

# **Title: The Impact of China's One-Child Policy on Female Empowerment: A Systematic Literature Review**

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## **Abstract**

This thesis employs a systematic literature review to examine the connection between China's One-Child Policy (OCP) and female empowerment. Based on Vanessa Fong's work, it hypothesises a positive relationship, supported by an analysis of 32 studies. Findings largely confirm that the OCP strengthened female empowerment by concentrating resources and support on only daughters through reduced household size. This led to greater access to family investment, parental support, educational and career development, progressive gender role attitudes, stronger natal family ties, improved intergenerational relationships, and enhanced decision-making authority within marital families. While most studies support this hypothesis, some present conflicting results, plus the OCP's effects vary due to external factors such as local educational and economic resources, shifts in patriarchal norms, and parents' education and parenting concepts. This highlights the policy's complexity. Moreover, much of the literature fails to distinguish the OCP's effects from broader socio-economic changes, making its precise impact difficult to assess. Despite these overlapping influences, the database still supports that the OCP and other factors have collectively shaped women's lives and influenced female empowerment.

# 1. Background and Research Question

This thesis explores the relationship between China's One-Child Policy (OCP) and female empowerment via a systematic literature review, inspired by Vanessa L. Fong's (2002) study on urban daughters under the OCP. China started introducing the family planning policy in the late 1970s and officially implemented the OCP in 1979 to restrain rapid population growth. The policy combined incentives, such as access to financial rewards and job benefits, with coercive measures, including forced contraception, abortions and sterilisations, particularly targeting women (Pletcher 2018). While enforcement was stricter in urban areas, rural resistance due to son preference and labor needs led to the emergence of the "1.5-child policy" instead (Kane and Choi 1999). The OCP significantly reduced fertility rates and eased demographic pressures (Jiang, Li, and Feldman 2013), but it also resulted in a skewed sex ratio, undocumented children, population aging, labor shortages, and widespread controversy over women's reproductive rights (Fong 2002; Goodkind 2015).

Fong (2002) argues that the One-Child Policy (OCP) empowered women. Through extensive participant observation in schools and 107 families, she revealed that singleton daughters received greater family investment, educational opportunities, and improved family and gender status. As one of the earliest and most cited studies in this field, Fong's work serves as a pioneering study in this field, laying the foundation for subsequent work. However, some studies that are based on Fong yet challenge Fong's finding, such as Hu and Shi's (2018) study, argue that the deeply rooted paternal preference for sons over daughters will limit the OCP's role in empowering females, indicating that the influence of OCP is controversial. On the other hand, Fong also mentions that increased investment for only-daughters occurs mainly in economically advantaged households; families with limited resources may still underinvest even in an only daughter. These imply the OCP's impact may be complex and can be formed by external conditions.

Against this background, this thesis asks whether the OCP led to female empowerment, and if so, in which way. To critically evaluate existing findings, verify Fong's conclusions, and gain a more comprehensive

and unbiased understanding of the OCP's impact on female empowerment, this thesis takes Fong's study as a point of departure to conduct a systematic literature review on prior studies to explore whether, and how, the OCP has influenced female empowerment. Drawing on Fong's framework, this thesis examines the following dimensions: family investment, education, employment, gender equality, family status, and the division of household gender roles. The central research question is:

**How has female empowerment (measured as family investment, education, employment, gender equality, family status, and the division of gender roles within families) changed in response to the OCP?**

Based on Fong (2002), this thesis hypothesises a positive relationship between the OCP and female empowerment.

The terminologies used in this thesis are explained below:

- Only-daughters: daughters without siblings
- Only-son: son without siblings
- Only-child: the child without siblings (covering both female and male).

## 2. Relevance of this review

According to the European Institute for Gender Equality (2023), female empowerment encompasses women's self-worth, decision-making rights, access to opportunities and resources, control over their lives inside and outside the home, and the ability to influence social change. Education, training, awareness, confidence-building, and institutional reforms are key tools for empowerment. Female empowerment is closely linked to fundamental human rights and gender equality, enabling women to live with dignity and make strategic life choices (Bayeh 2016; UNFPA China 2017). It strengthens women's roles in personal, family, and societal contexts. However, in contemporary China, patriarchal traditions and son preference hinder gender equality and women's welfare, causing employment discrimination and skewed sex ratios, which lead to social issues such as marriage squeeze and gender-based violence (Fung & Ferchen 2014; Liu 2023; UNFPA China 2017). Gender inequality and insufficient female empowerment undermine women's rights and well-being, harming their emotional, economic, and social interactions and limiting their development (Liu 2023). Such disparities cause gender imbalances and violence, threatening social stability (UNFPA China 2017). Female empowerment and gender equality are essential for social development and poverty reduction; without them, national development slows, costs rise, and injustice grows (Bayeh 2016). Therefore, female empowerment is key to women's welfare and social stability.

Fong (2002) argues that the OCP has empowered females, providing a direction for exploring ways to enhance female empowerment. However, it remains unclear how extensively the literature has investigated this area and whether similar insights and conclusions have been reached. Moreover, according to Liu (2023), despite decades having passed since the OCP was implemented, gender inequality remains severe. This somewhat contradicts the

hypothesis that the OCP may have promoted female empowerment, as that hypothesis would expect a reduction in gender inequality over time. Therefore, the impact of the OCP on female empowerment requires further investigation. This topic lacks a systematic literature review. This thesis aims to fill this gap by systematically investigating the impact of the OCP on female empowerment. By providing comprehensive insights on OCP's role, the thesis will advance the understanding of how population policies influence female empowerment and offer guidance for identifying effective factors to promote female empowerment.

### **3. Theoretical Framework: Fong's Framework on Female Empowerment via the OCP**

Fong (2002) argues that Chinese urban daughters born under the OCP are often regarded as the most fortunate generation of Chinese females in thousands of years. Traditionally, China's patriarchal kinship system favored sons in family resource allocation, including education, property, and inheritance. While through making the daughter as the only-child in a family, parents have no choice but to invest resources in their daughters therefore combat challenge the traditional patriarchal norms, Fong believes through create specific demographics, OCP makes the only-daughter have received higher input from family resources, which empowers daughters with the ability and opportunity to challenge inequitable gender norms and secure benefits.

To comprehensively understand OCP's impact on female empowerment, this thesis conducts a systematic review to comprehensively examine existing studies. Fong's literature provides a relatively comprehensive examination of the subfield of female empowerment, covering aspects such as family resources, educational work, and gender norms. Thus, this thesis initially adopts Fong's study as the theoretical basis, dividing female empowerment into four primary subfields (with subclasses in Table 1). Further subfields will be added if there are new findings during the research process.

**Table 1: Subfields relevant to female empowerment according to Fong's study**

<b>Subfields relevant to female empowerment</b>	<b>Subclasses</b>
Family investment and parental support	Family investment, resources  Parental support, attention and care
Education	Educational opportunities and achievement
Employment and Career Development	/ (same as the subfields)
Gender Equality and Attitudes	Family roles/ Status (greater value for daughters)  Marriage  Social mobility

## **4. Methodology**

Williams et al. (2020) state that systematic literature reviews help deepen and broaden understanding of a topic by collecting related studies and reducing bias. Through adopting clear protocols and criteria, this method makes the process clear, rigorous, and repeatable (Owens, 2021). Using multiple search strategies and at least three databases encourages researchers to go beyond their own fields and collect more comprehensive data (Mallett et al., 2012; Coombs, 2024). Combining multiple studies' results helps avoid bias from single studies, improves the accuracy and reliability of conclusions, and resolves conflicts between different findings (Lee, 2019). Therefore, systematic reviews can offer fuller and more accurate insights into China's OCP and female empowerment. However, this method also faces challenges such as limited access to databases, subjective screening, and high resource demands (Mallett et al., 2012), which this thesis must address.

### **4.1 Databases, keywords, and selection criteria.**

The Northeastern University Library guidelines recommend using at least three databases for a systematic literature review (Coombs, 2024). Accordingly, this thesis searched six databases available through ANU student access: Scopus, ANU Supersearch, Web of Science, PubMed, Wiley Online Library, and Taylor & Francis Online Journals. Keywords were chosen based on the research topic and Fong's (2002) study, which examines the impact of the One-Child Policy on female empowerment, including family resources, education, employment, family status, support for only daughters against patriarchal norms, marriage, and domestic roles (see Table 1). Search terms and formulas were developed through iterative testing.



Searching terms:

Subset A :

OCP

Subset B:

Female empowerment

Subset C:

Education, labour market outcomes,  
assets/property/ inheritance, domestic  
labour division, gender  
attitudes/feminist thinking/ family  
status/ family investment//marriage



Subset D:

Chin\* (this signifies China)

Subset E

Daughter, girl, woman, women

Search formula:

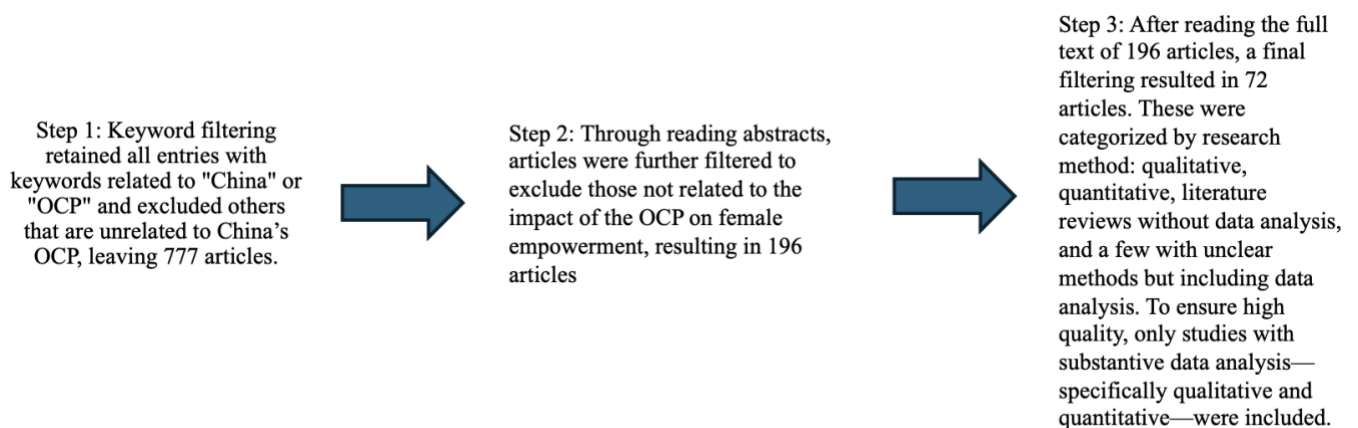
"one child policy" AND (female OR  
women OR woman OR daughter  
OR girl OR gender) AND  
empowerment AND (fertility OR  
reproduction OR education OR  
labour OR labour OR employment  
OR occupation OR career OR  
opportunity OR job OR work OR  
resources OR investment OR assets  
OR property OR money OR  
inheritance OR marriage OR  
domestic OR housework OR  
household OR family OR care OR  
roles OR feminist OR feminism)

This formula was applied across all databases. All retrieved records were imported into Zotero for management, yielding 1,265 entries. After removing duplicates, 1,133 unique records were transferred to Excel.

There are five criteria for resource inclusion:

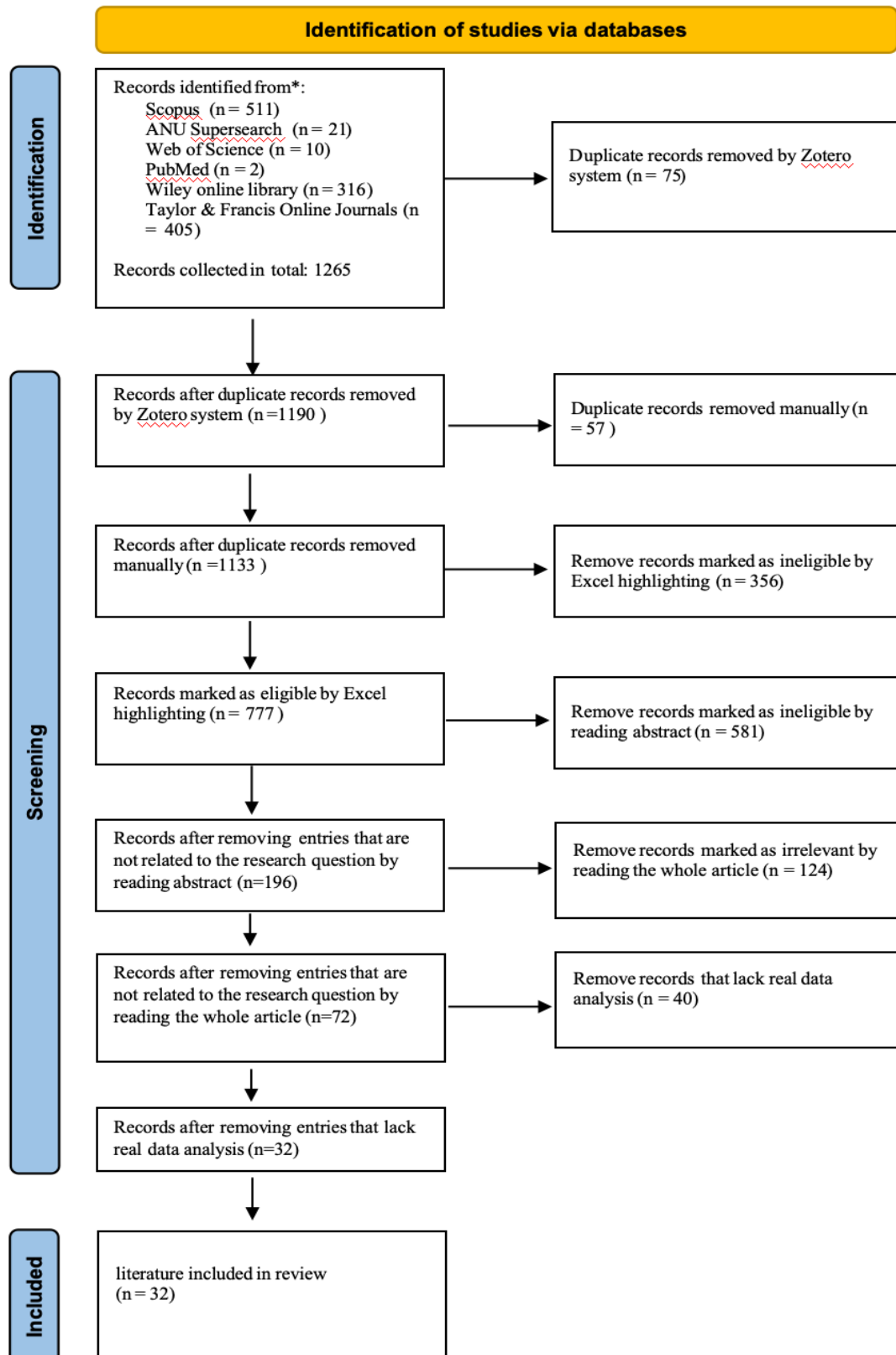
- A) It is about China
- B) It is related to the OCP or does not directly mention the OCP but implies that there is something related. For example, there is no direct reference to the OCP, but there is a study on the difference between only children and children with siblings
- C) It is relevant to female empowerment
- D) It contains a gender angle.
- E) The focus of this literature is related to the research topic.

Based on these criteria, the relevant literature was screened in three steps.



In total, 32 articles were selected (see Figure 1).

**Figure 1. Identifying studies for the systematic literature review and the number of studies included or excluded in each step**



## 4.2 Data extraction

According to the Health Sciences Library guidelines, the standard tool for systematic reviews is a data extraction matrix, which organises research information in tabular form (Moreton 2022). This thesis adopts the matrix from Raybould and Sear's (2020) review as a reference.

This thesis will collect the following information :

- “Dataset”
- “Research question/Aim”
- “Theoretical background”
- “Temporal aspect”
- “Sample”
- “Independent variable”
- “Dependent variable”
- “Method”
- “Control variables”
- “Results Summary”
- “Nature of the relationship between independent variable and dependent variable” (with p-value)
- “Categorisation in review (association for each independent variable, categorised as positive, negative, curvilinear, none, or mixed, with the dependent variable)”.

The nature of the relationship between the OCP and female empowerment is categorised in Appendix Table 1. The subfields, target groups, comparison groups, and birth cohorts are also recorded (Appendix Table 1 and Appendix Table 2).

### **4.3: Data analysis methodology**

This thesis categorises and analyses the selected literature into seven subfields related to female empowerment:

1. Family Investment
2. Education
3. Employment and career development
4. Gender equality and attitudes
5. Intergenerational relationships
6. Female reproductive rights, autonomy and health
7. Other social dynamics, including sex ratio and child sexual abuse

Although the sex ratio may not appear directly linked to female empowerment, in the context of China's son preference and selective abortion, an imbalanced sex ratio at birth is a key sign of gender inequality and female **disempowerment**. It reflects whether women's right to life is respected and their lives are valued. This imbalance increases gender gaps and leads to discrimination, violence, and rights violations against females (UNFPA China, 2017). Therefore, it is an indirectly relevant factor in understanding female empowerment.

The OCP, implemented from the late 1970s to 2016, possibly had shifting impacts over time. This thesis assumes that its effects on female empowerment vary temporally. Ideally, temporal changes would be analysed by birth cohort. However, due to limited or unclear birth cohort data in the existing database, an intergenerational comparison between mothers (older generation) and daughters (younger generation) is applied instead. While precise cohort analysis is not possible, this approach captures temporal changes of the OCP within the available data to some extent. Table 5 presents this comparison.

According to Appendix Table 2, mothers' birth years range from the late 1920s to the late 1990s, with most studies focusing on those born between the 1940s and 1990s, except Wu, Ye, and He (2014), who extended the range to the 1920s. However, small sample sizes and the fact that women born in the 1920s–1940s were generally beyond childbearing age during the OCP, their experiences were largely unaffected. Thus, this thesis limits the relevant mothers' cohort to births between the 1940s and 1990s. The most frequently studied cohorts are those born between the 1960s and 1980s, possibly because these women were of reproductive age during the OCP's strictest phase, making them the primary affected group. Daughters' cohorts mainly span the late 1970s to the 2000s. Some overlap exists between mothers and daughters from the late 1970s to the 1990s, but due to unclear cohort data, the precise distinction is impossible.

Despite overlap and ambiguity in cohort definitions, a generational distinction exists between mothers (born 1940s–1990s) and daughters (born late 1970s–2000s). Thus, intergenerational comparison offers a meaningful perspective to examine temporal changes in the OCP's impact on female empowerment. Although not a precise birth cohort analysis and is unable to produce exact results, this approach effectively captures the temporal dimension of the policy's effects.

## 5. Subfields analysis

Existing studies are categorised based on the nature of the relationship between the OCP and female empowerment, specifically, whether the findings suggest the OCP is beneficial or detrimental to women. Appendix Table 2 provides an overview of the studies and subfield classifications. Table 2 presents the distribution of findings across six categories: positive, negative, mixed (both positive and negative), no effect, cannot show relevance (distinct from no effect, indicating inconclusive results), and complicated (difficult to define). Each study is counted only once.

**Table 2. Summary of Relationships Between the OCP and Female Empowerment**

<b>Nature of relationship</b>	<b>Number of studies</b>
Positive	21
Negative	2
Mixed	1
No effect	2
Cannot show the relevance	1
Complicated	5

The database covers seven major subfields, as listed in the “Subfields of Female Empowerment” column in Table 3. Individual studies may appear in multiple subfields. To facilitate keyword searches in Excel, this thesis adopts abbreviations—shown in parentheses

after each subfield—based on the most representative term in each subfield. For convenience and concise text, these abbreviations are also used throughout the thesis. Most studies concentrate on Family Investment, Education, Employment and Career Development, and Gender Equality and Attitudes, while the other subfields are comparatively underexplored. Detailed qualitative analyses of each subfield are presented in Sections 5.1 to 5.7.

**Table 3. Literature by subfields of female empowerment and the nature of the relationship**

<b>Subfields of female empowerment</b>	<b>Number of studies</b>	<b>Result</b>
Family investment and parental support (investment)	9	Complicated 1 Positive 8
Education (education)	11	Complicated 1 No effect 1 Positive 9
Employment and career development (employment)	10	Positive 10
Gender equality and attitudes (gender)	14	Cannot show the relevance 1 Complicated 2 Negative 1 Positive 10
Intergenerational relationships (relationship)	5	No effect 2 Positive 3



Female reproductive rights, autonomy and health (autonomy)	3	Negative 2 Positive 1
Other social dynamics: sex ratio (“sex ratio”)	3	Complicated 2 Negative 1
Other social dynamics: child sexual abuse (“child sexual abuse”)	1	Mixed 1

Table 4 analyses findings by the group of focus (women affected by the OCP) and nature of the relationship, with each study counted only once. Table 5 analyses the findings by subfields of female empowerment, the number of studies for the group of focus, and the nature of the relationship, possibly multiple counts per study. These findings are discussed in Section 5.8.

**Table 4. Literature by the group of focus and the nature of the relationship**

<b>Group of focus (Affected groups)</b>	<b>Number of studies</b>	<b>Result</b>
Mothers	6	Negative 2 Positive 4
Daughters	21	Cannot show the relevance 1 Complicated 3 Mixed 1 No effect 2 Positive 14

Both mothers and daughters	1	Positive 1
Not clearly identified, just the female	2	All are positive 2
None, it only focuses on the main factor leading to China's gender ratio imbalance	2	Complicated 2

**Table 5. Literature by subfields of female empowerment, the number of studies for the group of focus, and the nature of the relationship**

<b>Subfields of female empowerment</b>	Number of studies for Mothers	Number of studies for Daughters	Number of studies for both mothers and daughters	Number of studies for Not clearly identified, just the female	None, it only focuses on the main factor leading to China's gender ratio imbalance
Family investment and parental support	Total:1 Positive:1	Total:8 Positive:8	0	0	0

Education	0	Total:9 Positive:7 Complicated:1 No effect:1	Total:1 Positive:1	Total:1 Positive:1	0
Employment and career development	Total:2 Positive:2	Total:5 Positive:5	Total:1 Positive:1	Total:2 Positive:2	0
Gender equality and attitudes	Total:2 Positive:1 Negative:1	Total:9 Positive: 6 Complicated: 1 No effect:1 Cannot show the relevance: 1	Total:1 Positive:1	Total:2 Positive:2	0
Intergenerational relationships	Total:1 Positive:1	Total:4 Positive:2 No effect:2	0	0	0
Female reproductive	Total:3 Positive:1	0	0	0	0

rights, autonomy and health	Negative:2				
Other social dynamics (sex ratio)	0	0	0	0	Total:2  Complicated:2
Other social dynamics (child sexual abuse)	0	Total:1  Mixed:1	0	0	

## 5.1 Family investment and parental support

The first subfield to be analysed is family investment and parental support. This section mainly explores the impact of China's OCP on family investment. There are a total of nine articles on this topic, including four quantitative studies, four qualitative studies, and one study that incorporates both quantitative and qualitative research paradigms. Family investment encompasses aspects such as family/intergenerational/parental investment, resource allocation, support, care, and attention. These studies consistently find that the OCP has significantly reshaped family dynamics and resource distribution, especially having a profound impact on daughters. By limiting families to having only one child, the policy altered family structures, focusing family resources and attention on daughters. This inadvertently became a booster for changing traditional gender roles and enhancing women's status in education, employment, and economic positions.

### **5.1.1 Synthesis of results in Family investment and parental support**

#### *5.1.1.1 Reduced sibling size and increased family investment*

Several scholars' research (e.g., Liu 2012; Zhang 2007; Deutsch 2006; Liu 2017; Chen and Jordan 2018) consistently points out that the OCP has significantly promoted equal family investment and parental support for only-daughters compared to boys. Firstly, daughters benefit from greater family investment due to the fundamental changes in family structure brought about by the policy (Liu 2012; Zhang 2007; Deutsch 2006; Liu 2017). The OCP, by reducing the number of children in families, has shifted the traditional parent-centred multi-child family model to a child-centred one (Liu 2012). The reduction in the number of children decreases the dispersion of family resources, allowing families to concentrate more resources and attention on the only-child, regardless of gender. Therefore, compared to daughters with siblings, only-daughters receive concentrated family investment (Zhang 2007; Deutsch 2006; Liu 2017).

For example, the study by Chen and Jordan (2018) indicates that although sons receive more financial and instrumental support in all family structures, children in one-child families are more likely to receive both types of support compared to those in multi-child families, regardless of gender. Additionally, the gender gap in receiving instrumental support from parents is smaller in one-child families than in multi-child families. Hu and Shi (2020) also found that compared to children with siblings, the only-child receives more financial and time investments in education from their parents. Zhai and Gao (2010) discovered that only-child receive more care and support from parents, making them more likely to be enrolled in center-based care. The core insight from these findings supports that the OCP's transformation to smaller family structures avoids resource dispersion, significantly increasing family investment in only-children compared to children with siblings. More

specifically, only-daughters receive substantially higher family investment than daughters with siblings. Meanwhile, Zhang's (2007) study notes that rural daughters gain more resource allocation because the smaller family size reduces the dilution of resources among fewer children. Thus, in families with only one or two children, daughters receive more attention and resources than in larger families. This thesis further supports the advantages brought by reduced sibling size. It even suggests that daughters benefit from higher family investment and parental support not just by being an only-child but also by having fewer siblings. However, it is important to note that the greater investment and support received by only-daughters is relative to daughters with siblings, since both only-sons and only-daughters equally benefit from concentrated resources. Moreover, in Chen and Jordan's (2018) study, although data support that the gender gap in obtaining instrumental support from parents is smaller in one-child families compared to multi-child families, this data lacks statistical significance.

