

05.09-Family planning in China

Family planning in China

Two little, too late

China has replaced its “one-child policy” with a two-child one. It should stop **dictating** family size altogether

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Vocab

1. **dictate** v. 命令;发号施令;强行规定 If someone **dictates to** someone else, they tell them what they should do or can do.

e.g. He had warned the West against trying to **dictate** to the Soviet Union...他警告西方国家不要试图对苏联发号施令。

FOR more than 35 years, the Chinese Communist Party has governed the world's most-**populous** nation by means of a **thinly disguised** threat: the country could become rich only if most couples limited themselves to having no more than one child. If they disobeyed, women were forced to **undergo abortions**; parents were subject to fines equivalent to several years' income and sometimes dismissed from their jobs; in the countryside, the homes of poor **peasants** who could not afford the **penalties** were occasionally stripped of anything of value and then knocked down. The “one-child policy”, as the **benighted** approach to the country's development was known, became **synonymous** with some of the most **brutal** aspects of the party's rule. The **bitter** irony is that China's problem today is too few babies, not too many.

Vocab

1. **populous** adj. where a large number of people live 人口众多的;人口密集的

e.g. one of America's most populous states 美国的人口大州之一

2. **thinly** adv. in a way that is not sincere or enthusiastic 冷淡;冷漠

e.g. She smiled thinly. 她淡然一笑。

3. **disguise** v. ~ **sb (as sb/ sth)** to change your appearance so that people cannot recognize you 假扮;装扮;伪装

e.g. She **disguised herself as** a boy.她女扮男装。

4. **undergo** v. to experience sth, especially a change or sth unpleasant 经历, 经受 (变化、不快的事等)

e.g. to **undergo tests/ trials/ repairs** 经受考验;接受检修

5. **abortion** n. 人工流产; 堕胎 If a woman has an **abortion**, she ends her pregnancy deliberately so that the baby is not born alive.

e.g. His girlfriend had an **abortion**.他的女朋友做了流产。

6. **peasant** n. 农民 A **peasant** is a poor person of low social status who works on the land; used of people who live in countries where farming is still a common way of life.

e.g. Chinese **peasants** farm their own plots.中国农民在他们自己的土地上耕作。

7. **penalty** n. ~ (for sth) a punishment for breaking a law, rule or contract 惩罚;处罚;刑

罚

e.g. Assault **carries a maximum penalty** of seven years' imprisonment. 侵犯人身罪可判处最高七年的监禁。

8. **benighted** adj. 不幸的；蒙昧的；无知的 If you describe people or the place where they live as **benighted**, you think they are unfortunate or do not know anything.

e.g. Famine hit that **benighted** country once more. 饥荒再次席卷了那个蒙昧的国家。

9. **synonymous** adj. ~ (with sth) so closely connected with sth that the two things appear to be the same 等同于...的

e.g. Wealth is not necessarily synonymous with happiness. 财富未必等同于幸福。

10. **brutal** adj. violent and cruel 残暴的；兽性的

e.g. a brutal attack/ murder/ rape/ killing 野蛮的攻击/谋杀/强奸/杀害

11. **bitter** adj. 激烈的；猛烈的；充满敌意的 In a **bitter** argument or conflict, people argue very angrily or fight very fiercely.

e.g. ...the scene of **bitter** fighting during the Second World War. 第二次世界大战期间激烈的战斗场面

On October 29th the party **belatedly** decided to switch to a two-child policy. It had already been allowing this for some couples—for example, if one of the parents was an only child. Easing up a bit more, it reasoned, would help slow the country's rapid ageing. More children would (eventually) mean more people to look after the elderly—a looming problem in a country with only a **rudimentary** welfare system. Once again, however, the party has miscalculated.

Vocab

1. **belated** adj. 迟来的；延误的；姗姗来迟的 A **belated** action happens later than it should have done.

e.g. ...the government's **belated** attempts to alleviate the plight of the poor. 政府一再拖延的扶贫举措

2. **rudimentary** adj. dealing with only the most basic matters or ideas 基础的；基本的

e.g. They were given only rudimentary training in the job. 他们仅仅受到过基本的职业训练。

3. **miscalculate** v. to judge a situation wrongly (对形势) 判断错误

e.g. She miscalculated the level of opposition to her proposals. 她没想到她的建议会受到这样强烈的反对。

Sentence

Once again, however, the party has miscalculated.

