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From Vinegar and Cotton Balls to Diaphragms and Vasectomies: Birth Control in Twentieth-Century China

DISSERTATION

submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in History

by

Sarah Mellors

Dissertation Committee:
Professor Jeffrey Wasserstrom, Co-Chair
Associate Professor Emily Baum, Co-Chair
Associate Professor Kavita Philip

2018

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DEDICATION

To

my family, friends, and interviewees.

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

From Vinegar and Cotton Balls to Diaphragms and Vasectomies:
Birth Control in Twentieth-Century China

By

Sarah Mellors

Doctor of History

University of California, Irvine, 2018

Professor Jeffrey Wasserstrom, Chair

Since its enactment in 1979, the One Child Policy—which in theory limited Chinese couples to one child each—has made global headlines and been the focus of publications in a wide array of fields from public health to political science. Nevertheless, the majority of these works privilege the perspective of the state. Such accounts give little consideration to the decades leading up to the policy's implementation and reaffirm the monolithic official narrative that radical state intervention was critical for reducing population growth and enabling rapid economic development.

This dissertation seeks to emphasize the part played by individuals in shaping their own reproductive futures, granting users of birth control agency in a scholarly discourse dominated by top-down policies. Drawing on both archival and oral history, I examine birth control and abortion practices in the *longue durée*, beginning with the consolidation of Nationalist Party rule (1927-1949) and ending with the 2015 implementation of the Two Child Policy, which allows for two children per couple. In particular, I focus on the 50-year period preceding the enactment

of the One Child Policy, drawing on the lived experience of birth control and abortion practices in three cities to complicate and challenge official narratives.

My findings reveal that birth control and abortion had been utilized in urban China from at least as early as the Republican period (1912-1949), and that throughout the twentieth century, contraceptive practices differed according to class, location, gender, and other markers of identity. Furthermore, despite the introduction of an elaborate matrix of mechanisms to deepen state control over reproduction both before and during the One Child Policy era, this process was fraught with obstacles and inconsistencies. The result was that individual and familial considerations continued to shape reproductive decisions even amidst intensifying family planning campaigns. Contributing to interdisciplinary studies of medicine, the history of reproduction in China, and gender and sexuality studies, I highlight the coexistence and syncretism of traditional, Western, and folk contraceptive methods, reliance on abortion as a primary form of contraception, and the endurance of gendered reproductive responsibilities.

INTRODUCTION

China's One Child Policy—the national family planning mandate implemented in 1979 that limited couples to one child each—is one of the first and most controversial topics that arises in conversations about modern China.[1] While the official state narrative argues that the policy prevented 400 million births and contributed to the Chinese "economic miracle," demographers have argued that the policy was gratuitous. Rather, they suggest, declining birth rates naturally accompany socioeconomic development, a condition contingent upon economic reform rather than reproductive policing.

When I began teaching English at a suburban middle school in Guangdong province in 2009, I had heard about the policy's harsh enforcement and that transgressors were sometimes forced to undergo abortion and sterilization surgeries. To my surprise, I had a number of students in my classes with as many as eight siblings. At school, my pupils often teased each other, joking that one student had cost his parents an additional 1000 *yuan* in fees or that another had managed to evade the policy altogether. Fast forward to 2011. I was teaching English and History at Nanjing University of Aeronautics and Astronautics in Jiangsu province, where I was asked to teach a compulsory class for university faculty and administrators. As I grew closer to my adult students, they invited me to their homes and confided in me about their personal lives. Like their parents decades earlier, some students admitted that they had known very little about sexual hygiene or birth control when they were married in the 1980s and 1990s. Many of my students, then in their 40s and 50s, had undergone multiple abortions in accordance with the One Child Policy, the violation of which could lead to heavy fines or even expulsion from the university.

[1] The One Child Policy is a widely used term, employed here for convenience, even though there have always been stipulations within it for some couples to have an additional offspring.

It was this series of events, which revealed the vast degree of variation in policy enforcement and the enduring gaps in sex education and birth control use, that piqued my interest in studying the history of contraception. I wondered how these contemporary stories fit into the longer narrative of birth control use in China. To what extent did individuals and the state endorse family limitation measures before the One Child Policy's implementation? What roles did location, occupation, education level, and gender play in determining contraceptive practices prior to the One Child Policy?[2] How did birth control practices shift or remain constant throughout the twentieth century, from the Republican period (1912-1949) to the era of Mao Zedong's rule (1949-1976) to the Reform era (1978-present)?

The Scholarly Landscape

Since the enactment of the One Child Policy in 1979, myriad academic studies and journalistic accounts have examined the policy's execution and its consequences. These publications range from news articles reporting the "horrors" of forced sterilization and abortion to demographic studies praising the efficiency with which the Chinese government lowered the country's birth rate. What the vast majority of work on birth control and family planning in modern China shares is a narrow focus on the One Child Policy with little attention to historical antecedents. In addition, even the most comprehensive works seeking to situate the policy historically and politically approach this topic almost exclusively through the analysis of policy documents, as though the only narrative of value is the official one.

Governing China's Population: From Leninist to Neoliberal Biopolitics, a seminal work on population planning in China, argues that population issues are central to post-Mao politics

[2] The terms "contraception" and "birth control" are used interchangeably throughout this dissertation.

and power.[3] Examining the evolution of the birth control policy in late twentieth and early twenty-first century China through a Foucauldian lens, anthropologist Susan Greenhalgh and political scientist Edwin Winckler argue that population planning in the Mao era (1949-1976) was “soft,” tentative, and largely grounded in Stalinist and Leninist notions of central planning, technocratic bureaucracy, and strategic borrowing from Western science. Specific efforts to limit population growth were intermittent. During the post-Mao Deng Xiaoping era (1978-1992), the population became a major governmental and political preoccupation. With the introduction of the One Child Policy in 1979, limiting population growth became a national imperative, one that was enforced through bureaucratic means.

In *China’s Longest Campaign: Birth Planning in the People’s Republic, 1949-2005,* political scientist Tyrene White locates the historical roots of the One Child Policy in earlier PRC birth planning policies. She argues that the new limits on birth control enacted in 1979, though apparently drastic, only represented an “incremental tightening of a birth limitation program that had been in place for some time.”[4] In other words, the One Child Policy did not spark widespread resistance, particularly among rural residents, because population-limiting measures had been in place to varying degrees for decades. The birth control campaign followed much the same course as earlier Maoist campaigns, employing propaganda, disseminating campaign targets, and denouncing transgressors.

None of these important works, however, investigates the lived experience of using birth control, something that historian Gail Hershatter has done in one of the only works concentrating on the period before the late 1970s. Taking an oral history approach to women's experiences in

[3] Susan Greenhalgh and Edwin A. Winckler, *Governing China's Population: From Leninist to Neoliberal Biopolitics* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005), 4.
[4] Tyrene White, *China’s Longest Campaign: Birth Planning in the People’s Republic, 1949-2005* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006), 5.

rural China, she conducted interviews with 72 rural women in Shaanxi asking how they experienced the early Mao years. She finds that women's personal experiences diverged widely from official narratives of women's liberation under socialism. Yet, her treatment of birth control is brief, and because she only interviewed women from a small corner of China, one wonders if her findings are merely representative of local reproductive patterns or if they have broader implications for other parts of the country.[5]

Moving Beyond the One Child Policy

Building on the findings and methodology of Hershatter, I seek to emphasize the part played by individuals in shaping their own reproductive futures, granting users of birth control agency in a scholarly discourse dominated by top-down policies. Furthermore, I aim to historically situate contemporary contraceptive trends, attitudes toward sex and reproduction, and cultural meanings associated with birth control, an exercise that sheds light on the co-constitution of state and society, medicine and culture, and individual and collective decision-making. This dissertation, then, examines birth control and abortion practices in the *longue durée*, beginning with the consolidation of Nationalist Party rule (1927-1949) and ending in the present, three years after the implementation of the Two Child Policy, which limits Chinese couples to two children each. In particular, I focus on the 50-year period preceding the enactment of the One Child Policy, drawing on the lived experience of birth control and abortion practices to complicate and challenge official state narratives on fertility in China.

Since state fertility policies differed for rural and urban areas, I focus on three Chinese cities of varying sizes with vastly different levels of economic development—Shanghai, Tianjin,

[5] Gail Hershatter, *The Gender of Memory: Rural Women and China's Collective Past* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), 176.

and Luoyang—as well as other locations in China. Comparing research sites spread across a large portion of eastern and central China allows me to uncover regional and local differences in access to birth control. The heightened restrictions on archival access since 2015, when I began investigating this topic in China, made choosing research sites as much about intellectual merit as feasibility. I settled on these three cities in part because they all had rather extensive post-1949 state archives with a greater degree of openness than I had experienced elsewhere. A friend's introduction to the head archivist at the Luoyang Municipal Archive proved critical in enabling me to obtain exclusive access to local materials, most of which had never received scholarly attention.

Primary Sources

My research draws on a number of different types of sources and methodologies. As a historian, I conducted traditional archival research at more than ten university, municipal, provincial, and private archives in eastern and central China. Due to the increasingly limited access to materials in state archives, in many ways I was forced to cobble together incomplete and fragmented materials, including county, municipal, provincial, and national birth planning reports, condom and oral contraceptive production records, legal accounts, and internal reference (*neibu cankao*) documents. I also drew on articles in regional newspapers and women's magazines. I reviewed dozens of guides to sexual health and medical texts available through the Shanghai Library and the National Library of China, as well as local used book markets and book stores.

I supplemented my textual research with oral histories to contextualize official documents and fill in the blanks in fragmented local narratives. I interviewed more than 50 men and women

who came of age after 1949 individually, in couples, and in groups. When I mention this to anyone inside or outside of academia, the first question raised is always about how I gained access to interviewees. Finding elderly individuals willing to share some of the most personal acts of their lives with me was a challenge but a rewarding one. The vast majority of my interviewees were people I met in public spaces. Every morning just as the sun came up and in the evening before the sun went down, I would visit a local park where dozens of elderly people would be practicing tai chi, playing the board game called *weiqi*, dancing, or simply sitting and gossiping. I would sit in the park day after day until regulars had come to recognize me. I ballroom danced, I joined a senior citizens' group, I took belly dancing classes, and I chatted with people everywhere I went. I found that if I was able to strike up a conversation with one older person, other individuals—either bored or intrigued—would want to talk to me. As I became closer to these elderly people, they would ask me about my research and introduce me to their friends and family. While some laughed at the strange and taboo nature of my research, others were more than happy to tell me about their experiences with birth control, sex education, and even sterilization. I observed that it was easiest to talk about these subjects in single sex groups, as no one felt comfortable talking about sex in co-ed environments. The only time I conducted interviews with a man and a woman was if the two were married and comfortable discussing their shared history. As I became more accustomed to conducting interviews, I started bringing props with me, usually sex guides from the 1950s. Anyone who had previously dismissed me was now eager to talk to me about my stash, either to ask me where I had gotten such materials or to tell me that I had odd hobbies.

Although I am not an anthropologist, the realities of privileged positionality are not lost on me. As a straight white woman then in her late 20s, though I am often told I appear younger, I

likely seemed non-threatening and possibly even endearing. Some interviewees even tried to set me up with their single—or married—adult children. All of this made for many hilarious and eye-opening interactions. I am convinced that conducting oral histories would have been much more challenging had my outward appearance—with respect to age, skin color, gender, sexual orientation, or even body type—been different.

Nevertheless, I also encountered a number of obstacles during my research. At times, I struggled to understand my interviewees, either because they did not speak Mandarin or because they were so elderly that they had lost all of their teeth, making it difficult to enunciate. In such cases, other park visitors would help mediate the conversation and translate. I was also fortunate to interview the parents of friends, who helped convey the nature of my research to their parents so it would seem less alien. The limits of memory, particularly among the elderly, also posed significant challenges. While remaining cognizant of the ways in which contemporary politics shape recollections of the past, I tried to encourage my interviewees to move backward through time from the present to the 1980s to the 1970s and so on. Bringing sex guides and objects from earlier periods helped trigger memories in interviewees. To partially validate my interviews, I compared them with each other and cross checked them with archival materials to get a more complete picture. Sometimes if I had a question after the interview, I would call or message the interviewees on WeChat, a popular Chinese messaging service. For the purposes of confidentiality, in this dissertation pseudonyms are used in place of interviewees' real names.

Secondary Literature

This study, located at the nexus of several fields and disciplines—the history of birth control in China, the history of medicine, and gender and sexuality studies—engages with a

growing body of research seeking to reconcile social scientific perspectives on demography with gender analysis and culturally sensitive understandings of medicine.

History of Reproduction and Birth Control

Francesca Bray has shown that belief in preserving one's health and independence by avoiding pregnancy is hardly a new idea. She argues that, in imperial times, some women avoided intercourse with their husbands or used abortifacients to put off pregnancy as long as possible because giving birth could mean a loss of the woman's autonomy and a break with her natal family. The ability to postpone pregnancy also had a class dimension; in elite, polygynous households, wives had a higher status than concubines or female maids. Elite wives also had access to a greater array of medicines, such as abortifacients. Bray argues that in imperial China, the act of raising a child was more significant than physically giving birth to one, and therefore wives were content with mothering the biological children of their husbands' concubines and female servants.[6]

Scholars in sociology, history, and anthropology have built on and pushed back against Bray's claims. According to anthropologist Arthur Wolf and historian Theo Engelen, "The received view of Chinese fertility is that most couples made no effort to control their fertility because they wanted as many sons as possible."[7] Demographers James Z. Lee and Wang Feng have argued that unlike the West, China did not experience a Malthusian population crisis nor did it struggle to undergo a modern demographic transition. Lee and Wang attribute China's unique demographic behavior to several factors: polygyny and a severe gender imbalance (caused by excess female infant and child mortality) left millions of men unmarried, low fertility

[6] Bray, *Technology and Gender,* 323.
[7] Arthur P. Wolf and Theo Engelen, "Fertility and Fertility Control in Pre-Revolutionary China," *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 38, no. 3 (2008): 362.

within marriage (even though marriage rates were high), and high rates of adoption.[8] Furthermore, they argue that the practices of late starting, early stopping, and long birth intervals, as well as the use of abortion, kept China's fertility low.[9] Historian Matthew Sommer rebuts the claims of Lee, Wang, and Bray that abortion was widely practiced in imperial china, arguing instead that traditional abortifacients were hardly a viable option for the average woman. Such herbal abortifacients, Sommer claims, were unreliable, dangerous, expensive, and difficult to use. Therefore, they were neither mechanisms for female empowerment nor effective tools of family planning. Sommer further contends that abortifacients were an emergency response to either a medical crisis, such as a pregnancy that was dangerous to a woman's health, or to a social crisis, like an extramarital affair that resulted in pregnancy.[10]

Wolf affirms a number of the arguments made by Lee and Wang—namely, that China's fertility rate was low to moderate and that Chinese couples limited the size of their families through a combination of infanticide, adoption, and longer birth spacing (due in part to breastfeeding). However, rather than attributing low fertility to either sexual self-control or birth control technologies, Wolf disputes the three factors Lee and Wang argue account for low fertility: late starting, early stopping, and wider birth spacing. Instead, Wolf ascribes late starting to early marriage, late onset of menstruation (due to hunger and privation), and high miscarriage rates among underdeveloped mothers. In addition, he argues that "early stopping" was either a product of early marriage among Chinese (couples have sex less frequently after they have been married a long time) or extreme poverty and poor health with age (which meant that couples had children earlier). Finally, Wolf argues that poor health and nutrition, heavy labor, and spousal

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[8] James Z. Lee and Wang Feng, *One Quarter of Humanity: Malthusian Mythology and Chinese Realities, 1700-2000* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), 7-8.

[9] Ibid., 11.

[10] Matthew H. Sommer, "Abortion in Late Imperial China: Routine Birth Control or Crisis Intervention?" *Late Imperial China* 31.2 (2010): 99.

separation resulting from poverty contributed to longer birth spacing.[11] While my research does not specifically contribute to this debate because I examine a later time period, other scholars' findings on attitudes and practices associated with birth control and abortion in imperial China inform my arguments. The question of whether couples actively practiced "early stopping" as a means to limit family size, for example, is relevant to my research, in that such practices endured throughout the Mao period in the form of marital abstinence.[12]

Traditional Medicine vs. Western Medicine in History and Anthropology

As Ruth Rogaski and others have shown, in the late nineteenth century Western medicine came to be seen as a panacea for China's problems—domestic weakness and corruption, foreign imperialism, and disintegrating faith among elites in the traditional Confucian cosmology.[13] Chinese medicine, conversely, became synonymous with backwardness and emblematic of national weakness. From 1928 to 1929, reformers who viewed Chinese and Western medicine as adversarial and incommensurable sought to terminate traditional medicine altogether, but traditional medicine ultimately endured as a state sanctioned medical system. Ralph Croizier accounts for this phenomenon in the 1968 classic *Traditional Medicine in Modern China*, which posits that Chinese medicine only survived its encounter with biomedicine because conservative elites embraced it as a critical part of China's cultural legacy.[14] In so doing, Croizier reinforces the binary between Western and Chinese medicine.

Bruno Latour's arguments in *We Have Never Been Modern* about the hybridity of nature and society and the unrealizable nature of modernity have proven critical in destabilizing the

[11] Arthur P. Wolf, "Is There Evidence of Birth Control in Late-Imperial China?" *Population and Development Review* 27.1 (2001): 140-142.
[12] Interview with author, Tianjin, February 14, 2017.
[13] Ruth Rogaski, *Hygienic Modernity: Meanings of Health and Disease in Treaty-Port China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 2-3.
[14] Ralph Croizier, *Traditional Medicine in Modern China: Science, Nationalism, and the Tensions of Culture* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968), 106.

perceived epistemological tension between traditional medicine and biomedicine apparent in Croizier's work. For Latour, modernity corresponds to two distinct but often conflated meanings, and recognizing this tension enables us to admit that we are not wholly modern and never were.[15] In explaining hybridity, he argues that nothing is purely social/cultural or purely natural.[16] In line with Latour, Bridie Andrews argues that the categories "traditional," "modern," "Chinese," and "Western," are not mutually exclusive—no type of medicine falls is strictly "modern" or "Western."[17] Indeed, Andrews demonstrates that what constituted Western and Chinese medicine changed dramatically in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Until the early twentieth century, "Chinese medicine" consisted of a diverse array of beliefs and practices from yin/yang theory, folk medicine, and magic. Chinese medicine only became a distinct and cohesive category when Chinese doctors were forced to define their field to distinguish it from the medicine of the West. Part of this process involved reconfiguring and adapting Chinese medicine to position it as both essential to China's cultural heritage and an empirically legitimate medical system.

Sean Hsiang-lin Lei resituates the confrontation between Chinese medicine and biomedicine as a tension between Chinese medicine and the modernizing state.[18] Lei elaborates that the fate of Chinese medicine was largely shaped by political competition between Chinese practitioners of biomedicine and those of traditional medicine, both seeking state validation. Lei proposes that rather than being in opposition to biomedicine and the state, traditional medicine "coevolved" with biomedicine in a demonstration of hybridity.

With these important debates in the historiography of Chinese medicine in mind, I employ the term "traditional Chinese medicine" when referring to traditional medicine in the

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[15] Bruno Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern,* trans. Catherine Porter (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), 11.
[16] Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*, 40.
[17] Bridie Andrews, *The Making of Modern Chinese Medicine, 1850-1960* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2014), 11.
[18] Sean Hsiang-lin Lei, *Neither Donkey Nor Horse: Medicine in the Struggle over China's Modernity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014), 5.

Republican period and "Traditional Chinese Medicine" or TCM when referring to the codified and reconfigured version of traditional medicine post-1949. During the Mao era, the symbolic significance of traditional medicine and its ability to withstand empirical scrutiny repeatedly come to the fore in Communist Party efforts to promote or discredit traditional contraceptives and abortion techniques.

Relatedly, the field of Medical Anthropology has contributed an additional dimension to our understanding of different medical systems, revealing that in fact culture and sociopolitical context play key roles in determining how illness is understood and medicine is practiced. Arthur Kleinman argues that positivist bifurcation of Western biomedicine and other forms of healing neglects the fact that individual explanations of and responses to illness are culturally contingent. Kleinman draws on the concept of Explanatory Models, the factors that shape understandings of and responses to sickness, health, and treatment.[19] According to Kleinman, clinical studies reveal that patients and their families tend to respond better, both physically and emotionally, to explanations of illness that resonate with their own beliefs and explanatory systems. Because individual explanatory models often combine elements of biomedicine, popular culture, and folk healing, one cannot easily distinguish between these overlapping systems of thought. In addition, he finds that folk religion, Daoism, Buddhism, TCM, and Western biomedicine are frequently used in conjunction in Taiwan and among residents in American Chinatowns. Patients do not see these different forms of healing or belief systems as competing. The relationship between medicine and cultural context, as well as the porousness of categories like Chinese and Western medicine, are useful for understanding Chinese reproductive and contraceptive practices in the twentieth century.

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[19] Arthur Kleinman, *Patients and Healers in the Context of Culture: An Exploration of the Borderland Between Anthropology, Medicine, and Psychiatry* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), 25.

Gender and Sexuality Studies

In recent decades, historians of China have made leaps and bounds in the study of gender and sexuality, particularly with respect to the analysis of women in late imperial, Republican, and even Communist China. To review all of these works would take an entire book in itself, so here I briefly mention several works that have influenced my line of thinking. Frank Dikotter argues that in the early Republican period, Western sexual discourses merged with centuries-old Chinese views about sex producing "a plurality of intertwined modernities" that merged Western science and biological categories with Chinese medical discourses and gendered meanings.[20] Harriet Evans builds on Dikotter's work in her exploration of the dominant discourses of sexuality in China since 1949. She finds that in the 1950s, as well as in the 1980s, the prevailing discourse on sexuality was that of biological essentialism whereby "nature dictated an unchanging set of gendered attributes and expectations."[21] This discourse of essential difference, which conflated biological sex and gender behavior, was used to justify state intervention into private life, particularly with respect to women, and to define so-called normative and deviant sexual behavior.[22]

Moving from discourse to practice, Gail Hershatter examines the temporal dimensions of gender, asking how women experienced the Mao era. She discovers that rural women's experiences during the Mao era diverged greatly from official histories. This finding challenges the chronology of "campaign time"—the official state narrative as interpreted through top-down campaigns. For the state, 1949 marked the end of the "old" society, characterized by feudalism and rampant socioeconomic inequality, and the beginning of the "new," socialist society.

[20] Frank Dikotter, *Sex, Culture, and Modernity in China: Medical Science and the Construction of Sexual Identities in the Early Republican Period* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1995), 12.
[21] Harriet Evans, 34.
[22] Evans, 52-55.

Hershatter finds that men in rural Shaanxi experienced change more along the lines of the official narrative of the party, whereby 1949 marked a liberation from capitalist exploitation and inaugurated economic mobilization across class and gender lines. However, some rural women designated the Great Leap Forward (1959-1961) or the entire collectivist period (the early 1950s to the early 1980s) as the old society and argued that the new society began in 1978 when Deng Xiaoping launched economic reforms. Rather than feeling liberated by the Party, during the collective period, women were exhausted from the double burden of labor inside and outside the home.

Contributions and Arguments

In contributing to these debates, this dissertation has implications for scholars in diverse fields. Building on Hershatter's challenge to "campaign time," I suggest that the standard periodization associated with modern Chinese reproductive history needs to be reexamined in light of the fact that the One and Two Child Policies marked historical continuities as much as disjunctures. This brings to mind the issue that turning points are contingent upon positionality and perspective, so that what stands out as a key event in the lives of some may not have been very significant for others. In particular, my findings show that changes in reproductive and contraceptive practices occurred along different timelines according to one's location, socio-economic status, education level, and other factors.

As for the debates among Lee, Wang, and others over whether China experienced a demographic crisis in the late imperial and early Republican eras, by highlighting continuities in reproductive and contraceptive practices, this dissertation connects that conversation to another set of debates over whether the One Child Policy was actually necessary and effective. My

findings substantiate these arguments regarding the use of individual methods for limiting family size and son preference as a motivator for having more children.

From the perspective of the history and anthropology of medicine, just as numerous scholars have shown in histories of colonial medicine, interactions between traditional and Western medicine did not eviscerate either but simultaneously yielded clearer distinctions between the two and medical synthesis.

In terms of gender and sexuality, on the one hand, this study affirms claims about the sexually repressive nature of both pre-modern and contemporary Chinese society; on the other hand, I show that such a blanket categorization has limited validity. My findings illuminate the historical continuities in individual reproductive practices amid state regulation and reveal that pockets of individual sexual decision-making always existed despite state attempts to discipline the populace. It is also clear that gender hierarchies re-embed themselves despite changes in state fertility policies. Located at the nexus of modern Chinese history, the history of medicine, and gender and sexuality studies, these insights highlight a new dimension to reproduction and contraception in China.

This dissertation also sheds light on Michel Foucault's much-used concept, "biopolitics," which articulates the ways in which the invasive and disciplinary nature of modernity brought bodily practices under the purview of governments. In their work on the deepening of state control over reproduction in post-Mao China, scholars Greenhalgh and Winckler define biopolitics as "a field of politics concerning the administration and optimization of the vital attributes of human life, particularly at the aggregate level."[23] In his later work, Foucault refines the term biopolitics and demonstrates its specific applications within the context of society with the term "biopower."

[23] Greenhalgh, *Governing China's Population*, 27.

While I contribute to understandings of the ways in which reproductive bodies became key sites of modern state discipline, illustrating Foucauldian biopower, I also challenge this model by demonstrating the role that individual agency played in challenging, perpetuating, and distorting state authority. In this way, my findings are more akin to Kenneth Lieberthal's model of Chinese political governance—"fragmented authoritarianism"—in which gaps in the state bureaucratic matrix left room for local and individual maneuvering.[24] Indeed, the state sought to gradually deepen its control over reproduction through more systematic record-keeping, monetary incentives, cultural propaganda, and legal measures in the years leading up to the establishment of the One Child Policy, yet this process was fraught with obstacles and inconsistencies. The result was that individual and familial considerations continued to shape reproductive decisions even amidst intensifying family planning campaigns.

In addition, in the Mao era—and to a degree in the Republican period—debates at all levels of government over the relationship between population size and economic development, disagreement over the efficacy of various family planning options, and a weak medical infrastructure resulted in repeated—and at times, simultaneous—condemnation and endorsement of different types of birth control. These mixed messages and conflicting campaigns exposed couples to a variety of family planning options, which in turn offered them greater decision-making power. Some women preferred Western-style abortions because they were assumed to be more sophisticated, "scientific," and hygienic, while others privileged abortifacients or prophylactics made from more familiar traditional Chinese herbal recipes. In many cases, however, couples arbitrarily combined and synthesized contraceptive and abortion techniques from TCM, Western medicine, and folk medicine.

[24] Kenneth Lieberthal, *Governing China: From Revolution Through Reform* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2004), 169.

Birth Control Case Studies: Shanghai, Tianjin, and Luoyang

Before outlining the structure of this dissertation, I offer a brief overview of my three primary research sites. Shanghai is located in the east of China, abutting the East China Sea, and is directly administered by the central government. Tianjin, also under direct federal administration, is located southeast of the capital, Beijing, and borders on the Yellow Sea. In contrast to these larger cities, Luoyang is a provincial level city located in the landlocked province of Henan in central China's Yellow River Valley. According to the first census of the People's Republic of China, in 1953 Shanghai had a population of 6.2 million and Tianjin 2.69 million.[25] Due to limited record keeping, the first recorded population statistic for Luoyang I could find was 601,250 in 1964.[26] By the early 1980s (1981-1982), all three cities had grown significantly: Shanghai's population had reached 11,810,000, Tianjin 7,780,000, and Luoyang 963,718.[27]

As treaty ports, both Shanghai and Tianjin were under partial foreign occupation from the end of the First Opium War (1839-1942) to the late Republican period. In Shanghai, the British and Americans carved out the International Settlement while the French established the French Concession. The city's foreign residents hailed from more than 20 European nations, Japan, India, Vietnam, and Korea, as well as nations of the Middle East and Latin America.[28] Similarly, Tianjin was, in the words of Ruth Rogaski, a "hypercolony," as it had eight foreign

[25] National Birth Planning Committee Integrated Planning Division [Guojia jihua shengyu weiyuanhui zonghe jiahua si], *Chinese Birth Planning Statistical Yearbook* [Quanguo jihua shengyu tongji ziliao huibian] (N.p.: n.p., 1983), 2.
[26] Office of the Luoyang Population Survey Leading Small Group, *Di sanci renkou pucha shougong huizong ziliao huibao* [The Compiled Materials of the Third Manual Population Survey] (Luoyang: Office of the Luoyang Population Census Leading Small Group, 1982), 11.
[27] National Birth Planning Committee Integrated Planning Division, *Chinese Birth Planning Statistical Yearbook*, 2; Office of the Luoyang Population Survey Leading Small Group, *Di sanci renkou pucha shougong huizong ziliao huibao* [The Compiled Materials of the Third Manual Population Survey], 9.
[28] Hanchao Lu, *Beyond the Neon Lights: Everyday Shanghai in the Early Twentieth Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 38.

concessions.[29] Although it had enjoyed prominent status in China from the Eastern Han Dynasty (25-220 AD) through the Jin Dynasty (1115-1234), Luoyang's limited economy and distance from the coast ensured that it never had a significant foreign presence.

As a result of their differing histories, Shanghai and Tianjin boasted flourishing, multilingual public spheres in the early twentieth century whereas Luoyang had little in the way of published media. Likewise, whereas Shanghai was one of the most economically developed cities in China throughout the twentieth century, Tianjin's economy lagged behind it, and Luoyang was relatively undeveloped. These differential trajectories make for interesting points of comparison, but also pose challenges, as Luoyang's municipal archive does not contain records from the Republican period.

Chapter Outline

This dissertation moves chronologically from the Nanjing Decade (1927-1937) to the present. Chapter 1 focuses on the theory and praxis of abortion and birth control use from 1927 until the establishment of the People's Republic in 1949, a period in which eugenic discourses gained currency and elites became preoccupied with the notion that bodily health embodied modernity and national prowess. Under the Nationalist Party, abortion and sterilization were illegal, as were homemade and store bought abortifacients, yet the historical record reveals that these methods of fertility control were in common practice in urban China.

Like their predecessors, Communist officials initially placed strict restrictions on birth control use, encouraging high fertility rates. Chapter 2 considers birth control use from the founding of the PRC until 1958, when the central government turned its attention away from family planning. I show that despite an early ban on certain birth control publications, literature

[29] Rogaski, *Hygienic Modernity,* 13.

on sex and birth control continued to be published in major cities, that narratives on sex and birth control in women's magazines and sex handbooks varied widely, and that access to birth control and contraceptive surgeries varied dramatically. Despite the party's rhetoric of socialist egalitarianism, access to birth control was far from equal.

Chapter 3 uses archival records and interviews from Shanghai, Tianjin, and Luoyang to explore the rise of local family planning programs, as well as official efforts to promote a culture of birth control through plays, posters, exhibitions, and focus groups. The Great Leap Forward (1959-1961), a campaign to enact rapid industrialization and agricultural collectivization, resulted in a devastating famine and millions of deaths, yet from 1959 to 1965, access to birth control continued to grow. Even then, not only did access to contraceptives and information about birth control vary widely, but the types of birth control products available and even their prices also diverged based on location.

Focusing on the period from 1966 until the implementation of the One Child Policy in 1979, Chapter 4 analyzes the rise of new technologies and political campaigns that both deepened and challenged state control over personal reproductive choices. I argue that the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) and the Youth Reeducation Movement (1968-1980), the latter bringing millions of urban youth to the countryside, complicated efforts to curb population growth by creating unprecedented opportunities for pre-marital sex. However, the concurrent deployment of minimally trained "Barefoot Doctors" to the countryside also facilitated the spread of abortion throughout rural China.

Chapter 5 examines the One Child Policy from its introduction in 1979 to the present, three years after the policy's replacement. I show that the policy built on and refined existing

mechanisms of reproductive control but also yielded in new obstacles and forms of resistance that undermined state population planning endeavors.

The epilogue stresses continuities in birth control practices from the Republican era to the present in terms of the gendered burden of family planning, eugenic rhetoric and practices, uneven access to sex education, and an enduring reliance on abortion as birth control.

Moving between several different literatures and across a vast timespan, this dissertation brings the theory and practice of family planning at the state level in conversation with grassroots practices. The result is a story that is unique to China but that engages themes relevant to other geographic regions and time periods in world history.

Chapter 1: Birth Control and Abortion in Republican China, 1927-1949

According to the memoirs of her close comrade Xu Mingqing, Jiang Qing, Mao Zedong's fourth and last wife and a popular actress in the 1930s, had an abortion before marrying Mao in 1938. At that time, in 1936, Jiang was preparing to play the main character, Nora, in a performance of the Henrik Ibsen play, "A Doll's House." As the story goes, when Jiang discovered that she was pregnant, she went to Shanghai to have an abortion because she feared that having a child would impede her acting career.[30] She alludes to her abortion in an article, "From 'Nora' to 'The Tempest'" ("*Cong 'Nala' dao 'Daleiyu'*"), which she published in the journal "New Scholarly Knowledge" (*Xin xueshi*) in May 1937.[31] Several years later, when the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) was hiding out in Yan'an, Jiang Qing gave birth to Mao's daughter. When she became pregnant again, Jiang determined that she did not wish to have another child because pregnancy was hard on her body. Thus, she had another abortion, but this time the doctor accidentally left a piece of gauze in Jiang's abdomen during the operation. As a result, she developed a high fever, but eventually recovered. What is the likelihood that such a story of Jiang Qing's abortions is actually true? In the 1930s as a well-known Chinese actress, would Jiang have had knowledge about and access to this type of procedure or was this merely a rumor intended to tarnish a rising star's reputation? What about the second abortion in the 1940s when Jiang was already a leading female cadre in the CCP?

This chapter focuses on urban birth control practices and the rhetoric surrounding birth control from the consolidation of Nationalist Party rule in 1927 until 1949, when the

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[30] Ye Yonglie, "Jiang Qing zai yan'an zaoyu yiliao shigu: zuo liuchan shoushu shabu bei yiliu fu zhong" [Jiang Qing Suffered a Medical Accident in Yan'an: During an Abortion, a Piece of Gauze was Left Inside Her Abdomen], last modified October 14, 2013, http://news.ifeng.com/history/zhongguojindaishi/detail_2013_10/14/30294864_0.shtml.