#### *5.1.1.2 Gender dynamics in sibship structure under the OCP*

Secondly, Fong (2002) argues that the OCP breaks the traditional preference for sons by forcing urban parents without sons to invest in their daughters. Thus, under the OCP, girls benefit more compared to boys. Historically, China's patrilineal society led parents in traditional multi-child families to prioritize resource investment in sons, giving relatively less to daughters (Fong 2002). However, the implementation of the OCP compelled families with only-daughters to concentrate all their resources on the sole daughter, regardless of any traditional son preference (Fong 2002). As a result, only-daughters no longer have to compete with brothers for family resources, allowing them to receive family investments traditionally reserved for boys. Wang and Feng (2021) support Fong's (2002) argument. Their study

indicates that having siblings, especially male siblings, is disadvantageous for married women in terms of obtaining family resources and parental support, highlighting the advantage of the only-child status for females in receiving family investment. For married men, being an only-child does not significantly impact the acquisition of family resources, suggesting little difference in family investment and parental support between only sons and sons with siblings. Additionally, it is important to emphasise that the OCP not only benefits contemporary only-daughters but also has long-term positive effects. The policy allows only-daughters to fully access family resources and continue to do so even after marriage, thereby extending educational benefits to their children (Wang and Feng, 2021). This indicates that the OCP mainly benefits women and has little impact on only sons, as only sons have always received concentrated parental investment due to patrilineal norms. However, this conflicts with the earlier conclusion that both only sons and only-daughters equally benefit from the concentrated resources brought by the OCP.

However, some findings from Hu and Shi (2020) and Zhai and Gao (2010) refute the conclusions of Fong (2002) and Wang and Feng (2021). Both studies reveal a similar insight: despite parents investing more in and giving more attention to only-children (regardless of gender) compared to those with siblings, the gender differences in receiving parental investment, support, and attention are minimal across different sibling sizes, including whether or not the child is an only-child (Hu and Shi 2020; Zhai and Gao 2010). This suggests that the gender of the child is not a significant factor in determining parental investment and support (or at least not the primary factor). The increased family investment, parental support, and care that girls receive are not because there are no longer sons in the family but simply due to the resource concentration brought by having fewer siblings. Therefore, this consistency in the support received by both sons and daughters across various

sibling sizes challenges the notion that the OCP primarily benefits only-daughters and has little impact on only sons.

### **5.1.2 Discussion on family investment and parental support**

Based on the above analysis, two main reasons help only-daughters receive increased family investment: resource concentration due to reduced sibling size and the absence of competition from a son. However, this reveals a controversy: does the OCP benefit only-daughters and only sons equally, or does it primarily benefit only-daughters? Insights related to reduced sibling size indicate that the OCP allows only-children to receive concentrated family investment and parental support compared to children with siblings, regardless of gender (Liu 2012; Zhang 2007; Deutsch 2006; Liu 2017; Chen and Jordan 2018). However, another perspective argues that the OCP benefits only-daughters more than only sons by eliminating the preference for sons inherent in patrilineal norms, as sons traditionally receive more parental investment (Fong 2002; Wang and Feng 2021).

Additionally, the view that the OCP mainly benefits only-daughters is challenged by the studies of Hu and Shi (2020) and Zhai and Gao (2010). These studies demonstrate that child gender does not significantly impact the acquisition of family investment and parental support in any sibling size, thus refuting the idea that the OCP primarily benefits only-daughters by eliminating sons. This indicates that the impact of the OCP is complex and controversial. It is essential to clarify whether the OCP primarily benefits only-daughters with little impact on only sons or if it benefits both only-daughters and only sons equally. This is still an open debate. To answer that question, Future studies need to control variables and make comparisons from multiple dimensions, including comparing the differences in



investment and support received by only-daughters and daughters with siblings, comparing the differences between only-sons and sons with siblings, and then the size of these two differences are required to be compared.

## **5.2 Education**

This section mainly explores the impact of China's OCP on education. There are eleven articles on this topic Published between 2002 and 2024, including six quantitative studies, two qualitative studies, and three studies with both methods. A series of studies demonstrate that the OCP has had a profound impact on the education of women in China, mainly reflected in the increased educational resources for only-daughters, expanded educational opportunities, and improved educational achievement.

### **5.2.1 Synthesis of results in education**

China's OCP has had a profound impact on women's education, primarily by increasing educational resources, expanding educational opportunities, and improving educational achievement for women. Firstly, the OCP reduced the number of children per family, concentrating family resources, parental attention, and educational expectations on the only-child. With only one child in the family, traditional gender biases gradually diminished, and parents' educational expectations for their only-daughters significantly increased (Fong 2002; Liu 2012; Wang, Huang, and Cai 2023). This situation allowed only-daughters to receive more educational investment and attention, enjoy a growth environment relatively free from gender bias, and thus enhance their cognitive development, personal abilities, and educational achievements (Gu and Yeung, 2021). The changed sibship structure seems key for many other pathways of influence.

Data indicates that after the implementation of the OCP, the gender gap in educational attainment significantly narrowed, especially in urban areas (Wu, Ye, and He 2014). The policy has notably improved women's education, with the average years of schooling for women increasing by 0.559 years, significantly higher than the 0.265 years for men (Wang, Huang, and Cai, 2023). Strict birth control measures have significantly raised educational levels for women, particularly in high school and university graduation rates, with only-daughters outperforming their female peers with siblings in academic performance and opportunities to enter elite universities (Huang, Lei and Sun 2021; Liu 2017). Moreover, the personal abilities of only-daughters in innovation have also reflected improvement. According to the research by Guo, Lin, and Guo (2018), compared to daughters with siblings, only-daughters performed better in line meaning fluency and originality.

In contrast, daughters with siblings are still subject to the family notion of favouring males over females, resulting in unequal attention and resource allocation from parents, which leads to disadvantages in accessing educational resources (Zhang, Wang, and Liu, 2021). For instance, due to the presence of multiple children and the traditional preference for boys in rural areas, rural daughters often find it difficult to obtain adequate resources. This results in lower educational achievements for daughters in rural families with multiple children compared to urban only-daughters (Gu and Yeung, 2021). This further illustrates the benefits of the OCP in enhancing educational opportunities and achievements for females by concentrating resources on the only-child. Besides improving educational opportunities and achievements for females by concentrating on family resources, the study by Kim, Brown, and Fong (2018) indicates that the OCP also promotes more flexible gender identities, which is beneficial for the educational achievements of females. More flexible gender identities are associated with better adaptability and innovation abilities in females, enabling them to surpass males in education and careers.

In conclusion, daughters with siblings are significantly disadvantaged in terms of access to educational resources and achievements compared to only-daughters, due to the negative impacts of resource dispersion in families with multiple children and traditional male-preference notions. The OCP has altered family structures by concentrating family resources and parental support on the only-daughter, enabling her to obtain more educational resources and opportunities equal to those of sons. This significantly enhances the educational achievements of only-daughters. This indicates that the OCP has significantly reduced the gender education gap and promoted gender equality in education by focusing resources on only-daughters.

### **5.2.2 Discussion on education**

However, the study by Huang, Jiang and Sun (2024) seems to conflict with the positive impact of the OCP on reducing the gender education gap and suggests that the policy may have negative effects on female education. Huang, Jiang and Sun (2024) found that in regions without strict birth spacing regulations, traditional male-preference notions and less stringent birth policies provided a protective effect for first-born girls, reducing the negative impact of mother-daughter separation on girls' academic performance. However, under strict OCP regulations, this protective effect significantly weakened. This seems to indicate that the strict OCP might be detrimental, or at least not beneficial, to the future academic performance of females.

It is important to note, however, that the claimed impact of traditional male-preference notions on girls' future academic performance lacks rigorous direct data evidence and is inferred indirectly through the aforementioned data results. This is an unsupported argument, making this conclusion potentially a case of incorrect attribution, requiring further research to confirm. For example, comparing the academic achievements of girls in regions with strong

male-preference notions to those in regions with little or no such notions would provide more conclusive evidence.

It is also important to note that Zhang, Wang, and Liu (2021), when arguing that only-daughters have equal digital skills and internet usage as boys due to concentrated parental investment and attention, did not provide rigorous data evidence but instead supported this point by citing other studies. This highlights the need for future research to further validate these observations with a solid data foundation. Moreover, the study only provides some p-values in the main text, but does not provide p-values for the comparisons between daughters with siblings, sons, and only-daughters in the data tables, making it unclear whether the conclusions have statistical significance, which may be a limitation of this thesis.

Furthermore, Guo, Lin, and Guo (2018) pointed out that although only-daughters scored higher in line meaning fluency and originality compared to daughters with siblings, they did not show a significant advantage in real-world problem tests. This indicates that despite receiving more resources and attention in the family, the advantages of only-daughters do not fully translate into improved real-world problem-solving abilities, suggesting the presence of other influencing factors. Guo, Lin, and Guo (2018) specifically noted that although only-daughters did not show a significant advantage over daughters with siblings in real-world problem tests, an interesting finding was that only-daughters scored higher in both line-meaning tasks and real-world problem tests compared to the eldest sons in families with siblings. Considering that Guo, Lin, and Guo (2018) not only compared the impact of different sibling sizes on children's educational performance but also examined the effects of birth order in more detail, this suggests that the factors influencing only-daughters' real-world problem-solving abilities might be more complex, involving not only family size but also birth order and gender. This requires further experimental exploration.

## **5.3 Employment and career development**

This section mainly explores the impact of China's OCP on Employment and Career Development. There are a total of ten articles on this topic, including five quantitative studies, four qualitative studies, and one study that incorporates both quantitative and qualitative research paradigms. A series of studies indicate that the OCP significantly benefits women's careers, primarily by reducing workplace discrimination against women, thereby enhancing female employment, promoting women's career development, increasing women's labour force participation, raising women's incomes, improving women's economic independence, and reducing the gender income gap.

### **5.3.1 Synthesis of results in employment and career development**

This series of studies reveals the multifaceted impact of China's OCP on women's employment and career development. Firstly, the OCP, by reducing the number of children, allowed only-daughters to receive full support and concentrated family resources from their parents. This increased investment includes educational opportunities, parental care, as well as social and psychological support (Fong 2002). The advantages gained by only-daughters not only promoted their educational achievements but also inspired more ambitious career aspirations. This contributes to the enhancement of their roles within the family and greater economic independence as adults by engaging in income-generating work (Zhang 2007; Liu 2012).

Kim, Brown, and Fong (2018) further point out that the OCP's concentration of parental resources and expectations on only-daughters allows only-daughters to have the ability to resist traditional gender norms. This facilitated a flexible gender identity among young urban women. This flexibility manifests in improved adaptability and innovation capabilities,

enabling them to pursue broader educational and career opportunities, including fields traditionally dominated by men. Consequently, these women can more easily and effectively respond to the ever-changing socioeconomic conditions in China's rapidly developing market economy and are more likely to excel, surpassing men in educational achievements and career diversity. This further promotes gender equality in education and careers. Therefore, the OCP has significant benefits for women's career development.

Additionally, the OCP, by limiting the number of children, helps to liberate married women from the heavy burdens of household and childcare responsibilities, allowing them more energy to develop their careers. The findings show that having more siblings and bearing more children both reduce women's labour participation rates and career achievements (Liu and Marois 2024; Wu, Ye, and He 2014). The evidence also indicates that strict birth control significantly increases the likelihood of women obtaining white-collar jobs (Huang, Lei and Sun 2021). This is because raising fewer children helps alleviate women's childcare burdens, mitigate the conflict between work and family, and protect them from gender discrimination in the labour market, thereby promoting their career development (Fong 2002; Zhou 2021).

Moreover, only-daughters can still receive childcare support from their parents after marriage, reducing their childcare burden and helping to ensure their career development post-childbirth (Fong 2002; Shen and Jiang 2020). This advantage is reflected in the significantly reduced gender income gap. Women's pre-tax and post-tax incomes have significantly increased after the implementation of the OCP, while men's incomes have not shown significant changes, indicating the positive impact of the OCP on women's careers (Wang, Huang, and Cai 2023).

### **5.3.2 Discussion on employment and career development**

By reducing the number of children, the OCP has enabled only-daughters to receive full support and concentrated resources from their parents, including educational opportunities and psychological support. This concentration of resources not only enhances only-daughters' educational achievements but also boosts their career ambitions and economic independence. Similarly to education, this suggests that improved access to family resources due to the change in sibling structure seems to be the key to advancing their career development. Simultaneously, the policy encourages only-daughters to resist traditional gender norms, developing a more flexible gender identity compared to males. This flexibility allows only-daughters to cross gender boundaries and explore a broader range of careers, including fields traditionally dominated by men, significantly improving their competitiveness in the workplace. This seems to suggest that the OCP's promotion of advanced gender equality awareness is also a key part of benefiting women's employment and career development.

Moreover, the benefits of the OCP extend beyond only-daughters to mothers as well. By limiting the number of children, the OCP reduces the household and childcare burdens on mothers, allowing them more energy to develop their careers. This increases mothers' labour participation rates and career achievements and protects married women from workplace gender discrimination. Overall, the implementation of the OCP enhances the workplace competitiveness of only-daughters by increasing parental support and educational investment, and it alleviates mothers' household and childcare burdens while reducing workplace gender discrimination. In summary, the OCP benefits mothers and only-daughters equally in terms of job opportunities, career development, economic income, and reducing gender gaps in the workplace and income.

## **5.4 Gender equality and attitudes**

This section primarily explores the impact of China's OCP on gender equality and attitudes. The topic is covered by a total of fourteen articles, including five quantitative studies, eight qualitative studies, and one study that encompasses both quantitative and qualitative research paradigms. A series of studies indicate that the OCP has had profound effects on traditional gender roles and social gender equality, mainly reflected in the following aspects: Firstly, only-daughters have shown a significant increase in gender equality awareness. Secondly, the patrilineal norm favouring males has been disrupted, and the traditional preference for sons has weakened. Additionally, the family status of only-daughters has significantly improved, receiving more attention and recognition. The OCP has also promoted a more equal division of labour between genders within families. Finally, the policy has enhanced the status and happiness of married women within the household, giving them equal decision-making power over family resources as men.

#### **5.4.1 Synthesis of results in gender equality and attitudes**

The OCP, by limiting the number of child-birthing, has compelled parents to place greater emphasis on their fewer children, regardless of gender, thereby benefiting only-daughters and significantly altering traditional gender roles and expectations (Zhang 2007). In traditional rural Chinese patriarchal culture, daughters were typically valued less than sons because families primarily relied on sons to support elderly parents (Zhang 2009). However, as the OCP led to smaller family sizes, the importance of each child within the family increased, and parents began to rely more on daughters. Especially in families with only one daughter, only-daughters have become crucial in providing for their elderly parents (Zhang 2009). Parents have shifted the expectations traditionally placed on sons onto their only daughters, viewing them as the future hope of the family and valuing them more. These daughters are



expected to work, provide financial support for the family, and receive more investment and encouragement. They are increasingly seen as capable of being as filial as sons, leading to more aligned expectations for both genders within families (Fong 2002).

Moreover, the advantage of concentrating family resources on only-daughters has enabled them to develop a more flexible gender identity, making them better equipped to challenge traditional patriarchal norms and gender stereotypes. This has given them an edge in China's rapidly transforming market, allowing them to enter many educational and career fields traditionally dominated by men (Kim, Brown, and Fong 2018). As women increasingly take on roles traditionally held by men and enter male-dominated fields, shifts in attitudes toward traditional gender roles are facilitated (Deutsch 2006; Liu 2008). This helps to break down patriarchal norms, reduce gender discrimination, and further promote the concept of gender equality throughout society (Deutsch 2006). This indicates that the changes in gender equality and attitudes deeply interact with Family Investment.

One notable phenomenon of the OCP weakening the patriarchal preference for sons is the reduced emphasis on the traditional preference for inheriting the family surname. According to Deutsch (2006), among the younger generation, as only-daughter families reconsider the continuation of the family legacy beyond the patrilineal line, families generally prioritize the happiness and success of their only child, whether son or daughter, over continuing the family surname through a male heir. Furthermore, in this nurturing environment where parents place great importance on their children, only-daughters are more likely to develop gender equality awareness and cultivate the ability to challenge patriarchal norms. Compared to their parents' generation, the younger generation influenced by the OCP indicates a significant reduction in son preference (Deutsch 2006).

For example, according to Chen et al. (2021), before the implementation of the OCP, under the influence of the son preference, male heirs were more likely than female heirs to impact company innovation. However, after the implementation of the OCP, the positive impact of male heirs over female heirs on corporate innovation diminished, and the gender difference's influence on company innovation was no longer significant. This indicates that the OCP has helped women gain the same ability as men to positively affect the family legacy, reflecting a reduction in traditional son preference and an increase in women's influence within the family.

Moreover, as only-daughter families reconsider the continuation of the family legacy beyond the patrilineal line, families generally prioritize the happiness and success of their only child, whether son or daughter, over continuing the family surname through a male heir. In this nurturing environment where parents place great importance on their children, only-daughters are more likely to develop gender equality awareness and cultivate the ability to challenge patriarchal norms. Compared to their parents' generation, the younger generation influenced by the OCP indicates a significant reduction in son preference (Deutsch 2006). For instance, according to Chen et al. (2021), before the implementation of the OCP, under the influence of the son preference, male heirs were more likely than female heirs to impact company innovation. However, after the implementation of the OCP, the positive impact of male heirs over female heirs on corporate innovation diminished, and the gender difference's influence on company innovation was no longer significant. This indicates that the OCP has helped women gain the same ability as men to positively affect the family legacy, reflecting a reduction in traditional son preference and an increase in women's influence within the family.

Additionally, the enhanced gender equality is significantly reflected in the increased satisfaction of women with their family status and overall family happiness. A larger number of siblings can lead to lower educational attainment for women, which in turn results in them taking on more household chores, and reduces their satisfaction with family status and family happiness (Wu, Ye, and He 2014). By limiting the number of children, the OCP has improved women's educational levels and career achievements, thereby indirectly reducing the amount of housework for married women. This increases women's satisfaction with the division of housework, family status, and marriage, and enhances their subjective well-being (Wu, Ye, and He 2014; Huang, Lei and Sun 2021). This suggests that the demographic shift brought about by the OCP has led to women becoming more equal to men at the family level, promoting gender equality. Moreover, the change in family structure due to fewer children has also alleviated the burden of childbirth and childcare for mothers, enabling women to pursue work and education rather than being confined to the role of a mother (Fong 2002).

According to Zhou (2021), individuals with stronger egalitarian gender role attitudes are more likely to support strict government control over fertility because birth control policies are seen as aligning with feminist goals of achieving gender equality across various aspects of life. This is especially true for those who prioritize women's participation in the public sphere. Birth control policies are viewed as an effective means to reduce the conflict between the unequal division of household chores and career pursuits. They believe that restrictive birth quotas have freed Chinese women from the burden of childbirth and reduced their caregiving duties within the family (Zhou 2021). This is consistent with the findings of Wu, Ye, and He (2014) and Huang, Lei and Sun (2021), indicating that the reduction of the motherhood burden, a trend towards more equal division of housework, and the improvement in women's happiness in family and marriage are significant aspects of how the OCP has promoted gender equality.

Moreover, strict birth control has significantly improved household income, consumption, and savings. At the same time, women in families subjected to strict birth control are more likely to become heads of households and enjoy a higher proportion of “female-oriented consumption”, such as spending on clothing and beauty products (Huang, Lei and Sun 2021). In contrast, “male-oriented consumption”, such as spending on beverages, alcohol, and dining out, has significantly decreased (Huang, Lei and Sun 2021). Strict birth control policies can enhance overall economic security and better financial outcomes for families while increasing “female-oriented consumption” and reducing “male-oriented consumption” (Huang, Lei and Sun 2021). This indicates a reallocation of household resources toward goods and services preferred by women. This shift demonstrates a significant strengthening of women's rights and status within the family, giving them greater decision-making power over household finances. It challenges the traditional male-dominated family paradigm and reflects substantial progress in gender equality for married women within the household. Additionally, stricter birth penalties have reduced women's adherence to the traditional belief that "marriage and children are essential for women" (Huang, Lei and Sun 2021). This suggests that the OCP has contributed to a shift in women's thinking towards valuing female independence and roles in society rather than just within the family, indicating a significant enhancement in gender equality awareness among women.

#### **5.4.2 Discussion on gender equality and attitudes**

Based on the above statement, the positive impact of the OCP on gender equality is mainly reflected in the enhanced status and well-being of women in their natal and marital families. Female empowerment is the key pathway toward gender equality (Peace Corps n.d.), thus the increased gender equality indicates that female empowerment also gets benefits in only-daughters’ natal and marital families. By reducing family size, the OCP has led parents to

place their caregiving expectations on their only daughters, thereby elevating the status and value of only-daughters in their natal families. This has weakened the patriarchal norm of son preference, broken the traditional preference for patrilineal surname inheritance, and increased women's influence within their natal families. As family expectations for both genders have become more aligned, women have been encouraged to take on roles traditionally held by men, prompting a shift in gender role attitudes. Through this process, only-daughters have developed more flexible gender identities and a greater awareness of gender equality, enabling them to challenge patriarchal norms and compete in traditionally male-dominated fields.

Moreover, the OCP has benefited not only only-daughters but also the generation of mothers. The reduction in the number of children has lessened the childbirth and caregiving burdens on mothers, improved their status and happiness in their marital families, and increased their decision-making power within the household, positively impacting their overall well-being. Additionally, stricter birth control penalties have challenged the traditional notion that family and marriage are paramount for women, enhancing women's independence and promoting a more equal awareness of gender roles.

However, it is important to note that, as Wang and Zhang (2022) mention, the equal treatment of daughters and sons brought about by the OCP, through the reduction in the number of children and subsequent changes in family structure, is merely a result of the enforced OCP. On the surface, it appears equal, but it does not fundamentally challenge deeply rooted gender biases. Parents have simply adapted to the reality of having only one daughter and have accordingly adjusted their expectations and resource allocation in a manner similar to how they would for a son. However, this adaptation is limited to within the family and does not extend to broader societal perceptions. Therefore, flexible and equal gender roles and

treatment typically remain confined to the nuclear family. In the wider society, the impact of the OCP in improving gender equality is limited, and traditional and discriminatory gender roles still persist. Wang and Zhang (2022) 's study answers the question raised in part 1.3, making this study important. The evidence supports that the OCP encouraged gender equality at a certain level but did not completely overcome the gender inequality issues. Gender equality is enhanced mainly inside families Wang and Zhang 2022), yet it remains a problem in present China and harms females' wellbeings and social harmony (Liu 2023; Bayeh 2016).

Zou and Liu (2024) also mention the negative impact of the OCP on the generation of mothers. The study indicates that during the OCP period, the state's enforcement of intrauterine device (IUD) usage on women of childbearing age was perceived by many women as an infringement on their bodily autonomy. Moreover, the use of IUDs also brought about serious health risks. Zou and Liu (2024) also highlight the significant gender disparity in contraceptive responsibilities, noting that women disproportionately bore the burden of sterilization, while men were exempt from similar contraceptive responsibilities and did not face associated health risks. This gender disparity reflects issues of gender inequality in the implementation of the OCP.

In addition, Hu and Shi (2020) challenge the argument that the OCP can enhance gender equality awareness. Their study indicates that although parents invest more in an only child compared to children with siblings, this increased investment does not significantly enhance the child's awareness of gender equality. This suggests that the OCP may not be related to promoting gender equality. Liu (2024) provides insights into other factors that are more likely to influence the gender awareness of the only-child generation, including socioeconomic background, educational opportunities, family influence, marital dynamics, and cultural norms. These factors affect the gender role attitudes of the only-child generation. This

implies that future research should include these factors as control variables to further refine the studies and clarify the extent of the OCP's impact.

## **5.5 Female intergenerational relationships**

Regarding female intergenerational relationships, there are five articles on this topic, including two quantitative articles, two qualitative article, and one mixed-methods article. A series of studies indicate that the OCP has had a significant impact on female intergenerational relationships, especially the mother-daughter relationship.

### **5.5.1 Synthesis of results in female intergenerational relationships**

Firstly, the OCP has promoted female intergenerational relationships (Liu and Jiang 2021; Zhang 2009). Liu and Jiang (2021) 's evidence reveals that only-daughters have more intimate connections with their parents, particularly with mothers, than daughters with siblings. The more siblings there are the less close the relationship with the parents.

Furthermore, a gender comparison of only-children reveals that only-daughters are more inclined to have intimate bonds with their mothers than only-sons. However, only daughters, on the other hand, are more unlikely to have close interactions with their fathers than only sons. This suggests that the OCP, by reducing the number of siblings, has significantly fostered closer intergenerational relationships between only-daughters and their parents, particularly their mothers. Furthermore, in families with more siblings, daughters are less likely to maintain close relationships with their parents, while the likelihood increases for sons. This indicates that traditional gender preferences still exist in multi-child families (Liu and Jiang 2021). In families with multiple children, the traditional preference for sons leads to more distant relationships between daughters and their parents, while sons have closer relationships. However, in only-child families, only-daughters often enjoy a stronger intimate

connection with their mothers. Such evidence supports the idea that the OCP mainly benefits daughters. By reducing family size, it has significantly strengthened female intergenerational relationships, especially the mother-daughter relationship.

Furthermore, the OCP's enforcement not only strengthened the intimate relationships between only-daughters and their parents, especially their mothers, but also enhanced the close relationships between married women of childbearing age and their natal families (Zhang 2009). Traditionally, married women were considered economically independent from their natal families and often severed ties after marriage. However, the OCP brought about significant changes in this dynamic. Many couples who were of childbearing age during the OCP era wanted to have more children than the policy allowed. This led married women to return to their natal homes to avoid local government inspections, strengthening their ties with their natal families (Zhang 2009).

Married women hid at their natal homes to evade pregnancy checks, which increased their contact and gaining of support from their natal families, often resulting in longer stays and further consolidating family bonds (Zhang 2009; Deutsch 2006). With increased interactions between married women and their parents, economic cooperation and social support systems between married women and their natal families became more frequent (Zhang 2009). For instance, In terms of housing and cohabitation decisions, only-children, regardless of gender, are more likely to plan to live near their parents compared to those with siblings. This changes the traditional pattern of women leaving their natal family after marriage, enhancing the connection between women and their natal families (Deutsch 2006). Also, married women often collaborated with their natal families in business activities or labour exchanges. In times of marital difficulties or divorce, married women frequently returned to their natal



families for support, reversing the traditional predicament where women could only rely on men. This increased women's autonomy in their lives (Zhang 2009).

