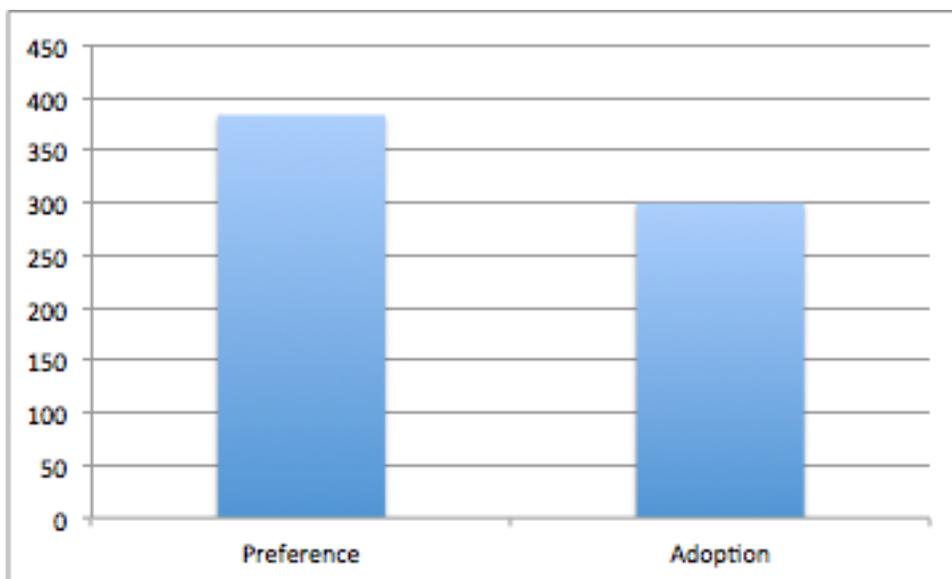


Table 11 demonstrates how abandonment (n=125 or 10.8%), adoption (n=300 or 26%), gender preference (n=384 or 33.3%), and sex ratio (n=345 or 29.9%) were depicted in the sources, with gender preference having the highest frequency and abandonment the lowest. China has a significant sex ratio imbalance, creating a shortage of females available for marriage, preferring males to females, and increasing the availability of girls available for adoption. Abandonment of girls is still practiced in China, but the sources do not represent the high frequency at which it occurs in the country.

Table 11

Comparing the Frequencies Among Abandonment, Adoption, Gender Preference, and Sex Ratio

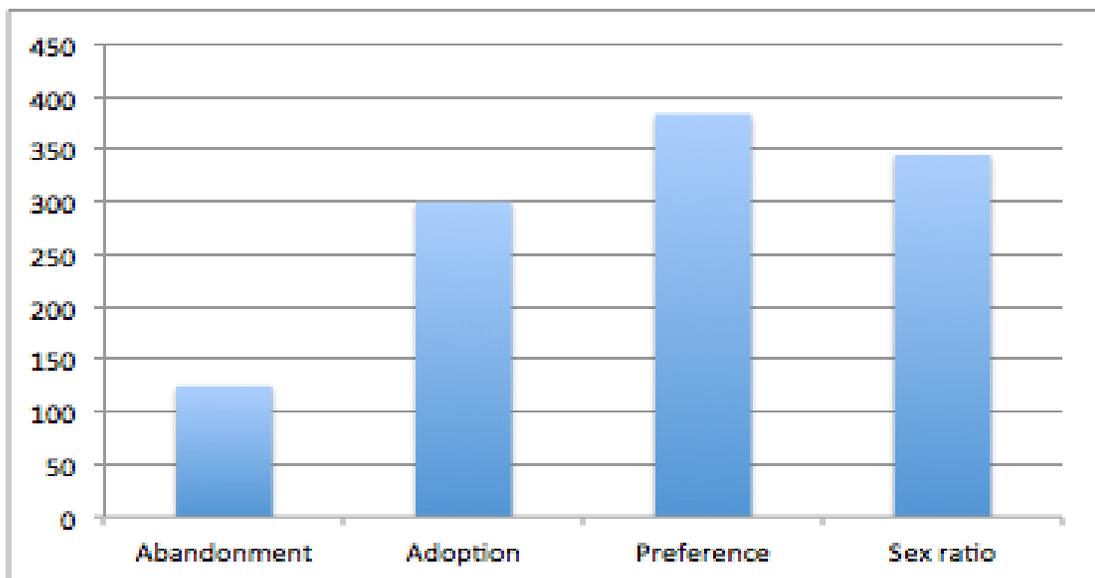


Table 12 is a comparison of the frequency of abandonment in books (n=36 or 28.8%), articles (n=33 or 26.4%), and movies (n=56 or 44.8%) that were used.