[31] Jiang Qing, "From 'Nora' to 'The Tempest'" [*Cong "Nala" dao "Daleiyu"*], *Xin xueshi* [New Scholarly Knowledge] 1, no. 5 (1937): n.p.

Communists successfully defeated the Nationalists and united China. During this period, individual health and sexual hygiene came to be seen as a reflection of national wellness and strength.[32] As part of the intertwined processes of state building and modernizing, Chinese elites debated extensively the path China should take to strengthen itself in the wake of foreign imperialism and devastating wars. Intellectuals considered to what extent China should retain or abandon "traditional" Chinese culture, adopt foreign scientific knowledge and models of governance, or synthesize these diverse systems. The Japanese invasion of northeastern China, World War II, and the civil war between the Nationalists and the Communists punctuated this 22-year period and added urgency to these matters.

Concerns about improving the health of the population and overcrowding, and therefore birth control, lay at the intersection of modernizing efforts, fears of national weakness, and health debates. As Tong Lam has demonstrated, this period experienced an epistemic shift toward viewing social facts as a new source of truth and increased emphasis on the administration and analysis of statistical surveys.[33] Publications on birth control often drew on such statistics to legitimize their claims. According to Sun Muhan, between 1912 and 1949 more than 750 articles relating to population issues were published in newspapers and periodicals whose focus spanned society, politics, finance, commerce, agriculture, public health, and women (table 1.1).[34] During the same period, across the biological and social sciences, 194 types of books devoted solely to population were published while a total of 350 books with at least one chapter on population were published. In total, these books accounted for about 0.4 percent of the estimated 100,000 books published in the Republican period. Publication statistics also

[32] Frank Dikotter, *Imperfect Conceptions: Medical Knowledge, Birth Defects, and Eugenics in China* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 69.
[33] Tong Lam, *A Passion for Facts: Social Surveys and the Construction of the Chinese Nation State, 1900-1949* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), 3-4.
[34] Gu Jiantang, "Minguo shiqi renkou yangjiu tanwei" [An Exploration of Population Studies during the Republican Era], *Beijing University Journal: Philosophy Society Edition* (2001), http://www.szrmf.com/paper/48916.html.

suggest that debates about population-related problems peaked between the late 1920s and the early 1930s. Despite ebbs and flows in the public discourse and critical historical disruptions, from the perspective of birth control and abortion the period from 1927 to 1949 also demonstrated relative continuity in available contraceptive technologies, their use, and the debates that surrounded them.

Table 1.1: Population-Related Publications in the Republican Period

Time Period	1919-1929	1930-1936	1937-1949	1912-1949
# of Articles	More than 290	More than 390	N/A	More than 750
# of Books	39	55	48	194

In particular, this chapter deploys evidence from newspaper articles, magazines, advertisements, and court records from several cities for which such materials are available—namely Shanghai, Tianjin, and Beijing—to draw overarching conclusions about the dimensions of urban birth control and abortion practices.[35] In so doing, I contribute to the literature on China's scientific modernization, the history of birth control, and gender studies, establishing points of reference useful for understanding later trends in reproduction and birth control.

The first section of this chapter broadly examines birth control and abortion in practice. I first explore the range of contraceptive and abortive techniques available to women and those they chose to employ. Despite the existence of condoms and spermicidal douches, abortions—including the use of emmenagogues—were the most prevalent forms of contraception that appeared in the historical record. These abortions, however, involved several different strategies taken from folk practices, traditional Chinese healing, and Western medicine. Some women, for example, used patented pills or herbal decoctions, available in pharmacies and through

[35] While the rest of the dissertation takes Shanghai, Tianjin, and Luoyang as the primary field sites, this chapter focuses more on Shanghai, Tianjin, and Beijing because Luoyang was small and underdeveloped during this period, leaving little in the form of written records. Moreover, the Western presence in Shanghai, Tianjin, and Beijing provide illuminating case studies.

midwives, to induce abortion while others used acupuncture needles or surgery to terminate their pregnancies. Second, through the lens of court records, I investigate the ways in which class and location shaped birth control praxis. From the 1920s through 1940s, birth control was neither explicitly endorsed nor banned for married couples but sterilization and abortion were criminalized.[36] Despite its legality, birth control was not widely available or reliable, so most evidence of fertility regulation comes from court records charging women with surgical or medicinal abortions. My findings suggest that working class women, such as domestic servants and factory workers, were one of the largest abortion seekers, at least according to police records. In terms of rationales for undergoing abortion, the most common ones cut across class and geographic lines: adultery, premarital intercourse, and sex among "chaste" widows. While some women underwent abortions to avoid being accused of depravity, in fact public antipathy toward the flourishing abortion market meant that women undergoing abortions often became the targets of gendered public accusations of reckless sexual behavior.[37] In particular, the media highlighted abortions among actresses, singers, prostitutes, and entertainers as a form a social critique.

The second section of the chapter situates birth control and abortion within broader domestic and international debates about science, national strength, and modernity. I analyze the ways in which the lexicon of birth control and the reproductive practices certain linguistic expressions signified changed over time. In the Republican period, overt and "scientific" discussions of sex proliferated but often included translations of foreign texts from Japan, the Soviet Union, the United States, Britain, and Germany, which facilitated the blending of Chinese and foreign ideas about reproduction and eugenics. At the same time, the medical language used

[36] Tyrene White, *China's Longest Campaign: Birth Planning in the People's Republic, 1949-2005* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press: 2006), 22.
[37] Ma, "Gender, Law, and Society," 205.

to describe birth control merged a primarily traditional Chinese medical discourse with Western and Japanese scientific terminology. Moreover, I examine the complex and competing philosophies about family structure, state authority, gender roles, and overpopulation circulating in elite Chinese circles from the late 1920s to the late 1940s. I argue that these debates produced a plethora of discourses on birth control dominated as much by eugenic concerns as by competing notions of the ideal—and modern—woman.

Birth Control and Abortion in Practice

What types of birth control products and methods for inducing abortion were available in urban China at this time and who was using them? The medical marketplace in China's largest cities, particularly in port cities with large migrant populations, thrived from the early 1920s onward, introducing the populace to a wide array of products and treatments at several different price points. In this way, consumers of different statuses and class backgrounds could draw on a wide range of products and procedures. Practitioners with varying kinds of degrees of expertise—from licensed Chinese and foreign doctors of Western medicine to itinerant peddlers, unlicensed Chinese medicine healers, and druggists selling contraceptive and abortifacient drugs—coexisted within this marketplace. Contraceptives—a broad and elusive assortment of medicines with debatable efficacy—were not explicitly banned. In fact, a few birth control clinics which had been established in major Chinese cities like Beijing, Shanghai, and Nanjing distributed contraceptives to middle class women throughout the 1930s.[38] Unlike contraceptives, abortion was illegal according to all versions of the Republican criminal code until therapeutic

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[38] You Ji, "Gulou yiyuan zhishi jieyu" [Gulou Hospital Provides Birth Control Instruction," *Guangji yikan* [Guangji Medical Journal] 12, no. 2 (1935): 10-11; Mao Xian, "*Yiyao wenda: da di 365 hao beiliuxian guan xizhang jun wen jieyu*" [Medical Q&A: Answer Number 365 Beiliu County's Guan Xizhang Asks About Birth Control], *Guangxi weisheng xunkan* [Guangxi Hygiene Journal], 3, no. 2 (1935): 18; Ma, "Gender, Law, and Society," 122-123.

abortion was legalized in 1935, allowing for abortion if a woman was too sick to carry the pregnancy to term. Similarly, the 1928 draft of the Republican criminal code strictly prohibited the advertising of abortion services.[39] Furthermore, as part of efforts to regulate and professionalize the medical industry, as of 1929 advertising the abortifacient properties of drugs could result in a pharmaceutical company or pharmacy losing its license to sell medicine in Shanghai.[40] In theory, this would have meant that companies would have stopped mentioning the ability of their products to induce abortion, and yet, as I will demonstrate, advertisements for these types of products persisted, often in very explicit terms. Nonetheless, the risk of having one's medical license revoked may have contributed to the veiled language some advertisers used when marketing products with abortifacient properties.

The fuzzy line between drugs that prevented pregnancy and those that prevented carrying a pregnancy to term made it even more difficult to distinguish between illegal abortifacients and legal contraceptives. In addition, the authorities at times viewed contraception as encouraging abortion and therefore policed its sale.[41] In 1929, the Shanghai government banned the promotion and dissemination of drugs with contraceptive, abortifacient, or aphrodisiac properties (*yaowu you biyun datai zhuangyang deng zhi xiaoyanzhe*).[42] The Shanghai Municipal Police conducted a few searches of drugstores, confiscated suspicious drugs and books, and charged certain newspaper owners with disseminating illegal material. However, Ling Ma rightly argues that it is likely that "such one-off fanfare did not affect the abortion market beyond its very

[39] Ma, "Gender, Law, and Society," 243.
[40] "Shanghai tebieshi qudi yinwei wuyao xuanchuan pin zanxing guize" [Temporary Rules for the Prohibition of Publicizing Obscene Drugs in Shanghai], *Shenbao* 22, no. 20157 (1929): n.p.; Emily Baum, "Health by the Bottle: The Dr. Williams' Medicine Company and the Commodification of Well-being" in *Liangyou, Kaleidoscopic Modernity and the Shanghai Global Metropolis, 1926-1945*, Paul G. Pickowicz, Kuiyi Shen, and Yingjin Zhang, eds. (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 87.
[41] Ma, "Gender, Law, and Society," 201.
[42] "Shanghai tebieshi qudi yinwei wuyao xuanchuan pin zanxing guize" [Temporary Rules for the Prohibition of Publicizing Obscene Drugs in Shanghai], *Shenbao* 22, no. 20157 (1929): n.p.;

surface."[43] In one case from 1937, Shanghai police investigators disguised themselves as customers and exposed two pharmacies selling "obscene" products. The owners of the two pharmacies were charged with selling a variety of aphrodisiacs, contraceptives, and sexual aids, including eight eight-pack boxes of condoms, 22 boxes of disease-preventing contraceptives, 7 bottles of *gujing* pills to fight nocturnal emissions, 5 uterine warmers (believed to help an embryo implant itself and grow by warming the womb and increasing blood circulation), and 483 sex guides. All of the offending products were seized. The pharmacies were also charged with advertising these products in print.[44] In a similar case from 1930, a Shanghai pharmacy was charged 900 *yuan* for selling aphrodisiacs (*chunyao*) and *Baoyulin*-brand contraceptive tablets.[45] Despite the risk of being charged fines and having their property seized, individual pharmacists, pharmacies, and medicine companies continued to advertise and sell these types of products.

<u>Emmenagogues, Abortifacients, and Medical Commercialization</u>

If one opens a women's magazine or newspaper from the late Republican period, the likelihood of encountering advertisements for various products marketed as emmenagogues is particularly high. Francesca Bray has argued that in traditional Chinese medicine, a regular menstrual period was believed to indicate health and balance. If amenorrhea occurred either due to pregnancy or some more serious and potentially dangerous cause, this indicated the existence of a menstrual blockage. According to TCM, the world is made up of *qi*, "a vapor taken to constitute the essence of matter," and erratic menses indicated that a woman had imbalanced

[43] Ling Ma, "Gender, Law, and Society: Abortion in Early Twentieth Century China" (Unpublished doctoral dissertation, State University of New York, Buffalo, 2016), 175.

[44] "Liang yaofang chaohuo yinju chunyao" (Two Pharmacies Were Searched--Obscene Products and Aphrodisiacs Were Seized), *Shenbao* 13, no. 22925 (1937): n.p; Charlotte Furth, *A Flourishing Yin: Gender in China's Medical History: 960–1665* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 292.

[45] "Chunyao an jieshu qifeng" [Aphrodisiac Case Closed], *Shenbao* 11, no. 20593 (1930): n.p.

levels of *yin* and *yang*, the complementary types of *qi*.[46] Therefore, during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, if a woman's menses were irregular, this might lead her to use consume *tiaojingyao* or *tongjingyao*, medicines that induced menstruation, which in turn would prevent pregnancy.[47] Historians of medicine note that emmenagogues bring on (delayed) menstruation regardless of whether a woman is pregnant. Abortifacients destroy the fertilized ovum and/or cause the uterine lining in which the embryo is implanted to be expelled. In the early stages of pregnancy, embryos and fertilized ova simply look like menstrual blood.[48] Therefore, there has always been a fine line between emmenagogues and abortifacients, and at times marketers in China and the West specifically advertised abortifacients as emmenagogues or "patent medicines" to make them more palatable.[49] In both cases, these types of medicines would have been readily available for purchase from itinerant drug sellers, pharmacists, or medical practitioners. Alternatively, the herbal ingredients needed to make these formulas could have been procured from local apothecaries.

This practice took on a new form in the globalizing and modernizing context of the Republican period, in which many areas of life, particularly medicine, became commercialized and commodified. Much as science came to be seen as a panacea for China's problems as a nation, health products became the cure for individual ailments, so that the individual body could be strengthened along with the nation as a whole. Newspapers began advertising commodities to be bought as part of a modern health regimen, products that denoted a modern, consumerist lifestyle.[50] Convenience was part and parcel of the commodification of health and customers

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[46] TJ Hinrichs and Linda L. Barnes, eds., *Chinese Medicine and Healing: An Illustrated History* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012), 7-11.

[47] Francesca Bray, *Technology and Gender: Fabrics of Power in Late Imperial China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 325.

[48] Anne Hibner Koblitz, *Sex and Herbs and Birth Control* (Seattle: Kovalevskaia Fund, 2014), 11.

[49] Koblitz, *Sex and Herbs and Birth Control,* 43-44.

[50] Eugenia Lean, "The Modern Elixir: Medicine as a Consumer Item in the Early Twentieth-Century Chinese Press,"

increasingly demanded affordable drugs that could be purchased easily without having to consult a potentially costly medical practitioner.[51]

Relatedly, so-called "wonder drugs" and health boosting cure-alls (*buyao*), which have a long history in China, gained new authority in the era of mass media and commercialization. As Eugenia Lean has argued, in the early 1900s doctors, pharmacy houses, individual doctors, and apothecaries advertised wonder drugs or elixirs claiming to cure a wide range of health problems from loss of energy and nocturnal emissions to opium addiction and even death.[52] The language of Western biomedical science and flashy advertisements lent an air of legitimacy and expertise to druggists' and drug companies' claims. However, Western medicine was also viewed as lacking the personal engagement between doctor and patient common with traditional practitioners. This alienation was best represented by the way Western medicine depicted health and illness in terms of dissected organs within a physical body rather than as an immaterial system of interacting meridians.[53] At the same time, advertisements utilized the holistic language associated with traditional Chinese medicine—a vocabulary more familiar to the vast majority of consumers than the alienating and impersonal language of Western medicine—to sell their products.

Returning to the case of abortifacients, the notion of emmenagogue pills that ensure menstrual harmony merged nicely with the idea of cost effective, premade tablets as cures for everything—including unwanted pregnancy. More specifically, these advertisements couched the utility of *tiaojingyao* and *tongjingyao* in terms of traditional Chinese medicine—they enabled menstrual regularity or harmony, which fit within and appealed to a particular conceptualization

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UCLA History Journal 15, no. 0 (1995): 66-67.
[51] Baum, "Health by the Bottle," 80.
[52] Lean, "The Modern Elixir," 69.
[53] Lean, "The Modern Elixir," 71.

of menstruation as signifying wellness. While framed in terms of *qi* and bodily balance, the drugs themselves were premade, packaged, and marketed in a highly impersonal way, and the consumer they targeted shifted from the head of the household to young women.[54]

Advertisements conveyed to varying degrees the link between regular menstruation, health, and pregnancy: while some used more veiled language about promoting menstrual regularity, other explicitly claimed to prevent or terminate pregnancy. To provide concrete examples, we will examine some advertisements for *tiaojingyao* and *tongjingyao* from the 1920s and 1930s. A 1931 edition of the magazine *Funü shijie* (Women's World) advertised *Yue yue hong*, which can be translated as either the flower China Rose (which can be used to regulate menses) or as "monthly red," a possible euphemism for menstruation. The fine print of the advertisement reads:

> Women's medicine = fixing menstrual blockages and improving blood circulation
>
> This is an extremely effective formula for improving blood circulation. The Western name of this medicine is "emmenagogue pills" and it is suitable for women's systems. It melts easily in the body, so the treatment is very safe and fast.
>
> Effectiveness: Good for treating women with blood deficiency in blocked or astringent meridians, blood stasis, post-partum discharge, or other unclear symptoms.

The advertisement was published by Wuzhou Pharmacy Publishing, the head office of which was located in Shanghai with branches in various provinces and port cities. The pills sold for one *yuan* per bottle or a dozen bottles for ten *yuan*.[55] By invoking the term "emmenagogue" in English (prominently written in all capital letters), the company wanted to appear foreign, modern, and cutting edge with these features standing out to the reader. Yet, the text merged the traditional Chinese medicine concepts of "improved circulation" and "blood stasis" with the notion of "amenorrhea" in western medicine. In keeping with the language of modern

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[54] Lean, "The Modern Elixir," 78.
[55] "Yue yue hong," advertisement, *Funü shijie* [Women's World] 7 (1931), n.p.

advertising, the product is framed as effective, fast, and safe—features critical to the modern female consumer. The advertisement even defined "women's medicine" to educate potential consumers about which products they should desire and the ways in which consumption is central to modern subjectivity. The fact that the company was headquartered in Shanghai invoked foreign caché and consumption, while the product's availability in other port cities indicated its desirability to modern women in cosmopolitan cities. The sketch of a woman on the bottle (Figure 1.1) was also part of attempts to modernize Chinese advertising in the 1930s by adding visual representations of products to marketing.

Figure 1.1: "Yue yue hong."

Other advertisers were more explicit about the fact that the products they were selling were intended to prevent pregnancy, rather than only emphasizing the medicines' therapeutic functions. An advertisement for a drug called "Speton: Ideales Anticoncipiens," featured in a 1931 edition of the magazine *Funü shijie* (Women's World), sought to market fertility regulation to the mobile, assertive, and busy modern woman (Figure 1.2). The product's name, literally meaning "Ideal Anti-Pregnant," was prominently displayed in the advertisement below in a

language other than Chinese—in this case, Latin. This was meant to denote foreign status and reliability, as well as the allure of Western medicine. The image of the bird wrapped in rope, especially within the context of the advertisement, might have helped the viewer realize that this was in fact a stork, known for delivering newborn babies. As in some parts of the West, storks appear in ancient Chinese stories about fertility, so the advertisement would have been meaningful for both Chinese and foreigners. The advertisement reads:

> Preeminent birth control medicine (制育良药）
> Absolutely no oil; common, pure, and effective
> For leucorrhea [vaginal discharge] and neighboring tissues
> Inflammation, corrosion, and other illnesses in the body cavities
> Disinfectant ability will come true like something divine
> Various pharmacies sell it.

According to the advertisement, the drug is produced by a foreign owned company, manufactured at the Taylor Chemical Factory, and sold exclusively in China by the manager's office in Shanghai. While "Speton" is first and foremost a birth control medicine, like many other miracle drugs of the time, it serves a number of other functions. Not only can it prevent babies without the use of oil (which many vaginal inserts during this period used to trap sperm during sex), it also cured a number of vagina and abdomen related illnesses, and even boasted "divine" disinfectant properties.[56]

[56] "Speton," advertisement, *Funü shijie* [Women's World] 17, no. 7 (1931), n.p.

Figure 1.2: "Speton."

Other related products, which have received greater scholarly attention in recent years, were "Birth Control Friend" (*Zhiyu liangyou*) and "Lady's Friend" (*Ta de you*). Michelle King dates advertisements for Birth Control Friend to less than a year after Margaret Sanger's first visit to China, and one advertisement for Birth Control Friend even claims local demands for birth control in the aftermath of Sanger's visit created the impetus to produce these types of products. Birth Control Friend claimed to be able to prevent pregnancy, alleviate feminine discharge problems, and even prevent men from contracting venereal disease.[57] While this product was advertised as being "for external use only," King posits that it was almost certainly a vaginal suppository because of its claims to prevent transmission of venereal disease, a topic that is rarely mentioned in advertisements for either products labeled as emmenagogues or contraceptives. Interestingly, in this gendered scenario, the woman was presumed to have venereal disease while her relatively pure male lover was afraid of contracting it—a motif present in many writings on sexually transmitted diseases from the Republican period to the present. This also suggested that the target customers for Birth Control Friend was middle class men rather than so-called modern women. According to King and others, Chinese men preferred

[57] King, "Margaret Sanger in Translation," 73-74.

vaginal suppositories over other contraceptive measures because they were easy to use and did not diminish the male sexual experience.[58]

Advertisements for Lady's Friend were similar to those for Birth Control Friend in many ways. However, the former highlighted the drug's contraceptive properties by featuring the Chinese word *jieyu* in large, prominent letters on the left side of the advertisement. Like Birth Control Friend, the use of the word "friend" in the name evokes a kind of modern intimacy and trust between the user and the product. The full advertisement reads:

> "Lady's Friend" topical pills are the most effective medicine for contraception.
> It is generally recognized that this medicine is used by women with frail bodies and blood deficiency who are not suited for childbearing and are familiar with modern living and economic circumstances.
> (Introduced by a world famous Western doctor).
>
> Tested by the Central Health Laboratory and proven non-toxic.
> Each box is one *yuan* two *jiao* and comes with Chinese-language instructions available on request by letter.[59]

As with the other products, this one was sold by a company headquartered in Shanghai and was retailed at all major pharmacies. While the focus was on the drug's ability to prevent pregnancy, the language suggests that the target consumers were women who should not conceive for health reasons rather than women who solely wanted to have sex for pleasure. The reference to modern living and economic circumstances alludes to the fact that raising children was costly and time consuming, factors modern consumers and independent women took into consideration. The claim linking Lady's Friend to a world famous Western doctor lent an air of worldliness and legitimacy to the product. One article in the Shanghai newspaper *Shenbao* even joked that contraception like Lady's Friend would save the nation and allow the Chinese people to be

[58] King, "Margaret Sanger in Translation," 74.
[59] "Lady's Friend," *Funü shijie* (Women's World), 11 (November 1931): n.p.; Other advertisements for Lady's Friend can be found in the magazines *Funü zazhi* (Women's Magazine) 1, no. 2 (1931): 14 and *Nü qingnian* (Young Women) 17, no. 1 (1931): 136.

reborn as a nation not subjugated by foreign powers.[60]

Not all emmenagogues were as prominently advertised as those just mentioned; some were clandestinely made and sold by local druggists, peddlers, and even midwives.[61] In a case from Beijing in 1932, the police looked into a series of crimes—bribery, heroin trafficking, and the outbreak of a fight over the price of a rickshaw ride. This led police to discover that a man named Hu Shoushan was manufacturing so-called emmenagogues (*tongjingdan*), drugs which actually functioned as abortifacients. According to the report, "allegedly, a very large the number of people were purchasing this medicine for use as an abortifacient" while claiming to not know the true effect of the drug. Hu was charged with disseminating illegal medicines.[62] In another case from Beijing, likely from the 1930s, a young woman surnamed Jian who was four months pregnant sought an abortion because she was afraid that her father and brother would find out about the pregnancy and the fact that she was having an affair with a cook named Xing. Jian was suspected of buying an abortifacient (*dataiyao*) at a local drug store owned by a woman surnamed Yang. Suspicious investigators soon uncovered a stash of illegal abortifacients in the shop and Yang was charged with selling illicit drugs. As these and countless other cases illustrate, emmenagogues and abortifacients were not difficult to purchase in urban China. In addition, in the 1930s and 1940s, police did occasionally take action to uncover and undermine the abortion market, and they were as concerned with regulating the supply side—practitioners of abortion, people facilitating abortion, and people selling abortifacients—as the demand side.[63]

Some Western drugs were also available for purchase in urban China. In some instances, these medicines were marketed explicitly in terms of biomedical family planning whereas in

[60] Long Sao, "Dushi de feng" [The Urban Scene], *Shenbao* 16, no. 21583 (1933): n.p.
[61] Zi Nan, "Guafu duotai" [Widow Abortion], *Shenbao* 19, no. 225000 (1935): n.p.
[62] Beijing Municipal Archive (BMA), J181-020-09957.
[63] Ma, "Gender, Law, and Society," 92-93.

other cases they were sold to treat other illnesses and misused to induce abortion. Carbizone (*jiabux*i) tablets, a type of American birth control pill introduced to China by Margaret Sanger, was available for purchase in Shanghai as early as March 1923.[64] Similarly, the Shanghai Bai'er Pharmaceutical Company—a subsidiary of the German multinational pharmaceutical company, Bayer—published a booklet in 1938 during World War II advertising a variety of products including Rivanol, a potent abortifacient used in China from the Republican era to the present in second trimester and late term abortions.[65]

Quinine could also be purchased in pharmacies in large cities and could be used to induce abortion. In fact, quinine was even endorsed by Republican sex guides and early Mao era medical practice for use as a contraceptive.[66] Quinine appears in a wide range of abortion cases from the Republican period through the Mao era.[67] Take for example one case published first in the newspaper *Shanghai Correspondence* (*Shanghai tongxun*) in 1947. A young couple was living on Nanjing Road in Shanghai. The husband was an employee of the China National Goods Corporation, where he earned a humble (*feibo*) salary. In the seven years the couple had been married, the 22-year-old wife had given birth to five children, of which three had survived. When the young woman became pregnant again, she feared that the family could not afford to take care of another child. First, she tried consuming some type of acid (*suan*) to abort the fetus, but it simply made her throw up. She knew that quinine was used to treat specific illnesses but that it could trigger a miscarriage when taken in large quantities. For this reason, she overdosed on

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[64] Yu Lianshi, "Minguo shiqi chengshi shengyu jiezhi yundong de yanjiu: Yi Beijing, Shanghai, Nanjing wei zhongdian" [The birth control movement in Republican cities: A focus on Beijing, Shanghai and Nanjing] (Unpublished PhD dissertation, Fudan University, 2008), 277.

[65] Shanghai bai'er yaopin wuxian gongsi [Shanghai Bayer Pharmaceutical Company, Ltd.], "Bai'er yiliao xinbao" [Bayer Medical News], 12, no. 2 (1938): n.p.; K. H. Tien, "Intraamniotic injection of ethacridine for second-trimester induction of labor," *Obstetrics and Gynecology* 61, no. 6 (1983): 733-736.

[66] "Zui xin biyunfa," 1.

[67] Shanghai Jiao Tong University Archive (SJTUA), Z1-9-727; Tianjin Municipal Archive (TMA), X0191-C-000058.

quinine. The toxicity of the medicine caused her uterus to contract and release the fetus, but she bled continuously until her face turned blue and her heart gave out.[68] Other cases suggest that this was a fairly common last resort for poor women without access to other types of contraceptives or abortifacients.[69]

Some women even formulated emmenagogues and abortifacients from scratch at home. In one case from Beijing in 1945, a 36-year-old unemployed married woman named Jiang Liu had affairs with two different men: a 20-year-old unemployed man named Zhou Shulin and a 22-year-old worker named Ao Taiqing, both of whom lived in nearby alleyways (*hutong*). Eventually Jiang's abdomen became swollen and hard and soon after became soft. Jiang was charged with colluding with Ao to abort the pregnancy and cover up evidence of the affair. The method of abortion used was a concoction made from black soy beans taken orally. Jiang was sentenced to 5 months and 13 days in prison for committing adultery and having an abortion while Ao was sentenced to 4 months in jail for adultery.[70]

Other women utilized a variety of abortion techniques associated with traditional Chinese medicine. One such method was abortion through vigorous massage. Take for example the case of Shuhua Li, a 19-year-old woman from Beijing who was working at the Third Branch Clothing Factory in Tianjin. When Li, who was not married, discovered that she was six months pregnant, she sought help from a doctor. The doctor refused to help her abort the pregnancy so Li reached out to a colleague, Guo Bao, a 39-year-old married woman working at the same factory. Guo agreed to help Li induce an abortion through massage, but during the procedure Guo noticed that Li was vomiting white foam and called the factory doctor for help. He gave Li an injection and

[68] "Xinshui jieji de bei'ai, xian er'nu duo datai jian fudan, chi kuining wan buxing zhongdu si" [Sorrow of the Working Class, Feared Having Too Many Children So Had an Abortion to Reduce the Burden, Consumed Quinine and Died of Poisoning] *Daminbao* (1947): n.p.
[69] Qingdao Municipal Archive (QMA), D00429200079.
[70] BMA, J191-002-09401.

administered an oral medication, but she died soon after. Later when investigators found Li, her vagina was dilated and bleeding. The umbilical cord still connected her belly with that of a small lifeless baby boy. Li's lower abdomen was red and swollen and had the marks of repeated hand rubbing. Guo was charged with committing an abortion that led to death.[71]

Another method of inducing abortion that appears in abortion cases is either consuming herb mixtures orally in tea or inserting a blend of toxic insects, as well "ox knee" (*tu niuxi*) and other herbs, such as musk and monkshood root, into the cervix.[72] References to these types of abortion appear in a wide variety of sources from the imperial period through the present. In fact, Matthew Sommer uses court records and works of fiction to chronicle the use of these methods since the late Qing dynasty. The type of herbs used, however, differed by region according to local flora and medicinal practices. Ling Ma observes that insertion of ox knee root into the cervix was a common abortive technique used by native healers in Shanghai and southern China during the Republican period.[73] In one case from 1940, Zhou, a 25-year-old married woman working as a live-in maid in Shanghai, became pregnant. Fearing she would lose her job due to the pregnancy, she paid a traditional Chinese healer, Yao, and his wife to perform an abortion on her. Yao inserted a "daikon-shaped item" (*luobo zhuang de dongxi*) into Zhou's cervix, which induced abortion. Unfortunately, Zhou could not stop bleeding and after she died in the hospital, Yao was sentenced to three and a half years in jail and a fine of 300 *yuan*.[74] In another case from Shanghai, a 33-year-old woman named Gui Xu who was several months pregnant sought out an elderly local healer to help her undergo an abortion. The healer inserted herbs roots into Gui's uterus. After successfully aborting the pregnancy, Gui threw the body of the male fetus into the

[71] Tianjin Municipal Archive (TMA), J0044-2-038811.
[72] Matthew Sommer, "Abortion in Late Imperial China: Routine Birth Control or Crisis Intervention?" *Late Imperial China* 31, no. 2 (2010): 100.
[73] Ma, "Gender, Law, and Society," 33.
[74] SMA, Q180-2-4464; Ma, "Gender, Law, and Society," 179.

toilet (*biantong*). Her crime was only discovered when Gui admitted herself to a hospital because she was suffering from poisoning (from the herbs). In Gui's case, she survived the abortion and the aftereffects.[75] Many women who used such herbal methods consequently suffered from sterility, as depicted in the novel *The Obsessed*, by Liu Heng, which director Zhang Yimou later adapted into the film, *Judou*. Herbal abortifacients were definitely one of the most common forms of fertility control that entered the historical record, and in chapter 3 we will see that similar methods were practiced in various parts of China throughout the Mao era.

Acupuncture was another method used to induce abortion, but was more commonly used in northern China where acupuncture was more popular.[76] Traditional healers inserted one or more needles just under three inches long through the abdominal wall to stimulate uterine contractions and premature delivery.[77] Like many other abortion techniques from this period, needling (*dazhen* or *zhazhen duotai*) did not always successfully induce abortion and at times it could be very dangerous or even fatal. A British medical missionary living in Beijing and working at Peking Union Medical College in 1928 mentioned cases of needling gone wrong. In two cases, the needle broke off or got lost in the abdomen and had to be removed surgically. In a third case, a 43-year-old woman had become pregnant through adultery and wanted to hide the evidence from her husband so she attempted abortion through needling. After being needled four times, the abortion was successful, but the woman died of abdominal inflammation (peritonitis).[78]

Surgical abortions also seem to have been somewhat common in urban China and they often took place in privately run health clinics or in STD clinics that offered abortions on the

[75] SMA, Q180-2-2460.
[76] Ma, "Gender, Law, and Society," 31.
[77] Susan M. Rigdon, "Abortion Law and Practice in China: An Overview with Comparisons to the United States," *Social Science Medicine* 42, no. 4 (1996): 548.
[78] Sommer, "Abortion in Late Imperial China," 140-141.

side.[79] A number of foreign and Chinese-run public hospitals and clinics simply refused to treat women seeking abortions or seeking treatment for post-abortion health problems (excessive bleeding, infection, etc.) because the hospital did not want to be associated with illegal abortion cases.[80] In some cases, Western-style hospitals in Shanghai even reported abortion seekers to the local police and helped with community surveillance.[81] Given these realities, women who could afford more expensive treatment in Shanghai (and to a lesser degree in other cities) sought out private clinics, staffed by both foreign and Chinese practitioners of Western medicine. In these types of establishments, services were many times more expensive than self-administering abortifacients or seeing a native healer, but the chances of getting caught were also much lower and the facilities were more sanitary.[82] In fact, some of the same doctors who held legitimate positions at hospitals or health clinics secretly performed abortions on the side to make extra money.[83] In a case from 1931, the director of Huifen Medical Clinic, a health clinic located in one of Beijing's *hutongs*, was charged with regularly performing illegal surgical abortions. Police investigators found that the director, Wang Guoqing, was not only selling heroine but also was burying the bodies of the dead fetuses in a small grave at the base of the western wall of his courtyard. Wang was a 30-year-old pharmacist from Wuqiang county in Hebei province with a wife and three children. He claimed that the abortions he was charged with performing were done to save the lives of pregnant women who were sick and experiencing difficult and life threatening pregnancies. Wang claimed that he did not perform abortions for healthy women, but that occasionally women who had undergone an abortion [elsewhere] brought the corpses to him

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[79] "Sheyan: duotai yu jieyu" [Community Statement: Abortion and Birth Control], *Xinghua* 27, no. 31: 1; "Xingbingyuan mimi weiren duotai" [STD Hospital Secretly Performs Abortions], *Shenbao* 15, no. 20606 (1930): n.p.

[80] Ma, "Gender, Law, and Society," 174.

[81] Ma, "Gender, Law, and Society," 157.

[82] Ma, "Gender, Law, and Society," 160.