Despite the OCP enhancing intergenerational relationships between only-daughters and their parents, the strengthening of the father-daughter relationship is not as significant compared to the mother-daughter relationship (Liu and Jiang 2021). The findings of Xu and Yeung (2013) further demonstrate that the OCP has a smaller impact on the father-daughter relationship. The researchers studied the involvement of fathers in their daughters' lives in Shanghai and the influencing factors. Data indicates that whether a daughter is an only child does not significantly affect the various aspects of fatherly involvement. This suggests that other factors, such as the father's educational and economic level, personal attitudes towards parenting, and cultural changes mentioned in the study, may play a more important role in shaping how fathers in Shanghai interact with their daughters, regardless of whether the daughter has siblings (Xu and Yeung 2013). In summary, the OCP, by limiting the number of children, has significantly enhanced the mother-daughter relationship for only-daughters and strengthened the close relationships and autonomy of married women of childbearing age with their natal families. However, the OCP's impact on the father-daughter relationship is not significant. Factors such as the father's educational level, personal attitudes towards parenting, and cultural changes play a larger role in the father-daughter relationship.

### **5.5.2 Discussion on intergenerational relationships**

However, it is important to note that the study by Huang, Jiang and Sun (2024) suggests that the OCP may have adverse effects on the mother-daughter relationship. Huang, Jiang and Sun point out that migrant families from rural households with a firstborn daughter are less likely to experience parent-child separation when the child is two years old compared to rural migrant families with a firstborn son. In other words, girls are less likely than boys to be

separated from their parents during early childhood, especially at age two. This is because, under the son preference tradition, parents with a firstborn daughter are inclined to have a second child quickly to have a son. During the pregnancy period, women usually choose to stay in their hometown, reducing the likelihood of mother-daughter separation in early childhood.

This paradoxically protective effect of the son preference tradition means that, although son preference is generally detrimental to girls, it reduces the likelihood of girls experiencing parent-child, especially mother-daughter separation, at a young age, particularly at two years old (Huang Jiang and Sun 2024). Due to mass migration since the economic reforms of the late 1970s, migrant parents often decide to leave their children at home, which has made parent-child separation widely common in both rural and urban areas (Tong, Yan and Kawachi 2019). According to 2013 data from the All-China Women's Federation, there are 105.5 million children in migrant families, accounting for approximately one-third of all children under the age of 18 in China. According to China's 2000 and 2010 Population Censuses, 61 million left-behind children live in rural areas, and an estimated 8.7 million children are registered in urban areas (Tong, Yan and Kawachi 2019).

According to Huang, Jiang and Sun's (2024) evidence, in regions without strict birth spacing restrictions, girls are less likely than boys to experience parent-child separation at age two. However, in areas with strict birth spacing restrictions or strict enforcement of the OCP, this gender difference is no longer significant. This is because, in these areas, parents do not have the freedom to have a second child soon after the first, directly affecting parental migration and childcare patterns. This indicates that when reproductive choices are restricted, such as under the strict OCP, the traditional son preference's role in reducing mother-daughter separation is significantly weakened. This suggests that a strict OCP cannot effectively

reduce mother-daughter separation and therefore fails to mitigate the negative impacts of such separation on girls' future academic performance in this context.

Yet, it is important to note that the argument that the reduction of son preference decreases the likelihood of girls experiencing parent-child separation, especially mother-daughter separation, lacks rigorous direct data. Instead, it is an indirect inference made by Huang, Jiang and Sun (2024) through logical reasoning. This argument is not supported by evidence and, therefore, is not rigorous; the conclusion could likely be a false attribution and requires further research. Additionally, the study by Huang, Jiang and Sun (2024) does not provide evidence that girls in regions without strict birth spacing restrictions, i.e., daughters with siblings, are still less likely to experience mother-daughter separation in the long term. Nor does it provide evidence that only-daughters in regions with strict enforcement of the OCP are more likely to experience mother-daughter separation in the long term. Therefore, the study by Huang, Jiang and Sun (2024) cannot refute the insights into the positive impact of the OCP on strengthening the close relationships between married women of childbearing age and their natal families.

## **5.6 Female reproductive rights, autonomy and health**

This section primarily explores the impact of China's OCP on female reproductive rights and body autonomy, life autonomy and health. There are three articles on this topic, all of which are qualitative studies. Studies indicate that the OCP's impact is a double-edged sword. It has both harmed women's reproductive rights and bodily autonomy and posed health risks due to enforced sterilization measures. However, at the same time, it has also relieved mothers of the burdens of childbirth and childcare and strengthened the close relationships between married women and their natal families. This has helped women gain continuous support from their natal families and escape the traditional predicament of having to rely solely on men after marriage due to severed ties with their natal families, thereby enhancing women's autonomy in their lives.

### **5.6.1 Synthesis of results in female reproductive rights, autonomy and health**

Family planning policies often force women to undergo sterilization or other birth control measures closely aligned with state objectives, limiting their reproductive rights, infringing on their bodily autonomy, and posing serious health risks (Murphy 2003; Zou and Liu 2024). However, Zhang (2009) points out that the OCP strengthened the close relationship between only-daughters and their families. Women no longer sever ties with their natal families after marriage but continue to receive support from them, reversing the traditional predicament where women had to rely solely on men after marriage, thereby increasing their life autonomy (Zhang 2009).

### **5.6.2 Discussion on female reproductive rights, autonomy and health**

Overall, multiple studies indicate that the OCP has both positive and negative effects on women, particularly regarding the role of mothers. The advantages lie in alleviating the

burdens of childbirth and childcare, allowing women to step out of the traditional mother role to pursue their careers, and increasing the connection between married women and their natal families, enabling them to continue receiving parental support after marriage and thus gain autonomy in their lives. The drawbacks, however, include the compulsory enforcement of birth control policies, which harmed women's reproductive rights and bodily autonomy and negatively affected their health.

## **5.7 Other social dynamics**

There are other social dynamics impacted by the OCP that this review uncovered, including the skewed sex ratio and child sexual abuse (CSA). Referring to the skewed sex ratio at birth, there are a total of three studies on this topic, including one qualitative study, one research study based on the analysis of secondary quantitative data, and a reappraisal based on secondary data. It is important to note that none of the three studies explicitly compared specific groups (as shown in Appendix Table 1). Additionally, there is only one quantitative study addressing child sexual abuse, which is not relevant to the skewed sex ratio.

### **5.7.1 Skewed sex ratio**

#### **5.7.1.1 Synthesis of results in skewed sex ratio**

Regarding the skewed sex ratio at birth, Murphy (2003) argues that the combination of the OCP and the cultural preference for sons has led to phenomena such as underreporting or misreporting of female births, and sex-selective practices (such as abortion and female infanticide), aimed at ensuring families have a son. These sex-selective practices have resulted in a severe gender imbalance, particularly in rural areas, creating the so-called "missing girls" phenomenon. However, Loh and Remick (2015) believe that although the OCP intertwined with the traditional cultural preference for sons exacerbates the birth-gender

imbalance, the patriarchal cultural norms of son preference are the main driving force behind families choosing to have sons. In the absence of the son preference culture, the OCP alone would not directly lead to a gender imbalance (Loh and Remick 2015).

Goodkind (2015) also supports the view that the patriarchal cultural norm of son preference, rather than the OCP, is the main cause of the skewed sex ratio at birth. Goodkind (2015) found that the initial rise in the sex ratio of children in the 1980s was primarily due to parents hiding or underreporting the births and existence of baby girls out of fear of fines for violating birth quotas, rather than an actual increase in prenatal sex selection. Furthermore, Goodkind (2015) noted that the increase in the child-sex ratio in the 1980s was very small (no more than 1 per 100). This minor change contradicts claims that the OCP significantly exacerbated sex selection. Moreover, Goodkind (2015) found that prenatal sex selection only became significant after 1990, coinciding with the increased availability of sex identification technology, rather than the policy itself. Even in the 1990s, underreporting and hiding of female births remained a significant issue. Goodkind provides a stronger argument through a more detailed analysis of the data, thus it is more convincing. To sum up, this thesis believes that the son preference culture and the development of gender identification technology are the main factors resulting in the gender imbalance in China, and the OCP only plays an auxiliary role rather than the main reason.

Additionally, Murphy (2003) pointed out that the implementation of family planning policies in rural areas was flexible, allowing families with a firstborn daughter to attempt a second child, known as the 1.5-child policy. This flexibility inadvertently strengthened the preference for male offspring, indirectly supporting the cultural norm of son preference and further deepening gender bias (Murphy 2003). However, Goodkind (2015) refuted Murphy's insights. Goodkind (2015) argued that logically, the 1.5-child policy would not encourage sex

selection more than a two-child policy because, under the 1.5-child policy, parents with a firstborn daughter could have a second child without penalty, which should make the firstborn daughter more valuable. Furthermore, Goodkind (2015) noted that in many societies without birth restrictions, such as parts of South Korea, Vietnam, and India, an increased sex ratio at birth has also been observed, indicating that the cultural preference for sons plays a significant role in the gender imbalance.

#### **5.7.1.2 Discussion on skewed sex ratio**

There is a point of contention regarding the OCP. Murphy (2003) considers the 1.5-child policy implemented in rural areas as a flexible form of the OCP and believes that this flexibility indirectly supports the cultural norm of son preference, potentially increasing the tendency for son preference. However, Goodkind (2015) refuted this by arguing that since the 1.5-child policy allows rural parents to have a second child if the firstborn is a girl, there is no need for sex selection against daughters. Nevertheless, Goodkind seems to overlook the issue that families with a son preference cannot guarantee that the second child will be a boy. Even if parents do not practice sex selection for the first child, if the first child is a girl, they might still resort to sex selection to ensure the second child is a boy. Thus, Goodkind's argument appears to be flawed. However, these conclusions are based on logical reasoning and lack rigorous data support. Therefore, future research should conduct systematic investigations and control variables to clarify the relationship between the 1.5-child policy, the cultural norm of son preference, and sex selection.

To sum up, the cultural norm of son preference and the spread of gender identification technology are the main impacts on the imbalance of sex ratio at birth. Although the OCP has played a supportive role, the main reasons are the cultural norms of son preference and the

development of gender identity technology. The OCP itself has not prompted families to choose boys.

### **5.7.2 Child sexual abuse**

Zhu, Xiao, and Zhu (2023) conducted a quantitative study exploring the gender differences in child sexual abuse (CSA) in China, with a particular focus on the impact of sibling status.

The data demonstrated that, in the presence of older siblings, girls are less likely than boys to experience one-time indirect CSA, indicating that the presence of older siblings can protect girls from one-time indirect CSA. However, having both older and younger siblings makes girls more likely than boys to experience one-time direct CSA, suggesting that siblings can potentially become direct abusers. According to Zhu, Xiao, and Zhu (2023), direct CSA covers “Touching your private parts”, “Being forced to have sex”, “Attempted to force sex”, “Having sex with someone”, and “Being forced into commercial sex”. Indirect CSA covers “Flashing you”, “Sexual exposure”, “Exposure to pornographic materials”, “Nude photos being taken unwillingly”, “Passing on your nude pictures online”, “Saying or writing sexual things about you”, “Watching your private parts”. This classification is based on whether the acts involve direct physical contact or sexual activity.

Overall, gender and sibling status significantly impact the experience of child sexual abuse. The presence of older siblings can protect girls from one-time indirect CSA, but both older and younger siblings make girls more likely to experience one-time direct CSA (Zhu, Xiao, and Zhu 2023). This indicates that the OCP has mixed effects on girls, with both positive and negative impacts. By reducing the presence of siblings, the policy can protect only-daughters from one-time direct CSA but may make girls more vulnerable to one-time indirect CSA due to the lack of protection from older siblings.

## **5.8 OCP Effects by Intergenerational Change**



From the group of focus, there are clear intergenerational differences in the research subjects across different subfields of female empowerment. As shown in Table 4, daughters receive the most attention, while mothers are less frequently studied. This suggests that daughters are the primary focus in research on female empowerment, whereas attention to mothers remains limited. The subfields with the highest concentration on daughters are *family investment and parental support, education, and gender equality and attitudes*.

According to the group of focus in collected literature, as shown in Table 4, the daughter gets the most attention in this topic, the mother gets less, and the father gets the least attention. There is no research paying attention to the grandparent generation, maybe because the grandparents are not the generation impacted by the OCP directly. Moreover, there are some interesting findings. There is a disparity between the quantitative and qualitative analysis in this thesis. According to the quantitative result, there is no differences emerged between the effects of the OCP on mothers and daughters (namely Table 4: approximately 33 per cent negative, 66 % positive impact for both groups of focus). However, based on reading the articles in greater depth, mother gets more negative impacts than daughters, especially in the damage to mothers' reproductive rights, health and body autonomy. Daughters, on the other hand, are rarely negatively affected. This could be because, in quantitative analysis, each study is counted just once in terms of the group of focus and nature of the relationship.

To further improve the accuracy of the data, this thesis refines the analysis in Table 5 by matching the *nature of the relationship, subfields, and groups of focus* more precisely. For example, Murphy (2003) is related to both "Female reproductive rights, autonomy and health" and "Sex ratio," and focuses on mothers. However, Murphy only discusses the OCP's impact on mothers' autonomy. Thus, "Sex ratio" is not counted as related to mothers in this case. In addition, for some studies marked as having a "complicated" impact, this thesis

distinguishes the nature of the relationship when the complexity arises from differences across subfields or groups of focus. For instance, Hu and Shi (2020) present an overall complicated relationship, which can be broken down into a positive effect on *family investment* and no effect on *gender equality attitudes*, and is therefore categorised accordingly in Table 5. It should be noted that not all studies labelled as “complicated” can be separated in this way. Those that cannot be further distinguished remain marked as “complicated”.

The results in Table 5 support that the OCP had more negative impacts on mothers than on daughters, especially in the areas of “**Gender equality and attitudes and Female reproductive rights, autonomy and health**”. These findings are closer to the qualitative analysis in Sections 5.1–5.7. This may be because Table 4 counts each study only once by “groups of focus” and “**nature of the relationship**”, while Table 5 offers a more detailed breakdown, which provides more accurate results. Furthermore, this thesis separates “mother” and “daughter and mother” into two different categories, without accounting for overlapping identities. For example, some studies marked as “complicated” or “mixed” may show that the OCP had a positive effect on daughters but a negative one on mothers. This means the impact on groups with dual identities—being both mothers and daughters under the OCP—can be complex. Future studies could consider these overlapping roles and explore how intergenerational identity changes affect female empowerment.

According to Table 5 and Appendix Table 2, most studies on “***Family investment and parental support***” and “***Education***” focus on daughters, with only a few mentioning mothers. This may be because these subfields are more relevant to daughters. Mothers are usually older and are not the main targets of family investment or education. The

subfield“ ***Employment and career development***” includes both mothers and daughters, although daughters are still the main focus. In these three subfields, most of the findings are **positive**, and there are no **negative findings**. This suggests that the OCP generally had a **positive impact** on both mothers and daughters in family investment, education, and career development.

In comparison, the “**Gender equality and attitudes**” also primarily focuses on daughters, though a smaller number of studies examine mothers. In this subfield, the positive and negative impacts on mothers are equal. Daughters experience predominantly positive effects, approximately two-thirds of the cases. This indicates that the OCP has had a more positive impact on daughters than on mothers. Similarly, in the “**Intergenerational relationships**”, although the focus remains largely on daughters, the role of mothers is also considered.

Interestingly, all studies concerning mothers report positive outcomes, while daughters are evenly divided between positive effects and “no effect”. This suggests an intergenerational difference in how the OCP has shaped female intergenerational relationships, with mothers experiencing more positive impacts than daughters. Notably, the “**Female reproductive rights, autonomy and health**” stands out as the only subfield that focuses exclusively on mothers without including daughters. Studies in this subfield report more negative than positive outcomes, possibly due to mothers' direct exposure to reproductive control measures under the OCP. As for “**Other social dynamics**”, such as studies on “**Sex ratio**”, the focus tends to shift away from individual women and toward social and cultural factors. The issue of “**Child sexual abuse**”, on the other hand, relates solely to daughters and shows mixed effects attributed to the OCP. It is important to note that studies focusing on daughters overwhelmingly report positive effects, with no negative outcomes observed. In contrast, negative impacts appear only in mothers. This indicates that, compared with daughters, mothers have endured more negative impacts of OCP. In summary, the literature supports

that the **OCP is generally positive for daughters in female empowerment**, especially in education, family investment, and career development. However, its impact on mothers is more complex, with some subfields—particularly autonomy, reproductive rights and health—dominated by negative effects.

According to Part 4.3, the mothers' generation represents the 1940s to the 1990s, while the daughters' generation represents the late 1970s to the 2000s. From a temporal perspective, the data presented in Table 5 supports the following conclusion: in the subfields of family investment and parental support, education, and employment and career development, OCP is generally positive for both mothers and daughters. This suggests that the OCP had equally positive effects in these three subfields across the two generational periods, 1940s–1990s and late 1970s–2000s. However, in the “gender equality and attitudes” and “female reproductive rights, autonomy and health”, the OCP have a more negative impact on mothers. This indicates that the negative impact of the policy was more prominent during the 1940s–1990s than in the late 1970s–2000s, particularly in these two subfields. Furthermore, studies on “female reproductive rights, autonomy and health” almost exclusively focus on the 1940s–1990s. Moreover, “child sexual abuse” is associated solely with the daughters' generation, with relevant studies emerging only from the late 1970s to the 2000s.

It is important to note that in the “**intergenerational relationships**”, the results presented in Table 5 differ from the qualitative analysis in Sections 5.1 to 5.7. A close reading of the literature suggests that **only-daughters tend to receive greater attention within the family and maintain closer relationships with their parents** compared to the mother generation. This discrepancy may be attributed to the limited number of studies focusing on mothers in this particular field, potentially leading to biased quantitative findings. Ultimately, in the “**sex**

**ratio”** and **“child sexual abuse”**, there are only **complicated** and **mixed impacts**. This suggests that the impact of the OCP in these areas remains inconclusive. The ambiguity may also be because of the limited volume of research conducted in these subfields.

Moreover, as shown in Appendix Table 2, the OCP has affected mothers and daughters born in different decades, indicating a wide intergenerational span among the study population.

For example, mothers include women born from the 1940s to the 1980s. Although their birth years differ, they all gave birth after the late 1970s and were influenced by the OCP.

Similarly, daughters affected by the policy were born between the late 1970s and early 2000s, covering more than 20 years. This means that there are different ages and life experiences among both mothers and daughters. These differences may lead to different responses to the OCP and different impacts of the OCP on female empowerment. However, current literature does not examine these birth cohort differences in detail. This is a limitation and also a topic for future research. By focusing on a comparison between mothers and daughters, this thesis offers a limited view of intergenerational differences, which may not fully reflect the nuances of a detailed birth cohort analysis.

Furthermore, several promising research directions emerge. First, the birth cohorts of mothers and daughters partially overlap. This suggests that women may have experienced the OCP in different identity roles—some solely as mothers (1940s-Late 1970s), some as both (Late 1970s -1990s), others solely as daughters (1990s-2000s). Future studies could explore whether different combinations of OCP-related identities (only mothers, only daughters, or both) lead to divergent outcomes in female empowerment. In addition, it would be valuable to examine differences in female empowerment between mothers who were only-daughters and those who were not. Another interesting angle involves the variation in maternal age at childbirth under the OCP. Given that the mothers’ birth cohorts range from the 1940s to the

1990s, some women gave birth in their 40s while others in their 20s during the policy period (1979–2015). Future research could investigate whether this variation was influenced by the OCP and whether it had consistent or changing effects over time. To pursue these questions, future studies may adopt more refined data classification methods, such as those used by Wu, Ye, and He (2014), which clearly distinguish between mothers and daughters and categorise birth cohorts by decade. This approach would enable more precise analyses of time change effects on female empowerment.

## **6. Discussion**

In this chapter, key insights that emerged from the analysis of literature in Chapter 5 will be displayed from parts 6.1 to 6.1.7. Limitations and gaps in the Literature will be discussed in part 6.2. Following this, the recommendation for future research, both for this topic and this thesis, will be displayed in part 6.3.

### **6.1 Emerging insights**

In this section, key insights that emerged from the analysis of the literature will be displayed.

It includes several key insights, including:

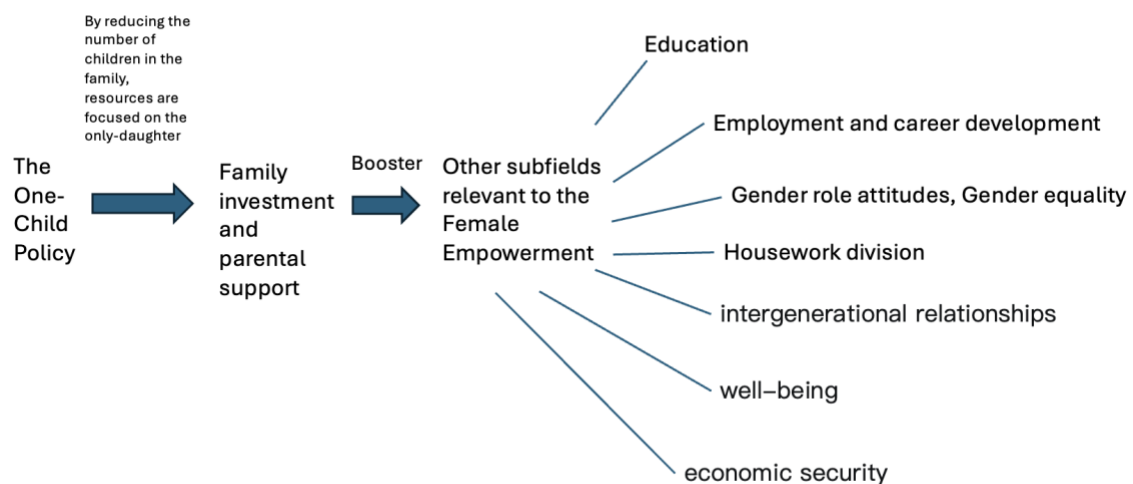
1. Change of family structure due to low fertility
2. The impacts of the OCP vary by external factors
3. Controversial issues
4. The impact of son preference or OCP
5. Empowering females in both natal families and marital families
6. Gender injustice in the mothers' generation in the OCP enforcement

#### **6.1.1 Change of family structure due to low fertility**

Through the above analysis, first, the main finding emerging from the analyses is that the change in family structure due to low fertility rates is a key reason why the OCP has the potential to empower women. The thesis finds that nearly all subfields involving female empowerment, such as education, employment and career advancement, gender equality, intergenerational relationships, well-being, and economic security, are associated with increased investment in only-daughters. Nearly every subfield related to female empowerment benefits from the concentrated family investment and parental support

received by only-daughters. Due to birth restrictions, the number of siblings has decreased, resulting in a shift from a parent-centred family structure to a child-centred family structure. This family structure forces families to prioritise the needs of the only-child over the needs of the parents so that the only-daughter can receive concentrated family resources and parental support. This suggests that the concentration of family resources and parental support resulting from this demographic change is a fundamental factor in promoting female empowerment. It concludes that the evidence supports that there is a chain relationship between the OCP, family resources and the other subfields relevant to female empowerment (as shown in Figure 2).

**Figure 2. The chain impact between the OCP, family investment and other aspects relevant to female empowerment**



### 6.1.2 The impacts of the OCP vary by external factors

However, it should be noted that this thesis observes the impact of the OCP to be complex. In multiple areas such as education, intergenerational relationships, and gender role attitudes, this thesis has found conflicting conclusions regarding the effects of the OCP. This indicates



that the impact of the OCP is complex and cannot be generalized. Furthermore, according to Xu and Yeung (2013), parents' educational and economic levels, personal attitudes towards parenting, and cultural changes in gender angle may play a more important role in shaping fathers' investment in their daughters, regardless of whether the daughters are the only-daughter or have siblings. Additionally, Liu (2024) emphasizes that while there is a positive correlation between only-daughters and more progressive gender role attitudes toward themselves, these positive correlations are mostly reflected in families in urban areas with increased educational resources and opportunities. As the one-child generation, only-daughters exhibit different gender role attitudes due to variations in their socioeconomic backgrounds, educational opportunities, family influences, marital dynamics, and cultural norms (Liu 2024). Fong (2002) believes that only in the presence of accessible resources for women can the concentration of resources resulting from low fertility rates truly benefit only-daughters. In the absence of educational resources and other resources available to women, fertility restrictions are merely restrictive without being empowering (Fong 2002). This may explain the differences. This suggests that the empowering effect of the OCP is limited by the environment and resources, and changes in external factors can significantly alter the impact of the OCP.

### **6.1.3 Controversial issues**

According to conflicting outcomes from different studies, the most notable point of contention is whether the OCP equally benefited both only-daughters and only-sons through increased family investment, or primarily benefited only-daughters. Most studies indicate that the reduced sibling size brought about by the OCP allows only-child, regardless of gender, to receive concentrated family investment and parental support compared to children with siblings (Liu 2012; Zhang 2007; Deutsch 2006; Liu 2017; Chen and Jordan 2018).

On the contrary, Fong (2002) and Wang and Feng (2021) suggest that since sons traditionally received more investment and support from their parents and have been valued, the transitioning from parent-centred to child-centred family has less impact on boys. Therefore, the OCP, by eliminating the presence of sons in the family, broke the patriarchal norm of son preference and benefits only-daughters more than only-sons. Such insight is also supported by Liu and Jiang (2021), whose evidence supports that in the Chinese cultural context, being an only-child has advantages in strengthening parent-child relationships, especially for daughters, who benefit more from this status. However, in families with multiple children, traditional son preference leads to a decrease in the closeness of daughters' relationships with their parents, while the closeness of sons' relationships with their parents increases. This indicates that the benefits of the OCP in increasing parent-child closeness mainly accrue to daughters (Liu and Jiang 2021). Such insight is further challenged by the evidence provided by Hu and Shi (2020) and Zhai and Gao (2010), which support that child gender does not significantly affect the allocation of family investment and parental support in all sibling sizes. Therefore, based on the current research data, evidence supports the idea that that only-daughters benefit more compared to daughters with siblings by the OCP in various aspects. However, it is not conclusive whether only-daughters benefit more from the OCP compared to only-sons. This thesis recommends conducting further research on this question.