Frequencies are high in all sources as abandonment of female children is a common practice in China. This can serve as an area of improvement in terms of child welfare.

Table 12

Frequencies of Abandonment within Books, Documentaries, and Scholarly Journals

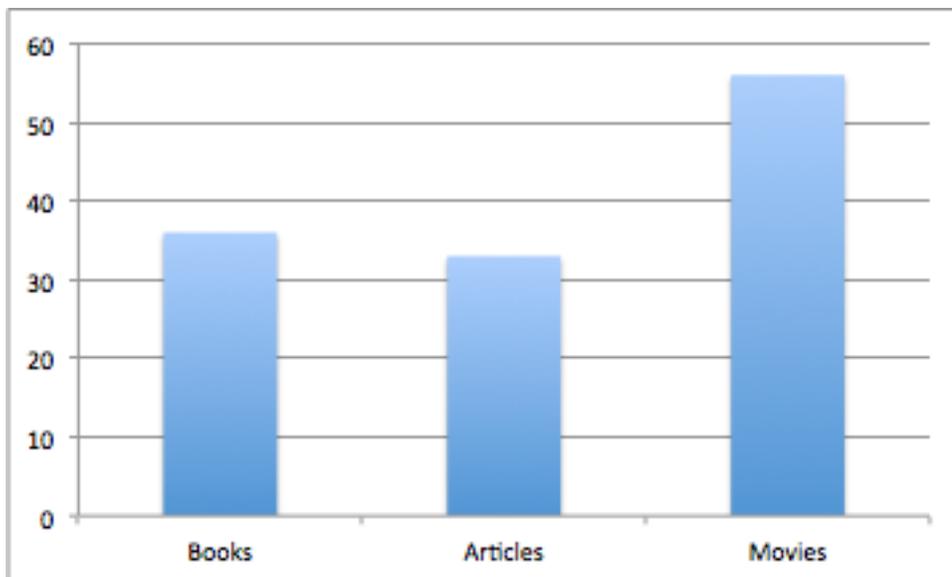
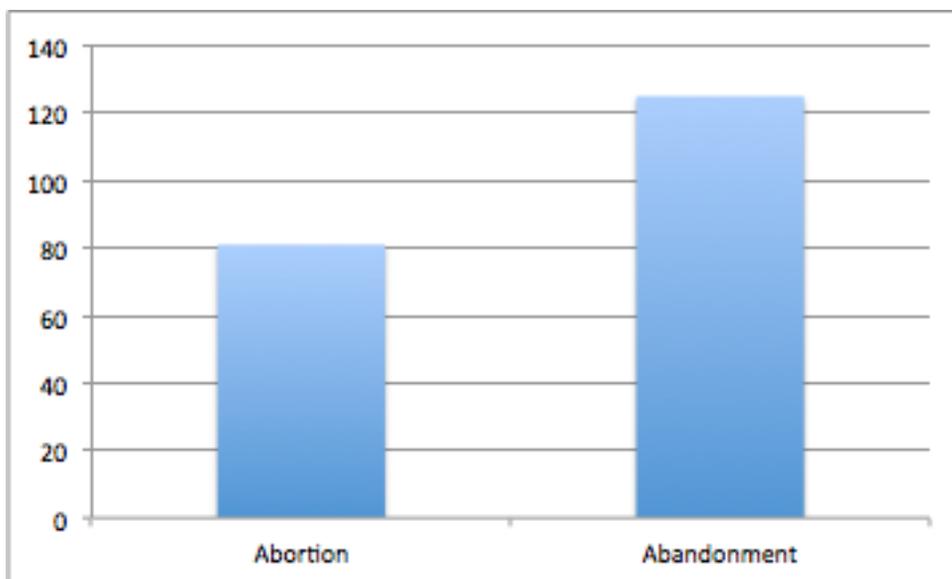


Table 13 shows a comparison in frequencies of abortion (n=81 or 39.3%) and abandonment (n=125 or 60.7%). Both frequencies are high in that they are common occurrences in China as a consequence of the one-child policy. The high frequencies can also serve as an indicator of the strictness in enforcement of the policy.