[83] SMA, Q186-2-21165.

to be buried nearby. The police uncovered the remains of several babies, as well as heroin, and Wang was convicted of both charges.[84] Had the case been brought to trial after 1935 when therapeutic abortion was legalized, Wang may have been able to evade punishment if he could convincingly argue that the pregnancies were life threatening. The problem of underground surgical abortions seems to have been so common that at various times, municipal governments ran investigations which specifically targeted doctors performing shady underground abortions. In Tianjin, for example, under pressure from a Catholic home for children, the municipal government ordered the Ministry of Health to crack down on practitioners of abortion, arguing that abortions were harmful to society.[85] Similarly, police penalized abortion clinics that illegally advertised their services in periodicals, as in the case of the Tianjin Ming Medical Clinic (*Ming zhenliao)* which openly advertised that it offered abortions.[86]

Condoms and Other Contraceptives

Records reveal that from the 1920s onward condoms (*baoxiantao* or *guitoutao*) were being sold in drugstores in major urban centers in China, particularly port cities.[87] However, they were never particularly popular. Historian Yuehtsen Juliette Chung observes that although foreign-funded condoms were available at Peking Union Medical College, "the idea of using condoms did not seep into Chinese men's mentality."[88] The general distaste for condoms among men in China, as we will see, continues to this day. When asked why they did not use condoms, many men cited the fact that they diminish the male sexual experience.[89] In addition to general lack of popularity, other factors may have also made procuring condoms more challenging. In

[84] BMA, J181-031-03649.
[85] TMA, J0025-2-003626-030; TMA, J0116-1-000615.
[86] TMA, J0116-1-000616-064.
[87] Xu Wancheng, *Zuixin shiyan nannü biyunfa* [The Newest Experimental Birth Control Methods for Men and Women] (Shanghai: Guoguang shudian, 1941), n.p.
[88] Yuehtsen Juliette Chung, *Struggle for National Survival: Chinese Eugenics in a Transnational Context, 1896-1945* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 119.
[89] Yu, "The Birth Control Movement in Republican Cities," 347.

1927, the Beijing police briefly considered policing the sale of condoms. The official police report charged that selling French and Japanese-made birth control pills, devices, and condoms was in fact more harmful to the public than the sale of pornographic books (*yinshu*).[90] Despite local opposition to the sale of condoms, it is unlikely that condoms were systematically banned in any one city. When they are mentioned in the archive, it is not in connection with birth control. Instead, condoms were often used to transport illegal drugs. In 1947, for example, in Beijing a man named Liu Tingyu was caught transporting nine *jin* of heroine in more than 20 condoms in his cotton vest as part of a large scale crime syndicate.[91] Similarly, in 1948, the Tianjin Municipal Bureau of Health investigated a case in which a woman was caught trafficking morphine and opium in rubber condoms.[92] In addition to being unpopular, it is likely that condoms rarely appear in the archive because they were not explicitly banned and therefore had no reason to show up in legal records.

Other contraceptive methods recommended in sexual hygiene guides included the use of the withdrawal method, abstinence, and washing after sex. One guide advised that women wash out their vaginas to drown the sperm (*nichu jingfa*) "the way that prostitutes do."[93] Other recommended birth control strategies included inserting spermicide, *Form Powder*, a foaming spermicide applied to a sponge (later proven to be dangerous), cervical caps, and concoctions of cocoa butter and acetic acid into the vagina prior to sex.[94] Gail Hershatter even speculates that infertility caused by acute sexual transmitted diseases such as syphilis may have prevented higher rates of pregnancy among Republican-era prostitutes, an argument that could be applied

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[90] BMA, J181-018-21000.
[91] "*Ping pohuo mimi duku* [Beiping Secret Drug Stash Exposed], *Shenbao* 6, no. 25052 (1947): n.p.
[92] TMA, J0116-1-000707-107; TMA, J0116-1-000707-108.
[93] Xu, *Zuixin shiyan nannü biyunfa*, n.p; Mao, "*Yiyao wenda,*" 18.
[94] Xu, *Zuixin*, n.p; Matthew Connelly, *Fatal Misconception: The Struggle to Control World Population* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008), 101.

to the population at large since venereal disease seems to have been widespread in major cities.[95]

Abortion in the Records: People and Circumstances

Because abortion was illegal during the Republican period, most evidence of abortions comes from court records, and in theory, one could use these records to estimate the number of prosecuted abortions in certain Republican cities. In contrast, it is difficult to estimate the extent of contraceptive use because these practices were not consistently policed and went largely unrecorded. Although it was illegal to either perform or undergo an abortion, enforcement of the law was both uneven and unsystematic, further complicating efforts to estimate contraception and abortion rates.[96] Abortion records in the archives of major Chinese cities make up only a fraction of the total crimes on record. Michael H. K. Ng argues that beginning in 1910, when the national criminal code was restructured, crimes such as abortion were re-categorized as police contraventions (*weijing*).[97] Therefore, as part of the expanding role of the police in urban governance, police were permitted to settle abortion cases independently of standard legal proceedings, a practice that remained more or less unchanged until 1949. As a result, crimes such as abortion were not reflected in local crime statistics, making it even more challenging to estimate to what extent abortion was practiced and policed.[98] In addition, criminal records—particularly in Shanghai—tended to highlight the offenses of lower class women, who often first saw inexpensive native healers. If these abortions resulted in serious after effects, the women would be forced to go to the hospital, where they might be turned in to the authorities.[99] Women

[95] Gail Hershatter, *Dangerous Pleasures: Prostitution and Modernity in Twentieth-Century Shanghai* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 175.
[96] Rigdon, "Abortion Law and Practice in China," 544.
[97] Michael H. K Ng, *Legal Transplantation in Early Twentieth Century China: Practicing Law in Republican Beijing* (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2014), 95-96.
[98] Ma, "Gender, Law, and Society," 76-82.
[99] Ma, "Gender, Law, and Society," 176-177.

who underwent abortions in more hygienic settings with trained medical practitioners likely would have no need to visit the hospital and risk being caught. Based on this skewed evidence, the primary form of birth control in urban China seems to have been abortion via the consumption of *tiaojingyao* or *tongjingyao*, application of herbal concoctions, or related methods. Records also suggest that certain types of women were more likely to undergo abortions: adulterous women, those having premarital sex, and widows who wanted to maintain the façade of being "chaste widows," a valued title in late imperial and Republican China.

Adultery (*tongjian*) as the impetus for consuming *tongjingyao* or inducing abortion is a recurring theme in Republican abortion records (and those from later periods). Although infidelity was no longer illegal in the Republican period as it was in the Qing dynasty, numerous records cite fear of evidence of an affair as the reason for a woman in an extramarital relationship seeking to prevent or terminate her pregnancy.[100] In some cases, the decision appears to be her own, while in others her lover or a family member pressured her into having an abortion.

Cases of premarital sex resulting in abortion are also fairly frequent, as young women or their family members sought to cover up the shameful evidence of intercourse before marriage, an act that could make those young women unmarriageable.[101] In one case, two young women even travelled from their rural villages to Shanghai to undergo abortions after premarital sex.[102] Similarly, a number of cases involve widows who had intercourse after the deaths of their husbands.[103] Though no longer married, so to speak, the widows were expected to preserve their

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[100] SMA, Q180-2-15037; TMA, J0044-2-023274; TMA, J0043-2-010192; TMA, J0044-2-029693; BMA, J183-002-21722; Ma, "Gender, Law, and Society," 235.

[101] "Youjian weichengnian nüzi bufang fangmian tiqi gongsu" [Court Prosecution for Luring an Underaged Girl], *Shenbao* 15, no. 22335 (1935): n.p.; TMA, J0044-2-038811; SMA, Q180-2-2348.

[102] "Nongcun pochan shengzhong, lai Hu duotai rizhong" [Rural Bankruptcy, Many Come to Shanghai for Abortion], *Shenbao* 12, no. 22775 (1936): n.p.

[103] SMA Q180-2-14737; Zi Nan, "Guafu duotai" [Widow Abortion], *Shenbao* 19, no. 22500 (1935): n.p.

chastity out of loyalty to their husbands and husbands' families. Appearing unchaste not only was shameful but also made the widows ineligible to receive a pension from their deceased husbands' families.[104] In other cases, the widow's lover—who was often already married—arranged for her to have an abortion without her permission, probably to protect himself from charges of adultery. This happened in the case of a 34-year-old Jiangbei widow, Shen Xu, whose married lover, Xiang Shijun, paid a Chinese medicine healer 30 *yuan* to insert herb roots into Shen's womb and induce abortion.[105] Many such cases ended in death, legal penalties, or both.

While court records suggest that abortion in Republican cities transcended socio-economic boundaries, I offer a few brief observations with respect to the class and occupational dimensions of urban abortion. First, according to the records I viewed, the majority of abortion seekers caught by the police were factory workers, domestic servants, or other working class individuals, who likely had little education.[106] This is not particularly surprising given that in Republican cities, factory work, entertainment, domestic servitude, and prostitution constituted some of the primary forms of female employment.[107] This finding also fits with Susan Rigdon's and Ling Ma's finding that middle and upper class women who underwent abortions did so in more hygienic and expensive clinics.[108] Such clinics offered greater privacy and shielded abortion seekers from the law, and thus few of these cases can be found in court records.[109]

Second, abortions among actresses, courtesans, prostitutes, and other female entertainers

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[104] SMA, Q180-2-14737.

[105] SMA, Q180-2-14379.

[106] SMA, Q180-2-2348; BMA, J181-021-32692, SMA, Q180-2-15037; SMA, Q180-2-14379; "Nü xuesheng zhi canju [The Tragedy of a Female Student], *Shenbao* 15, no. 19963 (1928): n.p; Christian Henriot, *Prostitution and Sexuality in Shanghai: A Social History, 1849-1949*, trans. Noel Castelino (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 125.

[107] Emily Honig, *Sisters and Strangers: Women in the Shanghai Cotton Mills, 1919-1949* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992), 21; Gail Hershatter, "Regulating Sex in Shanghai: The Reform of Prositution in 1920 and 1951," in *Shanghai Sojourners*, Frederic Wakeman Jr, and Yeh Wen-hsin, eds. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 145.

[108] Rigdon, "Abortion Law and Practice in China," 544.

[109] Ma, "Gender, Law, and Society," 205.

were also fairly common, but the media tended to play up the link between these professions and voluntary or coerced abortion.[110] Numerous articles discussed the hardships singers, prostitutes, and famous actresses faced, criticized their occupations and individual morality, and decried the practice of undergoing one or more abortions.[111] The fact that prostitution was legal for most of the Republican era and that differences in status among entertainers, courtesans, and prostitutes diminished over that period undoubtedly contributed to this trend.[112] Public denouncement of entertainers and prostitutes betrayed elite male anxieties about national stature, as well as the growing association of these professions with social disorder and cultural backwardness, rather than with the cultivated courtesans of the nineteenth century.[113]

Returning to the case of Jiang Qing mentioned in the introduction, this background knowledge provides useful context for deciphering the mystery of Jiang's alleged abortions. As a famous singer and one residing in Shanghai, it is plausible that Jiang would have had access to an abortion in the late 1930s. It is also possible that such a story was circulated merely to mar her reputation and that of other female entertainers. As for Jiang's second abortion several years later, as the next chapter will demonstrate, some of the first women to gain official permission to undergo abortions under the Communists were elite female cadres, and Jiang's position was the apogee in the hierarchy of top female cadres.

Translating Modernity: New Vocabularies and New Meanings

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[110] J181-023－07469; J181-021-32692; "Huoshan baofa (liu yuefen de wunü zhang: liu yue san ri (ponü datai)" [Volcanic Eruption: June Dancer's Account: June 3 (A Girl's Forced Abortion), *Wuchang texie* [Dance Scene] 2 (1939): n.p.; "Kelian jinü duotai zhisi" [Pitiful Prostitute Dies From Abortion], *Shenbao* 22, no. 21691: n.p.

[111] "Wei jinü datai, beigao fa juban" [Abortion for a Prostitute, the Accused was Detained and Dealt With], *Shenbao* 4, no. 25475 (1949): n.p.; Hui Mingzeng, "Cong Luo Guifang de duotai shuoqi" [Talking about Luo Guifang's abortion], *Wufeng banyue qikan* [Dance Bimonthly Periodical], 2, no. 3 (1938): 15; "Mou hongxing duotai sici" [A Certain Celebrity had Four Abortions," *Yingwu xinwen* [Film and Dance News] 1, no. 12 (1935): 5.

[112] Hershatter, *Dangerous Pleasures,* 20.

[113] Gail Hershatter, *Women in China's Long Twentieth Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 38.

The story of eugenics and birth control in China is inseparable from global debates on these topics. In 1922, the world renowned birth control advocate and founder of the American Birth Control League (later the Planned Parenthood Foundation of America), Margaret Sanger, visited East Asia.[114] In the political climate of the New Culture Movement—a movement among Chinese reformers in the 1910s and 20s to reconcile "traditional" culture, liberal notions of individual rights, and modernizing discourses after the founding of the Republic of China—influential reformers, such as Hu Shi and Cai Yuanpei, welcomed Sanger to China. Hu even personally translated her initial speech at Beijing National University, which stressed the importance of birth control.[115] Sanger's visit resulted in countless newspaper articles debating the merits and shortcomings of birth control.[116] Her works, as well as those of her British colleague Marie Stopes, were promptly translated into Chinese, and Sanger's speech from Beijing National University was reprinted in full in *The Ladies' Journal* and *The Women's Review*.[117]

The significance of Sanger's visit to China, in my opinion, is often overstated in Western histories of birth control in China, which tend to rely heavily on English-language sources and elite writings on the topic and attribute too much novelty to the ideas of Western eugenicists.

[114] Mirela David, "The Task is Hers:" Going Global, Margaret Sanger's Visit to China in 1922," *Asian Pacific Perspectives* 14, no. 1 (Fall 2016), https://www.usfca.edu/center-asia-pacific/perspectives/v14n1/david.

[115] Mirela David, "Free love, marriage, and eugenics: global and local debates on sex, birth control, venereal disease and population in 1920s-1930s China" (Unpublished doctoral dissertation, New York University, 2014), 32; Margaret Sanger, "Shengyu zhicai de shenme yu zenyang" (Birth control's what and how), translated by Hu Shi, transcribed by Xiao Feng and Mao Chen, *The Ladies' Journal* 8, no. 6 (1922): 129.

[116] Zhou Jianren, "Chan'er zhidu gaishuo" [A Summary of Childbirth Limitation], *Dongfang Zazhi* (East Asian Miscellany) 19, no. 7 (1922); "Shengyu zhicai de shenme yu zenyang" [The What and How of Fertility Sanctions] *Women's Magazine* (Funü zazhi) 8, no. 6 (1922); Michelle T. King, "Margaret Sanger in Translation: Gender, Class, and Birth Control in 1920s China," *Journal of Women's History* 29, no. 3 (2017): 61; Qin, "Talking about the Issue of Birth Control" [Tan jieyu wenti], *Women's Magazine* (Funü zazhi) 2, no. 1 (1941): 44.

[117] David, "Free Love, Marriage, and Eugenics," 171; Marie Stopes (Situopo), *Ertong Ai* [Wise Parenthood], Shanghai: Guanghua Publishing House (Guanghua shuju), 1926; Margaret Sanger, "Jieyu zhuyi" [Birth Control Doctrine], Chen Haicheng, trans., Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1928.

However, one significant contribution of Sanger's trip to China—or at least of the historical moment her trip has come to represent—was a critical linguistic shift. Records from the late imperial period include references to abortion, called *datai* (literally, hitting the fetus), *duotai,* or *zhuitai* (the last two referring to a falling or dropping fetus). However, the terms *shengyu kongzhi* and *shengyu jiezhi*, the literal translations of Sanger's expression "birth control," only came into use in China in the 1920s. Other shorter expressions for birth control, such as *jieyu* (literally "to conserve births") and the alternative term, *biren* (meaning "to avoid pregnancy") also emerged in this period. While the latter term is rarely used today, the former has remained in common usage up to the present. What is the etymology of these terms?

Before answering this question, consider the fact that through new and changing discourses on what it means to be modern and ways of knowing the natural world, early twentieth century China experienced an epistemological shift, which manifested itself in part through linguistic changes. As Leon Rocha has demonstrated, prior to the twentieth century, the word *xing* referred to human nature. In the late 1910s and early 1920s, however, it came to mean "sex" in addition to its original meaning.[118] Rocha explains that:

> The twentieth-century word *xing* and its associated compounds were, for the May Fourth New Culture generation, about 'neutrality'; they referred to biological facts of nature, they were 'modern'. To use *xing* for sex was to 'call a spade a spade': if sex was human nature, there ought not to be any shame in talking about it in a plain, straightforward, honest, unpretentious and immediate language, and there was no need to veil sex underneath thick layers of metaphors.[119]

In other words, as part of the New Culture Movement's iconoclasm, reformers argued that—much as Michel Foucault suggests of the West in his "Repressive Hypothesis"—Confucian morality suppressed sexuality, a universal, natural condition and one that could be understood

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[118] Leon Antonio Rocha, *"Xing: The Discourse of Sex and Human Nature in Modern China," Gender and History 22, no. 3 (2010): 606.*
[119] Leon Antonio Rocha, *"Xing," 610.*

through modern science. In an effort to modernize, scientize, and liberate China, May Fourth reformers replaced the euphemistic language once used to refer to sex with an explicit and broader term: *xing*.

The path to the contemporary Chinese meaning of *xing* actually followed a course similar to those of many neologisms and loanwords in contemporary Chinese in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. As Lydia Liu observed, "the Japanese used *kanji* (Chinese characters) to translate European terms, and the neologisms were then imported back into the Chinese language" in one of three forms: (1) two character compounds consisting of Chinese characters only found in pre-modern Japanese but not in Classical Chinese; (2) Classical Chinese expressions used by the Japanese to translate Western terms that were then reincorporated into Chinese but with a changed meaning—expressions termed "return graphic loans"; (3) modern Japanese compounds with no Classical Chinese equivalent.[120] Within this framework, *xing* falls into the second category as a return graphic loan, a word first formulated in Classical Chinese by Japanese scholars and then imported back into China with a different meaning.[121]

With this in mind, what about the origins of expressions like *shengyu kongzhi*, *shengyu jiezhi*, *jieyu*, and *biren*? All of these terms begin appearing in Chinese press and writings in the 1920s, and indeed, it is possible that all of these terms originated from Japanese translations of English words. *Shengyu kongzhi* and *shengyu jiezhi*—which typically refer to broad social categories—could both be translations of the Japanese word *sanji seigen* (産児制限), and *biren* could come from the Japanese word *hinin* (避妊). All of these Japanese expressions correspond to the English term "birth control" in contemporary Japanese. Because the formulation of characters in *hinin* appears earlier in Japan than in China, it is likely that *biren* comes from

[120] Lydia H. Liu, *Translingual Practice: Literature, National Culture, and Translated Modernity—China, 1900-1937* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), 32-34.
[121] Leon Antonio Rocha, *"Xing," 617.*

Japanese.[122] As for *sanji seigen* and the Chinese equivalents, because Margaret Sanger visited both China and Japan in 1922 and earlier Japanese works do not make reference to this expression, it is possible that the terms *sanji seigen* in Japan and *shengyu kongzhi/shengyu jiezhi* in China emerged simultaneously.[123] Tiana Norgren notes in her book on birth control and abortion in modern Japan that, "indeed in the 1940s and early 1950s, abortion and contraception were popularly understood to be two different forms of 'birth control' (sanji seigen): only later did the term come to be used exclusively to refer to contraception, as was intended by the Western family planning advocated who coined the phrase."[124] In China, as well, a fuzzy linguistic distinction existed between abortion and prophylactics. As for the term *jieyu*, there is no equivalent expression in pre-modern or modern Japanese, which likely means that this term is not a product of translingual borrowing, but a term unique to Chinese in the twentieth century. Regardless of its origin, *jieyu*, more so than the three other terms, continues to be used in contemporary Chinese. From this analysis, it is evident that the process of forging discourses on sex and birth control in China and the semantic shifts involved cannot be disentangled from global cultural and linguistic flows.

Eugenics, Orientalism, and the Quest for Modernity

Following Sanger's visit to China, a broad range of materials on population and birth

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[122] "Eiseikyoku" [Bureau of Hygiene], "Ninshin seigen matawa hinin-dama 'atoshia' to shōshi hanbai suru mono no kudan" [Regarding the Sales of Birth Control or 'Athosa' Contraceptive Balls], National Archives of Japan Digital Archive, 1909, https://www.jacar.archives.go.jp/aj/meta/MetSearch.cgi.

[123] "Teishutsu Shin-sen jisshi-go no taisaku nami gaikōmondai ni-seki suru shitsumon ni tai suru gaimu naimu ryō daijin tōben-sho" [After the General Election, Policy and Diplomatic Questions Were Asked, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister of Education Answered Them], National Archives of Japan Digital Archive, 1925, https://www.digital.archives.go.jp/das/meta/M0000000000000268628; this is one of the earliest sources I could find in the National Archives of Japan Digital Archive that mentioned the term "sanji seigen"; it is also possible that *shengyu kongzhi* evolved from the Japanese term "ninshin seigen" (妊娠制限), which appears in Japanese texts at least as early as 1909 but is not in common use today.

[124] Tiana A. E. Norgren, *Abortion Before Birth Control: The Politics of Reproduction in Postwar Japan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 83.

control, often complete or partial translations of foreign texts from Japan, the Soviet Union, the United States, Britain, and Germany proliferated in urban China.[125] Newspapers and women's magazines also helped disseminate the writings of prominent foreign eugenicists, physicians, sexologists, and public figures, such as Sir Francis Galton—who coined the term "eugenics", Annie Besant and Charles Bradlaugh, both early supporters of birth control in England and Colonial India, Ernst Grafenberg, the inventor of the intrauterine device, and Havelock Ellis, a eugenicist and one of the founders of the sexology movement, to name a few.[126] Chinese eugenicists took particular interest in the Soviet Union, where abortion was made legal and offered virtually free of charge between 1920 and 1936 to encourage women's involvement in the labor force and prevent dangerous home abortions.[127] The Soviet case therefore was referenced frequently in publications weighing the benefits of legalizing abortion versus promoting birth control use.[128]

These writings, as well Sanger's and Stopes', further contributed to the existing domestic discussion of eugenics and the fate of the Chinese "race," an emerging notion in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that posited that biological similarities more than socio-cultural ties bound together the people within China's borders.[129] As Frank Dikotter has shown, eugenic thinking in China was not merely imported wholesale from abroad, but rather the scientific language of biological determinism served to further legitimize eugenic ideas that had

[125] Dong Pingmei, "Shengyu jiezhi de lilun he shiji" [The Theory and Practice of Birth Control], *Dongfang zazhi* [East Asian Miscellany] 33, no. 7: 55-61.

[126] "Zui xin biyunfa" [The Newest Birth Control Methods] (Shanghai: Chinese Eugenics and Birth Control Promotion Society, 1948), 1; Sun, *Jieyu yi yousheng*, 7; Yan Yukuan, *Jieyu de lilun yu fangfa* [Birth Control Theory and Methods] (Shanghai: Dadong Shuju, 1933), 10.

[127] Alexandre Avdeev, Alain Blum, and Irina Troitskaya, "The History of Abortion Statistics in Russia and the USSR from 1900 to 1991," *Population* (English Edition) 7 (1995): 41.

[128] Sun Yanyu, *Jieyu yi yousheng* [From Birth Control to Eugenics] (Shanghai: Meilingdeng & Co., 1949), 1.

[129] Frank Dikotter, *The Discourse of Race in Modern China* (London: C Hurst & Co, 1992), 3; Gu, Weekly Comment: Early Marriage and Birth Control [Yizhou jianping: zaoyun yu jieyu] *Shanghai dangsheng* 1 (1935): 22.

long been present in China, a process Dikotter describes as a "cultural reconfiguration" rather than a break with tradition.[130] For example, *taijiao*—literally, fetal education—is the idea that a fetus can be educated in utero to optimize its intelligence and health and ensure that it will not be born prematurely or with birth defects. Writings promoting *taijiao* in China date from the Han dynasty (206 BC-220 AD) and scholars have suggested that *taijiao* was an early and enduring precursor to eugenics with uniquely Chinese cultural meanings. In the Republican period, *taijiao* was further legitimized by the language of science and eugenics.[131]

China's foremost sexologists, Ye Dehui and Zhang Jingsheng, also contributed to this conversation on sex and eugenics in their respective works, which aimed "to produce a new nation inhabited by a stronger and more intelligent Chinese race, more able to defend itself against foreign powers."[132] On the one hand, Ye drew on Han dynasty religious and medical texts to argue that China had long had an "indigenous" field of sexology that predated Western science and was superior to it. On the other hand, inspired by the disparate writings of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Havelock Ellis, and Marie Stopes, Zhang argued that foreign sexological discourses needed to be imported immediately in order to produce a strong and emancipated China free from traditional Confucian sexual repression.[133] Despite their nearly diametrically opposing perspectives with regard to sexology in China, both men's work had eugenic undertones and sought answers to the problem of so-called national and racial weakness.

Similarly, Sanger's and Stopes' eugenic tracts also conveyed the urgency of racial strengthening. However, unlike Ye and Zhang, Sanger and Stopes were primarily focused on the

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[130] Dikotter, *Imperfect Conceptions,* 8.
[131] Tina Phillips Johnson, *Childbirth in Republican China: Delivering Modernity* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2011), 39.
[132] Leon Antonio Rocha, "Translation and Two 'Chinese Sexologies': *Double Plum* and Sex Histories," in *Sexology and Translation: Cultural and Scientific Encounters across the Modern World*, ed. Heike Bauer (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2015), 154-155.
[133] Rocha, "Translation and Two 'Chinese Sexologies,'" 155.

fate of the white race. They favored "purifying" and "improving" the Caucasian race by decreasing the prevalence of "genetic" disabilities, mental illness, and sexual transmitted diseases. This concern dovetailed with anxieties about "race suicide," a hypothetical situation in which higher birth rates among the poor and people of color would outstrip birth rates among Caucasians, leading to non-whites outnumbering whites. For these reasons, Sanger, Stopes, and other advocates of "negative eugenics" supported reducing the birth rate among the poor, colonized, and sick people of the world with "undesirable" traits.[134]

Among Chinese elites, concerns about race and the fate of the nation had a particular formulation because of the tensions between the whiteness of Euro-American eugenics, Chinese notions of national identity, and the Otherization and semi colonization of China since the Opium Wars. In fact, Chinese feminists, birth controllers, and eugenicists agreed to varying degrees with Sanger and Stopes on the issues of birth control and eugenics, and elite opinions on these topics reflected a diversity of perspectives, many of which adapted certain aspects of Western discourses with local circumstances. Pan Guangdan, one of China's most distinguished Republican-era sociologists and eugenicists, shared Sanger's contention that sterilization of the lower classes could aid in racial regeneration by preventing the so-called "unfit" from reproducing. However, he also feared that birth control use among the superior and "quality" classes would lead to race suicide with the weak continuing to have large families and consequently overtaking the strong.[135] Others, however, believed that birth control did not pose a risk to the Chinese race.[136] Zhou Jianren, another distinguished Chinese eugenicist, for example, supported eugenics and birth control as a means to alleviate overpopulation, contending that birth

[134] Dikotter, *Imperfect Conceptions*, 105.
[135] David, "Free Love, Marriage, and Eugenics," 200.
[136] Li Tao'an, "Changshi tanhua: shengyu yu jieyu" [Common Sense Conversation: Birth and Birth Control]. *Dachangshi* 131 (1930): n.p.

control use would not lead to the end of the Chinese "race."[137] Rather than emphasizing negative eugenics, however, he envisioned enhancing the physical strength and health of the Chinese race as a way to prevent the racial extinction (*miezhong*) of Chinese vis-à-vis Whites.[138] Still others believed that birth control was unnatural, abortion was tantamount to murder, and coercive eugenics were unethical.[139] An article from *East Asian Miscellany* (Dongfang zazhi) published in 1934 argued that the Nazis' coercive sterilization of the handicapped, the Jews, and other "deviants" was immoral and fundamentally wrong since disabled or unintelligent people do not necessarily produce children with the same characteristics. In other words, the author took issue with what some eugenicists were claiming were inherited genetic traits.[140] Clearly, even the fundamentals of eugenic thinking were not uniformly agreed upon or universally endorsed.

As opposed to thinkers with strictly eugenic concerns, Sanger's and Stopes' writings outline a liberal feminist vision of female sexual independence as a crucial aspect of the international birth control movement. Although Sanger once admitted that "birth control is practically identical in ideal with the final aims of Eugenics," both Sanger and Stopes were also concerned with empowering women.[141] Both women felt that the ability to have an active and healthy sex life without the constant risk of pregnancy was not only essential for a happy marriage but would also liberate women from the physical burden of constantly being pregnant.[142] Moreover, sexual independence, the right to choose when to procreate, and freedom from successive pregnancies would ensure that women could improve their economic and social status in relation to men. Sanger and Stopes' pursuit of sexual independence for women and their

[137] David, "Free Love, Marriage, and Eugenics," 27.
[138] Dikotter, *Imperfect Conceptions*, 61.
[139] Gu Nan, "Changhsi tanhua: biyun yu duotai" [Common Sense Conversation: Birth Control and Abortion], *Tielu zhigong* [Railway Worker] 43 (133): 2-4.
[140] Gong Jin, "Guanyu deguo de qingpo jueyu lu (ouzhou tongxun)" [About the Law of Forced Sterilization in Germany (European Communication)] *East Asian Miscellany* 31, no. 9: 7-10.
[141] David, "The Task is Hers," https://www.usfca.edu/center-asia-pacific/perspectives/v14n1/david.
[142] Stopes, *Ertong Ai*, 37.

simultaneous endorsement of coerced sterilization for individuals such as the mentally ill, however, reveal a fundamental contradiction in their thinking.[143] Sanger's and Stopes' desire to empower the world's poor women conflicted with their elitist conviction that white, upper class, Euro-American Christians were morally superior to people elsewhere and that inferior groups especially needed to be pressured to have fewer children. Although ostensibly fighting for universal women's rights, and therefore access to ways to improve the socioeconomic status of women through control over fertility, in reality Sanger's and Stopes' commitment to female empowerment cannot be divorced from its eugenic origins.

Not all advocates of birth control and eugenics in China endorsed these approaches specifically for the sake of feminist liberation. Other advocates of birth control and eugenics focused on the value of having fewer children to cultivating wealthier families and healthier mothers. Building on the work of neo-Malthusians—who feared that overpopulation would lead to global resource shortages—and the work of birth control advocates like Sanger and Stopes, Chinese eugenicist Yan Yukuan argued in favor of birth control. In a 1933 book *Birth Control Theory and Methods*, Yan declared that a lower birthrate was necessary for the country to become wealthier, to avert war, and to prevent overuse of the land, a theory that came to dominate national and global discussions on the best way to achieve rapid economic development. In addition, Yan felt that the women of China needed to be saved from the challenges of overly large families. He argued that healthier and stronger mothers and children are more productive and enjoy a higher standard of living—lines of thinking endorsed, at least rhetorically, by the Chinese Communist Party beginning in the late 1950s.[144]

Other activists were more concerned with producing children with desirable qualities

[143] David, "Free Love, Marriage, and Eugenics," 179.
[144] Yan, *Jieyu*, 78.

than with preserving maternal health. Pan Guangdan argued that Chinese children—and therefore the nation—were falling behind due to insufficient education, a product of having too many poor, "low quality" children. Only through birth control use, he argued, could the Chinese stock be improved.[145] Like many of his peers, Yan Yukuan also felt that birth control efforts should focus on those who are poor, mentally ill, disabled, or have sexual transmitted diseases, while encouraging healthy "quality" births over sheer quantity. Another supporter of eugenics, Sun Yanyu, elaborated on this idea in a book he published in 1949 advocating for the sterilization of people with various illnesses so that their children could not acquire these traits.[146] Still others argued that birth control was necessary to prevent the births of unwanted "bastards," who were significantly more likely to turn to crime, begging, and bachelorhood, phenomena that contribute to societal disorder.[147] The lack of consensus about these issues was further complicated by diverse opinions with respect to population control measures.

Abandonment, Infanticide, Abortion in Public Discourse

When Margaret Sanger arrived in China, her visit coincided with the frenetic debates of the May Fourth Movement, which considered the best ways to modernize China so it could compete with and defend itself against foreign powers. At that time, Chinese reformers and foreign missionaries were devoting reams of paper to condemning Chinese women for undergoing abortions, committing infanticide, and abandoning unwanted infants. These Orientalizing and self-Orientalizing texts accused Chinese mothers of neglect and of being

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[145] Pan Guangdan, "Yousheng fukan: shengyu jiezhi de jige biaozhun" [Eugenics Supplement: Several Criteria for Birth Control], *Huanian* 4, no. 22 (1935): 431-435.
[146] Sun, *Jieyu*, 7.
[147] Wu Zelin, "Yazhou de jieyu wenti" [Asia's Birth Control Problem], *Tushu pinglun* [Book Reviews] 2, no. 6 (1934): 94; Gu, "Changshi," 2-4.

morally inferior to white, Christian women. These writings, in turn, put pressure on Chinese elites to dispel rumors about the prevalence of these issues. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the French Holy Childhood Association, a transnational religious philanthropic organization originally based in France, was also propagating this image of widespread child abuse and abandonment in China. The association even solicited donations among French Catholics to "save" orphaned Chinese children, both physically and spiritually. Henrietta Harrison speculates that the reason that this call for funds was so appealing to middle class French families was that it spoke to similar and contemporaneous issues of infanticide and child abandonment in France.[148]

Michelle T. King has shown that at the turn of the century infanticide was a common phenomenon worldwide, rather than an issue specific to China. Indeed, more than 20 percent of children were put into foundling homes in Paris, Milan, and other major cities in Europe at this time.[149] Countering Western assumptions of moral superiority and Orientalist accusations that the barbaric sexism inherent in Chinese culture led to the widespread abandonment or death of daughters, King highlights the diversity of perspectives with respect to this topic. Her work reveals that moralizing Chinese texts condemning infanticide predated the arrival of Westerners in China by many centuries. King convincingly argues that the Western imperialism and orientalism of the nineteenth century reframed what was in fact a global problem as a uniquely Chinese cultural problem of international concern.[150]

Discussions of infanticide in China often occurred alongside debates about the morality of abortions. Even Margaret Sanger openly denounced infanticide and abortion as methods of

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[148] Henrietta Harrison, "'A Penny for the Little Chinese': The French Holy Childhood Association in China, 1843-1951" *The American Historical Review* 113, no. 4 (2008): 76.