There is a debate over whether the OCP enhances gender equality in families and society. While evidence from many studies, such as Deutsch (2006), supports that the OCP contributes to raising overall gender equality awareness in society, Wang and Zhang (2022) specifically argued against that. Wang and Zhang argue that, despite the evident egalitarian treatment within families, this equality is only a superficial manifestation of the OCP, which has resulted in families with only one child and fails to transcend deeply-rooted gender norms. Outside the core family environment, social interactions still heavily lean towards

traditional gender roles. The OCP can only provide gender equality for only-daughters within the family, but its ability to mitigate broader social biases that still favor sons or adhere to traditional gender roles at the societal level is limited (Wang and Zhang 2022). Evidence also supports that factors such as socioeconomic background, educational opportunities, family influence, marital dynamics, and cultural norm differences are considered to play key roles in shaping gender role attitudes instead of the OCP (Liu 2024). This seems to suggest that the OCP cannot change the traditional norms of son preference and the role of the OCP in advancing gender equality is debatable. A further comprehensive investigation of the factors influencing son preference is required to identify the role of birth restrictions in female empowerment. Also, analyses on the question of whether the One Child Policy may have brought changes in macro-level social structures that are relevant to female empowerment, such as gender norms and job discrimination, are still lacking.

#### **6.1.4 The impact of son preference or OCP**

There is only one study with qualitative evidence that supports that the OCP is the key reason result in a distorted sex ratio (Murphy 2003). Yet there are two studies with a comparative historical analysis using secondary quantitative data and a reappraisal based on secondary data, respectively offer evidence to support that the "son preference" culture and the development of sex-selective technologies are the main reasons for the skewed sex ratio in China, while the impact of the OCP is insignificant (Loh and Remick 2015; Goodkind 2015). The second argument has more supporters and provides stronger evidence with deeply detailed data analysis and is, therefore, more convincing than the argument supporting the belief that the OCP is the primary cause of the imbalanced sex ratio. It also should be noted that the problem of gender imbalance is greater in rural areas than in urban areas because the preference for sons is more severe in rural areas than in urban areas (Lei and Pals 2011). This

seems to be further evidence that son preference culture is the main cause of the sex ratio imbalance, rather than the OCP.

#### **6.1.5 Empowering females in both natal families and marital families**

Evidence supports the idea that the shift towards child-centred family structures not only elevated the status of women within their natal families during their daughterhood but also increased their status and decision-making power in their adult marital families. Moreover, evidence also supports that the impact of being an only-child is long-term and intergenerational, affecting groups including only-daughters and the next generation of them (Wang and Feng 2021). The OCP allowed family resources to concentrate on the only-daughters, significantly promoting their educational and career development and advancing their gender equality awareness. Furthermore, the policy enabled only-daughters to continue receiving support from their natal families after marriage and childbirth, which alleviated their childcare burden and allowed them to continue advancing in their careers (Shen and Jiang 2020). They could also benefit their children's education by continuing to receive support from their natal families (Wang and Feng 2021), which is a privilege not typically enjoyed by daughters with siblings, as daughters traditionally separated from their parents after marriage (Zhang 2009). However, within the context of the OCP, families relied on women returning to their natal homes to avoid penalties for having exceeded the prescribed number of children, thereby strengthening the bond between married women and their natal families. This allowed women to maintain a close relationship with their natal family in post-marriage, receiving ongoing support and increasing interactions. This reversed the traditional predicament where women could only rely on men, thereby enhancing women's autonomy in their lives (Zhang 2009).

#### **6.1.6 Gender injustice in mother's generation in the OCP enforcement**

There is an interesting finding, highlighting that the OCP affects male and female parents differently. The impact of the OCP on intergenerational relationships is mainly explored in the mother-daughter relationship, the impact on the mother-daughter relationship is universal. In contrast, the father's involvement with care for daughters tends to be influenced by the father's educational level, personal attitudes toward parenting, and social-cultural changes relevant to gender. However, the number of research is limited, this thesis only finds one study (Xu and Yeung 2013) discussing the factors impacting fathers' care for daughters. Therefore, it is supposed that a conclusion cannot be drawn at this moment, further research should be conducted to investigate whether the OCP impacts male and female parents differently. According to the above analysis, the rising female intergenerational relationships are also due to the demographic shift to smaller family sizes, which allows resources and parental attention to be focused on the only-daughter. These two findings combined indicate that mothers are more influenced by family structure than fathers, while fathers are influenced more by personal factors than by family. Liu (2012) also mentioned that among the one-child generation, mothers are more inclined than fathers to sacrifice their careers and freedom to promote the development and happiness of their only-daughter. This also seems to imply some gender injustice, with mothers sacrificing more for the family than fathers. Although there are gender injustice exists in the implementation of the OCP, it is still unknown that gender injustice in the family even exacerbated by the OCP. It would be an interesting direction to investigate if the gender injustice was further exacerbated by the OCP or is a feature of Chinese families in general.

Finally, evidence supports the idea that most studies involving daughters demonstrate positive effects for only-daughters, including enhanced family investment, education, and career opportunities. Studies involving the generation of mothers reveal the OCP's double-edged nature: it alleviated the burden of childbirth, increased women's autonomy, family

status, and well-being, but also deprived women of reproductive rights and bodily autonomy and harmed their health, placing a disproportionate sterilization burden on women compared to men. The effect of the OCP has been almost uniformly positive for daughters, but mixed for mothers. However, the impact on the father is rarely mentioned. Jiang, Li, and Feldman (2013) brought up the ethical and moral debate surrounding the OCP, criticizing it for prioritizing national interests over those of individual families and placing excessive emphasis on macro-issues which include population growth and the economy. However, most studies included in this systematic review merely discover that the mother's interests are being violated. In conjunction, the mention that the OCP places a disproportionate burden of responsibility for sterilization on mothers, such as forced abortions and placement of IUDs (Zou and Liu 2024; Pletcher 2018), which suggests that fathers have suffered little under the OCP, and that 'violated family interests' seems to refer mainly to the violated interests of mothers. This appears to highlight the issue of gender inequality in the mother's generation an additional time.

#### **6.1.7 Summarizing the key insights**

In summary, the empowering effect of the OCP on daughters is primarily based on its role in reducing fertility rates, decreasing the number of children, and shifting the family model to a child-centred one. The analysis indicates that different subfields affected by the OCP are interrelated, forming a chain effect (as shown in Figure 2). One-child families were able to concentrate family investment and parental support for only-child, which is the most fundamental factor for female empowerment. The advantage of only-daughters in obtaining focused family investment and parental support can further benefit various aspects of women's lives, including education and career development, changes in gender roles, higher

family status, closer intergenerational relationships, challenges to traditional gender norms, and better opportunities for social mobility.

However, this does not always lead to the empowerment of women, as it continuously evolves and changes under the influence of external factors. The results in various subfields show contradictory outcomes, indicating that the impact of the OCP is complex, with both benefits and drawbacks. The influence of the OCP also varies due to external factors, including the availability of local educational and economic resources, changes in traditional patriarchal norms, and parents' parenting concepts and education levels. This may suggest that the complexity of the OCP itself is a result of the impact of different external factors. Therefore, in summary, the empowerment effect of the OCP on women stems from the concentration of resources and support brought about by the reduction in the number of children in the family. However, the impact of the OCP is complex and varies under different external factors.

## **6.2 Limitations and gaps in the literature**

Regarding gaps in the current literature, first, based on available research, it can only be reiterated that only-daughters seemingly benefitted more than daughters with siblings in various aspects of the OCP. However, it is not conclusive whether only-daughters benefit more from the OCP compared to only-sons. Additionally, research indicates that the distinction between the OCP and the 1.5-child policy is often unclear, with most authors not explicitly differentiating between the two, and some researchers treating the 1.5-child policy as a variant of the OCP. Given the differing socioeconomic and cultural environments

between urban and rural areas, this mixed research approach may lead to misunderstandings and inaccurate conclusions.

Furthermore, regarding the group of focus of this thesis, most studies concentrate on the impact of the OCP on the generation of children rather than on parents. This indicates a lack of research on the effects of the OCP on the parent generation. Additionally, most studies focus on family investment and parental support, education, employment and career development, gender equality, and attitudes. There are fewer studies on intergenerational relationships, female reproductive rights, autonomy and health and other social dynamics, including sex ratio and child sexual abuse, indicating gaps in these areas. Moreover, although family investments are highly crucial as a key pathway that the OCP goes through to benefit other subfields, the measurements of family investment and parental support often lack explicitness. There is no clear definition or scope of what is included in family investment and parental support. This is a weakness of the current literature. Particularly noteworthy is that of the three studies related to sex ratio, all three studies do not have clearly defined groups compared (as shown in Appendix Table 1), and most of the impacts are complicated (as shown in Table 3). This implies that understandings regarding sex ratios are still highly debated and that there is a shortage of both attention and well-defined compared groups in studies of this area.

Additionally, it should be noted that some articles mention the behaviour of parents who, fearing huge fines for violating the OCP and grassroots family planning officials avoiding penalties for not meeting targets, engaged in underreporting and concealing the birth of children (Kane and Choi 1999; Goodkind 2015). This behaviour has led to the issue of unregistered children, most of whom are girls (Kane and Choi 1999). These unregistered girls have to face challenges and difficulties in education and employment due to a lack of



identification when they grow up (Pletcher 2018). However, in the six databases searched in this thesis, no studies have conducted data analysis on the issue of unregistered children and education, indicating a research gap in this area.

Furthermore, most studies lack a clear range for the birth cohort, though some can be inferred from the article content (as shown in Appendix Table 2). For instance, in Hu and Shi (2020), the birth cohort inferred from the article is 1995-2000, representing the generation of children born under China's OCP. Based on the description in the article, the subjects' ages in 2010 were between 10 and 15 years old, and since the data was from the 2010 China Family Panel Studies (CFPS), these children were born between 1995 and 2000. However, birth cohorts in some other studies cannot be inferred, such as Zhang (2009), which only indicates that the subjects were marriageable-age daughters under the OCP.

Moreover, some studies exhibit a lack of rigour. For example, Zhang and Wang and Liu (2021) argue that only-daughters' equal digital abilities and internet usage compared to only-sons and sons with siblings benefit from parents' concentrated investment and attention, but they do not provide rigorous data to support this argument, relying instead on citing other research. Similarly, in Huang, Jiang and Sun (2024), the results regarding the paradoxical protective effect of son preference on girls lack direct data evidence, being inferred through data analysis. Moreover, Goodkind's (2015) argument against the role of birth restrictions in resulting sex-selective action lacks rigorous data support. Due to the lack of direct data support, these conclusions could not be rigorous.

This thesis finds that existing studies often **overlook the impact of regional variation**. In **rural areas**, people often prefer sons and want to have more children, so they tend to **resist** the One-Child Policy (OCP) more. In contrast, in **urban areas**, changing ideas and economic development made some families accept the idea of having only one child prior to the OCP

(Kane and Choi 1999). This may affect how the OCP influenced **female empowerment**. Fong (2002) also pointed out that the **availability of resources** is different across regions. For example, families in large urban centers generally have greater access to quality education than those in smaller towns or rural areas. As a result, even in singleton-daughter families, the extent of female empowerment may be constrained by the availability of local resources. Future research should therefore **incorporate regional disparities** into the analysis to provide a more nuanced understanding of the OCP's gendered effects.

### **6.3 The impact that cannot be analysed independently**

While existing studies support the role of the OCP, they often overlook other potential factors influencing female empowerment, leading to less rigorous conclusions. During the same period as the OCP, China experienced major political, economic, and cultural changes that had profound effects on society. Among the literature reviewed in this thesis, the most prominent change is China's market economy transformation in the late 1970s. Zhang (2007) and Zhang (2009) both highlight the transformative impact of economic reforms on women's roles, especially in rural areas. They demonstrate how these reforms, together with the OCP, led to major shifts in gender norms. Zhang (2007) emphasizes how the expansion of urban job opportunities created new paths to independence for rural women. Many migrated to cities, found work, and gained economic autonomy. This allowed them to move beyond traditional rural gender roles. With their income, many women made significant contributions to their families, changing their roles from dependents to main providers. Similarly, Zhang (2009) demonstrates that market reforms helped remove institutional and economic barriers that had previously limited women's mobility and autonomy. Women gained more freedom to visit their natal families, engage in family economic cooperation and take on jobs that were

once unavailable. Zhang (2007) and Zhang (2009) both believe that these shifts redefined women's roles in both family and economy, promoting gender equality by enhancing their economic independence, social networks, and status. Fung and Ferchen (2014) similarly note that modern industrialization and educational expansion improved job access and education for women, further promoting their independence and socio-economic status.

Additionally, Liu (2012) highlights how the market economy transformation specifically benefited daughters. Liu mentions that due to the beginning of the late 1970s China's market economy transformation, the mothers were laid off and redirected their focus from public work to private family life, thus providing more care for their children. Liu (2012) points out that the better care and support daughters received were largely because mothers made significant sacrifices for their daughters' education and growth, often at the expense of their careers and personal happiness, accepting early retirement or less dignified jobs. As a result, daughters benefited from their mothers' sacrifices, gaining better educational opportunities and higher expectations for the future. This indicates that the improved educational opportunities for only-daughters are not solely due to the OCP but also attributable to the market economy transition in China.

Interview data in Liu's (2012) study highlight that mothers, compared to fathers, made greater investments in their daughters' education and development. This further suggests that the OCP is not the sole factor enhancing educational opportunities for only-daughters; the market economy transition and mothers' choices also played significant roles. Therefore, to further verify the extent to which the family structure changes brought by the OCP have improved daughters' access to family investment and parental attention, it is necessary to exclude interfering factors for further research. Otherwise, it could lead to the impact of economic transformation being wrongly attributed to the OCP, causing errors in conclusion. However,

the studies reviewed by this thesis do not distinguish the impact of the market economy transformation from OCP, this is a weakness of the literature.

In summary, various social changes have shaped women's lives, yet these influences are not clearly distinguished in existing studies, and the specific impact of the OCP is not precisely discussed. While existing data supports the argument that the OCP promoted female empowerment by reshaping demographic structures, this thesis questions whether these demographic shifts were solely the result of the OCP or also influenced by broader socio-economic and cultural transformations. For instance, in urban China, some parents had already chosen to have only one child before the implementation of family planning policies (Kane and Choi 1999), suggesting that the demographic transition may not solely be due to the OCP. However, such possibilities are largely absent in the reviewed literature, these may be a significant gap in existing research.

The OCP occurred alongside various social changes that also positively affected female empowerment, making it difficult to separate the policy's specific role. Zhang (2009) argues that the market economic reforms and the OCP worked together to increase women's autonomy and status in economic, family, and social life, while redefining traditional gender roles. Additionally, Fung and Ferchen (2014) support that modern industrialization and expanded education improved women's status, but they also take the OCP as key in accelerating this progress. This indicates that it is not feasible to analyze the impact of the OCP separately from economic reforms and other social transformation, as the effects of the OCP are intertwined with these changes, resulting in an overall change of women's lives. Therefore, they cannot be studied in isolation. Although it is difficult to distinguish which changes were caused by the OCP and which by other factors, these multiple influences collectively shaped women's experiences and contributed to female empowerment.

## 6.4 Recommendations for further research

First, through investigating themes including intergenerational relationships, women's rights, autonomy and well-being, gender ratio imbalances, and child sexual abuse, subsequent research can reduce the research gaps that currently exist. In addition, to completely understand the multifaceted consequences of the policy, further attention is recommended to be directed to the OCP's effect on the parent generation. It also recommends to consider about include the grandparent generation in future research. Examining how the OCP has affected parents' and grandparent's gender viewpoints, financial circumstances, intergenerational connections and other aspects may provide additional perspective on the sophisticated social dynamics the policy has created. Furthermore, further study is necessary to determine if only-daughters or only-sons benefit more from the OCP to fully and deeply understand its true impacts. The future can also investigate whether gender injustice in the family is even exacerbated by the OCP.

Moreover, addressing the shortcomings of previous studies and carrying out more in-depth investigations are crucial and the goal is to improve the research and eliminate ambiguity. To give more exact and in-depth data and insights, future research, for instance, ought to explicitly differentiate between the OCP and the 1.5-child policy as well as specifically characterise the birth cohorts and groups compared. In addition, a thorough examination of all the variables and dynamic shifts that occur during the policy's implementation process is required, considering disparities between urban and rural areas, social opportunities for employment, national distribution of resources, and socioeconomic backgrounds. No literature has been found to conduct a study on this, thus this is also a gap in the literature. The fairness and effectiveness of the policy can be thoroughly assessed by delving into the variations in implementation impacts between regions and socioeconomic classes.

Furthermore, multiple pieces of evidence support the intertwined effects of the son preference cultural norms and the OCP on female empowerment, indicating significant research potential in this direction. Future research can explore how son preference culture interacts with the OCP and the specific impact of this interaction on gender equality and female empowerment. This can be explored by comparing the difference in the impact of the OCP on female empowerment between geographical regions with a heavy preference for boys and regions with a weak preference for boys. Further research is also required to determine whether other elements, such as cultural change relevant to son preference, and the socioeconomic growth process, may affect the policy's empowering impacts on females. A deeper knowledge of the effects of the OCP and potential outside variables can be attained through growing and extending studies in collecting information relevant to the change in social gender norms and economic development. In addition, most kinds of literature focus on the impact of the OCP on the micro-level, which means inside families. There are limited studies on how the OCP may have changed macro-level structures relevant to gender inequality such as norms, policies and culture. In the future study, the impact of the OCP within families and on society can be evaluated separately. This allows for a clearer distinction between the micro and macro impacts of the OCP on female empowerment effects. This thesis could also be strengthened by further categorizing the literature (into two categories - micro/family and macro/social) and calculating how much research is on micro/family and how much is on macro/social.

Finally, analysing findings by counting quantitatively and more qualitative in-depth analyses results in somewhat different conclusions in terms of the group of focus and the nature of the relationship, especially for the subgroup of mothers. As for the potential reasons that result in this disparity, the quantitative method which summarizes mothers and daughters only displays overall effects, yet there were more nuanced effects that are not included in the table

4, they show more negative effects for mothers. Therefore, future research should count each finding once and link the findings precisely to the group of focus, even if it means having multiple sub-finds relevant to the group of focus in one single study, and that one study needs to be counted multiplied in the analysis.

## 7. Conclusion

This thesis explores the impact of China's OCP on female empowerment through a systematic literature review. The thesis finds that the earliest research began in 2002, while the most recent investigations run until 2024. This indicates that it is a relatively new research field, and the thesis's study on this topic aligns with the development of contemporary society. Building on the pioneering work of Vanessa Fong (2002), the study hypothesizes that the OCP has a positive impact on female empowerment in China. By analysing 32 relevant studies, the thesis finds that by reducing the number of children per family, the OCP makes family resources and parental support focused on the only-daughters, which further benefits females in career and educational advancement, gender equality awareness, and family decision-making. While most studies support this argument, some have reached different conclusions, reflecting the complexity of the policy's impact on female empowerment and highlighting the potential influence of external factors on the policy's effectiveness in empowering women. For example, whether the concentration of family resources resulting from fewer number of number of children can empower women depends on the availability of accessible resources for women. This indicates that the policy's impact on female empowerment cannot be generalized and must be analysed in conjunction with various external factors, including regional differences, disparities in economic and educational resources in different geographic regions, and cultural differences within China (such as son preference). This may suggest that the complex role of the OCP is a result of complex external factors. It is important to note that the OCP occurred alongside multiple social transformations, such as the market economic reforms, and their effects are intertwined as a whole, making it difficult to isolate the specific impact of the OCP. However, it is clear that the combined influence of the OCP and other factors during this period brought social



changes and altered family structures, significantly shaping women's experiences and transforming their lives.

Additionally, an interesting debate has been discovered about whether the OCP benefits only-daughters and only-sons equally. While some studies suggest that the OCP primarily benefits only-daughters, other research finds no significant difference in the policy's impact on the two groups. This debate can serve as a direction for further research to explore the policy's impact on female empowerment. In addition, this thesis identified phenomena that had previously been incorrectly attributed to the OCP. For example, Murphy (2003) incorrectly believed that the OCP was a major factor in gender imbalance, yet a cultural preference for sons was the main factor.

It is important to note that this thesis has several limitations. Conducting a systematic review is a complex task, requiring the screening of numerous studies, potentially involving hundreds or even thousands of articles. Therefore, systematic literature reviews are typically conducted by multiple researchers to handle this workload (Mallett et al. 2012). In contrast, this thesis is completed by a single researcher within a limited timeframe of less than five months. Moreover, a team conducting a systematic literature review should include at least one scholar with methodological expertise to effectively use electronic data management tools for organizing and analyzing the retrieved information, thus enhancing the accuracy of the assessment and process efficiency (Owens 2021). However, the author of this thesis has a background solely in qualitative research and lacks methodological expertise or training in employing the systematic literature review method. Additionally, this thesis involves a significant amount of quantitative analysis, which extends beyond the researcher's academic background. To overcome these challenges, the researcher was self-trained to read quantitative results, p-values, and coefficients - namely the nature of the relationship to

ensure the research's efficiency and accuracy. The researcher also self-trained to use simple literature management tools, Zotero and Excel, to organize the huge number of pieces of literature. Due to the limitation of time and access to databases, this thesis only searched English language data which can be accessed by the Australian National University's database with student authority to ensure the research can proceed.

For future research on this topic, it is recommended that researchers further explore unresolved issues, such as whether both only-sons and only-daughters benefit equally from the policy or whether only-daughters benefit more. Additionally, understanding the reasons behind the policy's complex impact on female empowerment and identifying factors that influence its effectiveness could serve as future research directions. Furthermore, the impact of the OCP can be assessed separately at the family and societal levels. This approach enables a clearer distinction between the micro and macro effects of the policy, thereby enhancing the understanding of its implications for female empowerment. In addition, to improve this thesis, in the future, multiple-language databases can be included to expand the search scope and add the amount of data. Chinese databases can be included in future research as the research is focused on China's OCP. The analysis can also be refined in the future, such as a more detailed categorization of the relationship between the impact of the OCP on the literature's group of focus can be applied. To summarise, it is recommended that future research undertake comprehensive investigations from multiple perspectives, emphasising the extensive impact of the OCP on female empowerment while also clarifying the impacts' distinct manifestations and outcomes in various circumstances. This not only contributes to a thorough evaluation of the policy's effects on female empowerment, but it also offers insightful knowledge and direction for future efforts aimed at empowering women in China.

Overall, this thesis is the first research employing a systematic literature review to investigate the relationship between the OCP and female empowerment. It only provides fresh insights into the relationship between the OCP and female empowerment but also highlights unresolved debates and gaps in current research. Based on this it offers directions and recommendations for future studies. By summarizing and synthesizing the relationships between the OCP and female empowerment in existing literature, this thesis contributes to further understanding of this topic and assists in identifying gaps in the existing literature for further research. In conclusion, the findings of this thesis contribute to the first comprehensive and deeper understanding of factors influencing female empowerment by combining multiple literatures and perspectives. This has the potential to inform to promote more effective practices for gender equality and female empowerment in China.

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**Appendix Table1**

No	Publication Year	Author	Title	Method	Groups compared	The result of the relationship between the OCP (OCP) and female empowerment
1	2023	Wang, Z.; Huang, Z.; Cai, J.	Does the OCP Improve Chinese Human Capital? A Propensity Score Matching Analysis	Quantitative	People affected by OCP vs people not affected by OCP	Positive
2	2024	Huang, Z.; Jiang, X.; Sun, A.	Fertility and delayed migration: How son preference protects young	Quantitative	The likelihood of experiencing parent- child separation at age two (families with a	Complicated

			girls against mother–child separation		firstborn girl vs. Families with a firstborn boy)  · The gender differences in parent-child separation (regions with relaxed/no birth interval restrictions (1.5-child policy) vs. Regions with strict birth interval restrictions (OCP))	
3	2023	Zhu, Y.; Xiao, C.; Zhu, B.	Gender differences in child sexual abuse in China: Do one-child status	Quantitative	Boys vs girls.	Mixed

			and repeated victimization matter?		Have no siblings vs have older sibling vs only have younger siblings	
4	2024	Liu, Y.	Virtues or Talent among Brotherless Daughters: A Study of How Patriarchal Gender Ideals Affect Gender Role Attitudes among Women from the One-Child Generation in China	Qualitative	Brotherless daughters from different socio-economic, geographical, and financial (dis)advantages backgrounds.	Cannot show the relevance
5	2020	Hu, Y.; Shi, X.	The impact of China's OCP on intergenerational and gender relations	Quantitative	Only-child vs. Child with siblings	Complicated (positive for investment, no



					Boys vs. Girls.	effect on the view of gender equality)
6	2021	Liu, Y.; Jiang, Q.	Who Benefits From Being an Only Child? A Study of Parent–Child Relationship Among Chinese Junior High School Students	Quantitative	Only-child vs child with siblings  Only-daughter vs only-sons	Positive.
7	2021	Chen, S.; Ying, S.X.; Wu, H.; You, J.	Carrying on the family's legacy: Male heirs and firm innovation	Quantitative	Female heirs vs Male heirs	Positive
8	2020	Shen, Y.; Jiang, L.	Labor Market Outcomes of Professional Women	Qualitative	The study does not explicitly present groups	Positive.

			with Two Children after the OCP in China		compared but implicitly compares the experiences of professional women with only-child status to those without.	
9	2021	Gu, X.; Jean Yeung, W.-J.	Why do Chinese adolescent girls outperform boys in achievement tests?	Mixed: Both qualitative and quantitative	Girls' scores vs. Boys' scores  Urban girls' (only-daughter) math scores vs. Rural girls' (daughters in traditional families with multiple children) math scores	Positive

10	2018	Chen, J.; Jordan, L.P.	Intergenerational Support in One- and Multi-child Families in China: Does Child Gender Still Matter?	Quantitative	Only-child vs child with siblings, daughter vs sons	Positive
11	2018	Guo, J.; Lin, S.; Guo, Y.	Sex, Birth Order, and Creativity in the Context of China's OCP and Son Preference	Quantitative	Only-child vs child with siblings	Complicated.
12	2002	Fong, V.L.	China's OCP and the empowerment of urban daughters	Qualitative	Urban only- daughters vs. Daughters in multi- child families	Positive

13	2012	Liu, J.	Mothers' pasts and daughters' presents and futures: A cross-generational exploration of women's work and aspirations in urban China	Qualitative	Mothers in multi-child families vs. Singleton daughters	Positive
14	2009	Zhang, W.	"A married out daughter is like spilt water"?: Women's increasing contacts and enhanced ties with their natal families in post-reform rural north China	Qualitative	Married Women Before the Implementation of the OCP vs. Married Women Under the OCP	Positive

15	2010	Zhai, F.; Gao, Q.	Center-Based Care in the Context of OCP in China: Do Child Gender and Siblings Matter?	Quantitative	Boys vs daughter  Only-child vs child having siblings	Positive
16	2006	Deutsch, F.M.	Filial piety, patrilineality, and China's OCP	Qualitative	Only-child vs child with siblings	Positive
17	2007	Zhang, H.	China's new rural daughters coming of age: Downsizing the family and firing up cash-earning	Qualitative	Daughters with fewer siblings vs. Daughters with more siblings.	Positive.

			power in the new economy			
18	2008	Liu, F.	Negotiating the filial self : Young-adult only-children and intergenerational relationships in China	Qualitative	Young-adult with siblings vs Young-adult as the only-child	Positive
19	2003	Murphy, R.	Fertility and distorted sex ratios in a rural Chinese county: Culture, state, and policy	Qualitative	No explicitly compared group	Negative
20	2024	Liu, Shuomei; Marois, Guillaume	The effect of motherhood on the labour force participation of married women in China	Quantitative	Women without children vs. Women with one child vs.	Positive.