Table 13

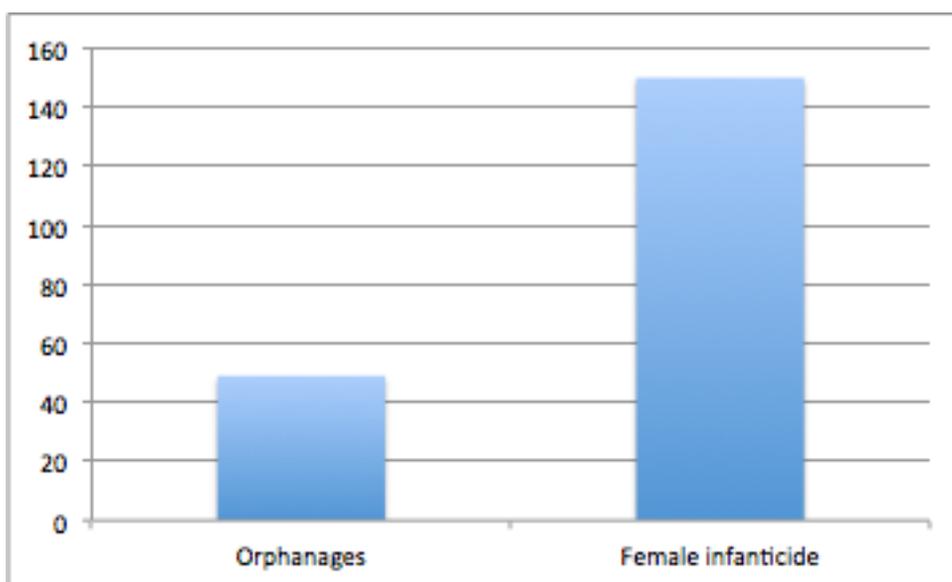
Comparing Frequencies of Abortion and Abandonment



The following table (Table 14) addresses the relationship between orphanages (n=49 or 24.6%) and female infanticide (n=150 or 75.4%). The frequency of female infanticide is high, and orphanages show a low frequency. The variables can demonstrate that the Chinese people prefer to perform the act of killing infant girls versus transporting the infant girls to an orphanage, in hopes that a family will adopt the child.

Table 14

Frequencies of the Comparison Between Orphanages and Female Infanticide



Interpretation of Findings

The researchers noted common themes among the various sources used which are: abandonment, birth control, adoption, gender preference, and female infanticide. These themes are represented with high frequencies throughout all the tables listed above. Abandonment is a common practice and serves as a method of not caring for a child, especially when the child is not of the preferred gender the family and society desires.

Gender preference is a long-standing Chinese tradition, as boys carry the family name. This preference for boys contributed to the sex ratio imbalance and the phenomenon known as “bare branches,” the fact that there will not be enough women for men to marry (Davis, 2012).

There are differences in policy implementation among rural and urban locations, the procedures used to ensure abidance of the policy, and the measures taken by families to ensure their compliance to the policy. Birth control methods, a highly emphasized practice among Chinese couples, to ensure that couples do not exceed the birth quota they are allowed, differs in its interpretation. The sources indicated that Chinese people have been coerced into adopting birth control methods, while the family planning committees want to make it seem as though it is a voluntary practice.

Policy implementation and interpretation have exposed practices and beliefs that negatively impact women. A rural couple stated “[i]t’s more profitable to raise geese than daughters” (Davis, 2012). Gender inequality is rampant in China which leads to the practice of female infanticide, and those girls that do survive in China are considered available for adoption, either domestic or international.

Summary

Results indicated that in China the status of women is not equal to that of men. The frequencies in the variables that were used for analysis give a grim portrayal of the institutionalized oppression of women. China’s one-child policy brought a vast array of unintended consequences the creators did not anticipate. Traditional beliefs about gender roles have further exacerbated the negative impact the policy has had on families all

together. Chinese families historically relied on men more than women, as men have the responsibility to care for their elderly parents, carry the family name, and continue emphasizing their traditional views of preference for son. Chapter 5 is a discussion of recommendations and limitations of this study.