[149] Harrison, "'A Penny for the Little Chinese,'" 76.

[150] Michelle T. King, *Between Birth and Death: Female Infanticide in Nineteenth-Century China* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2014), 8.

controlling population growth, and yet she openly criticized missionaries who sought to prevent infanticide, including female infanticide, because she claimed those lives would not be worth living and would only contribute further to social ills like prostitution.[151] Sanger and Stopes, instead, encouraged the use of condoms, spermicidal sponges, and cervical caps. Debates about infanticide, abortion, and child abandonment predated Sanger's visit to China and continued long afterward. Many intellectuals both in China and abroad were in favor of population control but against abortion. In fact, they advocated birth control use as a way to *decrease* the number of cases of abortion, infanticide, and child abandonment.[152]

Another line of thinking that combined eugenics with humanitarian concerns argued that birth control was the solution to widespread poverty, economic inequality, and child abandonment in China. Maura Cunningham has researched the establishment of a robust child welfare network in Shanghai during the early twentieth century (1900-1953). Cunningham analyzes new discourses on the responsibilities of governments toward poor and refugee children, as well as child welfare as a site of Chinese and foreign cooperation.[153] In the eyes of Chinese and foreign reformers, religious and secular, children were often viewed as the blameless victims of capitalist inequality and unethical societal practices.

The play *Abandoned Child* (Qi'er), published first in 1937 and again in 1951, highlights the ongoing debate over the issue of abandoned children in China. *Abandoned Child* was written by a Chinese playwright influenced by the May Fourth and New Culture Movements, Zhang Min, and published in Shanghai by New Drama Press (*Xin yanju she*). This play is useful in conveying the types of discourses circulating in China at this time with respect to the treatment

[151] David, "Free Love, Marriage, and Eugenics," 178; Margaret Sanger, "Birth Control in China and Japan," October 31, 1922, https://www.nyu.edu/projects/sanger/webedition/app/documents/show.php?sangerDoc=101865.xml.
[152] Sun, *From Birth Control to Eugenics*, 7; "Jieyu yu duotai shaying" (Birth Control and Abortion as Baby Killing" *Yongsheng* (1936): 80.
[153] Maura Elizabeth Cunningham, "Shanghai's Wandering Ones: Child Welfare in a Global City, 1900–1953" (PhD dissertation, University of California, Irvine, 2014), 18-19.

of unwanted children and how this issue was linked to national weakness. The play is set in a soup kitchen for the poor somewhere in urban China, likely in Shanghai where the play was published. A mother in her twenties has recently abandoned her two or three-year-old son because she cannot afford to feed him. Although starving children huddle like ghosts on street corners, she hopes that someone with more money will find her son, take him in, and raise him. Although the young mother sobs over missing her son, her mother—the abandoned child's grandmother—repeatedly advises her daughter that she made the right decision. The grandmother says she cannot bear "listening to his [the boy's] calls of hunger, watching him get thinner day by day, living to starve to death."[154] The daughter argues that it's better to die together, but her mother counsels that, "We can barely survive. Why on earth would we want a child to follow us to death?"

When other men and women enter the scene, some argue that abandoning one's own flesh and blood is unthinkably cruel and that mothers who do so are like monsters. One woman says that she had had several children and all of them died young—not one survived. She blatantly declares that, "Poor people really should not have children." The play concludes with the young mother returning to the train station to find her abandoned son. She repeatedly calls "Child, Child!" and her son responds, "Mama, Mama!" In the end when the mother and abandoned child are reunited, the grandmother pulls them apart, forcing the child to leave on his own and the young mother to go home in tears.[155] For the grandmother, allowing the child to starve to death early on is preferable to a life of poverty on the brink of starvation.

This play illustrates in deliberately heart wrenching language the dilemmas that impoverished mothers faced. In this context, it makes sense why an abortion, when available,

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[154] Zhang Min, *Qi'er* (Abandoned Child) (Shanghai: New Drama Press, 1937), 4.
[155] Zhang, *Qi'er*, 18.

might be more appealing than abandoning or even killing one's own child in the face of hunger and destitution. The fact that this play was written by an elite male reformer reveals that maternal morality and the care of children were indeed central to wider debates: these issues were viewed as the products of "backwardness" and national weakness. The woman's conclusion that poor people should not have children can be interpreted as evidence of eugenic logic or a genuine commitment to the welfare of mothers and children, or both. In addition, the characters' repeated blaming of mothers for abandoning their children affirms the notion that children are the sole responsibility of mothers and therefore anything bad that befalls them is the fault of their mothers. Plays like this, while designed to shock and educate the masses (as the director's forward to the play implies) also served to reinforce stereotypes about China as a place with rampant abuse of children, whether via abandonment, infanticide, or abortion.

Relatedly, at various times in late imperial and Republican history, due to the high mortality rates associated with them, charitable organizations and orphanages were accused of abusing and even murdering the children they were charged with caring for.[156] These concerns stemmed in part from deaths of orphans due to disease and poor living conditions reported in the media, as well as the desire to rid China of imperialist influences embodied in foreign philanthropic—typically Christian—organizations.[157] While these types of concerns reached their peak in the Republican period, in fact fears about the abuse of children as a reflection of national weakness even endured into the early People's Republic. Tu Peilin, for example, was a reporter for the newspaper *Shenbao* in the late Republican period and became a journalist with the *Liberation Daily* (Jiefang ribao) after the Communist victory.[158] He carried on the tradition of

[156] Angela Ki Che Leung (Liang Qizi), "Relief Institutions for Children in Nineteenth-Century China," in *Chinese Views of Childhood*, ed. Anne Behnke Kinney (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1995), 251-252.
[157] Cunningham, "Shanghai's Wandering Ones," 180.
[158] "Tu Peilin," *Shanghai Local History Office*, accessed February 28, 2018,

exposing unethical behavior at charitable institutions.

In 1952, Tu published a report called "Infanticide Hall" (*Shaying tang*) chronicling the abuse of children in a foundling home called Ren'ai Hall in Shanghai. Ren'ai Hall was established in 1892 by a French clergyman. According to Tu, this philanthropic organization had separate quarters for babies, orphans, the elderly, and the disabled, and also cared for the unwanted daughters of impoverished families.[159] Tu said that at first Shanghai locals thought Ren'ai was a place of kindness and good deeds; they observed foreign priests in black robes and nannies (*momo*) in big white hats singing songs and praying for the salvation of irreverent people's souls. However, eventually local residents started noticing that each day more and more dead bodies of children were being placed outside the backdoor of the "Nanny Hall" (*momo tang)* for infants. In addition, locals heard crying within the hall and observed that children were entering but never leaving. Yet, no outsiders were permitted to enter the grounds to confirm these stories (figure 1.3).[160] While it is likely that these observations were at least partly accurate, the deaths of so many children were likely the result of chronic malnutrition, unsanitary living conditions, and illness due in part to the lack of resources available to philanthropic institutions at this time, rather than a product of malicious and deliberate abuse, starvation, and murder, as the report charged.[161] Nonetheless, incidents like these ensured that the fate of China's unwanted or less privileged children remained in the public focus, where these issues were widely discussed and debated in the Republican and early Communist periods. Fears of child abuse in orphanages no doubt influenced the decisions of women unable to care for their babies to resort

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http://www.shtong.gov.cn/node2/node2245/node4522/node10080/node10084/node63755/userobject1ai54188.html.

[159] Tu Peilin, *Shaying tang* [Infanticide Hall] (Shanghai: East China People's Publishing House [Huadong renmin chubanshe], 1952), 2.

[160] Tu Peilin, "Jiefang hou zai kujing nei daiqi weishang fulan de yi bu yinghai shiti [After Liberation, the corpses of babies that had not decayed yet were lifted out of a dried up well]," *Shaying tang* [Infanticide Hall] (Shanghai: East China People's Publishing House [Huadong renmin chubanshe], 1952): 5.

[161] Tu, *Shaying tang,* 10-11; Harrison, "'A Penny for the Little Chinese,'" 91.

to abortion.

Figure 1.3: "After Liberation, the corpses of babies that had not decayed yet were lifted out of a dried up well."

In addition to plays and journalistic exposes, debates about abortion, infanticide, and childhood abandonment also took the form of newspaper and magazine articles. An opinion piece and subsequent series of letters to the editor published in 1926 encompass many of the prevailing debates. *East Asian Miscellany* featured an article titled "Birth Control, Abortion, and Childcare" on the theory and practice of birth control. The magazine's editor and the author of the article, Ke, argued that neither birth control nor abortion could solve China's social problems, and as a result, a reader extensively debated with Ke the value of birth control to China.[162] Wu, the reader writing to the editor, stated that:

> In fact, in many isolated villages in our country, abortion and infanticide are still common due to poverty, backward culture, and bad habits…In [the city of] Changshu, regardless of whether a baby is male or female, if a woman gets pregnant with a fourth child, she will suffocate it in the toilet even if the family is relative well off…Abortion and infanticide are not small problems in our society. They are cruel, despicable, and

[162] Ke Shi, "*Shengyu jiezhi datai he ertong gongyu*" [Birth Control, Abortion, and Childcare], *Dongfang zazhi* [East Asian Miscellany] n.i. (n.d.): 5-6

absolutely should not exist in the twentieth century world.[163]

Wu continued by saying he felt that although people had fundamentally no idea what either birth control or abstinence were, they should be taught modern birth control methods to prevent further atrocities. Furthermore, he explicitly stated that birth control was not related to population or eugenics, but was instead a means to fight barbaric practices. Ke, although agreeing with Wu that abortion and infanticide were common in the countryside, maintained that although he did not "oppose the adoption of birth control methods by the poor," in reality Chinese people were too destitute and uneducated to understand how to practice contraception. He clarified that even if these methods were made simpler, they would likely be ineffective due to the limits of birth control technology.[164] Such elitist perspectives and assumptions that infanticide was primarily a rural practice were common in the public sphere.

Other publications from this period also exhibit a wide range of opinions regarding infanticide and abortion. One famous Chinese doctor, Lu Shifu, blamed Chinese druggists and doctors for cruelly and irresponsibly convincing innocent young girls whose periods did not arrive on time or who accidently became pregnant to take illegal abortifacient pills. According to the article, young women were told that these pills would clear up the entire problem, but in reality these medications were not always effective and could lead to severe vaginal inflammation or even death. Instead Lu encouraged young women to use spermicide during intercourse to prevent themselves from being faced with this type of situation and implored medical practitioners to act morally.[165]

Similarly to Lu, other authors blamed the commercialization of medicine and doctors'

[163] SMA, D2-0-625-24.
[164] SMA, D2-0-625-24.
[165] Lu Shifu, "Feifa zhidao jieyu de chawu he weixian" [The Errors and Dangers of Illegally Advising on Birth Control," *Xiashengming yu jiankang* [Summer Life and Health], 6 (1928): n.p.

greed for the ubiquity of abortion. One female author, Zhen Ni, published an article in *New Women's Monthly* in 1946 putting forth a number of intriguing and at times contradictory ideas. Zhen first argues that doctors mainly perform abortions because it is an easy way to earn a relatively large sum of money. Zhen comments that this type of phenomenon, however, is also common in "civilized" countries like Japan and Germany. According to Zhen, many women in China desire birth control so they can pursue study, careers, or economic security, but that they are rarely knowledgeable about Western birth control methods. Therefore, they resort to dangerous indigenous methods (*tufa*) of contraception and abortion or pay for expensive surgical abortions. Zhen writes that, "According to the medical point of view, the most appropriate time to abort a fetus is during the sixth month of pregnancy or later. The mother's health will be the safest if she has an abortion during the sixth month."[166] Zhen explains that most doctors prefer to perform abortions in the first three months of pregnancy because it is much easier to dispose of the evidence that way and therefore not get caught violating the law. She also warns that if the abortion is not performed in a sanitary environment, the mother can contract a dangerous infection. Like many of her contemporaries, Zhen instead recommends using birth control products such as spermicides, pessaries (*zigongtao*), or condoms, which were easily available for purchase in drug stores. While she wisely cautions that using a pessary too frequently can cause painful uterine inflammation, keeping with the widespread belief of the time both in China and abroad, Zhen warns that using a condom too often can lead to neurasthenic disorders among men. Like many other outspoken social critics, Zhen appropriates the language of science to substantiate her claims even as she makes statements later proven inaccurate.

As evinced by these writings, elite—typically male—perspectives dominated the

[166] Zhen Ni, "Duotai he biyun" [Abortion and Birth Control], *Xin funü yuekan* [New Women's Monthly] 4 (1946): 20-21.

Republican-era public sphere. In one of the previously mentioned articles, a magazine editor named Ke accuses a reader, Wu, of being ignorant about the masses of China and only focusing on the elite perspectives of China's handful of intellectuals. This, arguably, could be a charge made against many of China's most vocal Republican-era elites—Pan Guangdan, Zhou Jianren, and others—most of whom were highly educated with training abroad and teaching positions at elite universities. Pan Guangdan, for example, was educated at Qinghua University in China, as well as Dartmouth College and Columbia University in the United States. Similarly, Zhou Jianren was the younger brother of the acclaimed writer Lu Xun and a professor of human biology in China.[167] As the next section will show, women did contribute to these conversations, however their thinking often paralleled or mimicked those of their male colleagues. Disagreement over the ideal behavior of so-called modern women lay at the core of these elite debates.

Abortion, Birth Control, and the Ideal Woman

In the Republican period, two archetypes of the modern woman emerged in response to conservative Confucian ideals of women as "good wives" and "wise mothers" (*liangqi xianmu*): the "New Women" and the "Modern Girl."[168] According to Sarah Stevens, the New Woman and the Modern Girl represented contradictory views of modernity.[169] On the one hand, the New Woman presented the positive aspects of modernity. She was depicted as well educated,

[167] Frank Dikotter, *Sex, Culture and Modernity in China: Medical Science and the Construction of Sexual Identities in the Early Republican Period* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1995), 38.

[168] In the climate of the New Culture Movement, the family unit also emerged as a site of reformist debate. For more on competing visions of the "small family" (*xiao jiating,* the nuclear family as opposed to the traditional extended family) and how family structure in China changed throughout the twentieth century, see Susan Glosser, *Chinese Visions of Family and State, 1915-1953* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003) and Yan Yunxiang, *Private Life Under Socialism: Love, Intimacy, and Family Change in a Chinese Village, 1949-1999* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003).

[169] Sarah E. Stevens, "Figuring Modernity: The New Woman and the Modern Girl in Republican China" *NWSA Journal* 15, no. 3 (Fall 2003): 83.

politically active, and nationalistic, willing to forego marriage to advance and modernize the nation. On the other hand, the Modern Girl symbolized the fears associated with modernity," such as danger, alienation, and cultural loss. Stevens argues that in female-authored works, the Modern Girl was typically disillusioned with modernity and represented the struggle women faced in finding their voices in a changing China. In male-authored works, however, the Modern Girl was a femme fatale or *flaneuse* who embraced bodily pleasure and consumerism while rejecting chastity and monogamy. In this case, the Modern Girl represented male fears about female subjectivity.[170]

Stevens argues that these two archetypes at times can be difficult to distinguish, and indeed they overlap and diverge in interesting ways in Republican discourses on abortion and birth control. Writers—male and female—utilized the New Woman/Modern Girl dichotomy to further their arguments in support of birth control or abortion. While in many instances men's voices seem to have dominated the public discussion of eugenics, abortion, and birth control in China, women in fact also contributed to this public discourse, but not always in the ways we would expect them to. Ling Ma shows that some feminist writers in fact reinforced certain fixed understandings of the correct societal roles of women by representing urban women undergoing abortions as pure and hardworking, closer to the nationalistic New Woman than the hedonistic Modern Girl. Ma demonstrates that, in fictional works discussing the phenomenon of abortion among young women in urban China, by emphasizing the fact that these young women were trying to liberate themselves from marriage and economic dependence (and using this to justify the situations in which they found themselves needing abortions), feminist writers also

[170] Stevens, "Figuring Modernity," 83.

"perpetuated the centrality of chastity in determining a woman's worth and the legitimacy of her behavior."[171] In these works, the reader still shares the male gaze.

As with abortion, writers also used the New Woman/Modern Girl binary to various extents to support their arguments about birth control, but they did not always reify conservative representations of ideal women. Take for example a book called "Again to the Women" (*Zai gei nürenmen*) published in 1933 by Ma Guoliang, a member of the China Democratic League, an editor for the influential Shanghai pictorial company and eponymous pictorial, *Liangyou*, and the editor-in-chief of the women's magazine *Modern Woman* (*Jindai funü).* In his lengthy plea for birth control use, first Ma declares that, "The new Modern Girl is knowledgeable, empowered, and independent. She is not controlled by men."[172] Here, he seems to be praising the Modern Girl's independence. However, in a long passage on the importance of birth control his portrayal of her also takes on some of the characteristics of the self-sacrificing, patriotic New Woman:

> Children, many people have praised them, said they are the little angels of the family, that they are the Cupid who makes the love between a husband and wife even more profound.
>
> This is good if you can provide for them, as can some people who take more than one wife and raise a dozen or more children, for what they have is money.
>
> But you cannot imitate them, and if your ability to support yourself and your spouse is too limited, then you should not even have one child of your own.
>
> Many in our society are thieves and prostitutes, and there are many, many people who do not have food in their stomachs and shelter. But weren't they all born from a mother's womb?
>
> They were abandoned because their parents could not support them, and society did not hold the parents accountable for their children's upbringing. As a result, they will be left as bandits despised by all!….
>
> Of course, sexual fulfillment is necessary, and it is one of the key elements of a prosperous marriage. Children are the result of the fulfillment of sexual desire.

[171] Ma, "Gender, Law, and Society," 162-163.

[172] Ma Guoliang, *Zai gei nürenmen* [Again to the Women] (Shanghai: Shanghai Liangyou Book Printing Company, 1933), 8.

> We need sexual fulfillment, but at the same time we have to have birth control, or completely avoid childbearing! Lying ahead of us is this kind of society!
>
> People who fully understanding their own power and adopt birth control are worthy of praise. This is first for society—not only will we ourselves benefit substantially, but also the whole of society will reap the benefits.
>
> If you do not have the ability to raise a child on your own, you not only bring greater hardship upon yourself, but you also make your innocent child suffer….
>
> Unless you are a rich capitalist, your child will become the heir to the flesh and blood eating devil you created!
>
> So, you do not need to practice abstinence; [instead] use contraceptive methods to control your fertility….
>
> You [will] not have to worry about being unable to afford parenthood and that your child will be useless to society.
>
> Discard the selfish prejudices of individualism, and give your energy for the happiness of all mankind…
>
> You should practice birth control![173]

In this passage, Ma conflates the Modern Girl and New Woman archetypes. On the one hand, he praises the strength and independence of the Modern Girl and liberally acknowledges that sexual fulfillment is necessary for a happy, healthy marriage. On the other hand, he repeatedly invokes the image of the nation and mankind in general to justify birth control use. He argues that birth control is necessary to save lives, diminish suffering, and improve the country. Ironically, even as he implores the reader to "discard the selfish prejudices of individualism"—behavior associated with the Modern Girl—he invokes individualistic arguments to persuade readers that it is in their personal best interest not to have too many children. From the perspective of class, Ma's use of the term "rich capitalist" in a Marxist sense would seem to imply a disdain for the wealthy and yet Ma contends that only affluent people should be having a

[173] Ma, *Zai gei nürenmen*, 151-166.

lot of children, a borderline eugenic argument. In this case, he is not affirming the importance of individual morality (i.e. chastity) with respect to sexual satisfaction and instead is more focused on ethical childrearing and national reform.

Such overt discussions of reproduction, birth control techniques, and sexual liberation sat uneasily alongside contemporaneous discourses arguing that the ideal woman was pure and chaste (something akin to the New Woman). As suggested earlier, the trope of the ideal woman as one lacking or repressing sexual desire has a long history in China dating at least to the Song dynasty (960-1297). Mark Elvin, Matthew Sommer, Janet Theiss, and others have illustrated the ways in which control over female sexuality served as a source of state and cultural authority in the late imperial period. While the cult of chastity was primarily an elite practice in the Ming dynasty, Sommer argues that the Qing state expanded the expectation of chastity to commoners. The state's objectives were to create legally enforced, uniform sexual expectations and to ensure that all males, regardless of class, could share the same monopoly over their wives' sexuality.[174] Theiss complicates Sommer's claims by illustrating the limits of attempted state control over sexuality; she argues that the conflicting agendas of ordinary people and contradictory constructions of female sexual morality undermined state hegemony in this area.[175] These same tensions reemerge in the Republican and Mao eras, as the state sought to affirm a particular vision of sexual morality through various legal, social, and political mechanisms. But unlike in the past, the Nationalist and Maoist regimes were armed with the rhetoric of science.

Articles from women's magazines in the 1930s and 1940s use arguments grounded in morality as well as science to affirm the importance of premarital virginity. An article from

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[174] Matthew H. Sommer, *Sex, Law and Society in Late Imperial China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), 7-8.

[175] Janet Theiss, *Disgraceful Matters: The Politics of Chastity in Eighteenth-Century* China (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 211.

Women's Magazine published in 1941, argues that there are two types of chastity—not engaging in sex before marriage and not engaging in extramarital sexual relations—both of which are essential to maintaining individual purity.[176] Similarly, an article in *Medical News* (Yixun) argues that chastity is critical because an unmarried woman who has lost her virginity will never find a husband.[177] Other authors take a different approach to chastity, using the legitimating language of science to argue against premarital sex. For example, one article shifts the issue of premarital sex from a primarily moral one, as it was in imperial times, to a physiological issue. The author argues that premarital sex can expose couples to dangerous diseases and harm.[178]

Even as progressive writers upheld the ideal of premarital chastity, they frequently decried the outdated expectation that women will commit suicide if sexually violated or remain chaste if widowed. A feminist article in *Modern Woman*, explicitly entitled "Chastity, Love, Marriage" cautions that, "Often a boy will forcibly take an inexperienced girl's virginity. Other people will look down on her and the girl of course will be hurt. For the sake of her honor, she will be forced to marry someone she barely knows and does not love."[179] The article describes a well-known story in which a young college student is raped by a married taxi driver. When the young woman discovers that she is pregnant, she commits suicide out of shame. The author condemns this situation in favor of sexual reform. Yet, as Harriet Evans argues, even in the 1950s many of the narratives on sex were moralizing tales seeking to protect young women and their virginity.[180]

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[176] Hong Li, "Zhencao wenti" [The Chastity Problem], *Funü zazhi* [Women's Magazine] 2.2 (1941): 29.
[177] Xie Yunshou, "Duotai zui" [The Crime of Abortion], *Yixun* [Medical News] 2, no. 1 (1948): 3.
[178] Ren Jin, "Weihun fufu de xingxingwei" [Engaged Couples' Sexual Behavior], *Funü yuekan* [Women's Monthly] 6, no. 6 (1948): 59.
[179] Zuo Songfen, "Zhencao, aiqing, hunyin" [Chastity, Love, Marriage], *Xiandai Funü* [Modern Woman] 13 (1949): 11-12.
[180] Harriet Evans, *Women and Sexuality in China: Dominant Discourses of Female Sexuality and Gender Since 1949* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1997), 107.

With respect to birth control or abortion, the enduring importance of premarital chastity and marital fidelity caused anxiety among some vocal elites who felt that endorsement of birth control and decriminalization of abortion would enable and even encourage premarital sex and adultery.[181] In the late imperial and Republican periods, extramarital intercourse and fornication (typically premarital sex) were illegal for women, and perpetrators of these crimes could be tried in court. In 1935, this law was extended to male adulterers, though prosecutors continued to focus primarily on female offenders.[182] Condoning birth control use or abortion would seem, then, to be subtly undermining the legal and moral commitment to female chastity and marital fidelity. Patriarchs fears about the legalization of birth control and abortion were not completely unfounded. In fact, despite the criminalization of abortion, women continued to have abortions to hide evidence undermining the façade of widow or premarital chastity.[183]

Because of the controversy surrounding female sexuality, the legalization of abortion and was not universally supported by feminists. Some felt that seeking decriminalization of abortion would undermine the larger effort to acquire support for improving the general status of women. In fact, some feminist woman groups in the Republican period did not explicitly endorse the decriminalization of abortion. Even as they criticized the patriarchal practices that allowed women little control over their own bodies, because abortion was controversial even among women and these groups wanted to appeal to a larger swath of society, they chose to maintain a moderate position with respect to abortion.[184]

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[181] L.D. Weatherhead, *Controlling Sexual Life* [*xingshenghuo de kongzhi*] (Shanghai: Youth Association Books [qingnian xiehui shuju], 1936), 58.

[182] Alison Sau-Chu Yeung, "Fornication in the Late Qing Legal Reforms Moral Teachings and Legal Principles," *Modern China* 29, no. 3 (July 2003): 303; Lisa Tran, "Sex and Equality in Republican China: The Debate over the Adultery Law," *Modern China* 35, no. 2 (March 2009): 214.

[183] Ma, "Gender, Law, and Society," 218-219.

[184] Ma, "Gender, Law, and Society," 150-152.

Birth Control and Abortion: Theory Versus Practice

What can be ascertained from examining birth control and abortion practices and the debates surrounding them? On the one hand, there was indeed a disconnect between lofty elite notions of modern nationhood and the concerns of ordinary women presented in the beginning of the chapter. While intellectuals had the privilege to reflect on the fate of society, the meanings of modernity, and the collective role in ensuring healthier babies, in reality women who used birth control or underwent abortion did so for practical reasons framed by individual or familial concerns—not wanting an affair to be discovered, fearing the loss of a job due to pregnancy, or concern about the detrimental social implications of premarital sex. Indeed, the languages spoken by these two groups—intellectuals and birth control users—barely overlapped; rarely if ever did ordinary women articulate birth control or abortion in terms of eugenic progress or individual sexual rights. For these women, the need to control births was more than a theoretical or existential issue.

On the other hand, debates in the public sphere may very well have shaped access to and policing of emmenagogues and abortifacients. Advertisements for medicines with abortifacient properties, as we have seen, were fairly ubiquitous, tacitly endorsing female agency at least in the realm of individual consumption and subtly promoting the notion that one's body was one's own domain. Although abortifacient use could still result in legal sanction, by not policing contraception and at times laxly enforcing abortion laws, national and local authorities created a space in which women could make some of their own reproductive decisions without state intrusion. Ling Ma, for example, argues that sometimes judges lessened sentences for abortion seekers because they acknowledged that abortion was often a product of poverty, coercion, or dire circumstances. This selective policing of reproduction might suggest that powerholders were

engaging to a degree with ideas about individual rights and modern subjectivity. However, the link between elite eugenic concerns and individual contraceptive or abortion practices is more tenuous.

Conclusion

During the Republican period, birth control, population growth, and the "quality" of births became critical social issues, as Chinese elites linked individual health and reproduction to national unity and strength. As a result of domestic and global intellectual exchanges, reformers synthesized Chinese and foreign ideas about sex and reproduction. In addition, semantic blending took place between "scientific" language in the West and Japan and traditional Chinese medical discourses. Within the vibrant Republican public sphere, Chinese feminists, birth controllers, eugenicists, and reformers held a broad and heterogeneous range of opinions with respect to family structure, state authority, gender roles, and overpopulation. The tension between the idea of women as desired objects—embodying virtue and "Chineseness"—and women as economic producers, consumers, and desiring subjects was central to elite debates about reproduction.

Exploring the range of contraceptive and abortive techniques available to women and those they chose to employ demonstrates that abortion—assuming that emmenagogues can be characterized at abortifacients—was the most common form of fertility control that made it into the historical record but that it took on many forms derived from folk practices, traditional Chinese healing, and Western medicine. My investigation of the ways in which class, location, and education level shaped birth control praxis identifies three reasons for seeking abortion that cut across these categories: adultery, premarital sex, and intercourse among "chaste" widows.

While lower class women dominated both the court records and the media reports on abortion, these three themes emerge time and again in a wide variety of situations and among a diverse cast of characters. As the next chapter will show, these trends, concerns, and priorities with respect to birth control and reproduction did not simply disappear with the founding of the People's Republic. Rather, certain practices were temporarily suppressed or reconfigured to fit within a Communist framework and deployed as part of the Party's modernizing agenda.

Chapter 2: Less Reproduction, More Production:

Birth Control in the Early PRC, 1949-1958

This chapter examines birth control in China from the founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in October 1949 until 1958, highlighting historical continuities and breaks with the pre-Communist era. In the early years of the PRC, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) severely restricted access to birth control medicines and devices, sterilization surgeries, and abortions. However, over the next three decades the Party gradually reversed this policy and moved to aggressive birth prevention. The roots of the One Child Policy—enacted in 1979 and subsequently revised to allow for two births in 2015—can be found in China's pre-1979 population policies.[185] The gradual shift from pro-natalism to active population control began in the early 1950s with the first effort to loosen restrictions on birth control devices and surgeries.

How did high-level policy changes in the early years of the PRC inform individual experiences with contraception? What were people reading about birth control in the 1950s? Who was using contraception and under what circumstances?

In answering these questions, I make several arguments. First, in the 1950s, a gradual linguistic shift took place in discussions of birth control as subtler family planning rhetoric replaced overtly eugenic terminology. Second, despite an early ban on birth control publications, which was later reversed, literature on sex and birth control continued to be published. While some of the people I interviewed claimed that birth control and information about it were all but non-existent at this time, others said they learned about birth control through books and practiced the rhythm method or alternative techniques for fertility control.[186] Third, narratives on sex and

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[185] Tyrene White, *China's Longest Campaign: Birth Planning in the People's Republic, 1949-2005* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press: 2006), 5.

[186] Interview with author, Shanghai, August 10, 2016; interview with author, Shanghai, August 11, 2016; interview

birth control in women's magazines and sex handbooks varied widely. These narratives were often inconsistent, combining Ming and Qing-dynasty ideals of female chastity with "scientific" discourses on sex and Marxist arguments about productivity.[187] Debates at all levels of government about the ethics of birth control as well as a lack of reliable biomedical contraceptive methods added to the confusion. Finally, as with information about sex, access to birth control and contraceptive surgeries varied according to demographic factors. The CCP in particular encouraged workers to use birth control to increase agricultural and industrial production. This chapter ends at the close of 1958 when the Great Leap Forward (1958-1961), a campaign to shift China from an agrarian economy to a socialist planned economy through industrialization and collectivization, shifted focus away from family planning and new publications on birth control diminished drastically. The Great Leap resulted in the most devastating man-made famine in Chinese history with a death toll of 18 to 30 million people. This staggering loss of life changed the tenor of discussions on population control.

The Evolution of Language

During the first decade of the PRC, a gradual linguistic and epistemological shift took place in the area of birth control. In the Republican period, the most common words for contraception were *shengyu kongzhi* and *shengyu jiezhi*, direct translations of the English term "birth control" (see chapter 1for more on this topic). The CCP, however, replaced these terms with ones more specific to its reproductive vision. Phrases like *jihua shengyu* (literally, planned birth) and *biyun* (pregnancy prevention) came into more frequent use and marked an indigenization of what was originally a largely foreign or at least international discourse. This linguistic transition was indeed a significant one, marking a conceptual shift from *shengyu*

with author, Shanghai, August 30, 2016.

[187] Leon Rocha, "Sex, Eugenics, Aesthetics, Utopia" (PhD diss., University of Cambridge, 2010).

kongzhi (literally, birth control), a kind of passive and reactive response to overpopulation, to *jihua shengyu* (planned birth), an active and strategic engineering of the population.[188] The intention was to gradually change the primary form of birth control from abortion, the most prevalent method for fertility control in the Republican period, to other forms of birth prevention, namely condoms and cervical caps during this period.

This linguistic shift was part of the larger post-World War II international move from overtly eugenic terminology to the subtler language of family planning.[189] While eugenics had emphasized racial fitness, family planning was primarily concerned with alleviating poverty through smaller families and improved healthcare. Yet, in China at least, overtly eugenic language seems to have co-existed with family planning discussions of maternal health and sex education. This may be due in part to the fact that, in the early 1950s, China modeled itself in many respects after its closest ally, the Soviet Union. China borrowed heavily from its neighbor's fertility policies, which incentivized large families and prohibited contraception to promote collective consciousness.[190] As in the Soviet Union, Chinese women who had many children were honored as "glory mothers" (*muqin yinxiong*).[191] In the late 1950s and early 1960s, as relations with the Soviet Union began to sour, the literature in China on contraception stopped relying so heavily on information translated from foreign languages—Russian, English, German, Japanese, and French—and domestic research came to dominate the field of Chinese birth control.

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[188] Tyrene White translates *jihua shengyu* as birth planning; White, *China's Longest Campaign,* 39.

[189] Matthew Connelly, *Fatal Misconception: The Struggle to Control World* Population (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008), 114.

[190] Ekaterina Selezneva, "Struggling For New Lives: Family and Fertility Policies in the Soviet Union and Modern Russia," Ideas, https://ideas.repec.org/p/hit/hitcei/2015-8.html, 8.

[191] Chongyi Wang et al., *Dangdai zhongguo de weisheng shiye* [Public Hygiene Undertakings in Modern China], vol. 2 (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chuban she [China Social Sciences Press], 1986), 230; Anchee Min, *Red Azalea* (New York Anchor Books, 1994), 77.

"More Sons, More Happiness"

During the early years of the PRC, the government advocated pro-natalism, encouraging women to produce as many children as possible to augment the workforce. According to two elderly men I interviewed in Shanghai, the traditional Chinese adage, "more sons, more happiness" (*duozi duofu*), best illustrated China's early fertility policy.[192] Any efforts at fertility control, because of their association with Malthusianism, were deemed "bourgeois" and "capitalist" and therefore in opposition to the goals of the party-state.[193] In 1957, when prominent intellectuals openly criticized the state's natalist policies, they were thoroughly punished.[194] In terms of daily life, limited access to contraceptives, due to both resource scarcity and bans on contraceptive sales, as well as a lack of information about birth control use, were the most effective means of promoting natalism.[195] Instances in which the government took a hard stance against those attempting to regulate their fertility were typically cases of abortion, in which those responsible were caught and tried.[196] Yet, in its first decade of rule the CCP played a much less invasive role in the reproductive lives of its citizens than it would in the future.