					Women with two or more children.	
21	2014	Wu, Xiaogang; Ye, Hua; He, Gloria Guangye	Fertility Decline and Women's Status Improvement in China	Quantitative	High-education vs. Low-education women  Women with more vs. Fewer children  Women with siblings vs. Only-daughters	Positive
22	2021	Huang, Wei; Lei, Xiaoyan; Sun, Ang	Fertility Restrictions and Life Cycle Outcomes: Evidence from the OCP in China	Quantitative	Individuals and families not subjected to strict OCP birth penalties vs.	Positive.

					Those facing high birth penalties.	
23	2021	Zhang, Puxin; Wang, Lian; Liu, Chun	The empowerment of singleton daughters: exploring the gender digital divide among Chinese college students	Quantitative	Girls with siblings vs only-daughters vs boys	Positive
24	2017	Liu, Ye	Women rising as half of the sky? An empirical study on women from the one-child generation and their higher education participation in contemporary China	Mixed-Both qualitative and quantitative	Only-daughters vs. Daughters with siblings.	Positive



25	2022	Wang, Yijie; Zhang, Yanan	“As Good as a Boy” But Still a Girl: Gender Equity Within the Context of China’s OCP	Qualitative	<p>The study does not explicitly mention a control group, but the content reveals the following comparisons:</p> <p>Gender roles and treatment within the family vs. Broader society (traditional families with sons vs. Only-daughters under the OCP).</p> <p>Only-daughters vs. Daughters with siblings.</p>	<p>Complicated (Superficial positive inside a family setting. No effect on the whole society.</p>
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26	2021	Wang, Xiaotao; Feng, Xiaotian	Family Resource Dilution in Expanded Families and the Empowerment of Married Only Daughters: Evidence From the Educational Investment in Children in Urban China	Quantitative	Only-child vs child having siblings  Female vs male.	Positive
27	2021	Zhou, Y.	The Personal and the Political: Gender Equity and Attitudes toward Birth Restriction in Contemporary Urban China	Quantitative	Attitudes toward state fertility restrictions (Stronger egalitarian gender role attitudes vs. Traditional gender role attitudes)	Positive

28	2018	Kim, S.W.; Brown, K.-E.; Fong, V.L.	How flexible gender identities give young women advantages in China's new economy	Mixed-Both qualitative and quantitative	Women (with more flexible gender identities) vs. Men (with more traditional gender identities)	Positive
29	2013	Xu, Q.; Yeung, W.-J.J.	Hoping for a Phoenix: Shanghai Fathers and Their Daughters	Mixed-Both qualitative and quantitative	Only-daughters vs daughters with siblings	No effect.
30	2015	Loh, C.; Remick, E.J.	China's skewed sex ratio and the OCP	A comparative historical analysis using secondary quantitative data	Not explicitly have a compared group	Complicated
31	2024	Zou, Wenxue; Liu, Zikun	Body politics, reproductive rights, and	Qualitative	Female vs male.	Negative

			digital media advocacy within stigmatized contexts: a critical discourse analysis of Weibo discussions on IUDs in modern-day China			
32	2015	Goodkind, D.	The claim that China's fertility restrictions contributed to the use of prenatal sex selection: A sceptical reappraisal	A reappraisal based on secondary data	Not explicitly have a compared group	Complicated

## **Appendix Table2**

[illegible]

2023	Wang, Z.; Huang, Z.; Cai, J.	Does the One-Child Policy Improve Chinese Human Capital? A Propensity Score Matching Analysis	<p>This research examined the impact of the One-Child Policy (OCP) on Chinese human capital per capita. To the best of this author's knowledge, this research is the first to explore the effect of the OCP on Chinese human capital by using propensity score matching (PSM). This research also examined</p>	2023		16	15				<p>China; female; gender; male; Gross Domestic Product; human capital; income distribution ; One-Child Policy (OCP); PSM; quality–quantity trade-off; social policy</p>	the average income of females
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2024	Huang, Z.; Jiang, X.; Sun, A.	Fertility and delayed migration: How son preferenc e protects young girls against mother-c hild separatio n	Mother-child separation harms children's development . This concern is particularly relevant in rapidly urbanizing societies with massive migration. However, factors that increase the probability of children becoming separated from their migrating parents are not well understood. In this study, we find that	2024			166				population policy; birth rate; child development; Child development; Fertility; Left-behind children; migration; Migration; pregnancy; son preference; Son preference	
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2023	Zhu, Y.; Xiao, C.; Zhu, B.	Gender difference s in child sexual abuse in China: Do one-child status and repeated victimizati on matter?	Studies of child sexual abuse (CSA) in China seem to present findings inconsistent with the international literature. To explore the reasons of such inconsistency , this study examined the roles of one-child status and repeated victimization	2023			144				Gender; adolescent; China; female; human; male; sex difference; child; sibling; article; Chinese; major clinical study; vulnerabilit y; social work; child sexual abuse; Child sexual abuse; One- child	child sexual abuse
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2024	Liu, Y.	Virtues or Talent among Brotherless Daughters: A Study of How Patriarchal Gender Ideals Affect Gender Role Attitudes among Women from the One-Child Generation in China	Are women from the one-child generation in China gender egalitarians? Despite extensive studies on gender role attitudes from structural and cultural perspectives, limited research has explored the significance of gender role attitudes in Global South contexts, like China, which have unique demographic and cultural	2024	175-193	1	58				China; gender attitudes; gender egalitarianism; patriarchy; the one-child generation; the talent–virtue ideal	Gender attitudes
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2020	Hu, Y.; Shi, X.	The impact of China's one-child policy on intergenerational and gender relations	Drawing on data from the China Family Panel Studies, this article assesses the state of gender equality among Chinese children under the one-child policy. We demonstrate the importance of conducting intra-gender and inter-gender comparisons taking into account the perspectives	2020	360-377	3	15				one-child policy; gender equality; post-reform China; Comparative dimensions; comparative perspectives; intergenerational relations	intergenerational and gender relations, family investment
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2021	Liu, Y.; Jiang, Q.	Who Benefits From Being an Only Child? A Study of Parent–Child Relationships Among Chinese Junior High School Students	After more than three decades of implementation, China’s one-child policy has generated a large number of only children. Although extensive research has documented the developmental outcomes of being an only child, research on the parent–child relational quality of the only child is somewhat limited	2021			11				China; children’s gender; birth order; only children; parent–child relationship; sibship size	parent-child relationship
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2021	Chen, S.; Ying, S.X.; Wu, H.; You, J.	Carrying on the family's legacy: Male heirs and firm innovatio n	we predict that entrepreneur s are more likely to have a long-term orientation to their decisioan making if they have male heirs, because traditionally sons, not daughters, have been expected to carry on the family business. Our results support this prediction. Specifically, we find that when entrepreneur	2021			69				Son preference; Entreprene ur; Family firms; Innovation	gender equality
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2020	Shen, Y.; Jiang, L.	Labor Market Outcomes of Professional Women with Two Children after the One-Child Policy in China	Since the implementati on of the two-child policy in China in 2016, it is unclear how professional women's labor force outcomes and family commitment s have changed. Using interviews with 26 professional women with two children in Shanghai, we examined their work–life transitions and labor	2020	632- 658	3	76				child care; China; gender disparity; labor market; labor mobility; Shanghai; social policy; womens employeme nt	Labor Market Outcomes
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2021	Gu, X.; Jean Yeung, W. J.	Why do Chinese adolescent girls outperform boys in achievement tests?	The current study extends our understanding of the widely documented gender educational gap in favor of females and its contributing factors through a mixed- methods analysis of the Chinese case. We develop an analytical framework that incorporates three mechanisms —intergenerational transmission of gender stereotypes and educational attitudes from parents to children and from teachers to students.	2021	109- 137	2	7					Gender; education; social stratification; post- reform China; adolescents	Education
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2018	Chen, J.; Jordan, L.P.	Intergene- rational Support in One- and Multi- child Families in China: Does Child Gender Still Matter?	Using data from the baseline wave of the China Family Panel Studies, we applied three- level random- intercept logistic regression models to investigate how the child gender gap in intergenerati- onal support differed between one- and multi- child families in China based on 16,201 parent-child dyads. The	2018	180- 204	2	40				China; female; Female; human; Humans; male; Male; sex difference; Family Characteris- tics; family size; child; Child; aged; Aged; panel study; elderly care; social support; family ecological approach; financial manageme- nt; Financial Support; gender difference.	
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2018	Guo, J.; Lin, S.; Guo, Y.	Sex, Birth Order, and Creativity in the Context of China's One-Child Policy and Son Preferenc e	The purpose of this study was to examine the influences of sibling constellation (sex and birth order) on creativity in the context of China's one- child policy (OCP) and Confucian culture (e.g., preference for male offspring). Participants were recruited from a public university in east China and were asked to	2018	361- 369	4	30						personal ability
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2002	Fong, V.L.	China's one-child policy and the empowerment of urban daughters	Urban daughters have benefited from the demographic pattern produced by China's one-child policy. In the system of patrilineal kinship that has long characterized most of Chinese society, parents had little incentive to invest in their daughters. Singleton daughters, however, enjoy	2002	261-278				Taylor and Francis			
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2012	Liu, J.	Mothers' pasts and daughters' presents and futures: A cross-generational exploration of women's work and aspirations in urban China	Since the late 1970s, China adopted an approach to socialist construction that was centred on economic modernization*. The post-Mao economic reforms — which led to major social, political, and economic changes — improved living standards immensely. However, the effects of these reforms were felt	2012	Sep-31					Palgrave Macmillan			Family investment
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2009	Zhang, W.	"A married out daughter is like spilt water"?: Women's increasing contacts and enhanced ties with their natal families in post-reform rural north China	This article investigates how the intersection of two state policies, the market reforms initiated in 1978 and the "one-child" policy launched in 1979, is shaping gender, family, and kin relations in rural North China. It focuses particularly on women's ties with their natal families after marriage; these have	2009	256-283	3	35				Gender; Family; China; womens status; marriage; Rural China; cultural tradition; gender relations; Asia; Eurasia; Far East; rural society; kinship; "one-child" policy; Daughter-parent relationship ; Market reforms; The state	parent-child relationship
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2010	Zhai, F.; Gao, Q.	Center-Based Care in the Context of One-Child Policy in China: Do Child Gender and Siblings Matter?	we examined the effects of child gender and siblings on center-based care enrollment in the context of China's one-child policy and its tradition of preference to have many children, especially sons. Using data from the China Health and Nutrition Survey (CHNS) 2000 wave and multilevel logistic	2010	745-774	5	29				Gender; One-child policy; China; family planning; population policy; child; sibling; gender identity; regression analysis; Center-based care; Sibling	care, family resources
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2006	Deutsch, F.M.	Filial piety, patrilineality, and China's one-child policy	<p>This study examined the effects of China's one-child policy on two traditional aspects of Chinese family life: filial piety and patrilineality. Eighty-four graduating university seniors, who were part of the first cohort born under the onechild policy, were interviewed about their life plans. Comparisons between</p>	2006	366-389	3	27					One-child policy; Only child; Filial piety; Chinese families	undermining patrilineal norms
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2007	Zhang, H.	China's new rural daughters coming of age: Downsizing the family and firing up cash-earning power in the new economy	The summer of 1996 marked an unusual historical event in Zhongshan village, a rural community of Hubei Province in central China. For the first time in this village's history a village girl, Li Rong, passed the competitive national entrance examination and became the first female	2007	671-698	3	32						
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2008	Liu, F.	Negotiating the filial self : Young-adult only-children and intergenerational relationships in China	This article explores how a group of first-generation young-adult only-children negotiate the filial self in the specific socio-cultural context of today's China and with their cultural baggage as only-children. The article draws upon in-depth interviews with 22 young adults, both women and men from various backgrounds	2008	409-430	4	16				Inter-generational relationships; Negotiation of the filial self; Old-age support; The Chinese family; Today's China; Young-adult only-children	family status
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2003	Murphy, R.	Fertility and distorted sex ratios in a rural Chinese county: Culture, state, and policy	This article explores how gender bias in population policies interacts with local culture to reinforce distortions in sex ratios among infants and young children in rural China. It argues that population policies introduce new sources of inequality into local culture	2003	595-626	4	29					Asia; birth rate; China; Eurasia; Far East; Jiangxi; population policy; sex ratio; son preference	
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2024	Liu, Shuomei; Marois, Guillaume	The effect of motherhood on the labour force participation of married women in China	This paper explores the impact the number of child(ren) and the age of child(ren) on the participation in the labour force by married women in China. Using logistic regression models with the latest Chinese Family Panel Studies data, results show that: (1) the odds of LFP (Labour Force Participation) has	#####	104-120	1	20					
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2014	Wu, Xiaogang; Ye, Hua; He, Gloria Guangye	Fertility Decline and Women's Status Improvement in China	The literature typically treats fertility reduction in developing countries as a result of women's status improvement, based on the assumption that women have greater decision-making power on childbearing as their status improves. This article investigates whether and how fertility	#####	#####	3	46					family investment, Education, employment
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2021	Huang, Wei; Lei, Xiaoyan; Sun, Ang	Fertility Restrictions and Life Cycle Outcomes : Evidence from the One-Child Policy in China	This study considers the experience of China's one-child policy to examine how fertility restrictions affect economic and social outcomes over a lifetime. Using variations in these penalties across provinces and over time, we find that exposure to stricter fertility restrictions	2021	694–710	4	103					female empowerment
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2021	Zhang, Puxin; Wang, Lian; Liu, Chun	The empowerment of singleton daughters : exploring the gender digital divide among Chinese college students	PurposeExisting researches find that a gender difference exists in terms of Internet usage. In China, the singleton daughters resulting from China's one-child policy enjoy unprecedented parental support. The purpose of this paper is to investigate whether singleton daughters can, to some	2021	1401-1418	5	34					gender equality
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2017	Liu, Ye	Women rising as half of the sky? An empirical study on women from the one-child generation and their higher education participation in contemporary China	This article explores the changing dynamics between gender, cultural capital and the state in the context of higher education expansion in contemporary China. With a particular focus on the one-child generation and women's opportunities and aspirations, I draw upon empirical evidence from a first-hand survey	2017	963–978	6	74					socioeconomic status and cultural capital on students' academic performance and elite opportunities
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2022	Wang, Yijie; Zhang, Yanan	“As Good as a Boy” But Still a Girl: Gender Equity Within the Context of China’s One-Child Policy	what would happen if gender inequality were suddenly and forcefully proclaimed to be non-existent by the authorities? The Chinese one-child policy has to some extent functioned as a unique social experiment to answer this question. Historically, sons have been preferred in China. Yet, with the	2022	21582 44022 10820-	1	12					family support and family status
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2021	Wang, Xiaotao; Feng, Xiaotian	Family Resource Dilution in Expanded Families and the Empowerment of Married Only Daughters : Evidence From the Educational Investment in Children in Urban China	The One-Child Policy dramatically changed the Chinese family structure, and the literature indicates that only children may have an advantage in terms of family resource dilution. Moreover, as Chinese families traditionally prioritize investing in sons, only daughters are found to have been	2021	6E+05		12					Family investment
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2021	Zhou, Y.	The Personal and the Political: Gender Equity and Attitudes toward Birth Restriction in Contemporary Urban China	Birth rates have declined globally over the past several decades. Extensive research has applied the gender equity theory to examine the link between individuals' gender role attitudes and their fertility ideations in postindustrial democracies. A puzzle remains: does individuals' gender	2021			7				fertility; gender equity; birth restriction; gender role attitude	
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2018	Kim, S.W.; Brown, K.- E.; Fong, V.L.	How flexible gender identities give young women advantage s in China's new economy	In this article, we examine how a cohort of urban youth born under China's one- child policy have developed flexible gender identities through their childrearing aspirations and educational and occupational narratives, choices, and trajectories between 1999 and 2014. Drawing on surveys of	2018	982- 1000	8	30				East Asia; identities; longitudinal research; Social class	gender identity
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2013	Xu, Q.; Yeung, W.-J.J.	Hoping for a Phoenix: Shanghai Fathers and Their Daughters	Intergenerational relationships and gender roles in China are in transition because of ideational and structural changes resulting from social movements and policies in the past half a century. Using a mixed-methods design, we examine Shanghai fathers' involvement in their	2013	182-207	2	34				education; only child; fatherhood ; Chinese family; father involvement	gender roles
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2015	Loh, C.; Remick, E.J.	China's skewed sex ratio and the one-child policy	The media and generalist scholarly work have created a conventional wisdom that China's one- child policy is the driver of the country's skewed sex ratio and so should be relaxed in order to ameliorate the imbalance. However, we show through historical, domestic and international comparisons that son	2015	295- 319		222				China; sex ratio; family planning; population policy; cultural tradition; birth planning; skewed sex ratio; skewness; son prefe	Gender equity
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2024	Zou, Wenxue; Liu, Zikun	Body politics, reproductive rights, and digital media advocacy within stigmatized contexts: a critical discourse analysis of Weibo discussions on IUDs in modern-day China	This article explores prevalent beliefs surrounding the use of IUDs among Chinese women and how such discourses intersect with issues of gender, culture, and politics. Incorporating a critical health communication perspective and the framework of body politics, we conducted a critical	#####	27-46	1	52					women's autonomy in fertility choices
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quantitative

To analyze the effect of China's One-Child Policy (OCP) on human capital per capita and to assess the impact of the policy change in 2015 encouraging two births on economic development and gender equality

Quality-Quantity trade-off theory by Becker; modifications and empirical evaluations of the theory in various contexts; links between human capital formation, labor demands, and educational investments. The Q-Q trade-off are used to frame the empirical findings within a broader economic theory, suggesting

11,525 individuals born between 1975 and 1985 from urban and rural areas in China, excluding those with study-abroad experience or untraceable migration history. the birth years of the interviewers were restricted to the range from 1975 to 1985 to (1) exclude the impact of the land reform, which was launched

Human capital outcomes (measured in terms of educational attainment), personal income (Male = 1, Female = 0)

Propensity Score Matching (PSM) to estimate the causal impact of the OCP



it mentions girls and one child policy	Save
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quantitative

35% This study sample examines from gender Gender the differenc disparities in 2010 es in parent-child populat parent-c separation, ion hild son census, separatio preference, China n, impact of Migran especially migration on t mother- family Dynam child dynamics. c separatio Early Survey n for pre- childhood (CMDS) school- experiences, , China aged parental Family firstborn companionshi Panel children p Studies in rural (CFPS) China.

Data from 2010 18,435 rural children 1. whether Child- on under school gender of the parent separate census, age in the firstborn ion CMDS 2010 census, child (boy, analysis from additional ref=girl) \* 2. (Long-Term Schooling Performance) 2009 to samples from age CFPS CMDS and CFPS

Regress  
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quantitative

	Family						
	This study Resource						
	investigated gender	Dilution Theory:					
	differences regarding child	Suggests that as the number of children					
2009-2010	sexual abuse(CSA) in mainland China by examining the roles of sibling status and repeated CSA.	increases, family resources (attention, care, economic support) are diluted, increasing the risk of victimization.; conflicting findings in CSA studies in	Cross-sectional data from 2009-2010	14,564 Chinese adolescents	1. Gender (male, ref=female) 2. Sibling status (1 = have no siblings, 2 = have older sibling(s), and 3 = only have younger siblings)	experience of CSA, both direct and indirect forms	Multinomial logistic regression models ; interaction terms to analyze moderating effects

	Save

qualitative

82 individual interviews with highly educated women from the one-child generation in China.	1. What are the precursor s of gender egalitaria nism or conformis m among these women? 2. How are their positional and social characteri stics accumula ted during life-course transition s in relation to their husbands ? 3. How do their	The research integrates life-course accumulation and relational positionality, considering socio-economic status, education, work, and family transitions alongside patriarchal power structures. This approach builds on theories of gender role attitudes, emphasizing the importance of understanding a gender	82 siblingless women born between 1980 and 1987 from metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas of Beijing, Shanghai, or Nanjing.	Socio-economic, geographical, and financial (dis)advantages accumulated through life-course transitions.	Gender role attitudes (progressive gender egalitarians vs. traditional gender conformists).	Qualitative analysis of semi-structured interviews, including open coding, identifying patterns of bargaining with patriarchy, and assessing markers of egalitarianism and
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quantitative	Assess the state of gender equality among Chinese children under the one-child policy, focusing on intergenerational investment and children's subjective perceptions.	Explores intra-gender and inter-gender comparisons, focusing on intergenerational investment in children and children's subjective perceptions of gender equality. Discussions on intergenerational transfers, gender relations, and family dynamics under the one-child policy.	Data from 2010, reflecting the period of strict enforcement and nuances of the one-child policy across urban and rural divides.	Children's sibship structure (singleton vs. non-singleton, presence of elder and younger brothers, elder and younger sisters).	1)Intergenerational investment in children (annual family expenditure on child's education, weekly time spent by parents on child's academics). 2)Children's subjective perceptions of their life circumstances (perceived gender equality, educational aspirations, perceived happiness).	Hierarchical regression models with random intercepts at the family level, and logistic regression for binary outcomes related to children's perceptions.
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quantitative

China Education Panel Survey (CEPS), 2014	to examine whether the status of being an only child is associated with better parent-child relationships among Chinese junior high school students, and to explore whether children's gender moderates the association	The study draws on attachment theory and family systems theory, emphasizing the importance of parent-child relationships in child development. It suggests that only children might have closer relationships with their parents due to increased parental attention and anxiety about child-rearing. The study	The study uses data collected in 2014, after nearly three decades of the One-Child Policy being in effect. This allows for an examination of parent-child relationships at a time when the	18,445 parent-child pairs derived from a nationally representative sample of junior high school students (grades 7 and 9) and their parents across 28 counties in mainland China.	Sibship size (ref=only child, having one sibling, having two or more siblings)	Children's gender (0 = son, 1 = daughter).	parent-child relationships, measured through a single general question assessing closeness with mother and father separately (0 = not close; 1 = moderate; 2 = close).	Two-level ordered logit models were employed to account for the nested data structure (students nested within schools).
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the focus is not relevant to the research topic	save
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quantitative

Forbes China Rich List (2003-2019), CNRDS database, CSMAR database, public sources

To examine whether the effect of male heir on innovation varies before and after the enactment of the one-child policy.

Son preference and its impact on long-term strategic decisions within family businesses

2003-2019

24 /

entrepreneurs and 379 children (221 sons and 158 daughters) from listed Chinese family firms. The before the one-child policy cohort includes female entrepreneurs who were born in 1957 (1979–22) or earlier and male entrepreneurs who were born in 1959 (1979–20) or earlier, and the after the one-child policy cohort

the enactment of the one-child policy

the effect of male heir on innovation (patents applied)

Two-stage instrumental regression, Heckman two-step correction for selection bias

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Save

qualitative

To  
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work-life  
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Shanghai  
labor  
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policy

Gendered  
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accumulation  
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positionality

2016-  
2019

26  
professional  
mothers with  
two children,  
at least one  
below 6 years  
old

Institutional  
childcare  
support,  
paternal  
participation,  
physical and  
cognitive  
childcare  
labor

Work-life  
transitions and  
labor market  
outcomes.  
Employment  
status, income,  
career trajectory

Interviews





family support	Save
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quantitative

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CFPS  
(China  
Family  
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multistage  
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The  
research  
aims to  
investigate  
the  
child  
gender  
gap in  
intergenerational  
support  
in China,  
focusing  
on how  
this gap  
differs  
between  
one- and  
multi-  
child  
families.

Human  
ecological  
theory,  
Family  
structure and  
intergenerational  
support,  
Child gender  
and  
intergenerational  
support

Data  
extracted  
from the  
2010 CFPS,  
comprising  
16,201  
parent-child  
group,  
including  
5,373 elderly  
parents and  
11,791  
children in  
3,914  
families.  
Sample  
restricted to  
elderly  
parents over  
60 years old  
with living  
children .

2010

Child Gender  
(Son = 1),  
Family  
Structure  
(One-child  
family = 1,  
Multi-child  
family = 0)

Financial support  
exchange  
(Receive/provide  
Financial Support),  
Instrumental  
support exchange  
(Receive/provide  
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quantitative

Participants recruited from a public university in East China, born in or after 1979.	To examine the influence of sibling status (only children vs. children with siblings) on creativity, and how sibling constellation (sex and birth order) impacts creativity.	Influenced by China's one-child policy and Confucian culture; explores sibling constellation's effect on creativity, considering traditional views on gender and birth order within families.	Focus on participants born in or after 1979, following the implementation of the one-child policy.	364 participants from a public university; 65% women, 35% men; age mean 24; mixed backgrounds of rural and urban	Sex and birth order (SBO) :first son (who may or may not be the first child in the family), first daughter (who may or may not be the first child in the family), later son (with at least one older brother), later daughter (with at least one older sister), only son, and only daughter.	Divergent thinking tests (line meaning test and real-world problem test), online survey. A multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA)
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family support, against traditional gender norms	Save
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qualitative

Survey and participant observation data from urban families in Dalian, China.

To analyze the experiences of urban daughters born under China's one-child policy and how they have benefited from the policy's demographic pattern

Gender inequality, women's empowerment, effects of low fertility on gender roles.

Focus on daughters born after the implementation of the one-child policy in 1979.