Chapter 5

CONCLUSION, SUMMARY, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Our research question was whether China's one-child policy was either harming or benefitting Chinese children. The researchers were able to conclude that the policy is doing more harm than good to the population of China, with a significant impact on the children. In order of most impacted by the policy are children, women, and men. Children, especially girls, are the most impacted by the policy because they are being killed at an alarming rate. Some of the methods being used to kill them are abortion or female infanticide. Women are the targets of the family planning committees and are forced to endure horrendous birth control procedures to ensure adherence to the one-child policy. Women are subjected to late term abortions, are required to use IUDs or birth control pills, or sterilization surgery is performed. Men are being impacted because of the sex ratio imbalance in that there is not going to be enough women for every man to marry. This phenomenon is called bare branches, in that a family tree will stay put and not be expanded, there will be no addition of family members to the family tree.

The frequencies of our variables included for analysis support the research question. The high frequencies in the variables indicate the existence of gender inequality in China's one-child policy. High frequencies for gender preference and sex ratio imbalances were noticed throughout all sources. Frequencies for female infanticide and abandonment of girls were also high. The literature review and study findings are

consistent in demonstrating the prevalence of gender inequality found as a result in the policy implementation and interpretation practices.

Implications for Social Work

China is not alone in practicing female infanticide; India also heavily emphasizes female infanticide and gender inequality. Indian families traditionally value and prefer sons over daughters because sons carry the family name (Sharma, 2003). Sharma further found that the ratio of girls to boys is steadily declining, and can be attributed to sex selection abortions and female infanticide. Sharma added that in some areas of India strangulation, or placement of infant girls in sandbags are methods being used for female infanticide. In addition, Indian women practice sex selective abortions with the assistance and availability of ultrasound machines. According to Jha, Kumar, Pasa, Dhingra, Thiruchelvam and Moineddin (2006), despite prenatal sex determination being illegal since 1994 access to ultrasounds are widespread both in urban and rural areas, and therefore the law oftentimes is disregarded. This example shows that sons are preferred over daughters, generating and supporting gender inequality.

China's one-child policy has had some recent changes and forthcoming attitudes toward the updates. On November 15, 2013 China publicized the process of relaxing the one-child policy, however the government has yet to make the necessary and effective adjustments in writing, and has announced that children born before the determined date are considered illegal births (Bohon, 2013; Denyer, 2013). The proposed change to the policy is to allow couples to have a second child, if one parent is an only child themselves (Langfitt, 2013). Denyer further discussed that the policy updates will affect between 15

to 20 million couples, raising the birth rate to about one million births a year. Although couples are relieved to hear of the easing of the policy, Denyer described that Chinese couples are not rushing into conceiving a child due to the rising costs of schooling and housing. The New York Times' Opinion Pages concluded that of all the countries who feared a population outburst, China presented as going to extremes especially with the length of time it has implemented the policy (Feng, 2013). Feng added that one in three families in China, about 150 million households, currently have only one child. Some columnists are supporting the future changes the one-child policy will provide for Chinese families, though others strongly suggest that the policy should be eliminated in its entirety.

In working with certain ethnic groups, it is important to keep in mind their beliefs and values as they relate to their identity. Traditional Chinese beliefs encourage a collectivist way of life. The tactics used to enforce the one-child policy further exemplifies a collectivist approach. Family planning committees endorse a collectivist way of life when educating couples and persuading them to adhere to the policy. They claim adherence to the policy will be beneficial to society as a whole. This approach creates a conflict in the internal dialogue of cultural norms based on one's values and those imposed by society.

The norms and values are contingent upon their identification with an ethnic group. As social workers it is important to keep in mind the clients' perspective and consider their ethnic group's cultural and familial values, which may differ from one's

own, therefore respecting and honoring the clients' customs. Cultural sensitivity, a social work principle, is key in order to provide adequate services.