这里要突出的是 once again, 所以把 however 放到了句中

In 1979, when it introduced the one-child policy, it believed that **coercion** was the only way to ensure that population growth did not become unsustainable. The party has since claimed that the policy has helped prevent 400m births.

Vocab

1. **coercion** n. 强迫；胁迫；逼迫 **Coercion** is the act or process of persuading someone forcefully to do something that they do not want to do.

e.g. It was vital that the elections should be free of **coercion** or intimidation. 选举中不应有强迫或恐吓行为，这一点至关重要。

In fact, there is little evidence to back this claim. China's birth rate had been falling rapidly since the early 1970s with the help of little more than education campaigns. The birth rate continued to fall under the new policy, but other countries have seen similar declines without resorting to **cruelty** and **oppression**. Their experience suggests that the more important factors behind China's lower birth rate were rising female participation in the workforce, improvements in education, later marriages and the rapidly increasing cost of education and housing. The main effect of the one-child policy was to **foster egregious** human-rights abuses against the minority who ignored it.

Vocab

1. **cruelty** n. ~ (to sb/ sth) behaviour that causes pain or suffering to others, especially deliberately (尤指蓄意的) 残酷, 残忍, 残暴
e.g. cruelty to animals 对动物的虐待
2. **oppression** n. 压迫; 压制 **Oppression** is the cruel or unfair treatment of a group of people.
e.g. ...an attempt to escape political **oppression**. 企图逃避政治压迫的努力
3. **foster** v. 促进; 鼓励; 培养 To **foster** something such as an activity or idea means to help it to develop.
e.g. Its cash crisis has been **fostered** by declining property values. 地产贬值引发了现金危机。
4. **egregious** adj. 极坏的; 极差的; 极其恶劣的 **Egregious** means very bad indeed.
e.g. ...the most **egregious** abuses of human rights. 对人权的严重践踏

Sentence

Their experience suggests that the more important factors behind China's lower birth rate were rising female participation in the workforce, improvements in education, later marriages and the rapidly increasing cost of education and housing.

主干: Their experience suggests

从句的主语很长 the more important factors behind China's lower birth rate 但是前面都是修饰, 其实主干就是 birth rate were rising...

rising female 后面三个修饰 participation in the workforce, improvements in education, later marriages and the rapidly increasing cost of education and housing

最后一个其实指代了两个 and the rapidly increasing cost of education and housing 迅速提升的教育和住房成本。

By that measure, the new policy is also misguided. Some couples may feel encouraged to have two children, but it is unlikely that the overall birth rate—now well below the level needed to keep the population from falling—will climb by much (see article). This is clear from the **lukewarm** response to previous changes allowing couples to have two children in certain circumstances. A generation has grown up **indoctrinated** in the belief that China has “too many people”. Except for the very rich, most prefer to use their family's resources (increasingly stretched by the demands of the elderly) to give one child the best opportunities.

Vocab

1. **lukewarm** n. ~ (about sb/ sth) not interested or enthusiastic 无兴趣的; 不热情的
e.g. She was lukewarm about the plan. 她对这个计划不大感兴趣。
2. **indoctrinate** v. to force sb to accept a particular belief or set of beliefs and not allow them to consider any others 强行灌输 (信仰或学说)
e.g. They had been indoctrinated from an early age with their parents' beliefs. 他们从小

就被满脑子灌入了他们父母的信仰。

A bitter pill

Bizarrely, the party still believes that **coercion** remains necessary. Those who have had two children in **violation** of the previous policy will still have to **pay off** their fines. It is likely that those who have three children will be punished. There is no evidence that lifting these controls would result in a **crippling** population surge. So the party's insistence on maintaining them appears mostly a way of demonstrating power and saving face—as well as the jobs of the 1m-strong army of family-planning officials, who thrive on issuing fines.