2,273 students surveyed, 107 families observed, with a focus on singleton daughters.

Low fertility policy (one-child policy).

The impact of China's one-child policy on families and gender roles. Female Empowerment and ability to challenge gender norms.

Participant observation, survey, qualitative analysis.

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Save

qualitative

to explore the cross-generational effects of mothers' past experiences on daughters' aspirations and understandings of work and family in urban China. To investigate the impact of the one-child policy on the

The study is contextualized within the broader discourse of gender transformation in post-Mao economic reforms in China, focusing on how these transformations impact women across generations.

Post-1970s China, focusing on the generations affected by China's economic reforms and the introduction of the one-child policy.

20 mothers who experienced work and social identity pre-reforms and their daughters who were raised during one-child policy

One-child policy enforcement in urban China.

1. Educational opportunities for daughters.  
2. Family resources and parental attention received by daughters.  
3. Daughters' aspirations, attitudes towards work, and personal identities.

Qualitative analysis of in-depth interviews focusing on intergenerational influences and gender identity transformations.

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qualitative	<p>https://journals-sagepub-com.virtu.al.anu.edu.au/doi/pdf/10.1177/0097700408329613</p>	<p>Qualitative data collected through interviews and focus group discussions with 32 informants in three counties in Hebei, China between 2002 and 2004.</p>	<p>to investigate how the intersection of state policies (market reforms since 1978 and the "one-child" policy since 1979) influence gender, family, and kin relations, particularly focusing on the ties between women</p>	<p>The study builds on gender and kinship theory, focusing on how state policies can reshape informal kin relations. The article also references theories of social capital, arguing that women's informal ties to their natal families can improve their status and autonomy.</p>	<p>The data spans historical policies and changes starting from Mao's collectivization to Deng's market reforms. The primary data collection occurred between 2002 and 2004.</p>	<p>32 informants comprising ten men and twenty-two women from various social groups, including village, township, and county officials, farmers, teachers, doctors, entrepreneurs, and migrant workers.</p>	<p>Changes in gender and family relations, specifically the ties between married women and their natal families. Changes in the nature and frequency of contact between married women and their natal families.</p>	<p>Qualitative analysis based on interviews and focus group discussions, supplemented by direct observation and historical contextual analysis.</p>
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"Effects of Child Gender and Siblings on Center-based Care" and "Potential Moderation of Household and Community Resources and One-child Policy" are relevant	Save
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quantitative

China Health and Nutrition Survey (CHNS) 2000 wave	to examine the effects of child gender and the presence of siblings on the likelihood of enrollment in center-based care, in the context of China's one-child policy and traditional preference for sons	Impact of one-child policy and traditional son preference on childcare choices, influenced by Confucianism and agricultural economic structures favoring males for lineage perpetuation and labor.	Cross-sectional data from the year 2000	784 children from 704 households in 190 communities (i.e., neighborhoods in urban areas and villages in rural areas).	1. Child gender (boy/girl) 2. Presence of siblings (yes/no) 3. Number of siblings 4. Siblings' gender- and age-related characteristics (i.e., male/female, younger/older than the focal child, and preschool/school ages)	Enrollment in center-based care (yes/no)	Multilevel logistic regression using hierarchical generalized linear models (HGLMs)
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qualitative

Study included 84 university seniors from southeastern China, comprising an equal number of males and females, split between only children and those with siblings.

To explore the effects of China's one-child policy on traditional Chinese family values, specifically filial piety and patrilineality.

The study draws on theories related to the impact of family structure and national policies on familial roles and cultural norms, particularly in the context of Chinese society's emphasis on patrilineality and filial piety.

Cross-sectional study conducted during the 2000-2001 academic year. Participants were born in 1979, the first year of the one-child policy's implementation.

84 graduating university seniors from southeastern China, 42 males and 42 females, with a mix of only children and those with siblings.

Sibling status (only children vs. those with siblings).

Attitudes towards filial piety and patrilineal norms. Are only children born under the one-child policy less filial than children with siblings? Compared to children with siblings, do only children subscribe less to patrilineal norms and believe more in gender equality?

Qualitative analysis based on semi-structured interviews focusing on participants' life plans and parental expectations. Interviews conducted in English.

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qualitative

Fieldwork notes and statistical data collected in Zhongshan, a village in Hubei province, across four research trips (1993–94, 2002, 2003, 2004).	Examines how new demographic realities, new employment opportunities, and new marriage practices are reshaping inter-generational relations and parental attitudes towards gender equity in rural families.	Draws on ethnographic methods and theories from rural sociology and gender studies, focusing on the impact of economic and demographic changes on gender roles.	Longitudinal study, primarily during 1993–2004, capturing changes over a decade in the life trajectories of rural daughters.	Includes data from the first female college student in the village and other women from 392 households, reflecting broader trends in rural China's young female population.	1. China's stringent birth control policy starting in the late 1970s. 2. Economic reforms and opportunities in urban areas post-Deng Xiaoping's reforms.	Changes in gender roles, parental investment in daughters' economic independence and contribution to their natal families.	Ethnographic study including participant observation, interviews, and review of village records and demographic data.
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qualitative

Explore how first-generation young-adult only-children negotiate the filial self within the socio-cultural context of modern China, especially in terms of their perceived filial obligations and their plans for old-age support of their	Draws upon the socio-cultural context of today's China, traditional Confucian values of filial piety, and the specific challenges and pressures faced by the one-child generation under China's modernization and economic transformations.	Data collected in 2004; focuses on the first-generation young-adult only-children who grew up during China's significant social transformations since the late 1970s.	22 young adults aged 21–24 years, urban only-children, both genders, various socio-economic backgrounds.	1. Only-child Status 2. Gender 3. Socio-economic Status 4. Cultural Context (modern Chinese society and values)	Young adults' attitudes towards filial obligations and their approaches to negotiating intergenerational relationships. 1. What kind of familial values do only-children embrace as grown-ups? 2. How do they perceive and plan to cope with the impending filial obligations expected of them?	Qualitative analysis based on life-history interviews conducted in Chinese, translated into English. The study employs a narrative approach informed by the life history method
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qualitative

Qualitative interviews and focus-group discussions conducted from September to December 2000 in Rivercounty, Jiangxi Province, China. Interviewees To explore how state population policies interact with local culture in a rural Chinese county to produce gendered outcomes, specifically distorted sex ratios and the concept of "missing girls". The study draws on theories from demographic transition, modernization theory, and critiques from anthropological demography to understand how culture and policy intersect to affect fertility behaviors and outcomes. The study was conducted over a four-month period in late 2000. 119 households from Rivercounty, Jiangxi

1. State population policies  
2. Local cultural norms

Gendered outcomes in population dynamics, specifically the prevalence of distorted sex ratios among young children.

Qualitative methods including semi-structured interviews, focus groups, and ethnographic observations. Analysis included discourse analysis

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quantitative

Chinese Family Panel Studies (2018)	Investigate how the number and age of children affect labor participation among married women in China.	The social role theory. The new family economics. Division of labor theory	Most recent data wave (2018)	Married women in China aged 20–54, excluding those in agricultural labor and without children under 16. Total valid cases: 3,785, with childbearing experience n=3363	1. Number of children (no child as '0' (reference), one child as '1', and two or more children as '2'), 2. Age of youngest child (categorized as 0-3 years, 4-7 years, 8-15 years)	Labour force participation (LFP) (binary: participating vs. not participating)	Logistic regression models
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quantitative

The study builds on theories that associate women's increased socioeconomic status with decline on fertility, gender inequality and women's status in China, particularly in the context of state policy on fertility. The study focuses on two main areas: gender equality

The research aims to explore the impact of fertility decline on gender inequality and women's status in China, particularly in the context of state policy on fertility. The study focuses on two main areas: gender equality

8,531 married women in various cohorts from the Women's Status Survey 2000, Marriage cohorts: 1952–70, 1971–80, 1981–90, and 1991–2000. And 10,151 adults from the Chinese General Social Survey 2006.

1. Number of children (fertility)  
2. Respondent's gender (female coded as 1)  
3. sibship size at age ten (treated as a continuous variable to assess the impact on dilution of family resources).

Ordinal logistic regression for family status outcomes; OLS regression for educational and occupational outcomes.

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quantitative

How do early-life fertility restrictions under China's one-child policy affect long-term economic and social outcomes? To analyze the impact on China's education levels, employment types, marriage timing, fertility rates, and household income.

Drawing from theories on fertility and economic outcomes, examining how lower anticipated fertility due to stringent government policies influences human capital investment, economic development, and female empowerment.

Birth cohorts from 1940 to 1980; data from various surveys conducted between 1990 and 2014.

Over 10 million observations from the census data, 200,000 households from UHS, and 20,000 observations from CFPS.

Mean value of the fertility penalties (monetary fines for unauthorized births) during the respondent's age 6 to 20 years.

1. Education attainment (high school and college completion rates)
2. Marital status by age 25
3. Employment types (e.g., white-collar jobs)
4. Household income, consumption, and savings rates
5. Female empowerment measures (e.g., female-headed households, opinions on women's roles)

Regression analysis using a nationally representative sample, controlling for fixed effects of birth year, survey year, and province, as well as province-specific trends.

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quantitative

questionnaires to Southwest Jiaotong University and Hubei Second Normal University; 865 students surveyed, 811 valid responses.

To investigate whether singleton daughters resulting from China's one-child policy can break through the digital divide in internet usage compared to their peers.

The one-child policy potentially alters gender norms in China, where traditional values have historically resulted in greater investments in sons. The study explores the hypothesis that singleton daughters receive more parental support and resources, impacting their internet usage patterns.

Data collected between March 15 and April 3, 2017.

811 college students

Gender (male, female) Singleton status (singleton, non-singleton).

Types of Internet usage (informational, educational, social media), categorized into utilitarian, exploratory, and aspirational activities.

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), Two-way ANOVA and mean-comparison tests.

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Both  
qualitativ  
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to explore the impact of the one-child policy and higher education expansion on women's higher education participation and how family characteristics and socio-political circumstances affect women's aspiration

Survey of 858 undergraduates and 24 in-depth semi-structured interviews with female students from single-child families in two eastern provinces of China, 2007.

Intersection of gender, cultural capital, and state policies, particularly focusing on the one-child policy and its impact on higher education opportunities in China.

Data collected in 2007, focusing on cohorts affected by the one-child policy introduced around 1980.

Survey of 858 undergraduates and 24 in-depth semi-structured interviews with female students from single-child families. The surveyed students were born between 1987 and 1989, a period during which the one-child reform was enforced across China.

Singleton status (yes/no)

Patterns of participation and achievements by women from the one-child families (1. Academic performance (scores in gaokao) 2. Type of university attended (elite, key, others)) Their aspirations and expectations as well as the strategies they have adopted to achieve their goals in higher education.

Mixed methods: Quantitative survey and qualitative in-depth interviews.

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qualitative

IO explore how the Chinese one-child policy impacted gender roles and identities, particularly focusing on the life experiences of singleton daughters in urban China under the one-child policy.

Interviews with singletons on daughters raised in urban China under the one-child policy.

Draws on theories of feminism, particularly the dichotomy between "equity" and "difference" within feminist discourse. References the unique socio-political context of the Chinese one-child policy as a natural setting for examining these theories.

The study focuses on the experiences of daughters who reached adulthood before the end of the one-child policy in 2016, emphasizing the recent historical context.

Young women aged 18-25, who are only children, self-identify as female, and were raised in the Chinese urban context, specifically with at least one parent in a government-affiliated position.

Status as the singleton daughter under the one-child policy.

Perceptions and experiences of gender equality. Changes in gender roles and identities within nuclear families and societal interactions. Women's personal life experiences growing up as the singleton daughter under the one-child policy, with emphasis on family dynamics and societal interactions. ] Participants' family members' attitudes towards the one-child policy, neutral attitudes and details, details of non-neutral attitudes

Qualitative analysis using semi-structured interviews conducted in Mandarin, thematic coding



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quantitative

To explore the empowerment of married only daughters in urban China and how the family structure influenced by the One-Child Policy impacts educational investments in their children.

Family resource dilution theory, competitive paradigm confluence theory, and rational action theory.

Survey conducted in early 2016, focusing on individuals born between 1975 and 1985 during the implementation of the One-Child Policy.

1,007 fathers and 2,168 mothers of students, born between 1975 and 1985, across 12 major cities in China.

Parents' sibship size (number of brothers and sisters of the parents). Whether the father/mother was an only child or not

Educational investment in children, measured by the total spending on a child's education during the previous year.

Random intercept models to analyze survey data; stratified three-stage probability sampling for data collection.

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quantitative

Gender equity theory, examining if gender ideologies influence fertility ideations under state reproductive control. The gender equity theory suggests that perceptions of gender roles and the division of labor between genders can influence fertility decisions.

Investigate the relationship between individual gender attitudes and their attitudes toward state-imposed birth restriction in urban China.

China General Social Survey (CGSS), urban sample, (2010, 2012, 2013, and 2015)

Four waves of the China General Social Survey between 2010 and 2015

Nationally representative cross-sectional sample of noninstitutionalized adults in urban China, n = 18,435.

Gender role attitudes measured using five items: views on marital importance, male superiority, economic role of women, career focus, and division of household labor. (individuals espousing gender-egalitarian attitudes emphasize women's right to equal work over the primacy of her roles in the private

Attitudes toward state-imposed birth restriction, categorized into support for government control, neutral, and support for individual freedom.

Generalized ordered logistic regression

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Both  
qualitative  
and  
quantitative

Longitudinal surveys of 406 respondents in 1999, 2012–2013, and 2013–2014, a survey conducted with 208 of those 406 in 2014, and interviews with a representative subsample of 406 urban youth born under China's one-child policy have developed flexible gender identities through their childrearing aspirations and education al and occupational narratives , choices, and

The study draws on Bourdieu's theory of habitus and expands it through feminist reinterpretations to explore how changing social structures influence gender identities and societal opportunities, especially in relation to China's economic reforms and globalization. The study frames its analysis

Longitudinal study from 1999 to 2014.

406 surveys respondents. interviews with 48 of those 406 respondents

Flexible Gender Identities (including the flexibility in terms of childrearing aspirations, everyday gender expressions, and educational and occupational narratives, choices, and trajectories). Respondents' gender

Advantages in Education and Employment (Measured through educational attainment, income levels, and the types of occupations entered by the respondents. Advantages are defined as higher educational achievements, entry into white-collar jobs, and higher incomes compared to male counterparts). How Chinese youth of the single-child generation produce gender through their aspirations and their educational and career

Mixed methods, combining quantitative surveys with qualitative interviews

It may be relevant to one-child policy	Save	Both qualitative and quantitative	<p>Data collected from surveys, focus groups, and semi-structured interviews in Shanghai during 2008-2009.</p> <p>To examine Shanghai fathers' involvement in their adolescent daughters' lives. (a) To what extent are Shanghai fathers involved in their adolescent daughters' lives? (b) What factors influence Shanghai fathers' Parent-child relationships and gender roles in China are evolving due to societal and policy changes. Previous research suggests varying degrees of paternal involvement based on cultural and socio-economic contexts.</p> <p>773 daughters and 598 fathers from 17 schools in Shanghai. Daughters aged 13-17; Fathers mostly born during 1960s. 17 in-depth interviews conducted, including 8 father-daughter pairs and 1 girl whose father did not take part in the study.</p> <p>Whether the daughter is the only child</p> <p>Father's involvement with daughter (measured across emotional closeness, supervision, direct time engagement, warmth, communication, guidance and mentoring, financial provisioning, thought process, and their protective roles).</p> <p>Mixed-methods, incorporating surveys, focus groups, and semi-structured interviews. Quantitative data for variable analysis and qualitative insights for contextual</p>
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the focus is not relevant to the research topic, but it proves the one-child policy is little relevant to China's skewed sex ratio	save
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a comparative historical analysis using secondary quantitative data	<p>Data derived from various sources including official Chinese statistics, international reports (e.g., CIA World Factbook), and referenced studies</p> <p>To examine whether the one-child policy is the main driver behind China's sex ratio imbalance and to consider other factors such as son preference that may also contribute significantly to the skewed sex ratio.</p> <p>The study challenges the conventional wisdom that links the one-child policy directly to sex ratio imbalances, proposing instead that son preference plays a significant role.</p> <p>Examines data over several decades, notably from the early 1980s when China's sex ratio began to skew significantly.</p> <p>Not specific; refers to general population data and statistics from various periods and sources.</p> <p>The one-child policy (birth planning preference are</p> <p>The skewed sex ratio at birth (SRB) in China.</p> <p><math>SRB = (\text{Number of Female Births} / \text{Number of Male Births}) \times 100</math></p> <p>Comparative historical analysis, using data from official statistics and previous research findings.</p>
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qualitative

Building upon critical health communication approaches and the framework of body politics, this study seeks to explore the prevailing attitudes and beliefs surrounding the use of IUDs among women on Weibo and how 420 Weibo posts discussing Intra-uterine Device (IUD) among Chinese women .

Critical health communication perspective, framework of body politics, and digital media advocacy.

Posts from May 30, 2020, to August 31, 2020, capturing discussions post-exhibition of historical IUDs.

Posts from Weibo users, predominantly young women, reflecting on the use of IUDs and their implications in modern-day China.

Family planning policies (one-child policy)

Women's reproductive rights, bodily autonomy, health and empowerment

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) of selected Weibo posts.

This is a reappraisal. it looks not a research. Not sure about this one. have no idea how to do the data extraction	Save	a reappraisal based on secondary data	various census es and sample census es in China. Data from China's census es (1982, 1990, 2000, 2010), sample census es (1995, 2005), and annual hospita l sample of birthe	The paper critically examines conventional wisdom and previous studies linking to the China's fertility policies to sex ratio imbalances, questioning logical and empirical bases. Review of literature and analysis of sex ratio at birth (SRB) data	The study reviews data and trends from the early 1970s through the 2010s, with a focus on the implementation and impact of policies such as the one-child policy and the 1.5-child policy.	The analysis covers various demographic data sources from different time periods, including census data and sample surveys, particularly rural areas with the 1.5-child policy	Fertility restrictions (one-child policy, 1.5-child policy)	Prenatal sex selection/sex ratio at birth (excessively masculine child sex ratios due to prenatal sex selection)	Literature review, demographic analysis, probabilistic models
			To question the assumption that China's fertility restrictions contribute to the use of prenatal sex selection.						

Control  
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Results summary

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		Positive relationship between educational attainment and personal income (female p < 0.05 for post-tax income)	Key Finding: These findings highlight the positive role of OCP in enhancing individual Education Attainment	
Gender, location (urban/rural), parents' education levels, and regional differences (east, west, middle)	<p>Wang, Huang, and Cai (2023) conducted a quantitative study comparing people affected by the One-Child Policy (OCP) with those not affected by it to explore the policy's impact on human capital (educational attainment) and income.</p> <p>The data indicate that the One-Child Policy positively impacted the educational attainment of both genders, increasing the average years of schooling by 0.407 years, with results being highly statistically significant (<math>p &lt; 0.01</math>). Notably, the policy had a more significant effect on female education, with an average increase of 0.559 years for women compared to 0.265 years for men.</p> <p>Regarding personal income, the impact of the One-Child Policy was gender-specific. The policy significantly increased both pre-tax and post-tax income for women, thereby reducing the gender income gap (pre-tax income <math>p &lt; 0.1</math>, post-tax income <math>p &lt; 0.05</math>). However, the policy did not have a significant impact on men's income, indicating a limited effect on increasing male income.</p> <p>Overall, the One-Child Policy played an important role in enhancing human capital and promoting economic equality in China, particularly in improving women's educational attainment and reducing the gender income gap. These findings underscore the positive role of the One-Child Policy in promoting women's educational achievements, increasing women's income, and reducing the gender income gap.</p>	<p>Positive relationship between educational attainment and personal income (female <math>p &lt; 0.05</math> for post-tax income)</p> <p>Key Finding: These findings highlight the positive role of OCP in enhancing individual Education Attainment</p> <p>Positive relationship between educational attainment and personal income (female <math>p &lt; 0.05</math> for post-tax income)</p> <p>Key Finding: These findings highlight the positive role of OCP in enhancing individual Education Attainment</p>	<p>Positive relationship between educational attainment and personal income (female <math>p &lt; 0.05</math> for post-tax income)</p> <p>Key Finding: These findings highlight the positive role of OCP in enhancing individual Education Attainment</p> <p>Positive relationship between educational attainment and personal income (female <math>p &lt; 0.05</math> for post-tax income)</p> <p>Key Finding: These findings highlight the positive role of OCP in enhancing individual Education Attainment</p>	daughter

rural residency in hukou system, Parents' ages Parents' years of schooling City-level fixed effects Standard errors clustered at the county level	Huang, Jiang, and Sun (2024) conducted a quantitative study to explore the impact of son preference and fertility policies on mother-child separation and child development in Chinese families, with a particular focus on gender differences. The study primarily compared the following two scenarios:	Table 3 and Table 4: Positive. positive association between men having a male firstborn child and the likelihood of parent-child separation, only	In No effect This study finds that soci girls, particularly on y at the age of 2, are less likely to experience the parental separation compared to boys during early childhood. This trend is attributed to son preference, prompting parents to consider having another
	<p>1.The difference in the likelihood of experiencing mother-child separation at age two between families with a firstborn girl and families with a firstborn boy.</p> <p>2.The gender differences in child separation in regions with relaxed or no birth interval restrictions (1.5-child policy) versus regions with strict birth interval restrictions (one-child policy).</p> <p>The study found that fertility restriction policies significantly influenced parent-child separation, with statistically significant data only at the age of two. At age two, families with a firstborn girl were less likely to experience parent-child separation than families with a firstborn boy. In other words, girls were less likely to be separated from their parents, especially at age two (mother-child separation <math>p &lt; 0.01</math>, father-child separation <math>p &lt; 0.05</math>, parent-child separation <math>p &lt; 0.05</math>). The authors explained that this phenomenon is due to the son preference mentality, where parents with a firstborn girl tend to have a second child soon to have a son. Additionally, pregnant women usually stay in their hometown during pregnancy, reducing the likelihood of mother-daughter separation in early childhood. The study also showed that mother-child separation negatively impacted children's future academic performance, especially at age two (<math>p &lt; 0.1</math>). Based on these data, the authors concluded that the paradoxical protective effect of son preference meant that, despite generally disadvantaging girls, son preference actually reduced the likelihood of early parent-child separation for girls, promoting their healthy growth and better academic performance. Additionally, gender differences varied by region. The data showed that in areas without birth interval restrictions, girls at age two were less likely to experience parent-child separation compared to boys (<math>p &lt; 0.05</math>), while in areas with birth interval restrictions, this gender difference was not significant (<math>p &gt; 0.05</math>). Further research data indicated that under strict one-child policy, there was no significant gender difference in parent-child separation</p>		

city, age, parents' marital status, father's and mother's employment status, and father's and mother's education	Zhu, Xiao, and Zhu (2023) conducted a quantitative study to explore the gender differences in child sexual abuse (CSA) in mainland China, with a particular focus on the impact of sibling status. The study subjects included children of different genders (male and female) and different sibling statuses (having no siblings vs. having older siblings vs. only having younger siblings).	Table 4: The presence of older siblings can protect girls from one-time indirect CSA but the presence of both older and younger siblings makes girls more likely than boys to experience one-time indirect CSA (p < 0.05), suggesting that siblings can potentially become direct abusers.	Child sexual abuse (CSA)	daughter
	The data results showed that, with the presence of older siblings, girls were less likely than boys to experience one-time indirect CSA (p < 0.05), indicating that the presence of older siblings can protect girls from one-time indirect CSA. However, the presence of both older and younger siblings made girls more likely than boys to experience one-time direct CSA (p < 0.05), suggesting that siblings can potentially become direct abusers.	Overall, gender and sibling status significantly influenced the experiences of child sexual abuse. The presence of older siblings can protect girls from one-time indirect CSA, but the presence of both older and younger siblings makes girls more likely than boys to experience one-time direct CSA. This indicates that the One-Child Policy has mixed effects on girls, with both positive and negative impacts. By reducing the presence of siblings, the policy helps protect only-daughter children from one-time direct CSA. However, it also makes girls more susceptible to one-time indirect CSA due to the lack of protection from older siblings.		

Socio-economic status, property ownership, cultural capital, geographic al origin

According to Liu (2024), the study on gender role attitudes among the only-child generation of women without siblings in China identifies several key factors that significantly influence the formation and evolution of these attitudes. These factors include socioeconomic background, educational opportunities, family influence, marital dynamics, and cultural norms. Despite all participants being only daughters, there were still differences in their gender role attitudes. This study emphasizes the impact of differences in socioeconomic background, educational opportunities, family influence, marital dynamics, and cultural norms on the gender role attitudes of the only-child generation, rather than the One-Child Policy itself. Therefore, the study cannot establish a direct correlation with the policy.

Progressive gender equality is associated with the accumulation of socio-economic, geographical, and financial advantages, while traditional gender conformity is associated with the accumulation of disadvantages. Gender attitudes of daughters

Urban vs. rural residence, parents' socioeconomic status, educational background, and demographic factors such as age and gender of the child.

Hu and Shi (2020) conducted a study using quantitative analysis to examine the impact of different sibling structures on the gender differences in intergenerational investment and children's subjective awareness of gender equality. The study aimed to explore whether the one-child policy, by forcibly limiting the number of children, affects the gender differences in intergenerational investment and the gender equality awareness of the child generation. Key data indicate that the presence of siblings, particularly brothers (both younger and older), significantly reduces both financial and time investments in education from parents ( $p < 0.05$ ). Compared to children with siblings, parents invest more in only-child ren (regardless of gender). However, there is no significant gender difference in receiving intergenerational investment between boys and girls across different sibling structures, including the presence or absence of siblings and being an only-child ( $p > 0.05$ ). This indicates, firstly, that the child's gender does not influence parental investment, and secondly, that the one-child policy allows both only-daughters and only-sons to benefit from concentrated resources. Additionally, in specific situations, such as urban girls with both younger and older brothers, girls experience higher levels of happiness compared to boys, indicating that the presence of siblings does not necessarily decrease girls' happiness ( $p > 0.05$ ). Despite parents' significantly higher investment in only-child ren (regardless of gender), this increased investment does not significantly enhance children's gender equality awareness ( $p > 0.05$ ).