In the long term, Party leaders determined that birth control facilitated state modernizing efforts and could offer a solution to lagging grain production and the resulting grain shortages, both pressing problems that peaked in the crisis of the Great Leap Forward.[197] Rather than openly acknowledging the impending food shortage, the issue was often framed in terms of

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[192] Interview with author, Shanghai June 8, 2016.

[193] Shi Chengli, "Jianguo yilai jihua shengyu gongzuo gaikuang" [Summary of Birth Planning Work After the Founding of the PRC], *Xibei renkou* [Northwest Population] (1980): 35.

[194] Judith Shapiro, *Mao's War Against Nature: Politics and the Environment in Revolutionary China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 22.

[195] Shanghai Municipal Archive (SMA), B242-1-585.

[196] ECNUA, En 0351-150-012.

[197] White, *China's Longest Campaign,* 43.

improving maternal and infant health, expanding childhood education, and reducing household burdens.[198]

Elite female cadres also played a part in pushing for greater access to abortion and sterilization, arguing that women could not "hold up half the sky" and continue their revolutionary work with too many children.[199] In fact, when the women's magazine, *New Women of China*, conducted a reader poll in 1955 about demand for birth control and abortions, urban cadres, followed by university professors, secondary school teachers, students, and factory workers, most desired birth control to limit family size. The poll results—226 written responses penned by urban individuals from much of eastern and central China who either supported or opposed birth control—were so significant that they were even secretly circulated among the highest echelons of the Communist Party.[200] Although debates about birth control in the PRC arose around the same time as debates about the status of women, pundits and activists lamenting women's lack of marital or economic freedom rarely if ever condemned their lack of reproductive freedom. Instead, concerns about the maternal health and postpartum productivity dominated the conversation about birth control. It was thought that women should have many children but not so many that they could not remain useful contributors to the workforce.[201]

Beginning in the early 1950s, couples were encouraged to have children when their bodies had fully matured and at a pace that was healthy for the mother's body. This was not, however, an effort to limit population growth, but rather a plan to improve the "quality" of the population: healthier mothers meant healthier children and a healthier labor force.[202] This

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[198] Ibid., 35, 52.
[199] Ibid., 21.
[200] Chinese University of Hong Kong Archive (CUHKA), "Duzhe dui 'Xin Zhongguo funü' qikan 'Biyun fangfa' yiwen de fangying [Readers' Responses to the Article "Birth Control Methods" in *New Women of China* Magazine].
[201] Guangdong Provincial Archive (GPA), 233-2-267-33-39.
[202] Luoyang Municipal Archive (LMA), 16.

government campaign promoting late marriage (*wanhun)*—often used interchangeably with the term "planned birth" (*jihua shengyu*)—evolved into the public health slogan of the 1970s, "later, longer, fewer" (*wan, xi, shao*).[203] As the name suggests, "later, longer, fewer" encouraged couples to marry and have children later, leave larger gaps between births, and have fewer children altogether.[204] The delayed marriage campaign of the late 1950s, rather than dying out with increased access to contraceptives, escalated throughout the 1960s and 1970s.

In 1953, a central government decree ordered local governments to loosen restrictions on access to abortions and sterilizations.[205] Local policy changes, however, occurred at different rates. For example, in 1953, Beijing first permitted non-cadre women over 35 with at least six children or a serious illness to undergo these procedures but only with both their husband's and their work unit's consent.[206] That same year, Shanghai enacted a similar policy change allowing chronically ill married women over 35 to undergo sterilization and sick women who had undergone more than two miscarriages or caesarian sections to have abortions.[207] In 1956 Luoyang's government began allowing women with debilitating illnesses to have abortions and women over 30 with at least four children to undergo sterilization surgery.[208] In 1957 Tianjin enacted a comparable policy with provisions for work unit subsidization of medical fees and paid leave for recovering patients.[209] Such policies and the reproductive options they entailed, however, did not extend to the rural population. Even when the Ministry of Health published a

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[203] University of Ohio, Toledo (UOT), "China Trip, 1958"; Zhou E'fen, "Biyun wenti da duzhe wen" [Answering Readers' Questions About Birth Control], *New Women of China* 74 (1955): 26.
[204] H. Yuan Tien, "Wan, Xi, Shao: How China Meets Its Population Problem," *International Family Planning Perspectives* 6 (1980): 65.
[205] Wang et al., *Dangdai zhongguo de weisheng shiye* [Public Hygiene Undertakings in Modern China], 230-231.
[206] Thomas Scharping, *Birth Control in China, 1949-2000: Population Policy and Demographic Development* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003), 45; Beijing Municipal Archive (BMA), 135-001-00226; BMA, 002-002-00213.
[207] SMA, B242-1-560.
[208] Luoyang Municipal Archive (LMA), 48-301.
[209] Tianjin Municipal Archive (TMA), X0044-Y-000378-013.

directive in 1957 permitting women with the desire for sterilization, who had undergone a professional medical examination and had no medical contraindications, to have this procedure and women not wishing to carry a pregnancy to term to undergo abortion surgery, local governments continued to police these practices.[210]

Moreover, initially there were no provisions for male sterilization, even though vasectomies would have been equally effective in preventing further births and were less invasive than tubal ligations. When I asked an interviewee why women were encouraged to have sterilizations rather than men, she argued that men worked more efficiently than women and that their work was often more important than women's work, so it made sense for them to continue working while their wives underwent surgery.[211] Other female interviewees expressed similar views, arguing that as the primary breadwinners, men could not afford to be temporarily incapacitated from surgery, so therefore women must instead bear the physical burden of sterilization.[212] As with childbearing, sterilization in China would become another form of gendered and largely invisible labor. In the 1950s, the law and common assumptions about proper gender roles worked in concert to ensure that women carried more than their share of the burden of reducing fertility.

"Let's Talk About Sex"

The banning of certain publications on the practice of birth control was one of the most obvious examples of the Party's early natalism. In November 1951, the Ministry of Propaganda banned publication and distribution of four major publications on birth control: two magazines entitled *Guide to Married Life* and *Women's General Physiological Knowledge*, as well as two

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[210] Wang et al., *Dangdai zhongguo de weisheng shiye* [Public Hygiene Undertakings in Modern China], 233.
[211] Interview with the author, Ningde, June 12, 2016.
[212] Interview with author, Shanghai, December 20, 2016; interview with author, Luoyang, January 12, 2017.

contraceptive guidebooks, *Commonly Used Birth Control Methods* and *Practical Birth Control.* The CCP condemned them for spreading knowledge about birth control that might undermine the "spirit of increasing the population."[213] These publications, which contain detailed descriptions of the sex organs and diagrams demonstrating birth control methods, read much like eugenic treatises and guides to contraceptive use printed during the Republican period. Although Shanghai was the main target for the ban, a copy of the notice was also distributed to officials in Beijing who might encounter the offending literature. Books promoting a healthy sex life, such as *Arts of the Bedchamber*, were also banned.[214] The fact that these publications were still for sale and being read after 1949—to the point that officials saw them as a threat—suggests that there may have been a strong demand for, or at least curiosity about, sex and fertility regulation.

How, then, did young people and couples learn about sex? Scholars of China have argued that Communism's focus on the state and society rather on than the individual and Marxist denial of gender difference meant that sexuality and reproduction were rarely discussed.[215] Historian Harriet Evans, however, has argued that articles discussing various aspects of sexuality were available throughout the 1950s.[216] In fact, the showcasing of condoms and other contraceptives at a 1957 exhibition in Shanghai highlights the prominence of birth control in public discourse.[217] Advertisements for contraceptives in newspapers and on billboards were also not uncommon at this time.[218] Despite the initial ban, books and magazine articles on sex and birth

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[213] SMA, B1-2-3622-152; Guo Quanqing, *Shiyong biyunfa* [Practical Birth Control Methods], Shanghai: Family Publishers, 1950**.**

[214] SMA, B1-2-3622-152.

[215] Joanna McMillan, *Sex, Science and Morality in China* (Abingdon-on-Thames: Taylor and Francis, 2006); Kay Ann Johnson, *Women, the Family, and Peasant Revolution* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 183.

[216] Harriet Evans, *Women and Sexuality in China: Dominant Discourses of Female Sexuality and Gender Since 1949* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1997), 2.

[217] Deng Liqun, Ma Hong, and Wu Heng, eds. *Dangdai zhongguo de jihua shengyu shiye* [The Contemporary Chinese Birth Planning Project]. (Beijing: Contemporary China Publishers, 1992), 78-79; UOT, "China Trip, 1958."

[218] "Chulemi Contraceptive Cream," Inside Red China, http://t.cn/R23gOnv; "Jiajiale biyun pian" [Happy Family Birth Control Pills], *Hangzhou Daily* 1959, n.p.

control continued to be published; the limited scope of the ban suggests that central government leaders were ambivalent toward natalism. In fact, long before sterilization and abortion became widespread, guides detailing these procedures were being mass-produced.[219] Evans rightly argues that social discourses on sexual behavior in the 1950s often assumed that those in question were educated, urban, and had contact with the opposite sex.[220]

When I asked my interviewees what, if anything, they were reading about sex and birth control in the 1950s, they had a variety of responses. Some, like a group of men in their late seventies who I interviewed in Luoyang, said there was little information on birth control at that time and noted that even if there had been written information about sex, only the city's small literate population could have taken advantage of it.[221] While a limited number of urban residents had access to health classes that covered sex (figure 2.1), my other interviewees—all of whom were literate—said they learned about sex primarily through reading books.[222] One man, who I will refer to as Old Wang, was born in Shanghai in 1946. He was one of nine children raised in a wealthy Guomindang household. Of the nine children, only six lived to adulthood. Shanghai is a city of immigrants and Wang's parents were no different—his mother originally came from Shandong and his father from Jiangsu. When Wang was a child, his family had eight nurses and housekeepers, a big house, plentiful food, a car, and beautiful clothes. His parents were well educated but he only received a high school education under the Communists. According to Wang, urban people learned about sex from books like *Knowledge About Sex*.[223] *Knowledge*

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[219] Wang Yanrui, *Shuluanguan jueyushu* [Fallopian Tube Sterilization Surgery] (Beijing: People's Public Health Publishing House, 1959); People's Republic of China Ministry of Health Education Office, *Jiezhi shengyu xuanchuan shouce* [Birth Control Propaganda Handbook] (Beijing: Science Popularization Press, 1958).

[220] Evans, *Women and Sexuality in China*, 24.

[221] Interview with author, Shanghai, August 10, 2016; interview with author, Shanghai August 11, 2016; interview with author, Luoyang, November 11, 2016.

[222] "A Women's Health Class in 1955," 1955, photograph, *Everyday Life in Mao's China,* https://everydaylifeinmaoschina.wordpress.com/2015/10/02/a-womens-health-class-in-1955/.

[223] Harriet Evans translates *Xing de zhishi* this way in *Women and Sexuality in China.*

About Sex was first published in 1956 to spread awareness about sexual hygiene and to help young people with sex-related illnesses treat themselves.[224] In choosing what material to publish, readers submitted questions to the editors and the editors responded to their questions in subsequent editions of the book. *Knowledge About Sex* was so popular that several more editions were printed in 1957 and 1958 in Beijing, Guangxi, Chongqing, and Shanghai.[225] Altogether, more than 3.6 million copies of this book were sold, and copies of these books are still fairly common in used book markets and bookstores in China.

Figure 2.1: "A Women's Health Class in 1955."

Knowledge About Sex, like many other books about sexual hygiene from the 1950s, equated gender with sex, defining women by their reproductive functions rather than their gender

[224] Wang, Wenlin, Zhao Zhiyi, and Tan Mingzhu. *Xing de zhishi* [Knowledge About Sex] (Beijing: Science Popularization Press, 1958), introduction.
[225] *Knowledge About Sex* was even translated into Korean and Vietnamese.

performance. Categories like "woman" and "female" were treated as fixed and stable, even though they varied over time and across cultures.[226] Harriet Evans argues that the discourse of essential difference between the sexes only further reinforced gender hierarchies.[227] This formulation of gender affirmed the idea that women were sexually passive and innately designed to be wives and mothers.[228] In addition, guides to sex and marriage repeatedly affirmed the notion that intercourse was only for married heterosexual couples. In this context, there was little room for alternative gender identities, and discussions of sex and sexuality were confined to static gender roles and the fundamentals of reproduction.

According to three interviewees—Old Wang, a shop owner in her fifties surnamed Liu, and Lin, a 72-year-old gynecologist from rural Fujian province—in the 1950s and even in the 1960s most people were not comfortable talking about sex or birth control. Wang, Liu, and Lin, who were all interviewed separately, agreed that most mothers wanted to share information about sex and sexual hygiene with their daughters but did not want to do so outright because it was vulgar.[229] Therefore, people with culture (*you wenhua de ren)* or a good upbringing purchased books like *Knowledge About Sex* as wedding gifts for their daughters to help them prepare for sex on their wedding night. Also husbands might give books like this to their new brides to educate them about sex and pregnancy.[230] Lin said that in the 1950s and 1960s, most information about sex and birth control, if not learned through personal experience, was conveyed through reading books rather than speaking with friends or family. The introduction to *Knowledge About Sex* echoes this sentiment, lamenting that too many young people and even married couples lack an accurate understanding of sexual hygiene and that this can destabilize marriages. Both the

[226] Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990), 1.
[227] Evans, *Women,* 27.
[228] Ibid.
[229] Interview with author, Ningde, June 12, 2016; interview with author, Shanghai, August 11, 2016.
[230] Interview with author, Shanghai, August 10, 2016.

authors of *Knowledge About Sex* and Old Wang blamed "feudalism" (*fengjian zhuyi*) and the "old society" for widespread ignorance about sex.[231]

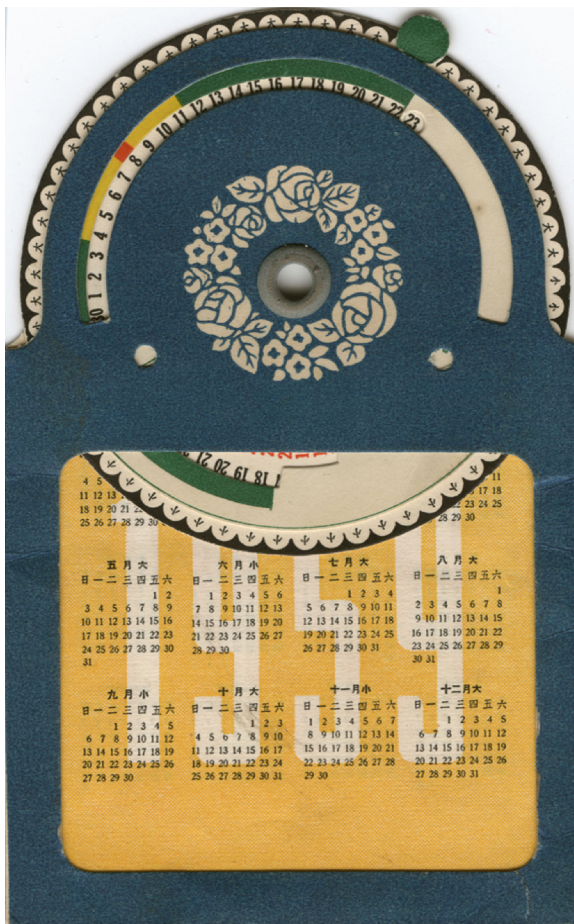
All three editions of *Knowledge About Sex* featured sections on both sexes' reproductive systems, masturbation, menstruation, pregnancy, and birth control. These books also contained detailed diagrams of male and female genitals, as well as charts on the ideal timing of male and female orgasms during sex. These diagrams attempted to make sex into a science that could be studied and mastered. *Knowledge About Sex* also claimed that intercourse typically lasted between two to three minutes and 10 minutes, but that women usually take between 10 and 30 minutes to orgasm and that a lack of knowledge about timing could lead to an "unharmonious" sex life.[232]

As for birth control, *Knowledge About Sex* recommended contraception for the benefit of both parents' and children's health. It claimed that in the old society, couples used methods such as practicing sexual self-control and taking abortifacients to terminate unwanted pregnancies, but that neither approach was ideal. The book introduced three methods for regulating fertility. The first involved inserting a contraceptive suppository covered in spermicidal jelly or another substance with spermicidal properties into the vagina before intercourse to kill sperm that attempt to enter the uterus. The authors conceded that although this method was simple and convenient, it was largely ineffective. The second approach involved using contraceptive devices: for men, condoms, called *yinjingtao* or *baoxiantao* (literally, insurance sheath), and for women, diaphragms or cervical caps. The authors stressed that using a diaphragm with contraceptive jelly is effective 98 percent while condoms are effective in preventing conception

[231] When the Communists took over China in 1949, they ostensibly created a "new society", which was entirely distinct from the "old society" (*jiushe)*, or pre-1949 China. Practices prevalent in the old society, such as prostitution, gambling, drug use, capitalism, and arranged marriages, were deemed "feudal".
[232] Wang, Zhao, and Tan, *Knowledge*, 38-39

95 percent of the time. Finally, *Knowledge About Sex* recommended using the “rhythm method” or “safe period method” (*anquanqi biyunfa*)—planning sexual intercourse based on the woman's menstrual schedule to prevent pregnancies.[233] Each month was broken up into three periods: the “easy conception period”, the “safe period”, and the “menstruation period”. It was believed that if a couple kept to a schedule of intercourse dictated by the woman’s period, chances of unwanted conception could be reduced (Figure 2.2).[234] My interviewee, Lin, said that the most common and effective form of birth control in the 1950s and 1960s was the rhythm method. She said that couples, especially women, began using this approach when they felt they could not handle having any more children.[235] Other sources also indicate that the rhythm method was being practiced in China at this time, particularly in rural areas with little access to mass-produced contraceptives.[236]

[233] Matthew Connelly, *Fatal Misconception: The Struggle to Control World Population* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008), 101.
[234] “Jieyu anquanqi cankao zhishi biao” [Rhythm Method Reference Calendar and Instructions], Shanghai: Shanghai Hygiene Press, 1956, https://www.nlm.nih.gov/exhibition/chinesefamilyplanning/1950s-1960s.html.
[235] Interview with author, Ningde, June 12, 2016.
[236] East China Normal University Archive (ECNUA), B 0357-001-018.



節育安全期參考指示表

袁英設計

上海衛生出版社出版　新華書店上海發行所总經售

使用節育安全期參考指示表,絕對不是消極地減少生育,而是根據科學的原理,依照自己的願望和條件,有計劃地控制生育密度,更好的負起培養下一代的責任。

使用方法

運用本表,祇要撥出月經期的兩項指數,受孕參考期和避孕安全參考期就能自動指示出來。

第一個指數——月經日期:是指月經來潮第一天的日期,是應用安全期節育方法的原始根據,所以,每次月經來潮,都必須準確地記錄下來,就在本表月曆表的日期上畫一個○。

第二個指數——月經周期:是指前後兩次月經期的相隔天數,是推算安全期的關鍵性數字。從月曆表上所記上一個月的○到下一個月○的"前一日"爲止的天數,就是月經周期。每次要查點準確,記在月曆表月份旁。

有了以上兩個指數,按下列方法一撥,就可以簡捷推出目前這一周期的全部日程,並分紅、黃、綠三種顏色指示出求孕參考期、可能受孕期和避孕安全參考期。

1. 左指撥日期轉盤(即齒形盤)把第一個指數——月經日期(紅色)顯露在左邊圓孔中。
2. 右指撥周期轉盤(即圓撥鈕)把第二個指數——月經周期(綠色)顯露在右邊圓孔中。
3. 看弧形指示窗內所自動指示出來的日程:
   標示紅色日期——指示預計排卵的日期,即求孕參考期。
   標示黃色日期——指示可能受孕的日期。
   標示綠色日期——指示不易受孕的日期,即避孕安全參考期。(但從左邊開始的數天,是行經期,期內亦應避免性交。)

注意事項

一、日期轉盤是由1～31和1～30兩組月曆日數連續安排的,使用時要先注意月經來潮月份的大小而選擇齒輪邊上"大"字的一邊或"小"字的一邊。如遇二月平(28日),可暫按小月撥出;如遇二月閏(29日),可暫按大月撥出,倘撥出的黃色日期已超過二月月底,則應將黃色日期再向右移二日。

二、月經周期,最好能有最近七、八個月的記錄,以求準確。有些工廠的保健站,已經建立月經卡記錄制度,爲本表的使用創造了有利條件。〔如月經周期點算防有錯誤時,亦可利用本表將上次月經日期(紅色)撥在左邊圓孔中,將這次月經日期撥在弧形窗的右邊圓孔中,於是顯露出在右邊圓孔中的數字(綠色)即爲月經周期。〕

三、月經周期不正常的婦女,如果長短相差不超過三天者,可按其變化趨勢或折中日數撥出;如月經周期長短相差在三、四天以上者,則須按最長和最短兩數,分兩次撥出,每次在弧形窗內指示的紅、黃色日期,都是可能受孕期,應在月曆表的各該日期上畫×××,期內停止性交,或採用其他避孕方法。

四、爲了安全避孕,應盡可能遠距排卵期而行性交。

五、本表是根據婦女排卵期有一定規律、使精子與卵子錯過相逢時期的理論而設計,提供節育的參考;但不能單純指靠本表作爲避孕的絕對依據,特別是月經周期多變或必需絕對避孕的婦女爲然。

六、本表附有四個年度的月曆卡,可以抽出翻換。

七、生育是夫婦天職,當避孕過一相當時期,母體健康,工作、生活各方面無不利條件時,可按最近的月經周期,參考本表弧形窗內的紅色標示日期,便比較容易恢復生育,負起培養新一代的光榮義務。

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Figure 2.2: Rhythm Method Reference Calendar and Instructions.

The rhythm method, still used today worldwide, was entirely compatible with Chinese beliefs about fertility and health. As mentioned in chapter 1, the anthropologist Francesca Bray skillfully argues that according to the Chinese medical canon, a woman's body was ruled by blood and therefore regular menses indicated harmony and health within a woman. Therefore, if amenorrhea occurred either due to pregnancy or some more serious and potentially dangerous cause, this indicated that the woman's *yin* and *yang* levels were imbalanced.[237] A couple not wanting to conceive would adhere to the rhythm method to ensure that the woman's menses

[237] Francesca Bray, *Technology and Gender: Fabrics of Power in Late Imperial China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 334.

were regular. Alternatively, a woman might consume *tiaojingyao*, or medicines that induced menstruation, to prevent pregnancy.[238] In imperial and Republican China, while a doctor might be reluctant to help a woman arbitrarily terminate a pregnancy, medicines for inducing menses could be purchased from private sellers and apothecaries.[239] Indeed, such practices endured in the PRC.

Couples and individuals could also learn about sex and birth control from articles in women's magazines and health guides. These materials blended aspects of Western biomedicine, the many strands of TCM, and imperial Chinese ideals about chaste women. In 1956 and 1957, Party leaders Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai tentatively acknowledged the need for population control, arguing that unmitigated population growth was at odds with a socialist planned economy. According to Mao's logic, every aspect of production should be planned by the state, including reproduction.[240] Immediately following these pronouncements, the first state-coordinated effort at educating the populace about contraception commenced, and publications on sex and birth control briefly proliferated. While publications about birth control were always in circulation, the shifting political climate meant that this particular state effort at promoting birth control only lasted until the end of 1958.[241] A second surge in birth planning promotion took place between 1962 and 1963, but as with the previous wave, this effort suffered from lack of organization and manpower. Like *Knowledge About Sex,* guides to sexual hygiene contained detailed images and diagrams of the reproductive organs. While in theory these books would

[238] Ibid., 325.

[239] Li Bozhong, "Duotai, biyun, yu jueyu: Song Yuan Ming Qing shiqi Jiang-Zhe diqu de jieyu fangfa ji qi yunyong yu chuanbo" [Abortion, Contraception, and Sterilization: Fertility Control and Its Dissemination in Jiangsu and Zhejiang during the Song, Yuan, Ming, and Qing Dynasties], in *Hunyin jiating yu renkou xingwei* [Marriage, Family, and Population Behavior], Li Zhongqing, Guo Songyi, and Ding Yizhuang, eds. (Beijing: Peking University Publishers, 2000),172-196.

[240] Martin King Whyte, Wang Feng, and Yong Cai, "Challenging Myths About China's One-Child Policy", *The China Journal* 74 (2015): 1-3.

[241] H. Yuan Tien, "Sterilization, Oral Contraception, and Population Control in China," *Population Studies* 18.3, 233.

have been intelligible to people with varying degrees of education, the guides were largely designed for an urban audience with access to contraceptives.

In 1958, for example, the Shandong People's Publishing House printed a booklet generically titled *Birth Control Propaganda Handbook* explaining how to practice birth control. *Birth Control* recommended several strategies for controlling births, some of which are still advocated today and some of which are of questionable utility. Like many other birth planning books from this period, *Birth Control Propaganda Handbook* had illustrated instructions for administering cervical caps, condoms, contraceptive ointment, suppositories, and vaginal plugs (*yindaosai).* The guidebook explained how to wash out contraceptive devices such as condoms and cervical caps for reuse, presumably because such items were hard to come by. Condoms were to be treated with talcum powder to ensure that they dried correctly and inflated or filled with water to check for punctures (this strategy was also practiced in Britain during World War II). These methods were echoed in other guides to sex from the 1930s and 1940s and well as in contemporaneous books.[242]

Birth Control Propaganda Handbook also discussed how to make birth control products from scratch in the event that standard, ready-made options were unattainable. The authors offered three recipes for making homemade suppositories that could be inserted into the vagina before intercourse. The recipes involved rolling cotton into a ball (leaving a dangling eight-inch string, something like a contemporary tampon) and soaking it in diluted vinegar, hot soapy water, or wheat flour boiled with salt.[243] According to similar sources, one cotton ball could be used repeatedly and would prevent sperm from entering the uterus.[244] The authors also

[242] Xu, *Zuixin,* n.p.
[243] *Jieyu xuanchuan shouce* [Birth Control Propaganda Handbook] (Jinan: Shandong People's Publishing Housee, 1958), 25-26.
[244] Wang Shengmin, "Tan anquanqi ji shiyanhu shuansai biyunfa" [Discussing the Safe Period and Salt Paste

recommended using the withdrawal method because it did not require any medicine or contraceptive devices, did not negatively impact a couple's sex life, and was easy to put into practice.

This guidebook included another method of birth control derived from Daoist practices: the "Urinary Tract Compression Method" or the "Acupuncture Point Method". The book explained that, like the withdrawal method, this approach has been in use since ancient times and did not require any medicines or birth control devices. During intercourse, when a man feels he is ready to orgasm, he should use his right hand to apply pressure for three minutes to the area between the anus and the base of the penis. After he has climaxed, he can release his hand. The pressure will have allowed him to orgasm without releasing any sperm, thus vastly decreasing the risk of pregnancy. The book's authors stated that if performed correctly, this method was very effective and aligned with traditional Chinese ideas about health and healing.

According to TCM, the balance of yin and yang, or the female and male aspects of *qi*, governs bodily health. Daoist teachings argued that men need a certain amount of female yin to balance out their abundant yang. Excessive sex could drain a man of his yang but an appropriate amount of sex would benefit him by replenishing his yin. A man could receive yin from female orgasms but he himself should try to limit emission of his seminal essence (*jing*) so as to avoid depleting his finite qi and causing illness.[245] Hence, the practice of "cultivating life" (*yangsheng)*—preserving *jing* through proper sleep, diet, temperature regulation, and even engaging in intercourse without releasing semen—arose.[246] For the same reason, masturbation

Suppository Birth Control Methods," *Hangzhou Daily,* April 19, 1957: n.p.

[245] Hugh Shapiro, "The Puzzle of Spermatorrhea in Republican China," *Positions* 6 (1998): 553-554; Everett Yuehong Zhang argues that *jing* was originally translated as seminal essence because it signified more than just semen. Since the republican period, however, the term has become synonymous with semen, 137-138.

[246] Everett Yuehong Zhang, *The Impotence Epidemic: Men's Medicine and Sexual Desire in Contemporary China* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015), 149.

was condemned for its damaging effect on men's health.[247] The Maoist state, by deploying this ancient religious practice as a form of birth control, completely removed the practice from its original socio-cultural context and yet acknowledged the enduring power of pre-Communist practices. Hugh Shapiro and other scholars argue that *yangsheng* practices remained a part of health discourse in the Republican period, and that after the opening up of China in the 1970s, these practices were revived.[248] However, this use of *yangsheng* in modern China has not been explored in detail and reveals that *yangsheng* practices did in fact endure during the Mao period, but in a form disassociated from their roots. *Yangsheng* via the "Acupuncture Point Method", somewhat ironically, was believed to prevent both impotence and conception.

Other guides to birth control suggested alternative ways of reducing the risk of pregnancy but also argued that non-biomedical birth control methods generally failed. For example, *General Knowledge About Birth Control*, published first in 1955 and then again in 1957 by the Shanghai Public Health Press, conceded that many birth control methods were troublesome, unreliable, and potentially dangerous to one's health. Yet, the authors claimed that some of these methods have been practiced widely in China. One category of birth control methods was *jieyu biyunfa,* literally birth control methods that limit desire; by curbing the desire for sex, they could reduce the risk of pregnancy.[249] However, *General Knowledge* also cautioned that these methods were unreliable and could occasionally result in unintended pregnancy, which might disrupt a happy marriage. Such contraceptive methods included the withdrawal method (*tiwai paijingfa,* literally ejaculating outside the body), the rhythm method, and prolonging breastfeeding (because a woman is physiologically less likely to get pregnant while nursing). The book argued

[247] Wang, Zhao, and Tan, *Knowledge*, 28.
[248] Shapiro, "The Puzzle", 553-554; Susan Mann, *Gender and Sexuality in Modern Chinese History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 93; Zhang, *The Impotence Epidemic,* 136.
[249] Bray, *Technology and Gender*, 17.

that, since ancient times, rural couples wishing to have fewer children or to at least lengthen the intervals between pregnancies have deliberately prolonged nursing. Today, however, it is known that this method is not equally effective for all women and that prolonging nursing for too long can cause a child to develop malnutrition.[250]

General Knowledge About Birth Control argued that in contrast to "unscientific" birth control methods of the past, new, scientific methods were entirely safe and much more effective. In fact, this was not the case. In many ways birth control medicines and devices in 1950s China were just as unreliable as earlier ones but appeared more trustworthy under the guise of scientific-sounding names and explanations. These so-called scientific approaches to contraception involved inserting acetic acid, soap, quinine (medicine typically used to treat malaria), or mercury into the vagina before sex to dissolve sperm during intercourse.[251] While such approaches may have acted as effective spermicides, they could definitely cause long-term harm to a woman's body, in particular mercury. The book suggested combining these homemade spermicides with other methods such as cervical caps and contraceptive jellies, cautioning that when used alone spermicides are not entirely effective. An alternative contraceptive technique involved washing out the vagina after sex with water, soap, and vinegar to kill any leftover sperm. These birth control methods, all of questionable utility, also appeared in Chinese and foreign contraceptive guides from the 1930s and 1940s.[252]

These types of contraceptive methods were held in such high regard that, as of 1955, the Chinese central government was domestically manufacturing boric acid and importing tannic acid, cocoa butter, lactic acid, gelatin, and quinine for use as birth control. According to

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[250] Song Hongjian and Zhao Zhiyi, *Biyun changshi* [General Knowledge About Birth Control] (Shanghai: Shanghai Public Health Press, 1957), 18-19.
[251] Song and Zhao, *Biyun*, 24; Jane Achan et al. "Quinine, An Old Anti-Malarial Drug in a Modern World: Role in the Treatment of Malaria." *Malaria Journal* 10, no. 144 (2011): 1-12.
[252] Xu Wancheng, *Zuixin shiyan nannü biyunfa* [The Newest Experimental Birth Control Methods for Men and Women] (Shanghai: Guoguang shudian, 1941), n.p.

contraceptive guides from the 1930s and 1940s, as well as internal CCP directives from the 1950s, fatty substances like cocoa butter or acidic materials like tannic or boric acid, could be inserted into the vagina before sex, thus serving as spermicides.[253] Historically, similar approaches had been used in Europe, the United States, and the pre-modern Muslim world to some effect.[254] High-profile Western birth control advocates like Margaret Sanger and Marie Stopes had even espoused these and similar methods in the 1920s and 1930s.[255] By the 1950s, even as China experimented with cocoa butter suppositories, condoms and douches had largely supplanted these birth control methods in the West.[256]

Another less well-known form of birth control was also being produced en masse in China in the 1950s: Lysol.[257] Beginning in the 1920s, the company known for its powerful cleaning agents produced inexpensive feminine hygiene products. It was recommended that women douche with Lysol after sex to disinfect the vagina and kill any lingering sperm. Though largely ineffective and potentially life-threatening, douching with acerbic Lysol was a popular birth control method in the US during the Great Depression up until the invention of oral birth control in the 1960s.[258] This method was later discredited because it caused vaginal inflammation, destroyed the vagina's healthy flora, and failed to prevent pregnancy. Historian Andrea Tone attributes the success of Lysol in America to the collaboration between the scientific community and advertisers in endorsing the product.[259] As with other "scientific"

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[253] Ibid; Yan Yukuan, "Jieyu de lilun yu fangfa" [The Theory and Method of Birth Control] (Shanghai: Great East Publishers, 1933), 110-111; TMA, X0191-C-000058.

[254] Daniel Winder, *Reproductive Control or A Rational Guide to Matrimonial* Happiness (Cincinnati: n.p., 1855), 48; Musallam*, Sex and Society in Islam,* 62-63; Andrea Tone, "Making Room for Rubbers: Gender, Technology, and Birth Control Before the Pill," *History and Technology* 18.1 (2010), 67.

[255] B.F. Musallam*, Sex and Society in Islam: Birth Control Before the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 62-63; Connelly, *Fatal Misconception*, 101.

[256] Tone, "Making Room," 70.

[257] TMA, X0279-C-000312-004.

[258] Andrea Tone, *Devices and Desires: A History of Contraceptives in America* (New York: Hill and Wang), 170.

[259] Tone, *Devices*, 160.

methods of birth control, Lysol was appealing because it offered the promise of Western science and therefore China sought to manufacture it with costly imported materials.