Vocab

1. **Bizarrely** *adv.* in a very strange or unusual manner 怪诞地, 异乎寻常地
2. **coercion** *n.* 强迫; 胁迫; 逼迫 **Coercion** is the act or process of persuading someone forcefully to do something that they do not want to do.
e.g. It was vital that the elections should be free of **coercion** or intimidation. 选举中不应有强迫或恐吓行为, 这一点至关重要。
3. **violation** *n.* **mass noun** the action of violating someone or something 违反, 违背; 侵犯; 褻渎; 强奸
e.g. the aircraft were in **violation** of UN resolutions. 那些飞机违反了联合国决议。
4. **pay off** **PHRASAL VERB** 短语动词 偿清, 还清 (债务) If you **pay off** a debt, you give someone all the money that you owe them.
e.g. It would take him the rest of his life to **pay off** that loan. 他得用余生来还清那笔贷款。
5. **crippling** *adj.* 有严重危害的 If you say that an action, policy, or situation has a **crippling** effect on something, you mean it has a very serious, harmful effect.
e.g. The high cost of capital has a **crippling** effect on many small American high-tech firms... 高昂的资金成本严重影响了美国的很多小型高科技公司。

The party would struggle to admit that the world's biggest attempt at **demographic** engineering has failed. But that is what it must do by lifting the remaining restrictions. Not **for the sake of** boosting the birth rate—it may well be too late for that. Rather because, after forcing so many Chinese to suffer to such little effect, a **disastrous** policy deserves to be **abolished**.

Vocab

1. **demographic** *adj.* 人口 (学) 的; 人口统计 (学) 的 **Demographic** means relating to or concerning demography.
2. **for the sake of** **for the sake of sb/ sth** | **for sb's/ sth's sake** in order to help sb/ sth or because you like sb/ sth 为了某人 (或某事) 起见; 因某人 (或某事) 的缘故
e.g. They stayed together for the sake of the children. 为了孩子, 他们还待在一起。
3. **disastrous** *adj.* very bad, harmful or unsuccessful 极糟糕的; 灾难性的; 完全失败的
e.g. a disastrous harvest/ fire/ result 严重歉收/ 火灾; 灾难性的结果
4. **abolish** *v.* to officially end a law, a system or an institution 废除, 废止 (法律、制度、习俗等)
e.g. This tax should be abolished. 这种税应该取消。

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Family planning in China

Two little, too late

中国的计划生育：二胎政策，为时已晚

China has replaced its “one-child policy” with a two-child one. It should stop dictating family size altogether.

在中国“独生子女政策”已被“二孩政策”所取代，这意味着总体上不再限定家庭人口规模。

For more than 35 years, the Chinese Communist Party has governed the world's most-populous nation by means of a thinly disguised threat: the country could become rich only if most couples limited themselves to having no more than one child. If they disobeyed, women were forced to undergo abortions; parents were subject to fines equivalent to several years' income and sometimes dismissed from their jobs; in the countryside, the homes of poor peasants who could not afford the penalties were occasionally stripped of anything of value and then knocked down. The “one-child policy”, as the benighted approach to the country's development was known, became synonymous with some of the most brutal aspects of the party's rule. The bitter irony is that China's problem today is too few babies, not too many.

在超过三十五年的时间里，中共采用变相威胁的方式，统治着世界上人口最多的国家：只有绝大多数夫妇自我约束，只生一个孩子，国家才能富强。如果有人不遵守，妇女就会被强行堕胎；夫妇俩会受到罚款，罚款数额相当于这个家庭若干年的收入，有时甚至会被所在工作单位开除；在农村地区，如果贫困的农民无法支付罚款，有时会被没收所有值钱物品，然后房子被拆毁。“独生子女政策”被视为中国发展过程中的一项愚昧之举，它已经成了中共无情统治的代名词。更讽刺的是，中国现在面临的难题却是小孩太少而不是太多。

On October 29th the party belatedly decided to switch to a two-child policy. It had already been allowing this for some couples—for example, if one of the parents was an only child. Easing up a bit more, it reasoned, would help slow the country's rapid ageing. More children would (eventually) mean more people to look after the elderly—a looming problem in a country with only a rudimentary welfare system. Once again, however, the party has miscalculated.