Recommendations

The researchers recommend that in the future overall changes be enacted to the one-child policy, for example, in terms of single-parent households as they are not mentioned in the literature and the policy does not address them. The researchers believe that unmarried individuals should be permitted to become parents, either biologically or via adoption. Single parents should have the ability to obtain birth permits, regardless of their marital, educational, and socioeconomic status. Moreover, the researchers strongly assert that the one-child policy should be eliminated in its entirety. Meanwhile, China should continue emphasizing the use of birth control methods but use positive reinforcements instead of the current approach being implemented. Family planning committees should focus on supporting the family's reproductive decisions and educating couples in a supportive manner, versus forcing couples to use birth control methods they disagree with.

More importantly, for the recommendations above to become successful, the ideologies of Chinese people and societal values need to change. Campaigning among urban and rural areas to demonstrate the importance of gender equality could significantly change current belief systems and the distorted view held about women. Traditional beliefs and gender preference are contributing factors to the current imbalanced sex ratios. In order to alleviate the sex ratio imbalance, Chinese people need to comprehend that women are as valuable as men, and are contributing members of

society. The acceptance of gender equality will level out the playing field among men and women, providing them with equal opportunities to prosper and reach their full potential. With the elimination of China's one-child policy, individual couples should be granted the ability to control their family size and exercise their rights as individuals.

Eliminating the one-child policy can in turn reduce the practice of female infanticide as there will not be a limit on the number of children that can be conceived, and with time the sex ratio imbalance can naturally return to appropriate levels. In the absence of a birth quota, the abandonment of children, particularly girls, should decrease. The decreased number of children being abandoned will also impact the number of children housed in orphanages.

Another recommendation the researchers have is to improve the conditions under which the orphanages operate. To improve the quality of life for the children residing in the orphanages, there must be an urgent shift towards adequate funding by the central government (Human Rights Watch/Asia, 1996). The Chinese government needs to devote more resources to improve the conditions of the orphanages to provide those children with better life outcomes. Human Rights Watch/Asia (1996) suggested that the solution for alleviating China's orphanage dilemma is allowing Chinese couples to adopt abandoned children, therefore having fewer children in orphanages that will require less funding by the Chinese government.

Recommendations for Future Research

The researchers believe that future replications of this study should include both qualitative and quantitative measurements of variables. Qualitative interviews should be

conducted with both American adopters of Chinese children and adopted Chinese children to inquire about their experiences of adoption processes and their experience of living in America. Another aspect of this topic that should be considered is touring private and state-run orphanages in China to be better able to understand and evaluate the conditions in which abandoned Chinese children live under. Also having the opportunity to interview Chinese people would be beneficial to the research to hear their perception of the one-child policy, their views and experiences as they relate to forced birth control use, abortions, abandonment of children, and their personal views about family dynamics. Lastly, for future replications, it would be important for the researchers to engage in empirical data collection to supplement content analysis.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to contribute to the awareness of international social welfare policies, in particular to China's one-child policy. The research illustrates the existence of gender inequality because of the policy influencing gender preference. The policy has innate discriminatory language targeted at women. In eliminating the policy another strategy should be used to address population growth, as it is known that at some point in time China will no longer be able to accommodate a surplus in the number of its citizens. The study also suggests that further work can be done to improve the status of women in Chinese society as it pertains to women's rights. The policy creates human rights violations, in limiting women's choice and hindering the outcome of pregnancies. Finally, it is noted that China is the country that has gone to the extreme in terms of population control.

APPENDIX A

Human Subjects Review Approval Letter



CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, SACRAMENTO
DIVISION OF SOCIAL WORK

To: Hugo Licea & Araceli Alicia Vega

Date: November 25, 2013

From: Research Review Committee

RE: HUMAN SUBJECTS APPLICATION

Your Human Subjects application for your proposed study, "China's one child policy: Is it harming or benefitting the children?", is **Approved as Exempt**. Discuss your next steps with your thesis/project Advisor.

Your human subjects Protocol # is: **13-14-026**. Please use this number in all official correspondence and written materials relative to your study. Your approval expires one year from this date. Approval carries with it that you will inform the Committee promptly should an adverse reaction occur, and that you will make no modification in the protocol without prior approval of the Committee.

The committee wishes you the best in your research.

Research Review Committee members Professors Maria Dinis, Jude Antonyappan, Serge Lee, Francis Yuen, Kisun Nam, Dale Russell,

Cc: Lee

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