No example better demonstrates the conflicting narratives on birth control in 1950s China than the case of the tadpoles. Between 1956 and 1958, the Chinese government set about "scientifically" testing the folk practice of tadpole consumption as a form of contraception. The study concluded decisively that mice that consumed a daily diet of tadpoles and mated still became pregnant.[260] Likewise, fertile women who consumed a tadpole regimen also became pregnant under similar conditions.[261] The fact that women in Hangzhou and other parts of Zhejiang province were consuming live tadpoles a few days after menstruation to prevent conception inspired this study. Multiple folk remedies recommended this procedure, but also argued that if a woman consumed 14 tadpoles on the first day and 10 on the second, then she would become sterile.[262] It was believed that the 'cold element' in tadpoles could counteract the 'heat' of pregnancy."[263] According to TCM, maintaining an even body temperature and balanced levels of qi were critical for health. Other similar methods of preventing pregnancy involved consuming snails, fish eggs, or bird eggs to induce abortion.[264] Newspaper articles in the late 1950s warned against "blindly consuming tadpoles as a form of birth control" and argued that such methods were not only ineffective but could also cause infection.[265] If anything the debate over the efficacy of consuming tadpoles as birth control reveals that some women were

[260] Su Feng, "Fu Kedou," n.p.
[261] "Kedou," n.p.
[262] Shao Lizi, "Wo dui jieyu wenti de yidian yijian" [My Opinion on Birth Control," *People's Daily* (1956), n.p.; "Kedou," n.p.
[263] Zheng Tiantian, *Ethnographies of Prostitution in Contemporary China*: *Gender Relations, HIV/AIDS, and Nationalism* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2009), 34.
[264] Sommer, 105.
[265] Su Feng, "Fu kedou buneng biyun" [Tadpoles Are Not Birth Control] *Hangzhou Daily* 2 (1957), n.p.; Kedou biyun danfang wuxiao [Tadpole Birth Control Home Remedy Is Not Effective] *Zhejiang Daily* 3 (1953), n.p.; "Kedou biyun zhengzai shiyan, xianzai bu yao mangmu fu" [Using Tadpoles As Birth Control is Currently Being Tested, For Now Do Not Blindly Consume Them] *Zhejiang Daily* (1957), n.p.

attempting to regulate their own fertility and that biomedical ideas about reproduction were far from dominant in China.

The Ming and Qing-dynasty ideal of chastity was yet another conflicting strand in the mix of information about sexuality and birth control.[266] Harriet Evans rightly argues that many of the narratives on sex in the 1950s were moralizing tales seeking to protect young women and their virginity.[267] Though some reformers sought to put an end to the centuries-old trope of the loyal widow and the chaste bride, these ideals continued to shape narratives on female sexuality.[268] For example, women were frequently stigmatized for losing their virginity before marriage, even if it occurred as a result of rape or sexual assault.[269]

An article published in 1951 in *Zhejiang Daily* blamed premarital or extramarital sex for the ubiquity of infanticide. It charged that too many couples were having affairs that resulted in pregnancy. Afraid that their affairs would be discovered, women either secretly aborted their fetuses or drowned the babies after birth, fearing that their "bastards" (*si shengzi)* would face abuse for the rest of their lives. The article's author lamented that not only was abortion dangerous, but like infanticide, it also amounted to murder. Rather than merely blaming women for abortions and infanticide, however, the article also criticized the "backward" attitudes of the masses for putting so much pressure on women to be virtuous that they resorted to killing if they failed to uphold this ideal. This article, a type of anti-abortion propaganda reminiscent of the work of missionaries and reformers during the Republican period, revealed the enduring power of the ideal of the unadulterated virgin. This added yet another type of narrative to the heterogeneous mix of discourses on sexuality and reproduction in 1950s China.

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[266] Siyen Fei, "Writing for Justice: An Activist Beginning of the Cult of Female Chastity in Late Imperial China" *Journal of Asian Studies* 71 (2012): 991-1012.
[267] Evans, *Women,* 107.
[268] Shanghai Number Two Medical School Gynecology and Obstetrics Research Group, *Qingnian hunyin weisheng* [Youth Marital Hygiene] (Shanghai: Shanghai Science and Technology Publishers, 1958), 30-31.
[269] Jiang Liu, "Yi ge nüedai de nüxing" [An Abused Girl], *Xiandai Funü* [Modern Woman] 13 (1949): 28.

Class, Geography, and Birth Control

Socio-economic status and geography shaped birth control practices in important ways. For much of the 1950s, for example, the cost of contraceptives differed radically in different regions. For this reason, in 1957, the Ministry of Health ordered that regional price differences be eliminated through the creation of blanket national prices for the four primary types of birth control available within China: condoms, cervical caps, contraceptive ointments, and suppositories.[270] The Ministry of Health also sought to increase access to condoms by expanding the types of establishments where birth control products could be bought from a handful of hospitals to smaller health clinics, delivery stations, rural midwives, and even street vendors. Since 1954, some contraceptives—cervical caps, condoms, ointments, and suppositories—were being produced domestically while others were being imported to meet the rising demand for such products. As of 1957, imported contraceptives in Tianjin were more than twice the price of domestically produced ones, and this disparity continued to grow as the Ministry of Health repeatedly reduced the cost of contraceptives. According to the newly mandated national contraceptive prices, condoms imported from Japan would cost .12 *yuan* whereas condoms produced domestically at the Tianjin Rubber Products Factory and other places cost only .05 *yuan*. In 1955, the magazine *New Women of China* published an interview with a female cadre named Liu Yunqian. Liu admitted that some of her colleagues—also elite women—had paid a whopping 10 to 20 *yuan* per condom in Shanghai and Beijing.[271] It is difficult to come by accurate income statistics for this period, but two years later in 1957 the average urban couple in China had an annual expenditure of 220 *yuan.*[272] At 10 to 20 *yuan* each, condoms would have

[270] TMA, X0092-Y-000123-007.
[271] Zhou, "Biyun," 26.
[272] "Per Capita Annual Income and Expenditure Urban and Rural Households," All China Data Center,

been a major expense, one only conceivable for wealthy elites. Liu, however, argued that if used correctly and washed after each use with soap, a condom should last one to two years if used once or twice a month (apparently she felt that having intercourse once or twice a month was representative of a "normal" sex life).[273] The same article also stated that cervical caps cost only three *yuan* each and could be used repeatedly.[274] Again, this price contrasted with the new national cost of cervical caps: domestically produced ones cost only 1.45 *yuan* each. However, as in Beijing and Shanghai, imported cervical caps cost 3.5 *yuan* each.[275]

Not only did the price of contraceptives differ by region, but the types of devices that were available also varied with location. The party center mandated that in medium to large size cities preference be given to selling cervical caps whereas in small cities condoms should primarily be sold.[276] A circular published in 1957 by the China National Pharmaceutical Company of Tianjin lamented that it was difficult to enforce national prices for contraceptives as this required physically visiting each place where contraceptives were being sold and checking for discrepancies. Because the company was understaffed, it struggled to undertake all of the necessary local inspections.[277] Apparently, capitalist inequality persisted in the contraceptive industry.

A particularly surprising example of variation across class lines can be found in the case of what could be called "upscale" contraceptives. In 1957, the Chinese national medical company recommended that birth control products be made more beautiful to appeal to customers. Specifically, condoms and diaphragms would be sold in cute boxes made of plastic or

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chinadataonline.org.

[273] It is even less surprising that condom use was rare given the general lack of consensus about how birth control worked. According to several articles in a 1955 issue of *New Women of China,* using condoms and other forms of birth control could cause senility (*shouruo)*.

[274] Zhou, "Biyun," 26.

[275] TMA, X0092-Y-000123-007.

[276] Ibid.

[277] TMA, X0092-Y-000123-026,

Bakelite (an early form of plastic) with accompanying perfumed sachets of talcum powder. It was thought that better packaging would sell more contraceptives, a decidedly capitalist notion and one that ran counter to the ideal of Communist asceticism. One wonders if the intention was to charge more for more beautiful contraceptives, creating a kind of two-tier birth control market.[278]

Class and geography even shaped the kind of customer service customers could expect with regard to birth control. In the cities, it was mandated that establishments selling birth control products have a male sales associate for selling male contraceptives and a female one for female products to make customers, especially shy young women, feel more at ease.[279] The staff members would be trained in the practice of birth control and able to provide instructions for use to customers. At this time, however, there was no such provision for sales of contraceptives in the countryside. Businesses selling contraceptives in rural China were few, under-stocked, and generally offered "poor" customer service.[280] In fact, the Tianjin government scolded local business for allowing their staff to make vulgar remarks about birth control rather than taking the issue seriously.[281]

Even for those who did have access to businesses selling birth control, there were still many other obstacles to overcome. One issue was quality. While it is unclear whether the quality of contraceptives differed according to geography, what is certain is that birth control was often unreliable. For example, in 1957 customers reported that certain types of diaphragms were not effective in keeping sperm out of the uterus. Instead of being elastic and conforming to the shape of the cervix, these diaphragms were stiff and left gaps through which the sperm could swim.

[278] TMA, X0092-C-000429-039.
[279] Ibid; LMA, 16.
[280] TMA, X0092-Y-000123-007.
[281] TMA, X0092-C-000429-039.

Other problems included contraceptive jelly or ointment that dissolved during sex, thus losing its spermicidal function, and vaginal suppositories that caused skin irritation. Officials lamented that women who used faulty contraceptives and became pregnant were resistant to trying other methods of birth control in the future.[282] Another major issue in expanding access to birth control was supply. Factories manufacturing birth control exhausted the necessary raw materials for production (which then needed to be imported), and birth control went out of stock in stores for long periods of time. Contraceptive ointment, for example, was sold out in Tianjin for half of 1956. Supply issues tended to be more severe in rural areas, and the authorities complained that the selection of birth control options was relatively limited outside of Shanghai and Guangzhou.[283] Finally, despite mandatory training, the staff selling birth control was not always knowledgeable about its use and could not correctly advise customers. Lack of affordable birth control options only further compounded these issues of quality and supply.[284]

Like access to contraceptives, access to birth control procedures also varied greatly according to geography, occupation, and class. While surgical records from the 1950s are rare and particularly difficult to access in China, the available records suggest that at least some individuals were having abortions and sterilizations at this time. As the population continued to grow and grain production lagged, birth control became a national imperative. Consequently, legal restrictions on access to abortion and sterilization surgery were repeatedly relaxed. Under certain conditions, men could now undergo sterilization surgery. Moreover, by 1957 in places like Shanghai medical fees for abortion and sterilization were subsidized.[285] As in the early 1950s, women demanding sterilization surgery needed their husband's permission as well as

[282] LMA, 16.
[283] Ibid.
[284] Ibid.
[285] SMA, B112-4-118-82.

local health department approval to undergo surgery. The Shanghai municipal government also stipulated that such procedures could only be conducted at private hospitals under the supervision of private physicians.[286] Because private hospitals were more expensive and more rare than public hospitals, this would have meant that most qualifying individuals were wealthier, urban women. In Beijing, however, female cadres who qualified for abortion or sterilization surgeries and received permission from the appropriate state authorities could undergo these procedures at public hospitals with state subsidization.[287]

Other than female cadres and the dangerously ill, the first people to obtain access to birth control and contraceptive surgeries were those the government felt could contribute most to national productivity, namely workers (*gongren*) and their family members. The results of the 1955 *New Women of China* survey mentioned earlier indicated that demand for birth control was relatively high among workers, yet it is unclear what, if any, role this played in the national government's decision to grant workers priority access to contraception. Internal government records and other literature revealed that the Party was most concerned with the number of hours women workers could labor following a pregnancy.[288] Indeed, a 1958 article in the *Zhejiang Daily* warned female workers at the Fuhua Silk Factory to use birth control when returning home to the countryside during the spring festival. The article cautioned that the risk of getting pregnant was greatest in the countryside due to ignorance about birth control, and that production levels fall when women get pregnant and take maternity leave.[289] In terms of wealth, workers were far from the richest people in Mao's China and yet their superior class status in traditional Marxist terms and their critical role in production gave them privileged access to birth control.

[286] SMA, B242-1-560.
[287] BMA, 135-001-00069.
[288] People's Republic of China Ministry of Health Education Office, *Jiezhi*, n.p.
[289] Chen Yifang, "Chunjie huijia yao zhuyi biyun" [Pay Attention to Contraception When Returning Home for Spring Festival], *Zhejiang Daily* 3 (1958), n.p.

In 1957, the State Council gave all workers and work unit staff in large cities like Shanghai and Tianjin permission to undergo abortions or sterilizations if giving birth would be detrimental to their health. The actual implementation of this policy, however, was left up to individual city governments, which worked with varying degrees of efficiency.[290] When workers were told that they would not receive paid leave following the surgery because this type of treatment did not qualify for labor insurance (*laodong baoxian*), many argued that they could not handle the financial burden contraceptive surgery entailed. Ultimately, the national government agreed to give two weeks paid leave for those who had surgery and to pay for their medical expenses to encourage birth planning.[291] That same year, the State Council also legalized abortions or sterilizations for healthy urban workers and staff but on the condition that all medical fees be paid out of pocket.[292]

Despite a slight loosening of restrictions on birth control surgery, abortions still made up a minute percentage of total pregnancies in the late 1950s. In the first quarter of 1958, in the medium-sized city of Hangzhou, for which there are no accurate population figures, 2,065 women had abortions.[293] Similarly, according to a six-year study in Shandong of 6779 pregnant women, only 3.68 percent or 250 individuals sought abortion or sterilization surgery. Office staff (*zhiyuan*) and workers (*gongren)* comprised 62 percent of those seeking abortions. Interestingly, housewives comprised another 23 percent and the remaining 15 percent was made up of teachers, students, farmers, and medical staff. Most of the women undergoing abortions were between 25 and 29 years old and already had at least three children, whereas women undergoing

[290] Scharping, *Birth Control*, 45.
[291] SMA, B112-4-118-82.
[292] TMA, X0044-Y-000378-013.
[293] HMA, 087-003-0218.

sterilization had more than five children.[294] Abortion rates rose in 1958 and 1962, and the researchers suggested that this was due to local family planning propaganda campaigns at those times. Otherwise, abortion and sterilization rates remained relatively low into the early 1960s. It is not surprising that women were generally reluctant to undergo abortions or sterilizations given that there were numerous botched cases. Records detail cases in which women became pregnant after sterilization, contracted dangerous post-surgical infections, or died during abortions.[295]

Anecdotal evidence further illuminates the disparities in access to contraception and abortion. The story of Wang Xu, one of my interviewees, offers an illustrative example. Born in 1931 in Nanjing, Wang is now 86 years old. Shortly after the founding of the PRC and the establishment of the 1950 Marriage Law requiring both parties' consent for matrimony, Wang and her husband had a free love marriage. While still living in Nanjing the couple had three children. At that time, Wang worked in the Office of Economic Planning while her husband had a post in another government office. In 1956, Wang's husband was relocated to a new position, and the couple moved to Shanghai with their three children. Wang immediately noticed a large cultural and intellectual gap between Nanjing and Shanghai—Shanghai was much more open, and birth control was more commonplace. In 1957, the couple had a fourth child, and in 1958 when Wang discovered she was pregnant with a fifth child, she told her husband that it was too much. They both agreed that it would be too difficult raising and educating five children, so Wang went to the hospital and had a surgical abortion. Afterward, the couple tried using condoms to prevent pregnancy but found them to be a nuisance, so Wang had an Intrauterine Device (IUD) inserted, which she had for more than a decade. Many of Wang's friends experienced problems with their IUDs, including infections, bleeding, and ineffectiveness in

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[294] Chen Xiyi et al.,"Dian xiyin rengong liuchanshu 250 li fenxi" [An Analysis of 250 Cases of Electrically-Induced Abortion] *Shandong Journal of Medicine* 1 (1964): 20-22.
[295] Zhejiang Provincial Archive (ZPA), J165-014-024-016.

preventing pregnancy. Fortunately for Wang, she encountered none of these issues. She said that had she not left Nanjing her life course would have differed and she probably would have had five or six children. She was grateful for the abortion and for the IUD because these things allowed her to be a better mother and to live a happier life.[296]

As a point of comparison with the previous story, consider the account of an interviewee whose mother, Luo, though similar to Wang in many ways, had a very different experience with contraception. Luo was about the same age as Wang and also a Shanghai resident, but a resident of the suburban district of Baoshan. Unlike Wang, though, Luo was dirt poor and uneducated. When I asked my interviewee if her mother had had access to birth control in the 1950s, she looked deeply hurt. Her mother had given birth to seven children and abandoned four of them because she was too poor to take care of them. There had been nothing in the way of birth control or abortion, and frankly, she had not even known that these were options for some people.[297] In this case, although Luo lived in Shanghai, her class and low education level—and likely her home's distance from the city center—deprived her of access to the types of services Wang had enjoyed during the same period.

Extramarital affairs, widespread to the point that city governments intervened, seem to have been a less documented but common reason for using birth control or undergoing an abortion.[298] This was due in no small part to the fact that although not technically illegal, local officials punished those who committed adultery, and out-of-wedlock pregnancies provided the most indicting evidence of marital infidelity.[299] In fact, one of my interviewees said he was sure that couples having extramarital sex at that time were using birth control but that no one would

[296] Interview with author, Shanghai, January 12, 2017.
[297] Interview with author, Shanghai, January 25, 2017.
[298] TMA, X0053-C-000737-096.
[299] Hangzhou Municipal Archive (HMA), 087-003-0362; SJTUA, Z1-9-222.

ever openly admit it.[300] This is not to say that contraception was used in every case of extramarital sex—as many unplanned births attest— but rather that it was perhaps used more in these instances than previously imagined.[301] Due to political sensitivity and privacy rights, individual cases of adultery and contraception use or abortion are difficult to uncover, as the records are mostly sealed. However, I have identified several particularly interesting cases that highlight the close correlation between birth control use, abortion, and pre-marital or extramarital affairs.

Court records from a case in Poyang county, Jiangxi illustrate well the connection between infidelity and abortion. Yu Chengmei, a 36-year-old husband and father, was having an affair with a widow named Hu Yumei (Jade Plum). Both individuals had the class label of "middle peasant". In June 1955, Jade Plum realized that she was three months pregnant. Not wanting her to have the baby, Chengmei repeatedly visited a 51-year-old woman named Hong Guizhi in the neighboring village, begging her to help perform an abortion. Finally Guizhi gave in and agreed to help, admitting to having previously assisted in 14 other abortions. Relying on ancient Chinese methods for inducing abortion, Guizhi inserted an herbal concoction into Jade Plum's vagina. Over the next few days, Jade Plum experienced violent vaginal bleeding, and the pregnancy was aborted. The bleeding, however, never stopped and by the time Jade Plum was brought to the hospital her pulse had slackened and her body temperature was dropping. Not long after, Jade Plum died from blood loss. When the authorities discovered what had happened, Chengmei and Guizhi were arrested for murder. Ultimately, Chengmei was sentenced to two years in prison while Guizhi received a seven-year sentence.

[300] Interview with author, Tianjin, September 17, 2016.
[301] ECNUA, As 0358-015-033; ECNUA, En 029-078-018.

Although Chengmei, whose idea it was to abort the pregnancy, received little criticism in the official case record, the court listed extensive reasons for punishing Guizhi. The record stated that she had sought personal profit from offering abortions and that she had maimed pregnant women and endangered the lives children. Moreover, the court accused Guizhi of sustaining evil practices from the pre-1949 period, during which a combination of a feudal marriage system and poverty had led women to seek wrongful abortions. The court declared that land reform and the 1950 Marriage Law pronouncing marriage a free choice were intended to correct some of these backward practices, yet enduring feudal practices and incorrigible individuals like Guizhi were to blame for out-of-wedlock pregnancies. While Chengmei played the most active role in the case (it is unclear whether Jade Plum even wanted the abortion), Guizhi suffered the harshest consequences and her crimes were framed in terms of "feudal thinking". Perhaps it is not a surprise that Guizhi suffered the gravest punishment, as the flexible, one-size-fits-all political category of "feudal" practices had long been associated with women. Nowhere in the file is there an assessment of the legality of Jade Plum's abortion, an interesting omission that marks this case as unique from similar ones during the republican period. While abortion was punishable by law in rural Jiangxi at this time, Jade Plum's death seems to have been the only reason for pressing charges against Chengmei and Guizhi.[302]

As in the previous case, though a person might live in a more rural area, having a particular vocation might substantially increase one's access to information about birth control and abortions. Yao was a young man in the Donggou Brigade of Jilin province. He was raised in a poor peasant family but was able to attend medical school, became a party member, and was appointed as a doctor of internal medicine in the small city of Taiyuan. In 1951, however, Yao was accused of seducing Li, one of the nurses he worked with. The affair resulted in Li

[302] Shanghai Jiao Tong University Archive (SJTUA), Z1-3-407.

becoming pregnant. The case file did not explain the details of the situation but ultimately Yao performed an abortion on the pregnant Li, who died as a result of the surgery. Whether the abortion was done at Li's request in unclear. In fact, it is uncertain what role Li played at all in either the affair or the abortion. In this case, Yao's privileged position gave him access to the knowledge and resources to perform the abortion. In China at that time, doctors did not have a high social status but they had information at their disposal. Regardless, the procedure cost Li her life and commenced a downward spiral for Yao into poverty, delinquency, and persecution. Whether real or fabricated by his enemies, Yao's charges—adultery, embezzlement, murder, stealing hospital equipment, attempting to sell his starving niece into prostitution, and insulting the Party—were ultimately withdrawn in 1984. Li's case, on the other hand, was not revisited and she was denied any agency even after death; her voice could not be heard in the archival record.[303]

Urban residents seem to have had access to a wider range of possible contraceptives and abortifacients. For example, in 1958 a married Beijing bus driver named Zheng Xiaoming initiated an affair with his female colleague, Xu. According to a political confession, Xu and Zheng had sex constantly, often as many as three times a day. Zheng assured Xu that she would not get pregnant because he always used a condom that he carried with him for this purpose. Presumably Zheng washed out the condom after each use and treated it with talcum powder so he could reuse it. The relationship ended only on November 30, 1965 when the couple came under fire for licentiousness and hooligan-like behavior.[304] As in this previous abortion case, the desired goal of preventing conception was achieved, but in this case both man and woman benefited from the ability to regulate their fertility and conceal their extramarital relationship.

[303] ECNUA, En 0351-150-012.
[304] Stanford University Cadre Archive (SUCA), Box 33.

In a similar case from urban Jiangxi province, a couple resorted to abortion through deliberate misuse of medication. In this case, Li was a credit officer at a local bank and a married woman. One day in 1958, Chen, a local camp director, visited the bank to check on his account. Soon after meeting, the couple began having an affair. However, when Chen professed his love to Li and asked her to leave her husband for him, she refused. Not long after, Li realized she was pregnant and that Chen was the father. While Chen may have wanted the baby, Li did not. She decided to abort the fetus using a method she had heard about that involved consuming quinine pills.[305] Though not technically banned at the national level, provincial and local authorities frequently charged and convicted people who underwent, performed, or facilitated home abortions.[306] Knowing this, Li had to convince her doctor to prescribe quinine for another illness. In the end, she successfully aborted the pregnancy. The incident only came to light years later when Chen came under scrutiny for his role in other crimes; unfortunately for Chen he was sentenced to reform through labor in the Chinese equivalent of a gulag for facilitating the abortion.[307] Both Li and Chen were urban residents, which may account for their knowledge about contraceptive practices. In this particular instance, knowledge about and access to an abortifacient was empowering for Li and ultimately resulted in her getting what she wished for, though this was not always the case.

Abortions and sterilizations at this time, even in the countryside, were not all conducted in secret. When renowned Indian demographer Sripati Chandrasekhar visited China in 1958, he noted that abortions were relatively common in the newly established rural communes. Likewise, according to Chandrasekhar, even during the Great Leap, commune doctors were performing sterilizations on women not wishing to have more children. Women could also choose to have

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[305] Qingdao Municipal Archive (QMA), D0042-92-00079.
[306] Wang et al., *Dangdai zhongguo de weisheng shiye* [Public Hygiene Undertakings in Modern China], 233.
[307] SJTUA, Z1-9-727.

IUD insertions if they wished to temporarily stop having children but continue in the future. Chandrasekhar claimed that post-partum sterilization surgery was "popular" among women but eschewed by men. Likewise, while women were often happy to have IUD insertions or to use diaphragms, their husbands resented using condoms.[308] As with sterilizations, the physical labor of controlling family size was deeply gendered.

Conclusion

Initially contraceptives, publications about birth control, and abortions were banned or severely restricted. However, grain shortages, mass starvation, and labor inefficiency produced a gradual loosening of these restrictions, with burdens falling unevenly on men and women. As I have shown, birth control practices in 1950s China varied according to class, geography, and occupation. Not only did access to contraceptives and information about birth control vary widely, but the types of birth control products available and even their prices also diverged. Conflicting ideas about sex and medicine during this period produced a rich hodgepodge of sexual narratives and contraceptive strategies based on multiple systems of knowledge: Western biomedicine, Daoism, TCM, and folk practices, to name a few. Despite or perhaps because of the lack of unified opinion with regard to fertility, much literature was published on birth control practices even before access to birth control became commonplace. Yet, individual reproductive agency was rarely the focus of discussions about birth control and population. Consequently, in some instances access to birth control could be empowering while in others it was life-threatening. For China, the 1950s marked the beginning of a slow and messy transition from haphazard, unsystematic regulation of reproduction to hegemonic population control. As we will

[308] UOT, "China Trip, 1958."

see in the next chapter, from the perspectives of both individuals and the state, the 1960s would resolve some earlier issues while creating new ones.

Chapter 3: Birth Control in Everyday Life: Old Ideas and New Technologies, 1959-1965

The Great Leap Forward, a campaign to shift China from an agrarian economy to a socialist planned economy through industrialization and collectivization is often remembered for the historic famine it produced. The Great Famine—also known as the three years of difficulty (*sannian kunnan shiqi*)—spanned from 1959 to 1961 and caused an estimated 18 to 30 million deaths. According to the 1983 Chinese Birth Planning Statistical Yearbook, the population of China in 1959 was 672,070,000.[309] After widespread starvation and the staggering death toll of the Great Leap Forward, the national population increased steadily through the 1960s due to high fertility and reduced infant and child mortality.[310] By 1966, the national population had swelled to 742,060,000. Of this number, an estimated 123,710,000 people lived in urban areas in 1959 and by 1966 the number of urban residents had increased to 133,130,000.[311] The failed Great Leap Forward and its associated food shortages provided greater impetus to promote delayed marriage and childbearing, the forerunner to the 1970s slogan, "later, longer, fewer." At the national level, the CCP formulated new approaches to extend its control over individual bodies and sexual practices. The party also targeted groups not interested in or knowledgeable about birth control. Although fragmented efforts to implement birth planning became slightly more systematic, these developments continued to be uneven. Not only were rural areas largely excluded from birth planning, but smaller, less developed cities were unable to keep pace with family planning programs in major cities.

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[309] National Birth Planning Committee Integrated Planning Division, *Chinese Birth Planning Statistical Yearbook*, 1.

[310] Kaufman et al., "Family Planning Policy and Practice in China: A Study of Four Rural Counties," *Population and Development Review* 15.4 (1989): 708.

[311] Judith Banister, *China's Changing Population* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991), 332.

This chapter looks at the state's efforts to deepen its presence in individual reproductive lives and the various setbacks it faced. First, I argue that with the end of the Great Leap Forward, the Party took a less ambiguous stance on birth control and tested more extensive "soft" tactics to encourage birth control use, such as cultural productions, focus groups, and exhibits of contraceptives. These methods paved the way for later "hard" and coercive birth control implementation.[312] Second, as the central government attempted to more systematically monitor, influence, and control sexual practices, resource shortages, lack of medical expertise, lack of reliable and affordable contraceptives, contradictory messages from the state, and individual distrust or dislike of birth control presented serious obstacles to birth planning efforts every step of the way. At the individual level, supply and demand for contraceptives were rarely in sync—some women actively sought birth control but could not obtain access while others were advised to use it and declined the offer. Third, as in the mid-1950s, access to birth control in general and more complex contraceptive surgeries in particular continued to be dictated by demographic and regional factors. Couples seeking to limit family size often drew on methods from both Western and Chinese Medicine.

Birth Planning as Art and Entertainment

In 1963, the Central Committee formally announced that late marriage and birth planning should be studied and implemented in urban China. A few months later in early 1964, the Birth Planning Office in the State Council was established and similar offices were formed in certain provinces and cities.[313] As of the late 1950s, some cities, such as Shanghai, Tianjin, and even Luoyang, already had created birth planning small groups, but they lacked the funding and

[312] Susan Greenhalgh and Edwin Winkler make the distinction between soft and hard birth control policy tactics in *Governing the Population.*
[313] White, *China's Longest Campaign,* 59.

support to make much of an impact.[314] Following the State Council decree, mandatory classes about birth planning and hygiene, arranged by gender and marital status, became increasingly common in workplaces across much of urban China. Workers met in groups to discuss the benefits of birth planning, to express their fears about using birth control, and to provide feedback on contraceptives they had tried.[315] As part of this broader ideological campaign, provincial and municipal Departments of Public Health produced cultural works designed to weave birth planning into the local cultural fabric. These works included films, songs, plays, and exhibits, each of which was accompanied by discussion groups and lectures. In 1963, for example, Jiangsu province's Department of Health produced 167,000 copies of birth control guides and posters, as well as films, broadcasts, exhibits, slide shows, and blackboard bulletins about birth control viewed by 2,557,627 people.[316] Denise Ho argues that Maoist exhibitions—museums, work unit exhibits, commissioned posters and pamphlets, among others—could both modernize and mobilize, introducing the masses to the vocabulary and slogans of revolution and curating a specific political narrative that both legitimated the CCP and encouraging participation in revolution.[317] The birth planning propaganda of the 1960s ignited revolution in its own way, encouraging mass participation in family planning and paving the way for the formalization of birth planning discussion groups and films under the One Child Policy. In fact, films promoting birth planning are still a feature of Chinese society today.

In 1956, provincial-level Departments of Public Health (*sheng weisheng ting)* ordered films promoting birth planning to be screened in both the cities and the countryside with

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[314] *Luoyang shizhi* [Luoyang Gazetteer], October 15, 2009, http://www.lydqw.com/DB/BookContent.aspx?BookID=200904080002&Content=Digital.

[315] TMA, X0032-C-000153.

[316] Huo Xuanji, "Dayuejin zhihou de jihua shengyu, 1962-1966" [Family Planning Policy after the Great Leap Forward, 1962-1966] (Master's thesis, Nanjing University, 2015), 36.

[317] Denise Ho, *Curating Revolution: Politics on Display in Mao's China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 13.

particular emphasis on more crowded areas.[318] Perhaps because of limited access to birth control products, however, film screenings only seem to have become common in the 1960s as greater emphasis was put on curbing population growth.[319] Such films sought to introduce the basics of sex education, as well as "scientific" (meaning Western-style) family planning methods, including abortion and male and female sterilization.[320] Couples were discouraged from using dangerous methods of birth control, namely homemade abortifacients and home abortion surgeries.[321]

Each participating province's and city's Department of Public Health created a unique set of directions for the screening of birth planning films. For example, in Guangdong province during screenings of birth planning films, male and female audience members were to be organized into separate sections or on separate floors of local theater for viewing. According to the regulations, children and foreigners were not permitted to watch, and circulation of the films was strictly prohibited, especially in areas where many minorities lived.[322] In Tianjin, birth planning films were advertised in the *Health Times* (*jiankang bao*) and then viewings were scheduled at various local factories, enterprises, and residential areas. The Women's Federation, trade unions, and other local organizations also arranged exhibitions of contraceptives, lectures, and contraceptive sales stations as a complement to the birth control films.[323] Similar arrangements were made in other places as well.[324] One 70-year-old man from Shanghai mentioned having seen a birth planning film in 1964 when he was 18-years-old, which was also the legal marriage age at that time. Being of-age, he and his fellow workers were forced to watch

[318] LMA, 16.
[319] Interview with author, Shanghai, August 10, 2016.
[320] GMA, 307-1-353-94～94.
[321] LMA, 16.
[322] GMA, 307-1-353-94～94.
[323] TMA, X0092-C－000429－038; TMA, X0032-C-000153.
[324] ECNUA, Acu 0357-013-022.

the film, though neither the men nor the women could bear to look at the screen. After the screening, a cadre asked the viewers whether they had sex lives (*xing shenghuo)*; no one would respond and the young women looked especially uncomfortable.[325]

Local work units and birth planning commissions also produced songs, plays, booklets, and posters promoting the benefits of late marriage and birth planning.[326] Many of these works described similar situations: parents with traditional views tried to convince their teenage children to marry early but the youths wished to postpone marriage in accordance with the Party's late marriage campaign. This caused problems at home, but ultimately all parties agreed that marrying later was in the young peoples' best interest. The youths argued that they would be overwhelmed and exhausted working or studying and raising children, that their bodies were not fully developed, and that early marriage was backward. In other works, young adult friends debated the benefits and drawbacks of early marriage. Three universal assumptions undergirded these works of propaganda: that marriage is a precondition for childbearing, that all couples who marry have children, and that all newlyweds have children immediately. The efficacy of cultural works in influencing personal reproductive decisions, I suspect, relied largely on a shared commitment to these ideas. One ditty from Shanxi province advocating delayed marriage is as follows:

"The Benefits of Late Marriage"
(Mother Is Not Confused Ditty)

Mother: This year I am 55 and I need to find my son a wife.
I have no money to do this, so I worry.

Mother: My oldest daughter is named Zhang Chunxiu. This year she is 19.
She is not married, this is really confusing. Ayo!

[325] Interview with author, Shanghai, August 10, 2016.
[326] ECNUA, Acu 0357-030-026; ECNUA, Acu 0357-030-002.

She is not married, this is really confusing.

Mother: We just held a meeting calling Chunxiu to take the lead in implementing late marriage. Mother is angry! Ayo! Mother is angry.

Daughter: The Party proposed implementing late marriage. Chunxiu will take the lead and not fall behind. She took a written pledge. Ayo! She took a written pledge.

Daughter: I heard mother from the beginning, so long as you speak clearly and with reason. Mother, she is not confused. Ayo! Mother, she is not confused.

Daughter: Mother, you look here. This is my pledge.
Guess what the circumstances are [for signing the pledge]. Ayo! You guess.

Mother: No need to look or to guess, in order to give your brother a wife.
You have no way of marrying later. Ayo! You have no way of marrying later.

Daughter: These days marriage is one's own decision. Marriage as a business deal should be abolished. Mother, you are very confused! Ayo! Mother, you are very confused!