十月二十九日，中国政府终于决定转变为二胎政策。比如之前的政策，只要夫妻双方有一方是独生子女，就允许生育二胎。他们推断，在合理的范围内放宽政策，就有助于中国放缓人口迅速老龄化的脚步。这将（最终）意味着有更多的孩子去照顾老人，因为中国的福利体系还不成熟，人口老龄化是个迫在眉睫的难题。然而，政府再一次估计失误。

In 1979, when it introduced the one-child policy, it believed that coercion was the only way to ensure that population growth did not become unsustainable. The party has since claimed that the policy has helped prevent 400m births.

中国于1979年出台独生子女政策时，认为强制实行是确保人口良性增长的唯一出路。一直以来该政党都宣称，独生子女政策减少了4亿人口的出生。

In fact, there is little evidence to back this claim. China's birth rate had been falling rapidly since the early 1970s with the help of little more than education campaigns. The birth rate continued to fall under the new policy, but other countries have seen similar declines without resorting to cruelty and oppression. Their experience suggests that the more

important factors behind China's lower birth rate were rising female participation in the workforce, improvements in education, later marriages and the rapidly increasing cost of education and housing. The main effect of the one-child policy was to foster egregious human-rights abuses against the minority who ignored it.

事实上，几乎没有证据能支持这一说法。二十世纪七十年代初至今，在仅仅通过教育推广活动的助力下，中国人口出生率急剧下降。新政策实施后，出生率继续下降，其他国家的出生率虽然也有类似的下降，但是他们并不是依靠暴行和压迫。他们的经验表明，提高女性的职场参与度、改善教育、提倡晚婚、迅速提升教育和住房成本，这些都是隐藏在中国出生率下降背后的重要因素。受独生子女政策影响最大的是那些少数不遵守此政策的人，使得他们的人权受到了严重的侵犯。

By that measure, the new policy is also misguided. Some couples may feel encouraged to have two children, but it is unlikely that the overall birth rate—now well below the level needed to keep the population from falling—will climb by much. This is clear from the lukewarm response to previous changes allowing couples to have two children in certain circumstances. A generation has grown up indoctrinated in the belief that China has “too many people”. Except for the very rich, most prefer to use their family's resources (increasingly stretched by the demands of the elderly) to give one child the best opportunities.

从这一点，新政策也是一种误导。有些夫妇或许会受鼓舞而生两个孩子，但整体的出生率不会大幅上升，因为目前的出生率还远低于防止人口下降所需的水平。这一点，看看之前就知道了，先前国家允许特定条件下的夫妻生二胎，但人们对此却反响不强。这一代人是被灌输着中国“人太多”这一观念长大的。除了那些有钱人，大多数普通人更愿意把家庭资源（因为老年人的需求而不断被削减）投入到一个孩子身上，给孩子创造最好的机会。

Bizarrely, the party still believes that coercion remains necessary. Those who have had two children in violation of the previous policy will still have to pay off their fines. It is likely that those who have three children will be punished. There is no evidence that lifting these controls would result in a crippling population surge. So the party's insistence on maintaining them appears mostly a way of demonstrating power and saving face—as well as the jobs of the 1m-strong army of family-planning officials, who thrive on issuing fines. 令人诧异的是，中国政府仍然认为强制手段是必要的。那些生育二胎的夫妇，由于违反了先前的政策，仍需付清罚款。而生育三个孩子的夫妇很有可能面临处罚。没有证据显示，如果取消这些限制就会带来人口毁灭性的激增。所以，中国政府坚持维护计划生育政策，似乎多是为了展示权力和保全面子，并保住那100万负责计划生育的官员们的饭碗，因为他们依靠罚款赚钱。

The party would struggle to admit that the world's biggest attempt at demographic engineering has failed. But that is what it must do by lifting the remaining restrictions. Not for the sake of boosting the birth rate—it may well be too late for that. Rather because, after forcing so many Chinese to suffer to such little effect, a disastrous policy deserves to be abolished.

中国不会承认世界上最大的人口统计工程的尝试是失败的。但要取消遗留的限制就必须承认这点。这并不是为了增加出生率，因为这很可能为时已晚。真正的原因在于，强制了这么多中国人受苦受难，最终却效果甚微，如此灾难性的政策就应该被废除。