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children's grade, ethnicity, cognitive score, academic performance, boarding school attendance, parental co-residence, marital quality of parents, family economic condition, parental education, hukou type (urban or rural registration), and parental age at birth of the child	<p>Liu and Jiang (2021) conducted a quantitative study comparing the parent-child relationships of only-children with those of children with siblings among Chinese junior high school students. The study found that only-daughters have closer relationships with their parents (especially mothers) compared to daughters with siblings, and the more siblings they have, the less close their relationship with their parents.</p> <p>Only-children have closer intergenerational relationships with their parents compared to those with siblings. Specifically, the closeness between only-children and their mothers is significantly higher in families with one sibling (<math>p &lt; 0.05</math>) and even more significant in families with two or more siblings (<math>p &lt; 0.01</math>). The closeness with fathers is highly significant in families with one sibling (<math>p &lt; 0.001</math>) and also significant in families with two or more siblings (<math>p &lt; 0.01</math>).</p> <p>Additionally, gender comparisons among only-children show that only-daughters are more likely to have a close relationship with their mothers than only-sons (<math>p &lt; 0.01</math>). Conversely, only-daughters are less likely to have a close relationship with their fathers compared to only-sons (<math>p &lt; 0.001</math>). Furthermore, in families with a larger number of siblings, the probability of daughters having a close relationship with their parents decreases, while the probability for sons increases (<math>p &lt; 0.001</math>), indicating that traditional gender preferences still exist in multi-child families. Meanwhile, having younger brothers and sisters significantly reduces both mother-child and father-child closeness, with the negative impact being stronger for daughters (Mother-Child Closeness interaction effects: younger brothers <math>p &lt; 0.001</math>; younger sisters <math>-0.33</math>, <math>p &lt; 0.01</math>; Father-Child Closeness interaction effects: younger brothers <math>p &lt; 0.001</math>; younger sisters <math>-0.29</math>, <math>p &lt; 0.01</math>). However, the effects of having older siblings were insignificant.</p> <p>Based on these findings, Liu and Jiang (2021) conclude that in the Chinese cultural context, being an only-child has advantages in strengthening parent-child relationships, especially for daughters who benefit more from this status. However, in families with multiple children</p>	<p>findings</p> <p>CI</p> <p>Positive.</p> <p>Only daughters have closer relationships with their parents (especially mothers) compared to daughters with siblings, and the more siblings they have, the less close their relationship with their parents.</p> <p>Only-children have closer intergenerational relationships with their parents compared to those with siblings. Specifically, the closeness between only-children and their mothers is significantly higher in families with one sibling (<math>p &lt; 0.05</math>) and even more significant in families with two or more siblings (<math>p &lt; 0.01</math>). The closeness with fathers is highly significant in families with one sibling (<math>p &lt; 0.001</math>) and also significant in families with two or more siblings (<math>p &lt; 0.01</math>).</p> <p>Additionally, gender comparisons among only-children show that only-daughters are more likely to have a close relationship with their mothers than only-sons (<math>p &lt; 0.01</math>). Conversely, only-daughters are less likely to have a close relationship with their fathers compared to only-sons (<math>p &lt; 0.001</math>). Furthermore, in families with a larger number of siblings, the probability of daughters having a close relationship with their parents decreases, while the probability for sons increases (<math>p &lt; 0.001</math>), indicating that traditional gender preferences still exist in multi-child families. 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Firm characteristics (age, size, Tobin's Q, ROA, etc.), entrepreneurial characteristics (gender, age, ownership), provincial GDP per capita, fixed effects for province, industry, and year

The study by Chen, Ying, Wu, and You (2021) reveals a significant link between male heirs and higher innovation in family businesses, influenced by cultural son preference and moderated by factors such as education, early life experiences, and the one-child policy. The findings show a positive correlation between male heirs and corporate innovation, especially in regions with a strong son preference. Before the implementation of the one-child policy, male heirs were more likely than female heirs to impact company innovation ( $p < 0.05$  across all three measures of male heirs). However, after the implementation of the one-child policy, the positive impact of male heirs on corporate innovation relative to female heirs diminished, and the gender difference in its effect on company innovation was no longer significant. This indicates that the one-child policy helped women gain the ability to positively influence family inheritance just as men did, reflecting a reduction in traditional son preference.

Findings from Part 3.5.3, Table 12 Before the implementation of the one-child policy, male heirs were more likely to influence corporate innovation. Positive. The findings reveal a positive relationship between having male heirs and corporate innovation, particularly in regions with strong son preference and female's family status) Before the implementation of the one-child policy, male heirs

professional mothers with two children, at least one of whom was below 6 years of age at the time of the interview.

The study by Shen and Jiang (2020) explores the labor market outcomes of professional women with two children after the one-child policy in China through qualitative interviews with 26 professional women in Shanghai. The research develops a conceptual framework categorizing participants' experiences into four labor market outcomes: enhancement, rebound, interruption, and stagnation. These outcomes are influenced by various constraining factors (such as lack of childcare facilities, increased physical and cognitive labor, low husband participation) and enabling factors (such as parental support, flexible working hours, job stability, value shifts). Specifically, some women achieved promotions and salary increases with parental support; some women, despite career interruptions, quickly rebounded with their husbands' support; others experienced reduced working hours and income due to childcare burdens and lack of support; and some women shifted to focus more on family, leading to career stagnation, particularly in highly hierarchical and bureaucratic environments. However, the generally low father involvement increased women's work-life pressure, hindering their career development. The study finds that women with an only-child status often excel in education and careers due to continuous parental support, which persists even after they become mothers, helping them maintain career advancement or salary increases. Overall, the study reveals the complex impact of childbirth on women's career development, indicating that the one-child policy, by limiting the number of children women can have, helps their career progression and development. The research also emphasizes the importance of parental support for women's career development and points out the negative relationship between lack of childcare support and career interruption, as well as the complex impact of gender social expectations on career trajectories.

Positive: Heavy parental investment in empowered singleton girls under one-child policy, contributing to their career development. Mothers who were singletons (only children in their families) often received heavy



(1)	Gu and Jean Yeung (2021) employed a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative research, to investigate why adolescent girls in China outperform boys in achievement tests. The comparison groups included girls' and boys' scores, as well as the demographics of urban girls versus rural girls. These comparison groups helped the researchers understand the impact of the one-child policy on female educational outcomes. Their research comprehensively demonstrated the positive effect of the one-child policy on girls' educational achievements, particularly in urban areas, helping to close the gender education gap. Through quantitative methods, they found a positive correlation between being an only child and girls' cognitive scores, especially in mathematics ( $p < 0.05$ ). Additionally, urban girls' math scores were significantly higher than those of rural girls ( $p < 0.01$ ). The authors argue that rural girls did not benefit from the effects of the one-child policy due to limited resources and the continued preference for sons in rural areas.	Findings	Positive.
(2)	Through qualitative interviews, Gu and Yeung (2021) further confirmed that the higher educational outcomes of urban girls were due to the strict implementation of the one-child policy in urban areas. With only one child in the family, parents placed greater educational expectations on their only daughters, resulting in more investment and attention, which led to better cognitive development and educational achievements. The concentrated parental resources and involvement for only daughters, including access to high-quality educational materials, schools, and private tutoring, gave them an academic advantage. This study highlights the shift in Chinese society's attitudes toward girls' education. This shift marks a new generational contract prioritizing investment in girls' education, reflecting broader social and economic changes. The impact of the only-child status played a crucial role in this shift by allowing parents to focus their efforts and resources on promoting their daughters' academic success, thereby helping to close the gender achievement gap and provide upward mobility opportunities. In this study, academic achievement is seen as a manifestation of the one-child policy's impact on family investment. The researchers confirmed that the one-child policy, by increasing family investment in urban daughters	Figure 1: In 2014, girls outperformed boys in verbal scores by 0.18 of a standard deviation ( $p < 0.001$ ). Table 4: Being	Positive. The study by Xiaorong Gu and Wei-jun Yeung provides comprehensive insights into how the one-child policy in China has positively influenced educational outcomes for girls, especially in urban areas, with a

Children's characteristics: Age (centered at 18), Marital status, Education level (ref=Low, Middle, High), Employment status (ref=No work, (Self-employed/farmers, Others) Parents' characteristics: Age (centered at 61), Sex of parent (ref=mother, father) Having a	Chen and Jordan (2018) used quantitative methods to investigate the impact of children's gender on intergenerational support (including both financial and instrumental support) in one-child and multi-child families in China. The data show that sons are more likely than daughters to receive both financial and instrumental support from their elderly parents ( $p < 0.001$ ). Moreover, children from one-child families are more likely to receive these two types of support compared to children from multi-child families ( $p < 0.001$ ). Additionally, it is important to note that there is a significant interaction between the gender of the child and the family structure in terms of receiving instrumental support from parents. Specifically, although the only son is more likely to receive instrumental support than the only daughter ( $p < 0.001$ ), this gender gap is smaller in one-child families than in multi-child families. The authors suggest that this indicates the one-child policy's positive role in reducing the gender gap in receiving instrumental support from parents, ensuring that daughters receive support similar to sons. However, it is important to note that, although the data indicate that the gender gap in receiving instrumental support is smaller in one-child families than in multi-child families, this finding does not have significant statistical significance. Therefore, concluding that the one-child policy reduces the gender gap is not rigorous, as other influencing factors may exist and require further verification.	Findings Table 3 positive, $p < .001$ . Child gender receiving the financial and instrumental support is smaller than daughters, gender gap in receiving instrumental support is smaller to multi-child families. This suggests a move towards
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Guo, Lin, and Guo (2018) employed a quantitative research method to examine the influence of sibling status (only-child vs. children with siblings) on creativity and how sibling constellation (sex and birth order) impacts creativity. The data show that, first, compared to children with siblings, only-children scored higher in line meaning fluency and originality. Second, only-daughters scored higher in line meaning fluency and originality than later-born daughters. Lastly, only-daughters scored higher in both line meaning tasks and the real-world problem test compared to the eldest sons in families with siblings. All these data are statistically significant ( $p < 0.05$ ).

Participant age, educational level, parental education level, urban vs. rural background .	Only-children demonstrated significantly higher creativity in line meaning tasks (fluency and originality) but did not show a significant advantage in real-world problem-solving tasks. This partially confirmed the authors' hypothesis that only-children generally have higher cognitive abilities due to receiving more concentrated resources and attention. The study also revealed that, although only-daughters receive more resources and attention in the family, this advantage does not fully translate into improved real-world problem-solving abilities. However, the study found no significant difference in creativity scores between boys and girls with siblings, contrary to the second hypothesis, indicating that other factors may influence creativity within sibling groups. Only-daughters outperformed later-born daughters and first-born sons in creative tasks, indicating that only-daughters exhibit the highest levels of creativity compared to other sibling groups.	Findings from Table 2: Compared to children with siblings, only-children scored higher in line meaning tasks and the real-world problem test compared to the eldest sons in families with siblings. All these data are statistically significant ( $p < 0.05$ ).	Being an only child demonstrated significantly higher creativity in linear meaning tasks (fluency and originality), but did not show advantages in real-world problem-solving tasks. This partially confirms the hypothesis that only-children generally have higher cognitive abilities due to receiving more concentrated resources and attention. The study also revealed that, although only-daughters receive more resources and attention in the family, this advantage does not fully translate into improved real-world problem-solving abilities. However, the study found no significant difference in creativity scores between boys and girls with siblings, contrary to the second hypothesis, indicating that other factors may influence creativity within sibling groups. Only-daughters outperformed later-born daughters and first-born sons in creative tasks, indicating that only-daughters exhibit the highest levels of creativity compared to other sibling groups.
Guo, Lin, and Guo (2018) believe that the enhanced creativity of only-daughters is due to the concentrated investment from parents and their unique position in a less gender-biased upbringing environment. Under the one-child policy, being an only-child, especially an only-daughter, is associated with enhanced creative potential in specific tasks, demonstrating the policy's positive impact on fostering female creativity in a traditionally son-preferred society. The one-child policy ensures the status of daughters as only-children, which benefits their creativity. By analyzing the impact of family investment on creativity, Guo, Lin, and Guo			Guo, Lin, and Guo (2018) believe that the enhanced creativity of only-daughters is due to the concentrated investment from parents and their unique position in a less gender-biased upbringing environment. Under the one-child policy, being an only-child, especially an only-daughter, is associated with enhanced creative potential in specific tasks, demonstrating the policy's positive impact on fostering female creativity in a traditionally son-preferred society. The one-child policy ensures the status of daughters as only-children, which benefits their creativity. By analyzing the impact of family investment on creativity, Guo, Lin, and Guo

Fong (2002) discusses the impact of China's one-child policy on family dynamics and gender roles, highlighting the following points:

#### Impact of One-Child Policy on Family Structure:

The policy has reduced competition among siblings, empowering girls to challenge gender norms and advocate for their rights and opportunities.

Traditionally, patrilineal kinship has dominated Chinese society, leading parents to invest less in daughters. However, daughters in one-child families receive unprecedented support from parents due to reduced competition with siblings for parental investment.

#### Dual Impact of One-Child Policy on Urban Mothers:

Socioeconomic status, urban/rural residence, parental attitudes.

While the policy has relieved mothers in urban areas from reproductive and caregiving burdens, it has also restricted their freedom to choose family size and subjected them to state control and enforcement strategies.

Nonetheless, the policy's impact on urban daughters is largely beneficial, as it encourages them to pursue education and careers instead of solely assuming maternal roles.

#### Urban only children Empowerment through Education:

Urban only children receive more educational investment, leading them to believe in upward mobility opportunities and often engaging in tutoring or private courses to enhance skills, such as English.

#### Encouragement for Higher Education and Skilled Careers:

Daughters without siblings are more likely to be encouraged to pursue higher education and professions requiring advanced skills

Positive.

Fong

(2002)

uses

qualitative

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Economic background, location (urban), specific time period of economic reforms.	Liu (2012) conducted a qualitative study to analyze the intergenerational impact of the one-child policy. By comparing mothers from multi-child families to only-daughters under the one-child policy, the study revealed that the one-child policy significantly increased family investment and attention towards daughters, especially in education. Unlike their mothers, who were born into multi-child families, only-daughters received more educational opportunities. Traditionally, Chinese families centered around parents, prioritizing their needs. However, Liu (2012) pointed out that with the implementation of the one-child policy and changes in family structure, families began to center around their children. Under the influence of this policy, only-daughters became the focal point of family attention and gained unprecedented status. Parents, particularly mothers, started to heavily invest in their daughters' education and development, breaking the traditional preference for sons.	The implementation of the one-child policy in China led to a significant increase in educational investment for only-daughters. This was due to the concentration of family resources on a single child, which allowed for higher educational attainment and career development opportunities. Unlike their mothers, who grew up in multi-child families, only-daughters received more focused attention and resources from their parents, leading to higher educational achievements and more ambitious career aspirations.
	Qualitative data indicated that the mother's generation had fewer educational and career development opportunities due to household chores and caring for siblings. In contrast, daughters under the one-child policy received more educational investment, family resources, and parental attention in child-centered families. Unlike their mothers, who had to share household responsibilities and care for siblings during their childhood, these daughters had more time to focus on their studies. Consequently, only-daughters achieved higher educational attainments and developed more ambitious career aspirations. Their personal identities became more individualized, and they also became more aware of existing gender inequalities and more capable of challenging traditional gender roles. This comparison highlights the significant impact of the one-child policy in enhancing daughters' educational opportunities, family resource allocation, and career development.	This study highlights the significant impact of the one-child policy on the educational and career development of only-daughters. The concentration of family resources on a single child led to increased educational investment and attention, which in turn resulted in higher educational attainment and more ambitious career aspirations for only-daughters compared to their mothers. The study also identifies the role of family structure and parental investment in shaping the educational and career outcomes of only-daughters.

<p>Not explicitly defined due to the qualitative nature of the study, but includes demographic variations such as age, occupation, and social status among informants.</p>	<p>Zhang (2009) conducted a qualitative study exploring the evolution of relationships between married women and their natal families in rural northern China since the country's market reforms in 1978 and the implementation of the one-child policy in 1979. The one-child policy, launched in 1979, aimed to control population growth by limiting the number of children per family. The study found that as family size decreased, the value of each child within the family increased, particularly enhancing the role of daughters in supporting elderly parents, thereby altering traditional gender norms and expectations.</p> <p>In traditional Chinese rural patriarchal culture, daughters were often valued less than sons, as the primary expectation was for sons to take care of aging parents. However, the one-child policy reduced family size, thereby increasing the value of each child in the family. Parents began to rely more on their daughters. Particularly as the only daughter, an only-daughter became crucial in caring for elderly parents, which changed traditional gender roles and expectations.</p> <p>Additionally, the study found that the implementation of the one-child policy strengthened the connection between married women and their natal families and granted women greater autonomy. Traditionally, married women were considered economically independent from their natal families and often severed ties after marriage. However, the one-child policy led to significant changes in this dynamic. Many couples of childbearing age during the policy's implementation desired to have more children than the policy allowed. This reliance on married women returning to their natal families to evade local government inspections strengthened their ties with their natal families. Married women hiding at their natal homes to avoid pregnancy checks increased their contact and support from their natal families, often leading to longer stays and further solidifying family bonds.</p> <p>With the increased contact between married women and their parents, economic cooperation and social support systems between married women and their natal families</p>	<p>1. In positive. Mark e state et "o policies Refor ne- have ms chi generally Natur ld" enhanced e of pol women's Relati ical ties and onshi , ties and p: ini autonomy Positi tia , with ve te fewer Mark d children, et in parents refor 19 place ms 79 greater facilit by value on ated a th daughters, break e altering down Chi traditional of pre- ne preferenc refor se es for m go sons. institu ve Parents' tional rn appreciati and m on and econo en value for mic t their</p>	<p>Gender equality: Family roles/Family Status and Kinship Relations (greater value for daughters ) Female's intergenerational relationships: strengthened ties Autonomy in life</p> <p>mother</p>
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Household income, urban/rural residence, availability of childcare facilities, local one-child policy, parental education, employment status, and presence of grandparents.

Children without siblings consistently had higher odds of receiving center-based care than those with siblings, while there was no evidence that child gender mattered. Children without siblings were more likely to be enrolled in center-based care.

Findings from Table 2. 1. Siblings presence: Negative effect ( $p < 0.01$ ) 2. Child gender: No significant effect ( $p > 0.05$ )

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Parental care (family daughter investment)

<p>Gender, urban vs. rural background, academic major.</p>	<p>Deutsch (2006) used a qualitative approach to compare only-children with children who have siblings, exploring the impact of the one-child policy on traditional Chinese values such as filial piety and patrilineal norms among Chinese university students. The study found that the one-child policy has a positive relationship with filial piety and a negative relationship with patrilineal norms.</p> <p>The research indicates that the one-child policy has influenced the development of egalitarian gender views among only-children. This shift is particularly evident among only-daughters, who often receive equal opportunities and encouragement from their parents. For instance, their parents frequently encourage them to pursue academic and career goals. Moreover, because many families have only one child, parents tend to invest heavily in the education and well-being of their child regardless of gender, breaking the traditional preference for sons. This fosters more egalitarian gender views among only-daughters, giving them the ability to challenge patrilineal norms and promoting greater gender equality in society.</p> <p>Furthermore, the study points out that the one-child policy has altered traditional gender expectations. As many families have only one child, daughters are expected to take on roles traditionally assigned to sons, such as caring for elderly parents and inheriting family property. With women increasingly assuming caregiving responsibilities traditionally held by men, gender role attitudes are shifting. Additionally, the preference for passing on the family name has diminished, as families with only one child now prioritize their child's happiness and success, regardless of gender, over continuing the family name through male heirs. Compared to their parents' generation, the younger generation affected by the one-child policy shows a significantly reduced preference for sons. This reflects an enhancement of women's family status and social gender equality.</p> <p>The only-child status has also strengthened the intergenerational connection between</p>	<p>Positive. Filial Egalitarian Gender Views: The one-child policy has influenced the development of more egalitarian gender attitudes and roles, promoting greater gender equality in society. Family roles/Family Status and Kinship Relations (greater value for daughters), Intergenerational relationships particularly notable among only-</p>
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Cultural norms regarding gender, local economic conditions, and historical fertility trends.

Zhang (2007) conducted a qualitative study focusing on rural women, highlighting how the one-child policy variant, the 1.5-child policy, empowered young rural women by reducing family size. The one-child policy began in the late 1970s, followed by the 1.5-child policy, which allowed rural families to typically have two children. This significantly lowered birth rates and fundamentally altered family structures and dynamics, resulting in smaller family sizes. The policy, by limiting the number of offspring, forced parents to value their fewer children regardless of gender, significantly changing traditional gender roles and expectations within rural communities. This change enabled parents to invest more in their daughters, as resources were less diluted among fewer children. In families with only one or two children, daughters received more attention and resources than they would in larger families. This increased investment included educational opportunities and parental care, leading to enhanced roles within the family and greater economic independence through engaging in paid work in adulthood.

Positi ve relati onshi p noted , as decre ased fertil y and increa sed econo mic oppor tunity lead to higher paren tal invest ment in daugh ters and	Chi na' The Bir th Co ntr ol Pol icy : Rel ati on shi p : Th e im ple men tat ion of This policy shifted	Positive. The implemen tation of the one- child policy, and subseque ntly, variations of it allowing rural families often to have two children, has fundamen tally altered family structure and dynamics. This policy shifted	Famliy investmen t: Attention and Resource Allocation Gender equality: Family roles/Fam ily Status and Kinship Relations (greater value for daughters ):enhance d roles for daughters within the family. economic condition (employ ment)	daughter
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<p>Gender, educational background (university students vs. non-university adults).</p>	<p>Liu (2008) conducted a qualitative study exploring the relationship between only-child status and gender in terms of filial obligations and gender roles. The study found that being an only-child significantly affects young people's filial responsibilities and gender roles. Due to the implementation of the one-child policy, only-children, regardless of gender, have taken on caregiving responsibilities traditionally borne by males. This change is particularly evident in gender roles, with female only-children expected to manage their own career development while also caring for elderly parents.</p> <p>In the unique context of being an only-child, societal and familial expectations for both genders have become more aligned, leading women to increasingly assume roles traditionally held by men, thereby promoting gender equality. This shift, driven by the dynamics of only-child status in China, represents a significant evolution of traditional gender roles and fosters greater gender equality.</p>	<p>ASSOCIATION POSITIVE.          The one-child policy has had a marked impact on Family roles/Family Status and Kinship Relations (greater value for daughters)          Traditional gender roles in China. As a result of the one-child policy, the daughters (only child)          In a gender roles/gender attitudes.          has gender equality.          the responsibility of supporting the          of the</p>
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Murphy (2003) conducted a qualitative study that explores the complex interactions between China's population policy and local cultural norms, and the profound impacts these interactions have on gender ratios and women's status. The study highlights that the one-child policy not only restricts women's reproductive rights and infringes on their bodily autonomy but also, when combined with local cultural norms favouring males, leads to a distorted gender ratio.

Socioeconomic status, access to healthcare and family planning services, educational level of respondents. Firstly, the family planning policy often forces women to undergo sterilization or other birth control measures closely aligned with state objectives, thus limiting their reproductive rights and violating their bodily autonomy. Moreover, the implementation of family planning policies in rural areas tends to be flexible, allowing families whose first child is a girl to try for a second child, known as the 1.5-child policy. This policy unintentionally reinforces the preference for male offspring, indirectly supporting cultural norms that favor males and further entrenching gender bias.

The combination of cultural preferences for sons and birth limitation policies has led to phenomena such as underreporting or misreporting the births of daughters and engaging in gender selection practices (such as abortion and girl infanticide) to ensure the family has a son. These gender selection practices have resulted in severe gender ratio imbalances, especially in rural areas, leading to the so-called "missing girls" phenomenon.

In summary, Murphy (2003) demonstrates the negative impacts of the family planning policy, manifested in the infringement of women's reproductive rights and bodily autonomy, and its interplay with male-preference culture, which distorts the birth gender ratio.

1. negative State policies: Positive association with perpetuation of son preference, categorized as negative with respect to gender. China's one-child policy exacerbated cultural preferences for sons, as in some areas families with a first-born girl were allowed to try for a second child, typically hoping for a boy. This intersection

Mother (only relevant to the Female Reproductive Rights, Autonomy, not the skewed sex ratio issue )

Women's age, hukou status, educational attainment, health, husband's education and employment status, region

Liu and Marois (2024) conducted a quantitative study on the effect of motherhood on the labor force participation (LFP) of married women in China. The key finding of the study is that motherhood has a significant negative impact on the labor force participation of married women. Specifically, compared to women without children, women with one child have a 20.7% lower labor force participation rate ( $P < 0.1$ ), while women with two or more children have a 37.7% lower labor force participation rate ( $p < 0.01$ ). Thus, it can be concluded that having more children has a significant negative impact on the labor force participation of married women, indicating that the one-child policy's limitation on the number of children has been beneficial for women's labor force participation.

Compared group: Women without children vs. women with one child vs. women with two or more children.

Each additional child decreases the odds of labor force participation by 20.7% for women with one child and 37.7% for women with two or more children. The odds of labor force participation are significantly lower for women with children compared to women without children. The results suggest that the one-child policy has had a beneficial impact on women's labor force participation. The findings indicate that having more children has a significant negative impact on the labor force participation of married women, suggesting that the one-child policy's limitation on the number of children has been beneficial for women's labor force participation. The results suggest that the one-child policy has had a beneficial impact on women's labor force participation. The findings indicate that having more children has a significant negative impact on the labor force participation of married women, suggesting that the one-child policy's limitation on the number of children has been beneficial for women's labor force participation.