Mother: I understand that marriage is a free choice, but getting married is like wearing clothes. No matter what you still have to wear them. Mother is not confused. Ayo! Mother is not confused.

Daughter: Older brother is 20 and I am 19. Our bodies are not fully developed yet.
There is no benefit to worrying about marriage. Ayo! Mother, you are really confused!

Mother: Men marry, women marry--this is handed down from our ancestors. I was only 15 when I married.
Who wouldn't praise me for being a good wife? Ayo! I am not confused!

Daughter: In those days, that was the social system. Having children early [these days] is a crime. It wastes one's youth. Ayo! Mother, you are really confused!

Mother: Early childbearing brings early happiness and prevents the issue of having no one to take your place when you get old.
Productive labor involves suffering. Ayo! I am not confused!

Daughter: If early childbearing brings early happiness, why didn't Big Brother and Big Sister do it?
As soon as mother mentioned it, her tears flowed like two rivers. Ayo! As soon as mother mentioned it, her tears flowed like two rivers.

Mother: You must never speak of Big Sister and Big Brother. As soon as it was mentioned, I wanted to cry.

You cannot control whether you endure calamities and suffer hardships. Ayo! You all blame me?

Daughter: Early childbearing is not merely about suffering hardships. Production and studying are both delayed.
Mother, you are very confused. Ayo! Mother, you are very confused.

Mother: You only have to speak clearly and with reason. Others will listen [to your opinion] and be convinced.
I am not confused at all. Ayo! I am not confused at all.

Mother: Your marriage is your own decision, age 28 or 25.
I will not be so troublesome again. Ayo! I will not be so troublesome again.

Daughter: Mother really is a good mother, agreeing to take the lead in delaying marriage.

Mother: Chunxiu really is a good daughter, taking the lead in implementing late marriage.

Daughter: Mother is not confused. Ayo! Mother is not confused.

Mother: I am not confused. Ayo! Mother is not confused.[327]

A play produced and performed in Tianjin by the Tianjin Food Factory Amateur Art Troupe in 1963, though set at a factory rather than in the countryside, contains similar themes about overcoming the traditional desire for early marriage to enable greater production levels. The play, however, was more explicit about the effects of early marriage on maternal health and the advantages of family planning. It also sought to counter the enduring preference for boys and emphasized that large families limit a young mother's ability to participate in critical political meetings. The play, set in the summer of 1957, centered around three young women. The eldest, Lizhu, was 26 years old and already married. 22-year-old Xiujuan put off marriage in order to work and study. The youngest, Chunmei, who had just turned 18, wanted to marry early because 18 is the minimum marriage age for women. Her comrades warned her that marrying early would negatively impact her work and study while having children early would be hard on her

[327] ECNUA, Acu 0357-030-043.

immature body. They urged her to wait until age 26 to get married and age 28 to have her first child, like her friends Xiujuan and Lizhu. Chunmei did not listen and got married. Five years later Chunmei had three children and was pregnant with the fourth. She was incredibly busy with strenuous household duties, and her productivity levels at work were low. She was also frequently absent from work. Moreover, her household was noisy and chaotic, she missed political meetings, and she was perpetually exhausted. Meanwhile, Xiujuan was still not married and her mother nagged her to hurry up and have a child so she could hold her grandson. Xiujuan responded that the party had called on her and other young people to take the lead in delaying marriage. As Chunmei argued with her husband about what to do with so many children, the birth planning committee told Chunmei that, like the economy, pregnancies must be planned too. This was a reference to Chairman Mao's 1957 speech to the Enlarged Third Plenary Session of the Eighth Central Committee of the CCP, in which he argued that unmitigated population growth was at odds with a socialist planned economy, so childbearing should be planned as well.[328] The play continued, arguing that overpopulation was bad for production and that the best solution was sterilization surgery. This was a radical departure from ten years earlier when a larger population was seen as the key to increasing production rather than in opposition to it. The birth planning committee told Chunmei that it would be easy to get sterilized after she gave birth to her fourth child and that men and women contribute equally in the new society so there was no need to try for more sons. Finally, Chunmei was sterilized and her decision was honored as a birth planning victory. She also helped her production group achieve record production levels, and Chunmei was deemed a model for other young women.[329] Like the ditty earlier, this propagandistic play promoted delayed marriage and birth planning in response to two central

[328] White, *China's Longest Campaign,* 60.
[329] TMA, X0032-C-000153-18.

concerns of the CCP: increasing worker productivity and preserving maternal health (likely so as not to overburden the healthcare system).[330]

Other works of propaganda offered visual representations of these themes. Examples of drawings and posters portraying the benefits of family planning were numerous and could be found throughout much of China in the early 1960s. The poster reprinted below, entitled "Practice Birth Planning, Change the Customs" (*jihua shengyu, yifeng yisu*), is one such example produced in Tianjin in 1963 (Figure 3.1).[331] The four sections depict the four primary benefits of practicing birth control: greater production, improved work and study, enriched health, and more time for educating and raising the next generation. The family members are depicted with plump, ruddy faces, smiling and enjoying hard work, abundant food, and family time. The subtext suggests that in contrast to the pre-Communist years, under the Communist regime women can labor in the fields and conduct scientific research alongside men, even while raising children and caring for the elderly.

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[330] GPA, 233-2-267-33-39; BMA, 100-001-00897.

[331] "Jihua shengyu, yifeng yisu" [Practice Birth Planning, Change the Customs], 1963, "Zhe xie jianzheng le jihua shengyu de haibao…" [Posters Attesting to Birth Planning..." *Shishe shishi de boke* [The Collecting Historical Events Blog], March 24, 2016, http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog_e39346e40102wej2.html.

Figure 3.1: "Practice Birth Planning, Change the Customs."

Around the same time, similar posters were printed as far away as Guangdong and Xinjiang provinces. One poster from Guangdong, below, entitled "A Li de fannao" [A Li's Troubles] depicts a young woman nicknamed A Li, who is struggling with too many children and too many exhausting responsibilities—feeding, cleaning, and clothing her children, field labor, etc. (figure 3.2).[332] In each frame of the poster, A Li looks exhausted and overwhelmed until she discovers birth control, which gives her more time to focus on agricultural production.[333]

[332] "A Li de fannao" [A Li's Troubles], 1964, "Zhe xie jianzheng le jihua shengyu de haibao…" [Posters Attesting to Birth Planning..." *Shishe shishi de boke* [The Collecting Historical Events Blog], March 24, 2016, http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog_e39346e40102wej2.html.

[333] "Zhe xie jianzheng le jihua shengyu de haibao…" [Posters Attesting to Birth Planning..." *Shishe shishi de boke* [The Collecting Historical Events Blog], March 24, 2018, http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog_e39346e40102wej2.html; unfortunately, the poor resolution of this image makes it nearly impossible to analyze the accompanying text.

Figure 3.2: "A Li's Troubles."

Figure 3.3: "Birth Planning Has Many Benefits."

A poster promoting birth planning in Xinjiang offers a final example of visual birth planning propaganda. This poster, "Jihua shengyu haochu duo" (Birth Planning Has Many Benefits), printed in Xinjiang's capital of Urumqi in 1964, contains text in both Simplified Chinese and Uyghur script to make it legible to the local population (Figure 3.3).[334] Xinjiang province in western China is known for its large population of individuals from the Uyghur minority group. As in the other posters, this one framed the benefits of birth planning in terms of national and individual health and production. However, the messages have been tailored slightly to fit the particular nationalistic goals of the CCP in minority regions. The six frames, from top left to bottom right, highlight the benefits of birth planning: strengthening socialism, expanding production and study among the masses, raising and training "red" successors, planning family life, protecting maternal and child health, and bringing health and prosperity to the people. In contrast to the posters from Tianjin and Guangdong, which seem to be directed entirely at a female audience, the image of an athletic-looking man throwing a shotput in the final frame suggests an attempt to appeal to masculinity. The message seems to be that while women can attain better health, raise healthier, smarter children, and be more productive through birth planning, men can bring honor, prosperity, and strength to the nation/ethnic group (*minzu*).

Evidently, not so differently from the state-sponsored cultural productions of the Cultural Revolution period, local government bureaus and work units composed songs, dramas, and posters promoting late marriage and birth planning to dislodge traditional preferences for early marriage and large families. The call to have fewer children also dovetailed with the notion that males and females can contribute equally in the New China so there is no need to try for more sons. That the audiences these works targeted were largely female suggests that either women

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[334] "Jihua shengyu haochu duo" [Birth Planning Has Many Benefits], 1964, "Zhe xie jianzheng le jihua shengyu de haibao…" [Posters Attesting to Birth Planning..." *Shishe shishi de boke* [The Collecting Historical Events Blog], March 24, 2016, http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog_e39346e40102wej2.html.

were primarily to blame for encouraging early marriage or that women were believed to be the only ones capable of stemming the tide of early marriage. In either case, just as with contraception, the burden of stabilizing population growth at the level of the individual family unit fell more heavily on women than on men, thus partially undermining the claim that delayed marriage promoted gender equality. As trite as these works of propaganda seem to the contemporary reader, the themes discussed in these pieces spoke directly to widespread concerns among the Chinese populace.[335]

Out with the Old, In with the New?

Despite active promotion of birth planning in some contexts, family planning was still not widespread at this time, and in some places it had barely made a dent. On the one hand, some official birth planning reports bragged that family planning and late marriage were now known in every household (*jiayu huxiao*). This claim was undoubtedly hyperbolic, as many interviewees attested that they had not heard of birth planning at that time. On the other hand, the same reports conceded that there were numerous obstacles to implementing the birth planning agenda and that birth rates were still rising in some work units.[336]

Improved and more precise record keeping was one way through which the state sought to deepen its control over reproductive practices. Abortion records in the 1950s were scattered and unsystematic except in the case of court records of "illegal" abortions, acts punished at the local level for not meeting the qualifications for abortion under national law. By the 1960s, however, record keeping with respect to pregnancy and birth control use was becoming increasingly meticulous and widespread, at least in cities. According to the official Luoyang city

[335] BMA, 100-001-00897.
[336] GMA, 231-1-29-44～44.

gazetteer, 267 abortions and 860 IUDs insertions were performed in Luoyang in 1963, one of the earliest years for which there are Luoyang medical records.[337] In terms of integrating birth planning and labor, each work unit was expected to keep precise records calculating how many abortions, vasectomies, tubal ligations, and IUD insertions were performed.[338] Work units were asked to report the number of births each month and encourage women with large families to have an IUD insertion or sterilization to prevent having too many children. As with other campaigns in China, more aggressive record keeping meant that work units in theory could single out individuals for punishment who failed to comply with birth planning goals. However, some work units failed to report their rates of birth control use, thus making accurate statistics harder to come by. Additionally, even in the early 1960s, small cities and more rural records had minimal records related to changes in individual household size.

Although IUD insertions, sterilizations, and the like were supposedly voluntary during this time, employees who resisted risked being accused of "thought obstacles" (*sixiang zhang'ai)* or "incorrect thought responses" (*bu zhengque sixiang fanying*), which were addressed with more focus groups and "thought education."[339] Ironically, there was a direct correlation between family size and absences from work meetings on birth control. In many cases, those individuals who most needed birth control were least likely to learn about it because they were busy taking care of their children.[340]

Birth planning office reports from cities across much of eastern and central China reveal that birth planning teams in various places encountered similar types of resistance to birth control

[337] *Luoyang shizhi* [Luoyang Gazetteer], October 15, 2009, http://www.lydqw.com/DB/BookContent.aspx?BookID=200904080002&Content=Digital; medical record keeping in Luoyang began in the late 1950s.

[338] TMA, X0032-C-000153

[339] CUHKA, "Liaoning biyun xuanchuan gongzuo zhong pengdao de qunzhong sixiang zhangai" [Ideological Obstacles of the Masses Encountered During Liaoning Birth Control Propaganda Work]；TMA, X0065-C－000366-004.

[340] GMA, 233-2-267-33-39; BMA, 100-001-00897.

from couples, individuals, and even medical personnel. Some older doctors, for example, argued that abortion was unethical and recalled a saying from only a few years earlier in the 1950s: "abortion: the disadvantages are great, the benefits are few." Their concerns were partially addressed in terms of improving the safety of abortions, but this occurred amid a rising abortion rate.[341] From the perspective of potential birth control users, reactions to contraception and related surgeries were deeply gendered and yet rarely were men alone in perpetuating the patriarchal status quo. A major issue that still exists today is that many couples were open to using birth control or undergoing sterilization but only after having at least one son. Female interviewees in Shanghai, Tianjin, and Luoyang told me that women without sons were seen as failures and mocked by other women. Only with a son can the patriarchal family line continue. In many cases, husbands and wives would have done anything to have at least one son and definitely would have resisted birth control.[342] In Xicheng district of Beijing, for example, women went as far as lying to newly-hired birth planning propaganda staff, saying that they were already using birth control when they were not. Forceful health inspectors later discovered these falsehoods.[343] In other cases, in-laws, especially mothers-in-law, who derived status from the birth of a grandson, opposed the use of birth control and the termination of a pregnancy through abortion.[344] Many women also feared that using contraceptives would negatively affect their marital lives, cause bodily pain or illness, or result in sterilization.[345] These women seemed to think that their husbands would not be sexually satisfied if they used contraception.

[341] Huo, "Dayuejin zhihou de jihua shengyu, 1962-1966" [Family Planning Policy after the Great Leap Forward, 1962-1966], 60.
[342] Interview with author, Luoyang, November 19, 2016; interview with author, Luoyang, November 14, 2016; interview with author, Shanghai, August 23, 2016; interview with author, Tianjin, February 13, 2017.
[343] BMA, 002-020-00379.
[344] BMA, 002-020-00391; Tina Phillips Johnson, *Childbirth in Republican China: Delivering Modernity* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2011), xvii.
[345] BMA, 002-020-00379; LMA, 99.

Their concerns were often warranted, as some men actively resisted using condoms. One of the most common reasons for not wanting to use birth control devices was that men found them troublesome (*mafan*) and uncomfortable.[346] Some complained that the process of washing, storing, and reusing condoms was simply unfeasible.[347] However, even when work units began distributing condoms free of charge to employees, few couples would use them.[348] My interviewees reported almost unanimously that men hated using condoms for these reasons and would rather risk unwanted pregnancy than bother with this type of protection.

In fact, the issue of men not liking condoms was so well known that it was even depicted in official propaganda promoting the benefits of contraception. Take the following cartoon, for example (Figure 3.4).[349]

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[346] BMA, 002-020-00379; BMA, 100-001-00897.
[347] BMA, 100-001-00897.
[348] Interview with author, Shanghai, January 12, 2017; interview with author, Luoyang, August 2, 2015; interview with author, Shanghai, December 22, 2017; interview with author, Tianjin, February 13, 2017.
[349] "Biyun yao jianchi shiyong kekao fangfa" [When Using Contraception, One Must Adhere to a Reliable Method], Beijingshi gonggong weishengju weisheng jiaoyusuo yu beijingshi kexue jishu puji xiehui [Hygiene Education Institute of the Beijing Public Hygiene Bureau and Beijing Science and Technology Popularization Association], *Nongcun jihua shengyu huace* [Rural Birth Planning Album] (Beijing: Beijing Publishers, 1958), n.p.

Figure 3.4: "When Using Contraception, One Must Adhere to a Reliable Method."

The texts reads:

<u>When Using Contraception, One Must Adhere to a Reliable Method</u>

1. Wang Xiaoyun had five children and was too busy every day. Since she was advised at the health clinic to use condoms, she had not been pregnant for a year.

2. Her husband said that condoms were too troublesome, and generally did not use them willingly. One day he heard about a folk prescription for contraception. He copied it down and gave it to Xiaoyun, convincing her to buy the medicine.

3. Xiaoyun went to the pharmacy to buy the medicine and took two pills, thinking that should would not get pregnant again.

4. After a few months, Xiaoyun became pregnant again. The doctor said to her: after this birth, only stick to reliable birth control methods, and then you will not get pregnant.[350]

[350] Beijingshi gonggong weishengju weisheng jiaoyusuo yu beijingshi kexue jishu puji xiehui [Hygiene Education Institute of the Beijing Public Hygiene Bureau and Beijing Science and Technology Popularization Association], *Nongcun jihua shengyu huace* [Rural Birth Planning Album] (Beijing: Beijing Publishers, 1958), n.p.

The cartoon clearly acknowledges that not only did men find condoms troublesome, but they would do just about anything to avoid wearing them. In this case, the husband even unknowingly convinced his wife to consume questionable folk prescriptions as contraception—a method addressed in greater detail later in the chapter.

That being said, some interviewees told me said that condoms were available early on even in rural contexts such as this and that men were willing to use them.[351] Demographer Thomas Scharping also argues that condoms were the most common form of contraception used in China during the early 1960s, and indeed, condom use emerged in surprising circumstances.[352] In 1964, in a case most likely from rural Shanxi, a man called Chen Jiaze was charged with raping a woman named Chen Donglan multiple times. The case stands out in that prior to committing each rape Chen Jiaze purchased and used a condom (*baoxiantao)* to ensure that Chen Donglan would not become pregnant. In a 1965 report on the case, Chen Donglan said that her rapist had gotten the condom from his fourth aunt (*sigu*) but that using birth control was his own idea.[353] The case was exposed as part of the Four Cleanups Movement, a socialist education campaign Mao launched in 1963 to weed out so-called "reactionary" elements. Because of the nature of this campaign, it is unclear whether this was an actual case of rape or a case of consensual sex that was later deemed rape as a political move. If the intercourse was consensual, that may have accounted for the premeditation and Chen's advance procurement of contraception.

This case and similar ones aside, the general reluctance to use condoms even when they were made available reveals an underlying power differential between men and women with the

[351] Interview with author, Luoyang, August 2, 2015.
[352] Scharping, *Birth Control*, 182.
[353] ECNUA, B 022-010-035.

condom as the site of the struggle.[354] In other instances, men resisted birth planning lectures and family planning in general because they felt that birth control did not have anything to do with them.[355] While most interviewees, male and female, argued that family planning was the responsibility of both men and women, women confided that in reality birth planning was always by default the woman's responsibility.[356]

Men arguing that they have nothing to do with family size and birth control is not universal. In contrast to China, many studies of birth control in the West argue that for hundreds of years men were primarily responsible for contraceptive use, as knowledge about birth control and the ability to control one's fertility were construed as evidence of masculinity.[357] In fact, the condom was the most popular form of contraception in the United States in the 1950s, and sales only decreased in the 1960s following the invention of oral birth control for women.[358] Anthropologist Tiantian Zheng has argued that men's unwillingness to use condoms in contemporary China, particularly when having intercourse with sex workers, reflects a fundamental lack of respect for women and their bodies. She posits that this attitude stems in part from a deep cultural preference for males.[359] Zheng sees this attitude as arising in part from the power dynamics of post-Mao economic liberalization, but she acknowledges that unwillingness among men in China to take responsibility for birth control is also a product of uniquely Chinese notions of masculinity. This particular configuration of masculinity in China, however, long predates the post-Mao reform period and even the Mao era.

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[354] Zheng Tiantian, *Ethnographies of Prostitution in Contemporary China* (London: Palgrave Macmillan), 8.
[355] GMA, 233-2-267-33-39.
[356] Interview with author, Shanghai, August 31, 2016; February 5, 2017.
[357] Kate Fisher, *Birth Control, Sex, and Marriage in Britain, 1918-1960* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 194, 229; Kate Fisher, "The Delivery of Birth Control Advice," in Joanna Bornat et al., eds., *Oral History, Health and Welfare* (London: Routledge, 2000), 266.
[358] Andrea Tone, "Making Room for Rubbers: Gender, Technology, and Birth Control Before the Pill," *History and Technology* 18.1 (2010), 67.
[359] Zheng, *Ethnographies*, 26.

The uneven burden of family planning also manifested itself in other ways. Even at this early stage in the birth planning project when the state had a consistent policy of voluntary contraception, there were already reports of coercion.[360] In Beijing and Jiangsu province, women who did not want to have abortions or sterilizations reported being forced to do so.[361] Likewise, in some cases, doctors inserted IUDs or performed abortions without their patients' consent.[362] In other cases, work units offered individuals the choice between aborting out-of-wedlock pregnancies and losing their jobs. This was the case for Zhou Yan, a female worker at the North Station branch of the National Transport Guild in Shanghai began having an affair with her male colleague. Zhou, age 32 and originally from Funing in Jiangsu province, became pregnant, and the affair was discovered. Because the couple was not married, she was pressured into having an abortion, which she ultimately did. She was accused of violating the marriage law and sentenced to thought reeducation.[363] Similar cases took place in other major cities like Beijing where unmarried workers were forced to abort their pregnancies or lose their jobs.[364]

As in the 1950s, persistent issues—lack of hygienic conditions, limited medical expertise, resource shortages, and overpriced yet unreliable birth control products and surgeries—plagued efforts to use and promote birth control. These problems occurred in large cities but were significantly more likely to occur in smaller cities, towns, and more rural areas. For this reason, the state first introduced complex contraceptive procedures like IUD insertions, surgical abortions, and sterilizations in the city rather than in the countryside. Similarly, more sophisticated birth control methods like uterine caps, which require a doctor's precise assessment

[360] GMA, 317-1-147-8～11; BMA, 002-020-00379.
[361] Huo, "Dayuejin zhihou de jihua shengyu, 1962-1966" [Family Planning Policy after the Great Leap Forward, 1962-1966], 56.
[362] BMA, 002-020-00391.
[363] SMA, C41-1-247-57.
[364] BMA, 002-020-00391.

and fitting, were mainly made available in cities. To the extent that any birth control existed in the countryside, the state emphasized the sale of condoms there.[365]

Problems with introducing contraception began with poor training of personnel. A 1964 internal reference (*neibu cankao)* report noted the dearth of information about contraception even among physicians. The report claimed that of all medical personnel, new medical school graduates and older doctors knew the least about contraception and contraceptive surgeries as neither group had much training in these areas. To get a sense of contraception knowledge among medical staff, the Xuanwu District Department of Public Health in Beijing conducted a workshop with 126 doctors and midwives. When asked questions about correct birth control practices, the doctors and midwives provided a wide variety (*wuhua bamen*) of answers, most of which were incorrect. For example, when asked in which part of the body a vasectomy took place, some responded "in the scrotum" (which is the correct answer) but others argued that it took place in the abdomen. In another case, some workshop participants responded that contraception (*biyun)* is when "yin and yang are in disagreement (*buhe),*" a line of thinking found in some strands of TCM. While other respondents knew that this was not the correct answer, they could not explain why. Finally, when asked to calculate the rhythm method's safe period—the period during a woman's monthly cycle when she is least likely to become pregnant from intercourse—some doctors and midwives said that the ovulation period was safest, when this is in fact the window in which women are most susceptible to pregnancy. The workshop's results showed that even in one of China's most developed cities, knowledge about contraception was not widespread among medical personnel.[366]

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[365] TMA, X0092-Y－000123－007.
[366] BMA, 002-020-00379.

The follow-up report on the workshop argued that confusion and disagreement about effective birth control were present in the medical field as a whole. There was even disagreement among TCM practitioners about the nature of birth control. Some practitioners of TCM believed contraception was linked to the balance of yin and yang while others said that that argument was more consistent with Daoist metaphysical theory than with TCM.[367]

Against this backdrop, it is not difficult to imagine that medical accidents abounded. In Beijing between 1963 and 1964, for example, large numbers of errors were made in performing abortions, sterilizations, and IUD insertions. According to internal reports, medical malpractice in the area of birth planning resulted in damaged reproductive organs, disability, and even death.[368] In some abortion and sterilization cases, improper application of anesthesia resulted in patient death. In other cases, doctors accidentally left medical gauze or surgical tools inside of the abdomens of women having abortions or sterilization surgery, leading to severe pelvic inflammation. A report in Zhejiang province showed that tubal ligations frequently were ineffective in preventing further pregnancies.[369] In other cases, sterilization left the patient's bladder permanently damaged and IUD insertions perforated the uterus leading to heavy bleeding and the ring getting stuck in the wall of the abdominal cavity. For example, a 60-year-old woman named Wang Xiuqin decided to have sterilization surgery. During the procedure, the doctor hit an artery, causing heavy internal bleeding, shock, and eventually death.[370] In some cases of midterm abortions (16 to 23 weeks) using the drug Rivanol to induce premature labor, the doctor mismeasured the dosage or did not test the patient for allergies, leading to death. In 1963, for example, a woman in Luoyang undergoing a midterm abortion (more than four

[367] BMA, 002-020-00379.
[368] ZPA, J165-003-068-217.
[369] ZPA, J115-003-067-030; ZPA, J115-003-068-029; ZPA, J115-003-068-005.
[370] ECNUA, En 0351-032-012.

months) because she felt she could not take care of another child, died from an overdose of Rivanol. The doctor apparently administered more than 50 times the dose, resulting in cardiac arrest and death. A similar case had occurred the day before but the patient was transferred to another hospital and saved.[371] Infections and uterine abscesses due to unhygienic surgical conditions and excessive, unmonitored blood loss were also common.[372] In some cases, abortion surgery failed to terminate the pregnancy meaning that the woman still gave birth to a baby, or in worse cases, gave birth to a disabled and disfigured child.

While vasectomies were far less common than tubal ligations and abortions, mistakes occurred in their implementation as well. In some cases, misuse of local anesthetics or overly large surgical incisions caused tissue necrosis, organ failure, and testicular damage. In other cases, the surgical wounds bled so much that a second surgery needed to be performed. Most commonly, the surgeries were simply performed incorrectly, missing the vas deferens altogether and thus not having the desired effect of sterilization. The error was typically discovered when the patients' wives accidentally became pregnant.[373]

According to a number of reports, these medical errors were the result of sloppy surgical practices, poorly trained doctors, and a general lack of understanding about the importance of sterile hospital environments. While most cases of contraceptive surgery did not result in serious problems, enough did to cause concern and distrust of the medical system. At the same time, there was a general lack of effective healthcare in much of China, so it is understandable why individuals might be reluctant to go under the knife given the circumstances. Problems with

[371] LMA, 80.
[372] ZPA, J115-003-068-160.
[373] BMA, 135-001-01472.

ineffective birth control and contraceptive surgeries account in part for the reason the population of China continued to grow rapidly during these years.[374]

An additional problem that was a holdover from the 1950s was the high cost and limited supply of contraceptives. In 1963, the Tianjin Economic Committee reported that local factories such as the Yutai Rubber Factory and Yutai Latex Factory had produced their first condoms. However, production costs were high, raw materials were insufficient, and factories were largely unprepared for this type of production.[375] At this time, most condoms in Tianjin were either imported or purchased from factories in Shanghai and Guangzhou. With a childbearing population of 1.4 million (700,000 couples), the city of Tianjin reported sales of 646,000 condoms in March 1963 and 126,000 in the first half of April that same year.[376] The city ambitiously planned to produce 6 million condoms in the next six months, allowing for around eight condoms per couple.[377]

In 1963, the central government also ordered the production of 2 million contraceptive suppositories, but supply and quality proved problematic. At this time, Beijing claimed that a portion of the city's population used suppositories, and Shanghai also boasted high sales of suppositories. However, a report from Shanghai lamented that 130,230 of the 1,538,900 suppositories in storage waiting to be sold had deteriorated and were no longer usable, amounting to a 123,300-yuan loss.[378] The city faced similar problems with cervical caps, as well as with acetic acid and glycerin to be used as spermicide, all of which degraded in storage.[379] Tianjin residents reported that suppositories were sold out in their city. Of those who had purchased them, the responses were mixed. Some users said they were effective in preventing

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[374] National Birth Planning Committee Integrated Planning Division, *Chinese Birth Planning Statistical Yearbook*, 1.
[375] TMA, X0110-D-000192-005.
[376] TMA, X0110-D-000192-005.
[377] TMA, X0110-D-000192－004.
[378] SMA, B 123-5-167-126.
[379] SMA, B 123-5-167-126.

pregnancy while others said they were not. Tianjin sought to also produce suppositories with help from Beijing.[380] In 1965, the city again lowered the price of contraceptives, but it is unclear if these products were any more effective in preventing pregnancies than their predecessors.

Cost was also an obstacle in Tianjin with respect to contraceptive surgeries, and the local government sought to alleviate this issue through price cuts. In 1962, the Tianjin Municipal Department of Public Health made vasectomies, tubal ligations, abortions, and IUD insertions free (through work unit reimbursement) to workers with labor insurance and their family members. As a result, 303,990 IUD insertions and 123,760 abortions were performed between 1963 and 1964.[381] However, individuals not native to Tianjin had to shoulder these fees individually without reimbursement. Excluding college students with public health care who paid for their own meals, urban residents were also eligible for free contraception.[382]

Price was also an obstacle with respect to both birth control devices and surgeries in Shanghai, Luoyang, and elsewhere. In 1964, the city of Guangzhou significantly lowered the prices of all contraceptive surgeries for cadres, workers, and their families to make these procedures appealing and affordable. Tubal ligation surgeries decreased from five *yuan* to two *yuan*, simultaneous tubal ligation and abortion decreased from eight *yuan* to three *yuan*, abortion from three *yuan* to one *yuan,* vasectomies from three *yuan* to one *yuan,* and IUD insertion from 1.5 *yuan* to free. In addition, women undergoing IUD insertions could be reimbursed for pre-surgery examinations, but had to foot the bill for hospital registration fees and the cost of the actual IUD out of pocket. Cadres, workers, and their families undergoing sterilization, however,

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[380] TMA, X0110-D-000192–005.
[381] Huo, "Dayuejin zhihou de jihua shengyu, 1962-1966" [Family Planning Policy after the Great Leap Forward, 1962-1966], 41-42.
[382] TMA, X0196-C-001315-002.

would be reimbursed for the cost of the pre-surgery exam, hospital registration fees, and any additional fees, thus incentivizing sterilization over temporary birth control.[383]

Another major problem seems to have been general lack of awareness about changing policies toward birth control, abortion, and sterilization both at the national and local level. Internal (*neibu cankao)* reports lamented that many cadres were not clear about the exact meaning of birth planning (*jihua shengyu)* and did not know the difference between this policy and Malthusian population theory, which Mao had deemed "bourgeois" and "capitalist" only a few years earlier. Some cadres even asserted that having children was a fundamental principle of Marxism and that using birth control was anti-Marxist.[384] At this time, terms like "Malthusian" and "Marxist" were exceedingly malleable. Cadres were right in feeling confused about the difference between birth planning and Malthusianism because there was no clear distinction and the so-called fundamental premises of Chinese Marxism changed frequently in CCP rhetoric. Even as some provincial and local cadres deemed birth control in opposition to Marxism, others argued that contraception had always aligned with socialist values. Ideology, in these instances, was strategically adapted to changing sociopolitical circumstances.

This same confusion about frequently changing policies was even more magnified at the grassroots level. While some of the individuals I interviewed were aware that contraception was available in big cities during the early 1960s, almost none of them knew that for large swaths of the urban population the cost of surgeries and IUD insertions could be reimbursed. Moreover, many, especially less well-educated urbanites, still thought that Mao's official policy toward

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[383] GMA, 317-1-122-96～97.
[384] BMA, 002-020-00379.

population was "*duozi duofu"* or more sons, more happiness, meaning that a large population was a boon to the Chinese economy and the socialist project.[385]

Old Wine in A New Bottle (*xinping jiujiu)*

Because China had 500,000 doctors of traditional medicine and only 50,000 doctors of Western medicine, the central government sought to capitalize on the popularity and accessibility of TCM. Indeed, the Ministry of Health even collected recipes for herbal contraception from TCM practitioners, in part to reinforce the notion that China had a rich medical heritage unique from the West.[386] Although there was no consensus about the herbs' value as contraceptives even among TCM practitioners, between 1956 and 1957, these formulas were circulated for the first time in provincial and municipal newspapers, as well as in the Women's Federation magazine *Women of China*.[387] The decision to circulate herbal contraceptive recipes in newspapers and magazines read by educated Chinese is particularly ironic since these recipes were largely associated with the illiterate underclasses during the Republican era.[388] Local government organs, like the Luoyang Municipal Ministry of Health, also instructed officials to include recipes for traditional Chinese abortifacients in official birth control propaganda.[389] Responding to the rise in popularity of herbal contraceptives, in 1957 researchers at Peking Union Medical College and other institutions began testing the efficacy and safety of such herbal recipes. Many women who consumed these formulas reported debilitating side effects, including severe pain and hemorrhaging. In one case, 20 party cadres developed symptoms like full-body swelling,

[385] Interview with author, Shanghai, June 8, 2016; LMA, 99.
[386] These herbal remedies were likely taken from the *Bencao gangmu* [Compendium of Materia Medica], one of the most influential medical texts in imperial China. This book contains more than 30 different herbs and medicinal plants that can be made into abortifacients or cause sterilization.
[387] Tien, "Sterilization," 227.
[388] Ling Ma, PhD diss.
[389] LMA, 16.

uterine hemorrhaging, and blistering of the tongue after consuming contraception powder from a local TCM clinic in Henan province. The contraceptive powder was later found to contain ground up leeches and Mercury Chloride (calomel), a common but toxic ingredient in traditional herbal contraception.[390] At the same time, researchers also worked to develop a “five flavors abortion pill,” an herbal abortifacient for mass consumption. However, this project was eventually abandoned when no real breakthroughs were made.[391] Many instances of negative side effects associated with herbal contraceptives led the central government to officially condemn these methods in 1962.[392]

However, these traditional recipes reemerged in official publications only a few years later. According to one barefoot doctor's manual—a medical guide for minimally trained healthcare workers delivering medical services in rural China—there were several well-known recipes for homemade herbal contraceptives. These herbal remedies, like the ones promulgated in 1956 and 1957, were likely taken from the *Bencao gangmu* [Compendium of Materia Medica], one of the most influential medical texts in imperial China. *Bencao gangmu* contains more than 30 different herbs and medicinal plants that can be made into abortifacients or cause sterilization. Although the barefoot doctors did not formally begin work until 1968, their methods like those of TCM doctors, stemmed from much earlier medical practices and suggested that the production of homemade contraceptives transcended the rural-urban divide.[393] A barefoot doctor’s manual from 1977 recommended that, for five months, women consume nine tender, five-inch stalks of *P. massoniana* (Chinese red pine) and one *liang* of white stipa roots after each period. This method was an effective form of contraception for three years.