<p>Education (categorized into four levels: primary or below, junior high, senior high, college or above), work status (employed or not), residence (rural or urban), and marriage cohort</p> <p>Household registration status (hukou), father's occupation al status at the respondent's age</p>	<p>Wu, Ye, and He (2014) conducted a quantitative study that, through multiple control group comparisons, revealed the impact of education, employment, number of children, and the one-child policy on women's family status, household chores, educational opportunities, and career achievements. The control groups included: highly educated women vs. less educated women, women with multiple children vs. women with fewer children, women with siblings (born before the one-child policy) vs. only-daughters (born after the one-child policy). The higher a woman's educational level, the lower the proportion of household chores she undertakes. The data show that highly educated women undertake significantly fewer household chores than less educated women (<math>p &lt; 0.001</math>). Furthermore, a larger number of siblings is significantly negatively correlated with educational attainment, with a more pronounced effect on women (<math>p &lt; 0.001</math>). Additionally, the more children a woman has, the higher the proportion of household chores she undertakes. Notably, among women married between 1991 and 2000, each additional child increased the likelihood of a woman undertaking more household chores by 47.7% (<math>p &lt; 0.01</math>). Moreover, an increase in the number of children lowers a woman's satisfaction with her family status; each additional child decreases the likelihood of high family status satisfaction by 7.96% (<math>p &lt; 0.05</math>), an effect more significant in the younger generation. This indicates that a larger number of siblings can lower women's educational attainment, leading to more household chores and reduced satisfaction with family status and happiness.</p> <p>Wu, Ye, and He (2014) also noted that declining fertility rates mean fewer siblings in the next generation, reducing resource competition among siblings. This increases educational opportunities, especially for daughters, positively affecting their academic achievements. These intergenerational benefits are reflected in the improved educational levels and career status of the daughter generation. The study supports the gradual reduction of educational gender inequality over time, particularly for the youngest cohort born under the one-child policy. Among the only-child cohort born between 1979 and 1988, the p-value for the gender effect on years of education was far greater than 0.05, indicating no statistical significance, whereas significant gender gaps in education were observed in earlier birth</p>	<p>Fertility and Household work: Increased fertility positively correlates with a higher share of household work for women (<math>p &lt; 0.01</math>, Table 2). Fertility and Satisfaction</p> <p>Positive. The One-Child Policy in China Promotes the Improvement of Women's Status in Two Ways: Relationship Between Fertility Decline and Women's Status in the Family: The fewer children women have, the</p>
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Year of birth, survey year, province, number of siblings, local sex ratios, economic conditions, education resources, compulsory schooling laws.	<p>Huang, Lei, and Sun (2021) conducted a quantitative study to explore the impact of China's one-child policy (OCP) on individual economic and social outcomes, using the variations in policy penalties across different provinces and times as the basis for analysis. They compared individuals and families not subjected to strict OCP birth penalties with those facing high birth penalties in terms of education level, timing of marriage, employment type, household income, consumption, savings, and female empowerment to assess the policy's effects on individual life cycle outcomes. The study found that higher birth penalties were positively correlated with increased female education levels, delayed marriages, improved economic conditions, and enhanced women's rights.</p> <p>Firstly, strict birth restrictions significantly improved education levels and job quality, especially for women. The data showed that stricter birth restrictions led to higher high school and college graduation rates for women, with a particularly significant increase in college completion rates (<math>p &lt; 0.1</math>). Additionally, birth restrictions significantly increased the likelihood of obtaining white-collar jobs for both men (<math>p &lt; 0.01</math>) and women (<math>p &lt; 0.1</math>). This indicates that birth restrictions significantly enhanced women's educational and occupational achievements.</p> <p>Secondly, strict birth penalties were associated with higher household income and stronger women's rights. In terms of household economic conditions, strict birth restrictions significantly improved income, consumption, and savings (<math>p &lt; 0.05</math>). This suggests that birth restrictions help enhance household economic security and better financial outcomes. At the same time, birth restrictions also empowered women. The study found that women in families subject to strict birth restrictions were more likely to become household heads (<math>p &lt; 0.1</math>) and enjoy a higher proportion of female-oriented consumption, such as spending on clothing and beauty products (<math>p &lt; 0.1</math>). Conversely, male-oriented consumption, such as beverages, alcohol, and dining out, significantly decreased (<math>p &lt; 0.01</math>). The negative correlation between strict birth penalties and male-oriented consumption indicates a</p>	<p>Findings: Positive. Higher fertility penalties are positively associated with higher education attainment, delayed marriage, improved economic conditions, and enhanced female empowerment. Education and employment outcomes are positively associated with higher education attainment, delayed marriage, improved economic conditions, and enhanced female empowerment. Education and employment outcomes are positively associated with higher education attainment, delayed marriage, improved economic conditions, and enhanced female empowerment.</p>	<p>Not clearly identifiable, just the female</p>
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Possibly socioeconomic background, although not detailed in the data provided.	<p>Zhang, Wang, and Liu (2021) conducted a quantitative analysis of the digital competence and internet usage of only-daughters under the one-child policy. The study found that only-daughters showed no significant differences from only-sons in information, educational, and social media aspirational activities. However, non-only-daughters remained disadvantaged in these aspirational activities, indicating that gender digital divides still exist.</p> <p>The researchers suggest that this disparity may stem from unequal distribution of parental attention and resources in families that favor male children, where daughters, especially older daughters, typically receive less support. Compared to their non-only-child peers, only-daughter students participated in these aspirational uses at levels comparable to male students, effectively narrowing the gender digital divide.</p> <p>Zhang, Wang, and Liu (2021) attribute this equal standing to the advantage only-daughters have under the one-child policy, where they do not face sibling competition for resources. This allows only-daughters to receive the same level of family resources and attention as males, enabling them to fully leverage educational and digital opportunities.</p>	<p>Differences in amount of use</p> <p>ma positive. le</p> <p>studies conducted</p> <p>Zhang, Wang, and Liu (2021)</p> <p>female students conducted a quantitative analysis of the digital competence and internet usage of only-daughters under the one-child policy. The study found that only-daughters showed no significant differences from only-sons in information, educational, and social media aspirational activities. However, non-only-daughters remained disadvantaged in these aspirational activities, indicating that gender digital divides still exist.</p> <p>The researchers suggest that this disparity may stem from unequal distribution of parental attention and resources in families that favor male children, where daughters, especially older daughters, typically receive less support. Compared to their non-only-child peers, only-daughter students participated in these aspirational uses at levels comparable to male students, effectively narrowing the gender digital divide.</p> <p>Zhang, Wang, and Liu (2021) attribute this equal standing to the advantage only-daughters have under the one-child policy, where they do not face sibling competition for resources. This allows only-daughters to receive the same level of family resources and attention as males, enabling them to fully leverage educational and digital opportunities.</p>
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	Liu (2017) employed a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative research, to explore the impact of China's one-child policy on family educational resource investment, cultural capital, women's educational achievements, and career development by comparing only-daughters with women who have siblings. Liu's study reveals the profound impact of the one-child policy on female participation in higher education. The findings indicate that only-daughters significantly outperform women with siblings in academic performance and opportunities to enter elite universities. This advantage primarily stems from families concentrating educational resources and cultural capital on only-daughters. By limiting families to only one child, the policy altered family structures, allowing parents to focus their time, money, and attention on this single child. This concentrated investment greatly enhanced the educational opportunities and learning support for only-children, directly promoting their educational attainment.	Positive Position	1. Single Girls' Status: Compared to girls with siblings, singleton girls have a higher probability in achieving the highest thresholds in the national college entrance examination (gaokao) and being enrolled in elite and key universities.
Socioeconomic status (Managerial, Professional, Working class, Agricultural)			
Parental educational level			
Cultural capital (objectified and embodied)	Firstly, only-daughters excelled in the national college entrance examination (Gaokao). This advantage can be partly attributed to families channeling all resources (such as time, finances, and attention) toward the only child, thus providing only-daughters with broader family investment, support, and educational opportunities. These opportunities include not only access to higher quality schooling but also participation in more extracurricular and cultural activities, as well as access to more study materials and tutoring resources. This increased resource availability significantly boosted only-children's competitiveness in crucial educational assessments like the Gaokao. The study data indicate that only-daughters are significantly more likely to achieve high academic scores in the Gaokao ( $p < 0.01$ ).	Succession	Single Girls' Status: Compared to girls with siblings, singleton girls have a higher probability in achieving the highest thresholds in the national college entrance examination (gaokao) and being enrolled in elite and key universities.
Geographical origin (urban/rural), types of schooling (model/key schools vs regular)	Secondly, only-daughters are more likely to gain admission to China's top universities. Compared to women with siblings, only-daughters have a significantly higher chance of being accepted into elite universities ( $p < 0.01$ ). This suggests that the one-child policy not only enhanced their academic performance but also helped alleviate educational inequality to some extent	Higher Academic Performance	Single Girls' Status: Compared to girls with siblings, singleton girls have a higher probability in achieving the highest thresholds in the national college entrance examination (gaokao) and being enrolled in elite and key universities.



Wang and Zhang (2022) conducted a qualitative study to deeply explore the impact of the one-child policy on only-daughters in urban areas of China and its effects on gender roles. Although the article does not explicitly define a control group, comparisons between the experiences of only-daughters and only-sons reveal differences in gender roles and treatment within traditional families and under the one-child policy. Additionally, the study's focus on the life experiences of only-daughters under the one-child policy implies a contrast with the experiences of daughters with siblings who were not subject to the policy.

Wang and Zhang (2022) mention that the one-child policy altered family structures, resulting in families with only one child. In this core family environment, gender roles tend to be more flexible, allowing daughters to receive the same treatment as sons. However, this equality is merely a result of the enforced one-child policy and does not fundamentally challenge deeply rooted gender biases. Parents have simply adapted to the reality of having only one daughter and have adjusted their expectations and resource allocation accordingly, similar to what they would do for a son. However, this adaptation is limited to the family environment and does not extend to broader societal perceptions, where traditional and discriminatory gender roles still prevail.

Complicated. In families, there is more apparent gender equality, but this is merely due to the lack of sons, forcing parents to invest in their only daughter. This creates a superficial sense of gender equality. It does not fundamentally

gender eq daughter

Parents' resources (age, residence, education, occupation, income, housing), Grandparents' resources (education, help, coresidence), Children's information (gender, age, siblings, school type, expected schooling).

Wang and Feng (2021) employed quantitative methods to thoroughly investigate the long-term impacts of the one-child policy, with a particular focus on family resource allocation and its ancillary effects. Their study found that married only daughters continue to receive family resource support even after marriage, which subsequently influences their children's educational investment. The results validated several statistically significant findings: the number of siblings of parents is negatively correlated with children's educational investment ( $p < 0.001$ ), the presence of maternal uncles has a detrimental effect on children's educational investment ( $p < 0.05$ ), the status of the mother as an only child is positively correlated with children's educational investment ( $p < 0.05$ ), while the father's only-child status does not significantly affect educational investment. The study revealed that having siblings, especially male siblings, is disadvantageous for women in acquiring family resources and investing in their children's education, highlighting the advantage of only-child status for only daughters in securing family resources. This advantage stems from the one-child policy's enforcement, which broke the traditional preference for sons by mandating a reduction in the number of children. With no sons, parents were compelled to concentrate their resources on their only child, allowing daughters to access the entirety of the family's resources and continue to benefit from them even after marriage, thus extending the advantages to their children's generation. In summary, Wang and Feng (2021)'s research demonstrates that the one-child policy in China significantly promoted the advantageous position of married only daughters in acquiring family resources and investing in their children's education by limiting the number of children in a family.

Parents' resources (age, residence, education, occupation, income, housing), Grandparents' resources (education, help, coresidence), Children's information (gender, age, siblings, school type, expected schooling).  
The study examines the unintended effects of China's One-Child Policy (OCP) on family resource allocation, revealing significant advantages for only daughters in acquiring family resources and investing in their education. The OCP led to concentrated parental investment/parental support/family resources for only daughters, which significantly promoted the advantageous position of married only daughters in acquiring family resources and investing in their children's education by limiting the number of children in a family.

Education level,	Zhou (2021) conducted a quantitative study that explored the complex relationship between gender role attitudes and attitudes toward China's state-imposed fertility restriction policies.	Table 2:	In the response of independent variables with more egalitarian views on gender roles	Positive. Stronger egalitarian gender role attitudes linked with higher support for state birth restriction.	Gender roles: housework division, Not clearly identify, just the female development/employment
employment status,	The study first highlighted a significant contrast between gender role attitudes and support for national fertility restrictions. Individuals with more egalitarian views on gender roles	respondents with	more egalitarian gender role attitudes	Positive. Stronger egalitarian gender role attitudes linked with higher support for state birth restriction.	
age, marital status,	were more likely to support the government's strict fertility control ( $p < 0.001$ ), whereas those with traditional gender role attitudes were less inclined to endorse such policies.	s with	more egalitarian gender role attitudes	Positive. Stronger egalitarian gender role attitudes linked with higher support for state birth restriction.	
gender, childbearing status,	The underlying reason for this phenomenon is that women have been increasingly participating in the labor market and outperforming men in higher education. Despite significant progress in public spheres such as higher education and employment, gender equality in household responsibilities has not been achieved, and women still face inequality	more egalitarian gender role attitudes	more egalitarian gender role attitudes	Positive. Stronger egalitarian gender role attitudes linked with higher support for state birth restriction.	
CCP membership,	at home. Men's participation in caregiving remains limited, with women bearing a disproportionate share of household duties, leading to an incomplete and stagnated path toward gender equality. Gendered family and childcare policies exacerbate this inequality, further discriminating against women in the labor market due to perceptions that they might be distracted by familial responsibilities. Egalitarian respondents believe that fertility restrictions can alleviate the dual burden on women, allowing them more freedom to pursue career goals. This policy aligns with feminist objectives of achieving gender equality across all areas of life, particularly for those prioritizing women's public sphere participation. The restrictive fertility quotas are seen as an effective means to reduce the incompatibility of gendered work and family roles, as they believe these policies help women escape the burdens of childbearing and reduce their caregiving workload at home.	are more likely to support the government's	are more likely to support the government's	Positive. Stronger egalitarian gender role attitudes linked with higher support for state birth restriction.	
religion, self-rated English ability,	Moreover, the study implies a comparison between the empowerment effects of the one-child policy and the two/three-child policies. Zhou (2021) referenced previous research, finding that the study's findings align with attitudes toward transitioning from the one-child policy to the universal two/three-child policy. Relaxing fertility restrictions raises concerns about increasing gender discrimination in the labor market and additional reproductive pressures on women. Thus, for those prioritizing women's public sphere participation, fertility restriction policies may appear beneficial as they mitigate work-family conflict and	likely to limit births (p<0.0 to 0.01 for gender	likely to limit births (p<0.0 to 0.01 for gender	Positive. Stronger egalitarian gender role attitudes linked with higher support for state birth restriction.	
social class, attitudes towards free speech, and internal migration, and hypothetical desire for children without		likely to limit births (p<0.0 to 0.01 for gender	likely to limit births (p<0.0 to 0.01 for gender	Positive. Stronger egalitarian gender role attitudes linked with higher support for state birth restriction.	

	Kim, Brown, and Fong (2018) utilized a mixed-methods approach to study how flexible gender identities provide young women with advantages in China's new economy. Their research found a positive correlation between young women's more flexible gender identities and higher upward mobility and employment advantages within the demographic context created by the one-child policy. Quantitative data showed that women were more likely than men to complete high school and university education and to obtain regular bachelor's degrees ( $p < 0.05$ ). They were also more likely to secure white-collar jobs, even those that did not require a university degree ( $p < 0.05$ ).	Positive correlation; more flexible gender identities among young women.	Positive. The one-child policy, by concentrating parental resources and aspirations on single daughters, inadvertently promoted flexible gender identities among young urban Chinese women. This flexibility, characterized by the benefits to
Socioeconomic background, educational opportunities, occupation al fields, marital status.	Qualitative insights revealed that women were generally more willing to cross traditional gender boundaries in education and career choices, which is linked to their more flexible gender identities. The one-child policy concentrated parental resources and expectations on a single daughter, allowing only daughters to theoretically challenge traditional gender norms. This fostered flexible gender identities among young urban women. This flexibility manifested in enhanced adaptability and innovation, enabling them to pursue a broader range of educational and career opportunities, including fields traditionally dominated by men. Consequently, these women were better equipped to effectively navigate the rapidly changing socio-economic conditions in China's fast-developing market economy, often outperforming men in educational achievements and career diversity. Thus, the one-child policy indirectly facilitated women's rise in the labor market by enhancing their adaptability and opportunities for diverse career roles.	Qualitative insights revealed that women were generally more willing to cross traditional gender boundaries in education and career choices, which is linked to their more flexible gender identities. The one-child policy concentrated parental resources and expectations on a single daughter, allowing only daughters to theoretically challenge traditional gender norms. This fostered flexible gender identities among young urban women. This flexibility manifested in enhanced adaptability and innovation, enabling them to pursue a broader range of educational and career opportunities, including fields traditionally dominated by men. Consequently, these women were better equipped to effectively navigate the rapidly changing socio-economic conditions in China's fast-developing market economy, often outperforming men in educational achievements and career diversity. Thus, the one-child policy indirectly facilitated women's rise in the labor market by enhancing their adaptability and opportunities for diverse career roles.	Advantages in Education and Employment due to Flexible gender identities
	In summary, according to Kim, Brown, and Fong (2018), the one-child policy promoted more flexible gender identities among women, thereby enhancing their adaptability and innovation capabilities. This enabled them to pursue a wider range of educational and career opportunities and to more effectively navigate the ever-changing socio-economic conditions, surpassing men in education and career achievements. Quantitative data indicated that women were more likely than men to complete high school and university education and to	In summary, according to Kim, Brown, and Fong (2018), the one-child policy promoted more flexible gender identities among women, thereby enhancing their adaptability and innovation capabilities. This enabled them to pursue a wider range of educational and career opportunities and to more effectively navigate the ever-changing socio-economic conditions, surpassing men in education and career achievements. Quantitative data indicated that women were more likely than men to complete high school and university education and to	

Family characteristics (property ownership, family structure), mother's characteristics (education, work hours). Father's age, education, occupation, work hours, confidence, and property ownership. Whether parents are Shanghai natives or migrants

Xu and Yeung (2013) utilized a mixed-methods approach to explore the involvement of fathers in the lives of their adolescent daughters in Shanghai and the influencing factors. The data indicated that whether the daughter was an only child had no significant impact on the various aspects of fatherly involvement. This suggests that other factors, such as the father's education level, personal attitudes towards parenting, and cultural changes mentioned in the study, may play a more significant role in shaping how fathers in Shanghai interact with their daughters, regardless of whether the daughters have siblings.

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<p>Economic factors, international and regional cultural variations, various government birth plan policies, financial costs and smaller-family preference</p>	<p>Loh and Remick (2015) conducted a comparative historical analysis using secondary quantitative data, including official statistics and previous research findings, to explore whether the one-child policy was the main factor leading to China's gender ratio imbalance, while also considering other significant influencing factors. The study found that the one-child policy was neither the sole nor the primary cause of the gender ratio imbalance. Instead, son preference and related cultural practices played a crucial role in causing the imbalance. The birth gender ratio began to rise sharply in the early 1980s and has remained highly imbalanced since then. Historical and regional data suggest that son preference, rather than the policy itself, was a key factor.</p> <p>The analysis indicated that regions implementing different policy frameworks (one-child policy, 1.5-child policy, and two-child policy) all experienced gender ratio imbalances. This suggests that the one-child policy did not uniquely cause the imbalance, as regions with other policies also showed imbalanced gender ratios. Moreover, the gender ratio imbalance was most pronounced in rural areas with a 1.5-child policy and a strong preference for sons, showing that the interaction between birth control policies and entrenched cultural norms, along with socio-economic incentives related to son preference, exacerbated the gender imbalance.</p> <p>Accordingly, the researchers argued that cultural, social, and economic institutions promoting son preference provided families with incentives to choose boys over girls, influencing the birth gender ratio more significantly than policy alone. Loh and Remick (2015) concluded that the interplay between entrenched cultural norms and socio-economic incentives related to son preference intensified the gender ratio imbalance. A policy alone, without the cultural preference for sons, would not directly lead to an imbalanced birth gender ratio.</p> <p>In summary, son preference was identified as the primary factor contributing to China's</p>	<p>One-child policy : relationship between the one-child policy and the skewed SRB is complicated, little negative effect. The one-child policy on policy exacerbates the skewed sex ratio at birth where it intersects with son preference. However, the policy alone, without the cultural preference for sons, does not directly</p>	<p>skewed sex ratio at birth</p> <p>None, it only focuses on the main factor leading to China's gender ratio imbalance</p>
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The one-child policy is negative to female empowerment.	Contrary to the one-child policy, the optimal approach to female empowerment is to encourage the use of IUDs under family planning policies not only infringing on women's bodily autonomy but also posing significant health risks. Furthermore, there is no doubt that the use of IUDs and the reproductive health of women's reproductive health is a key factor in the development of a country's economy and social progress.	Female Reproductive Rights, Autonomy and health Gender Equality	mother
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Reporting anomalies, underreporting of daughters, sex-specific stopping rules, socio-economic factors, cultural preferences, and availability of prenatal sex determination technology.

Goodkind's (2015) study is a reappraisal based on secondary data. It re-evaluates the impact of China's fertility restrictions on prenatal sex selection and questions the assumed link between this policy and sex selection. Some observers typically associate the implementation of the one-child policy in 1979 with the rise in child sex ratios in the 1980s, arguing that the policy led to increased prenatal sex selection by encouraging sex selection through reduced fertility rates, which in turn exacerbated prenatal sex selection. However, Goodkind argues that there is no strong causal relationship between China's fertility restriction policies and prenatal sex selection. The observed sex ratio imbalance is mainly due to reporting anomalies, socio-economic conditions, and cultural preferences.

Goodkind (2015) found that the initial rise in child sex ratios in the 1980s was primarily due to parents concealing the births and existence of female infants and young girls because of fears of birth penalties, i.e., underreporting and misreporting, rather than an actual increase in prenatal sex selection. The 1990 census initially reported a higher sex ratio, often cited as evidence of rising sex ratios. However, later data showed that the child sex ratios in the late 1980s were lower than initially measured because parents had to disclose (and register) their daughters' existence when they reached school age. Additionally, analyses of multiple data sources (1982, 1990, 2000, and 2010 censuses) indicated that the increase in child sex ratios in the 1980s was minor (not exceeding 1 per 100). This small change contradicts claims that the one-child policy significantly exacerbated sex selection. Thus, the skewed sex ratios of the 1980s can be attributed to data errors caused by underreporting and misreporting of female births, rather than a substantial reduction in female births due to prenatal sex selection. Furthermore, Goodkind (2015) found that prenatal sex selection only became significant after 1990, coinciding with the increase in sex-identification technology, rather than the policy itself. Even in the 1990s, underreporting and misreporting of female births remained a significant issue. Hence, the policy itself was not the primary driver of sex ratio imbalances; the rise in sex-identification technology played a more critical role.

little effect. The analysis suggests that other factors (reporting anomalies, cultural preferences) are more influential than policy alone. In complicated analyses, the study argues that there is no strong causal relationship between China's fertility restriction policies and prenatal sex selection. The observed sex ratio imbalance is largely due to other factors such as reporting anomalies, socio-economic conditions, and cultural preferences. None, it only focuses on the main factor leading to China's gender ratio imbalance.



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from the  
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age is  
between  
20 and 40  
years, the  
birth  
cohort of  
children

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university  
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East  
China,  
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after  
1979. The  
study was  
published  
in 2018.  
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cohort of  
university  
students  
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2010.

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one-child  
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their  
reproduct  
ive years  
typically  
married  
between  
the ages  
of 20 and  
30, which  
means  
they were

Not  
clearly  
identify.  
the year  
range  
inferred  
from the  
content:  
after 1990-  
2000.  
Data were  
from the  
2000.  
Children  
in 2000  
could be  
under 10  
years old.  
So the  
birth  
cohort  
could  
between  
1990-  
2000



born  
in1979.

1978-  
1987

Not  
clearly  
identified.  
The year  
inferred  
from the  
content:  
1980-  
1983.

The study  
focuses  
on young-  
adult only-  
children in  
urban  
China  
aged 21-  
24 years  
in 2004.  
The birth  
cohort  
would  
therefore  
be from  
1980 to  
1983.

Not  
clearly  
identify.  
The year  
inferred  
from the  
content:  
late 1970s  
to Late-  
1980s.  
The study  
was  
conducted  
in 2000  
and  
focused  
on  
mothers  
under the  
family  
planning  
policy. In  
2000,  
these

Ine year  
inferred  
from the  
content:

1964 -  
1998

The study  
utilizes  
the latest  
Chinese  
Family  
Panel  
Studies  
data as of  
2018.

Since the  
analysis  
focuses  
on  
married  
women  
aged 20-  
54, the  
birth  
cohort  
would  
include  
women

Children's  
birth  
cohort : 1  
949-1970,  
1971-  
1978,  
1979-  
1988 (the  
only-  
children  
generatio  
n).  
According  
to  
Mother's  
Marriage  
cohorts:  
1952-70,  
1971-80,  
1981-90,  
and  
1991-200  
0.  
Mother's  
birth  
cohort  
could be  
1970s to

1940 -  
1980

Not  
clearly  
identify.  
the year  
inferred  
from the  
content:  
late 1990s  
Typically,  
college  
students  
range  
from 18  
to 22  
years old.  
Thus,  
assuming  
the  
majority  
of the  
students  
surveyed  
were  
within this  
age range  
in 2017,  
they  
would



1987 -  
1989.

Not  
clearly  
identify.  
the year  
inferred  
from the  
content:  
1991-  
1998.  
The birth  
cohort for  
the study  
participants  
consists  
of young  
women  
aged 18-  
25 who  
were  
interviewed  
before  
the end of  
China's  
one-child  
policy in  
2016. This  
means  
the

1975-  
1985.

Born in  
and  
before  
1950s-  
1990s

Not  
clearly  
identify.  
the year  
inferred  
from the  
content:  
under  
China's  
one-child  
policy

Not  
clearly  
identified.

The year  
inferred  
from the  
content:

1991-  
1996.

The birth  
cohort for  
the  
daughters  
in the  
study  
conducted in  
Shanghai  
during  
2008-  
2009  
includes  
girls aged  
13 to 17  
years old  
at the  
time of  
data

Not  
clearly  
identify.  
It  
includes:  
from early  
1980s

Not  
clearly  
identify.  
The year  
inferred  
from the  
content:  
1960s and  
1970s  
In China,  
the  
mandatory  
use of  
IUDs  
(intrauterine  
devices)  
was most  
prominent  
during  
the early  
years of  
the family  
planning  
policy,  
particularly  
between



1979s-  
2010s.  
The study  
reviews  
data and  
trends  
from the  
early  
1970s  
through  
to the  
2010s