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[390] Tien, “Sterilization, Oral Contraception, and Population Control in China,” *Population Studies,* 18.3, 232.
[391] Scharping, *Birth Control*, 182.
[392] Tien, “Sterilization,” 232.
[393] Scharping, *Birth Control*, 176.

Alternatively, a woman could consume the juices of *C. japonica* (Japanese bamboo fern)*, D. auranticocaulis* (medicinal lotus), and *P. polyphylla.* Taken three times a day during menstruation, this formula could serve as a contraceptive for eight months. Other herbal contraceptives included wine mixed with *P. polyphylla* flowers and roots, effective for a year. Lastly, the manual suggested that in the case of a pregnancy in the first trimester, black bamboo mixed with white wine and sugar was an effective way of inducing abortion. For women who were not pregnant, this concoction could prevent conception.[394] There is some evidence that methods like this worked, as in a case in which a women consistently drank tea boiled with the herb *hemazi*, permanently ending her menstrual cycle and thus preventing pregnancy.[395] Other sources suggested that women wanting to miscarry consume safflower, rice wine, and herbal remedies to induce bleeding and abort fetuses.[396] One hospital noted that each year multiple women were admitted after consuming abortifacients made from blister beetles, a practice that often led to death.

Limited records from this period suggest that not only were many women using traditional herbal abortifacients, but in some cases they were using them together with or instead of Western family planning techniques, much as had been done in cities during the Republican period. Moreover, the use of these methods was not exclusive to uneducated, rural women. One case from Xicheng district in Beijing involved a woman named Liu Shijun. Liu was a 31-year-old Sichuanese mother of two, a boy age 12 and a girl age six. In 1960, she began working at the Erlong Road service center, but in 1962 she had to return home because she was sick. Her husband was in the military. In 1961, she successfully consumed safflower to abort a pregnancy.

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[394] Marvin E. Weisberg and John R. Graham, *A Barefoot Doctor's Manual: A Guide to Traditional Chinese and Modern Medicine* (Cloudburst Press, 1977), 61.

[395] Hua Han, "Under the Shadow of the Collective Good: An Ethnographic Analysis of Fertility Control in Xiaoshan, Zhejiang Province, China," *Modern China* 33, no. 3 (2007): 328.

[396] Huang Yuchuan, *Zhonggong jieyu yundong* [Chinese Communist Party's Birth Control Movement], (Hong Kong: Union Research, 1967), 22.

In 1962, she again consumed safflower to induce abortion but this time also jumped from a window to ensure that the miscarriage was complete, a practice not uncommon among women desperate not to give birth. She became pregnant again in 1964 and went to see her former colleague Wu at the service center. Liu asked, "Is having a sterilization painful?" She said that she had been using an IUD for the last two years and had not checked to see if she was pregnant again. Then, Wu went to the hospital on Liu's behalf and asked a doctor if he could perform an abortion on Liu. Liu said that she had already used safflower to abort two pregnancies without a hitch. If she got an abortion in the hospital she would have to stay overnight and there would be no one to take care of her two children. On April 19, 1964, Liu consumed alcohol infused with safflower, but her chest started burning severely. She visited the hospital twice over the next 24 hours when her temperature dropped dramatically. She was eventually transferred to the Beijing Number Two Hospital, where she died that afternoon.[397]

Similar themes emerged a few years later in cases from rural Boyang county and neighboring counties in Guangxi province. While relying solely on abortion, women and couples experimented with both Traditional Chinese Medicine and Western biomedical techniques. Often couples made several attempts to terminate their pregnancies before being successful, and few of the techniques they employed depended strictly on Western medicine. In a case from 1968, a married woman having an affair with a neighbor became pregnant and consumed abortifacient herbs. The abortifacient did not work, so her lover took her to a local hospital for a surgical abortion. That method, too, was unsuccessful, so the woman again inserted herbs into her vagina to induce abortion. Although the final attempt was successful, the woman developed a high fever coupled with intense pain and died soon after.[398] In another case, an educated female youth from

[397] BMA, 002-020-00391.
[398] JTUA, Z1-10-657.

Shanghai developed a relationship with the local party secretary who was 20 years her senior. When the young woman discovered that she was pregnant, the couple tried four times to induce an abortion by consuming Yunnan *baiyao* and other herbal medicines, but they failed every time. Ultimately, she was granted permission to return home to Shanghai where she had a surgical abortion.[399]

When neither surgical nor herbal abortions were available, women resorted to their own methods grounded in local practice. In her impressive ethnography of birth control and abortion in a rural and urban areas of Xiaoshan county, Zhejiang province (now part of the city of Hangzhou), Hua Han reveals the creative and horrifying methods women used to limit family size. Han's research focuses on the Lai lineage, the women of which for many years engaged heavily in handicraft spinning and weaving. Before the 1970s, almost every family in a township of Xiaoshan had a large wooden loom at home. Some women desperate not to give birth pulled the bar beaters of their family looms into their lower abdomens to induce abortions.[400] A rural peasant woman named Ying, for example, born in 1924, had six children, two of whom died at birth leaving four living children. After a fifth child was born in 1957, she prolonged breastfeeding to prevent herself from becoming pregnant again. When she noticed her stomach growing bigger once more, she hit herself with the loom beater in an attempt to abort. However, she was unsuccessful.[401] In other cases, women resorted to jumping or performing heavy physical activity to induce miscarriage.[402]

Cases like these reveal that the guiding force in individual medical decision-making was often simply pragmatism. Women used whatever method of birth control they had access to—

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[399] JTUA, Z1-11-123; for more on educated youth and the Sent Down Youth Movement, see chapter 4.
[400] Han, "Under the Shadow of the Collective Good," 330.
[401] Han, "Under the Shadow of the Collective Good," 331.
[402] Han, "Under the Shadow of the Collective Good," 322-323; Zheng, *Ethnographies of Prostitution*, 37.

though they almost always consumed abortifacients or had surgical abortions, rather than using prophylactics. Clearly, experiences with contraception continued to vary greatly, and some women used traditional Chinese abortifacients and Western contraceptives in conjunction. Access to Western-style birth control also did not preclude women from using folk medicine. This aligns with demographer Sripati Chandrasekhar's observation during his 1958 visit to China that many women preferred to use traditional Chinese herbal abortifacients over Western surgical abortions even if the former could be more dangerous.[403]

Conclusion

The result of the Great Leap Forward was an unprecedented man-made disaster with a catastrophic human toll. In fact, the only time China's national population actually decreased between 1949 and 1981 was in the years 1960 and 1961.[404] Though many have argued that official efforts to counter population growth were abandoned during this period and only renewed after Mao Zedong ended the Great Leap, evidence suggests that that was not entirely the case. Despite the single-minded obsession with boosting agricultural and industrial productivity and the catastrophe that resulted, some women in major cities like Shanghai and Chengdu continued to have voluntary abortions and sterilizations. As during the late 1950s, some high-ranking cadre women who did not have time for more children were granted official permission to undergo abortions, but the Party stipulated that a woman could only have an abortion for this reason once every three years.[405] Non-cadre women with four or more children and economic need could also petition for and undergo sterilization surgery, as one my interviewees did.[406]

[403] UOT, box 19, folder 43.
[404] National Birth Planning Committee Integrated Planning Division, *Chinese Birth Planning Statistical Yearbook*, 1.
[405] Jung Chang, *Wild Swans: Three Daughters of China* (New York: Touchstone, 2003), 393
[406] Interview with author, Shanghai, December 20, 2016.

Although class and location continued to dictate access to birth control, residence in a major city or a having a high-ranking government position did not guarantee either proper medical care or a preference for Western-style birth control over traditional methods.

The use of cultural works and focus groups to promote family planning in the 1960s inaugurated a trend that lasted for decades. Group conversations and cultural activities were used to challenge the traditional preference for early marriage and sons, to some effect. By tailoring propaganda materials to the concerns of local communities, the state was able to deepen its role in reproduction. Other efforts, however, were initially less successful. Provincial and municipal governments sought to standardize contraceptive information, train medical professionals in family planning, and hold individual work units responsible for employee birth control use, but encountered numerous obstacles. The chief result was increased attention to female bodies, not necessarily in ways that benefited women, and mounting pressure on women to limit family size while sustaining production.

Chapter 4: Up to the Mountains, Down to the Countryside, and Into the Abortion Clinic: the Cultural Revolution and the Sent-Down Youth Movement, 1966-1979

This chapter examines emerging reproductive trends and the changing role of the state with respect to family planning in the years from the start of the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) until the establishment of the One Child Policy in 1979. I argue that the start of the Cultural Revolution in 1966 with the rise of the Red Guards (Maoist revolutionary youth), the mobilization of Barefoot Doctors in 1968, and the campaign to re-educate urban youth in the countryside not only blurred the urban-rural divide but also created new and unprecedented problems that in some ways undermined the state's efforts to control childbearing while in other ways helped deepen that very control.

In tracing the intensification of state control over reproduction, I show that, on the one hand, the state limited the discussion of birth control among underage individuals, used mechanisms like mother-in-law teams and the court system to monitor and police reproductive practices, and improved record keeping with respect to abortion and birth control. On the other hand, people devised new ways of defying the government, and inconsistent policies provided space for individual maneuvering and co-opting of state-sanctioned contraceptives in contexts they were not intended for. At the same time, birth control and related surgeries continued to be expensive and unreliable, even as they became increasingly common. Birth planning was most successful when individual interests aligned with state interests. If the central government's goal was to decrease unplanned births, the Cultural Revolution and the rural reeducation campaign exemplified ways in which these goals were partially achieved but within a larger context of continual population growth; although the population ballooned from 742,060,000 in 1966 to

970,920,000 in 1979, the population growth rate dropped from 22.7 to 13.3 percent during the same timeframe. It can be said that the Cultural Revolution and rural reeducation both impeded and expedited these demographic shifts. Indeed, these movements facilitated the normalization of abortion by increasing the number of people forced to resort to this method, as well as access to this service.

This chapter also traces and evaluates the partial shift from reactive to preemptive family planning vis-à-vis IUDs and the development of an effective Chinese-made oral birth control pill. I argue that abortion and sterilization rates rose alongside increasing usage of IUDS and oral birth control but that prophylactics and sterilization still did not fully replace reactive family planning methods (i.e. abortion). Finally, I explore how comprehensive changes in record keeping and the implementation of new methods to monitor reproductive behavior paved the way for the One Child Policy's implementation in 1979.

Cultures of Sex and Birth Control

Historian Jeremy Brown and political scientist Nara Dillon locate the roots of the pronounced urban-rural divide in contemporary China in the policies of the Mao era, arguing that uneven policies during this period deepened disparities between the cities and the countryside.[407] From the mid 1960s through the mid to late 1970s, however, the city and countryside also overlapped in interesting and surprising ways. The Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) and the Sent-Down Youth Movement (1955-1980) brought revolutionary youth (called Red Guards) from the countryside to the city and urban youth to the countryside to learn from the peasants, thus serving to seriously blur the divide between these two areas. Between 1966 and 1968, Mao

[407] Jeremy Brown, *City Versus Countryside in Mao's China: Negotiating the Divide* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 1; Nara Dillon, *Radical Inequalities: China's Revolutionary Welfare State in Comparative Perspective* (Cambridge: Harvard University East Asia Center, 2015), 3.

exhorted millions of Red Guards, middle school and high school age students—many of whom had never left their hometowns and had rare unsupervised interaction with the opposite sex—to travel the country in co-ed bands igniting class struggle (an experience called *chuanlian* in Chinese). Records acknowledging birth control use or abortion during these years are few and far between. The dearth of materials might be attributed to a number of different factors: state silencing of topics related to sex during this period, political turmoil which made family planning more difficult, or close guarding of birth planning files by contemporary Chinese authorities. In contrast to the peak years of the Cultural Revolution, abortion records among unmarried youth from the early 1970s are quite numerous, even more plentiful than those from the years immediately preceding the advent of the Cultural Revolution.

Scholars of gender and sexuality in twentieth-century China are engaged in an ongoing debate over whether the state's role in sexual matters changed dramatically with the start of the Cultural Revolution in 1966. Mayfair Yang has stated that, "there was a dearth of both public and private discussions of sex during the Cultural Revolution."[408] Harriet Evans elaborates that publications on sex and birth control were available in the early PRC in the 1950s and early 1960s but that they became scarce with the start of the Cultural Revolution. Emily Honig notes that two conflicting narratives appear in Cultural Revolution memoirs—tales of sexual repression and examples of widespread sexual violence and promiscuity. She concludes from these paradoxical accounts that while the Cultural Revolution was sexually repressive, it involved the "continual negotiation of sex and sexuality" in which the role of the state in silencing sexuality was not usually obvious.[409]

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[408] Yang, M.M. "From Gender Erasure to Gender Difference: State Feminism, Consumer Sexuality, and Women's Public Sphere in China," in Mayfair Mei-hui Yang (ed.), *Spaces of Their Own: Women's Public Sphere in Transnational China* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 44.

[409] Emily Honig, "Socialist Sex: The Cultural Revolution Revisited," *Modern China* 29.2 (2003), 154, 171.

Was the public discourse on sex largely silenced during this period or did it continue? Does an increase in abortion records post-1968 indicate greater knowledge about abortion after the peak of the Cultural Revolution—the most frenetic years of the 1960s in which Red Guard mobilization was at its height—or does it mainly correspond to improved record keeping for reeducated youth (the majority of whom were sent down after 1968)? What role did the Cultural Revolution and the Sent-Down Youth Movement play in hindering or facilitating the spread of abortion and contraceptive practices?

I use diaries, memoirs, court records, film, literature, and interviews to explore the answers to these questions, concluding that one's experience with sex and contraception during the Cultural Revolution and the Sent-Down Youth Movement varied greatly based on individual circumstances: whether an individual was old enough to embark on journeys with other Red Guards between 1966 and 1968, whether he or she was dispatched to the countryside for re-education, and how long he or she spent away from home.

Emily Honig rightly argues that one's experience with sex during the Cultural Revolution was largely dictated by the institution or "sexual climate" a person was in.[410] In general, sex seems to have rarely been discussed in some spaces and yet it pervaded all aspects of political life, as sexual transgressors were a primary target of Cultural Revolution violence and the punishments doled out to them were deeply gendered. In his memoir, author Zhu Xiao Di recalls that as a youth during the early Cultural Revolution he learned about sex largely through reading big character posters (*da zi bao)*, public accusations of counter-revolutionary behavior including engaging in extramarital relations.[411] Similarly, novelist Yu Hua remembers the way a Cultural

[410] Honig, "Socialist Sex", 171.
[411] Zhu Xiao Di, *Thirty Years in a Red House: A Memoir of Childhood and Youth in Communist China* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1998), 53.

Revolution poster featuring a cartoon of an adulterous couple aroused his interest.[412] Michael Schoenhals explains that, "sex featured often and not very discreetly in big character posters" but was often framed as evidence of "revisionism" or other Maoist political offences.[413] If the purpose of exposing sexual transgressions was to reinforce the ideals of premarital chastity and marital fidelity, public pronouncements of lewd behavior also ensured that discussions of sexual behavior remained mainstream.

As for discussions of sexuality in public discourse, publications on sex were not explicitly banned by the state but people self-silenced for fear of being accused of not being "red" enough. Those found reading "bourgeois" books—foreign literature, books published before 1949, and books with any reference to love or sex—would be forced to confess their errors (*cuowu*) and punished accordingly.[414] Something as banal as singing love songs or writing love notes could also be grounds for political punishment.[415] At the same time, Red Guards burned some but not all forbidden books. In fact, there are numerous examples of the ways in which young people worked around this issue. In some memoirs, young people broke into Red Guard strongholds and stole banned books that had yet to be burned. In other cases, Red Guards looking to make some quick money sold confiscated books on the black market.[416] Many memoirs tell of young people secretly reading *shou chaoben*, hand-copied versions of forbidden texts that were circulated underground.[417]

In my assessment, those from historically wealthier and better educated families had a

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[412] Yu Hua, *China in Ten Words*, translated by Allan H. Barr (New York: Pantheon Books, 2011), 58.
[413] Michael Schoenhals, "Sex in Big-Character Posters from China's Cultural Revolution: Gendering the Class Enemy," in *Gender and Mass Dictatorship: Global Perspectives*, Jie-Hyun Lim and Karen Petrone, eds. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 250.
[414] Interview with author, Tianjin, February 14, 2017.
[415] Fan Shen, *Gang of One* (Lincoln: Bison Books, 2006), 156; JTUA, Z1-10-842.
[416] Jung Chang, *Wild Swans: Three Daughters of China* (New York: Touchstone, 2003), 368.
[417] Honig, "Socialist Sex," 148; Anchee Min, *Red Azalea* (New York Anchor Books, 1994), 75; Bai Ge, *1966-1976: Zhongguo baixing shenghuo shilu* [1966-1976: Record of the Life of China's Ordinary People] (Beijing: Police Officer Education Press, 1993), 283.

much higher chance than their peers of obtaining access to these types of materials either before or during the Cultural Revolution. In one case, the daughter of an elite Guomindang family had even read the *Kama Sutra* in high school, a book that her father had hidden from the authorities in his library.[418] Similarly, in the semi-autobiographical novel by Dai Sijie, *Balzac and the Little Chinese Seamstress*, two teenage boys from Beijing, Ma and Luo, find foreign books that have not been burned in the Cultural Revolution stashed away in a fellow educated youth's suitcase which they surreptitiously read along with their friend, a local seamstress.[419] Some of these books contained nude images of women, which would have fallen into the political category of pornography at that time and been severely punished. Similar stories abound in other Cultural Revolution memoirs.

Discussion of sex was not limited to illicit books and was far less taboo in more rural contexts. In the countryside, peasants were much more open about sex than city people. According to sent-down youth, the peasants often made lewd jokes and exchanged dirty stories, habits which rubbed off on relocated urban youth.[420] At the same time, they learned about intercourse from watching dogs and pigs mate.[421] To the chagrin of urban youth, male peasants often wore crotch-less pants in the fields and sometimes even worked in the nude. Similarly, some women went topless, except for young women, who were a cloth over their breasts.[422] All of this came as a shock to many modest educated youth.

If information on sex in general was difficult to come by in some places, then what about information about birth control in particular? While official publications on birth control were

[418] Shen, *Gang of One,* 270.
[419] Dai Sijie, *Balzac and the Little Chinese Seamstress: A Novel*, trans. Ina Rilke (New York: Knopf, 2001), 52.
[420] Shen, *Gang of One*, 145; Gao Yuan, *Born Red: A Chronicle of the Cultural Revolution* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1987), 19.
[421] Min, *Red Azalea,* 71; Rae Yang, *Spider Eaters: A Memoir* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 262; interview with author, Shanghai, December 22, 2017; Honig, "Socialist Sex," 156.
[422] Shen, *Gang of One*, 82; Honig, "Socialist Sex", 156.

scarce during the peak years of the Cultural Revolution (1966-1968), these books became increasingly common beginning in 1969. However, books about birth control use promoted family planning only within the context of marriage, and their target audiences were married couples. In fact, some people reported only obtaining official information on birth control for the first time when registering their marriages; unmarried people relied on married friends to share the secrets of contraception with them.[423] Not only was it difficult for non-married people to acquire family planning materials through official channels, but as with Western novels, being caught with such literature as an unmarried person might result in censure for bourgeois behavior.

Sex and Birth Control in Practice

During the Cultural Revolution, Red Guards engaged in *chuanlian* brought urban sexual culture in contact with sexual attitudes prevalent in the countryside. Red Guards saw themselves as Mao's personal representatives and the righteous protectors of Chinese socialism, and yet they at times engaged in the most bourgeois of acts: pre-marital sex. *Hawthorn Tree Forever,* a novel by Ai Mi that later was turned into a film by Zhang Yimou, is a Cultural Revolution love story that offers insights into the opportunities and perils of life as a Red Guard. In *Hawthorn Tree Forever,* the main character's best friend participates in *chuanlian.* In the process, she is seduced by her crush, a male Red Guard from her school. Ultimately, after the two have sex, the girl, who has no prior sexual experience, realizes she is pregnant and secretly has a surgical abortion at the hospital. The abortion is traumatic and embarrassing. Though this story is fictional, it reflects at least in part the reality of the era. In her memoir *Wild Swans,* Jung Chang recalls that a classmate of hers went travelling with her fellow Red Guards and became pregnant. As a result, her father

[423] Carl Djerassi, *The Politics of Contraception* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1979), 189.

beat her and her peers gossiped about her until she killed herself out of shame.[424] In contrast, in her memoir *Spider Eaters*, Rae Yang mentions the common charges of sex among Red Guards, but argues that she and her peers never engaged in such acts because of their bourgeois nature.[425] On the contrary, Red Guards were notorious for punishing and torturing individuals charged with rape and extramarital affairs.[426] It is important to note that there was little evidence of laws banning extramarital affairs outright but that accusations of sexual crimes were based on informal or "unwritten" rules under the authority of local leadership.[427]

Not all sex among Red Guards was consensual. Emily Honig writes that, "it was not unheard of for young women to return from their travels across China pregnant after sexual encounters that were sometimes desired and presumably, sometimes not."[428] What was deemed rape, however, was not always what we think of today as rape. In fact, sometimes consensual sex was considered rape, as admitting to having consensual pre-marital sex could ruin a young woman's reputation.[429]

If premarital sex was somewhat common among Red Guards, it seems to have been a much larger problem among urban youth sent down to the countryside. The first group of youth was transferred to the countryside as early as 1955, but the bulk of "rusticated" youth were sent down between 1968 and the late 1970s.[430] In total more than 17 million youth, or ten percent of the urban population, was sent to the countryside to remote places such as Heilongjiang, Yunnan, Inner Mongolia, and Guizhou to "learn from the peasants."[431] Between 1962 and 1979, the

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[424] Chang, *Wild Swans,* 317.
[425] Yang, *Spider Eaters,* 193.
[426] Zhu, *Thirty Years,* 43; Yang, *Spider Eaters*, 151.
[427] Emily Honig, "Socialist Sex", 153.
[428] Emily Honig, "Socialist Sex", 155.
[429] Min, *Red Azalea*, 60.
[430] Michel Bonnin, *The Lost Generation: The Rustification of China's Educated Youth (1968-1980)*, Krystyna Horko trans. (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 2013).
[431] Liu Xiaomeng, *Zhongguo zhiqing koushushi* [The Oral Histories of Chinese Educated Youth] (Beijing: Chinese

majority of sent-down youth came from China's three centrally-administrated cities: Shanghai (1,259,200), Beijing (636,300), and Tianjin (465,100).[432] Luoyang did dispatch sent-down youth to the countryside, but the numbers were insignificant compared to bigger cities.

One account of the lives of sent-down youth is particularly illuminating with respect to sexuality and premarital intercourse. In *Balzac and the Little Chinese Seamstress*, two teenage boys from Beijing, Ma and Luo, are shipped to rural Sichuan in 1971 for re-education. Luo falls for a young seamstress and she becomes pregnant with his child. Because the law forbids marriage until age 25 and having an abortion typically requires a marriage certificate, Ma trades a gynecologist a copy of a forbidden French book for a secret surgical abortion.[433]

Though fictional, this story illustrates a number of recurring trends among sent-down youth. In his memoir, *Gang of One*, former sent-down youth Fan Shen reveals how sent-down youth exchanged sex for favors. In one instance, a girl casually referred to as "Big Quilt" exchanged sex with her brigade leader for the opportunity to leave the countryside early to attend nursing school. When Big Quilt became pregnant by the brigade leader, she was also allowed to have an abortion. Other female youth similarly exchanged sex for transfers to better positions and exclusion from hard labor. It was also common for premarital pregnancy to result in a quick marriage.[434] In *Gang of One*, Fan's friend Smoking Devil, a sent-down youth from Beijing, gets a local village girl pregnant before marriage. The two make amends by agreeing to marry, whereby Smoking Devil gives up his urban residence permit (*hukou*) and foregoes any chance of ever returning to the city.[435]

Social Sciences Press, 2004), 1.

[432] Jin Dalu and Lin Shengbao, eds., *Shanghai zhishi qingnian shangshan xiaxiang yundong jishilu*, 1968-1981 [Chronicle of Shanghai Rusticated Youth During the Sent-Down Youth Movement, 1968-1981] (Shanghai: Shanghai Bookstore Publishing House, 2014), 1.

[433] Dai, *Balzac*, 184.

[434] BMA, 100-001-00897.

[435] Shen, *Gang of One*, 107.

Two women I interviewed illuminated a different dimension to this issue. The interviewees, one in her fifties and one age 75, were both from Tianjin, poor, and relatively uneducated. They argued that during the Cultural Revolution there were lots of premarital relationships. In most cases, rather than marrying the baby's father, if a girl became pregnant she would "throw away" (*reng*) the child since abortions were rare at that time.[436] Similarly, in *Wild Swans*, villagers find a dead baby that presumably was abandoned.[437] Several interviews affirmed the validity of these accounts, stating that during the Cultural Revolution, countless sent down youth and Red Guards on *chuanlian* had premarital sex.[438] According to one 57-year-old man from Shanghai, no one wanted to raise a baby without a *hukou*, which was denied to children born out-of-wedlock, so the young mothers secretly gave birth to these babies (*sishengzi)* in the countryside and gave them away to local families. State policies limiting movement created conditions that put women in a double-bind—women could either keep their out-of-wedlock babies who would then face life without the residence permit essential for obtaining housing, education, and medical care, or the mothers could give up or "throw away" their babies, all of which were emotionally traumatic courses of action. In other cases, unmarried women tried to drown the babies or had dangerous, and sometimes fatal, abortions administered by amateur practitioners or local doctors.[439]

Relationships between sent-down youth and locals or among two sent-down youth which resulted in forbidden pregnancies seem to have been very common, but the outcome was closely linked to the status of the couple involved. A series of typically inaccessible court records from rural Jiangxi further nuance this picture.

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[436] Interview with author, Tianjin, February 13, 2017; Honig, "Socialist Sex," 153.
[437] Chang, *Wild Swans*, 437.
[438] Interview with author, Shanghai, December 10, 2016.
[439] Interview with author, Shanghai, December 10, 2016.

The case of Cheng Yinguan, a man who came from a peasant family that farmed a small plot of rented land in rural Jiangxi, is illustrative. Although Cheng only had a junior high school education, he served first as a village clerk, then as a socialist educator for his work team, and eventually as a junior high school teacher. At age 40, he met Fang Wenzhen, a sent-down youth from Shanghai. The two began sleeping together, and Fang became pregnant. Cheng asked other people to help him procure an abortifacient, but the abortion was unsuccessful. When news of the affair got out, Cheng, although dismissed from his job, stole a letter of introduction from his work unit and brought Fang to a hotel where the couple illegally shared a room by posing as husband and wife. Finally, Cheng took Fang to the commune health clinic where he found a doctor willing to perform an abortion.[440] In this case, Cheng's position provided him with the resources to escape scrutiny in the commune and attain an abortion for Fang.

In another case, an educated youth from Shanghai developed a relationship with the local party secretary, a college-educated man from Shanghai who was 20 years her senior. When the young woman discovered that she was pregnant, the couple experimented with *baiyao* and other Chinese herbal abortifacients to no avail. Finally, the young woman was able to use her urban *hukou* to return home to Shanghai where she had a surgical abortion.[441] Around the same time, a female sent-down youth called Yuan, also from Shanghai, developed a relationship with the head of her work unit. The couple met secretly many times and when Yuan discovered she was pregnant she consumed *Shidishui*, a Chinese patent medicine used to counter the effects of too much heat in the body (which in TCM is believed to cause abdominal discomfort and dizziness). When the medication failed to induce an abortion and Yuan's pregnancy was discovered, her work unit permitted her to have a surgical abortion "to prevent the spread of her negative

[440] JTUA, Z1-11-22.
[441] JTUA, Z1-11-123.

influence" to her peers.[442]

In all of these cases, the young women were permitted to have abortions either at a commune clinic in the countryside or at an urban hospital. During that period, it was common for educated youth who became pregnant in the countryside to return to the city to have abortions. According to Emily Honig's interviewees, educated youth working in the Jiangsu countryside went to Nanjing for abortions if they could not obtain them locally.[443] In general, young women without connections to the city and those who developed relationships with less prominent figures in their communes did not fare as well the young women in the above cases. The fates of these women were closely linked to the statuses of the men they were involved with. Men with seniority, access to greater resources, and higher levels of education—unlike male sent-down youth—could offer their lovers' more flexibility in terms of access to abortions. At the same time, it is plausible that men in senior positions, nearly all of whom were married, had greater incentive to help their partners attain abortions because they had reputations and careers to protect. Whether acting out of patriarchal self-interest or altruism, in each of the above cases the male lover was arrested and sent to jail.

Not all sent-down youths shared these types of experiences. Others were stationed in very different "sexual climates" and therefore had different experiences with sexuality. Construction corps, for example, were much more tightly regulated than village production brigades.[444] I interviewed a 70-year-old couple born and raised in Tianjin. In 1970, the husband was sent to Inner Mongolia and the wife to Heilongjiang in frigid northern China as part of construction corps. The couple said that it was the most terrible time of their lives because they were cold and sick everyday digging ditches. As for sex, not only was there was no premarital sex but

[442] JTUA, Z1-10-883.
[443] Honig, "Socialist Sex", 172.
[444] Honig, "Socialist Sex," 171.

apparently men and women rarely interacted. The wife charged that anyone who had premarital sex during the Cultural Revolution was immoral; no one in her work unit had abortions or threw out babies. She became very upset when I even suggested that such a thing was possible.[445] Another interviewee, a 58-year-old man also born and raised in Tianjin, was also sent to a construction corps in Heilongjiang in 1970. As far as he knew there were no premarital sex and no forbidden pregnancies. No one abandoned babies or had secret abortions. As the other interviewees had said, men and women were kept completely separate in all male or all female brigades, so there was little opportunity for any type of relationship to develop.[446] In *Spider Eaters*, Rae Yang tells a similar story of her construction corps in rural Heilongjiang. She compares herself and her fellows sent-down youth to ascetic monks and nuns because of their spartan lifestyles and abstinence.[447]

In addition to differences in "sexual climate," conflicting official campaigns as well as the timeframe in which youths underwent reeducation in the countryside were critical in shaping attitudes toward sex and romance. In the early 1970s, even as the CCP promoted "wanhun" (late or delayed marriage) and "jihua shengyu" (birth planning) in the countryside and condemned youth caught flirting or reading provocative books, the slogan "take root in the rural areas" (*zhagen nongcun*) became popular.[448] This expression referred to the notion that educated youth should marry and settle down permanently in the villages where they were being rusticated to show enduring support for rural development. In particular, female educated youth were encouraged to marry local peasants or fellow educated youth, thus giving up their urban *hukou* and stemming the tide of rusticated youth returning to the cities (due to illness and the pursuit of

[445] Interview with author, Tianjin, February 15, 2017.
[446] Interview with author, Tianjin, February 13, 2017.
[447] Yang, *Spider Eaters,* 233.
[448] Bai Ge, *1966-1976*, 283.

higher education and new jobs).[449]

Similar themes emerge in *Mao's Lost Children*: *Stories of the Rusticated Youth of China's Cultural Revolution*, a collection of accounts of the lives of sent-down youth at Daling Farm (later converted into a militia regiment) on Hainan island. By 1973, there were more than 110,000 reeducated youth, mostly from Guangzhou, living on Hainan island.[450] In the late 1960s, the expression "being rooted in Hainan" referred to committing oneself to the revolutionary cause. However, by the early 1970s, that same slogan referred to getting married and starting a family on the island.[451]

The campaign to permanently settle in the countryside (*chadui luohu)* was fraught with contradictions. As some youth faced pressure to settle down in the countryside, at times authority figures went so far as to play matchmaker for the sent-down youth. In the case of a youth called Huang Rong'er in Hainan, the deputy political commissar of the regiment even offered to help Huang, the son of a senior government official, settle down with another rusticated youth to set an example for other youth.[452] Similarly, another sent-down youth how from Guangzhou, Fang Jinqi, recalls that she met her husband during the movement to put down roots and was encouraged to marry him.[453] However, Chen Hongguang, a sent-down youth stationed as a medic and laborer in a militia regiment in Hainan, explained that although he developed feelings for a fellow sent-down youth and was encouraged to put down roots, he feared that showing romantic affection could lead to charges of depravity. Ultimately the pair dated but chose not to remain together so as not to give up their right to eventually return to the city and enjoy a higher

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[449] Liu Xiaomeng, *Zhongguo zhiqingshi,* 319.
[450] Ou Nianzhong and Liang Yongkang, eds., *Mao's Lost Children: Stories of the Rusticated Youth of China's Cultural Revolution,* Laura Maynard, trans. (Portland: Merwin Asia, 2015), xiii.
[451] Ou Nianzhong and Liang Yongkang., *Mao's Lost Children,* 256.
[452] Ou Nianzhong and Liang Yongkang, *Mao's Lost Children*, 245.
[453] Ou Nianzhong and Liang Yongkang., *Mao's Lost Children,* 256.

standard of living.[454] Despite these contradictory sentiments, the realities of rural life—lack of supervision, access to superior housing for married couples, sheer loneliness, and pressure to support the sent-down youth movement—contributed to a rapid rise in the marriage rate among sent-down youth in the late 1970s. The number of married sent-down youth increased from 480,000 in 1974 to 861,000 in 1977.[455]

Indeed, the "sexual climate" in which a person lived and worked during this period, as well as the time frame in which reeducation occurred, dictated the degree of sexual freedom individuals had and the likelihood of them engaging in sexual relations. While some Red Guards and sent-down youth were sexually active, others lived in sexually oppressive environments with local contact with the opposite sex. At the same time, opportunities for premarital sex evidently created greater demands for abortions in the countryside as out-of-wedlock pregnancies were forbidden.

Out-of-Wedlock Sex and Abortion in the Eyes of the Law

Court records from rural Jiangxi illustrate the growing range and depth of state surveillance in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Criminal charges brought against unmarried individuals engaging in sex and the language used to justify penalties in these cases evinced the authorities intensifying role in distinguishing "orthodox" sexual and reproductive behavior from "unorthodox" practices and perpetuating gendered cultural norms. In every one of the cases, a female educated youth was sent from the city to the countryside, where she began having sexual relations with a local man. In almost every case, the male was significantly older and had some education or authority even if he was from a poor peasant background. The court records

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[454] Ou Nianzhong and Liang Yongkang., *Mao's Lost Children,* 251.
[455] Liu Xiaomeng, *Zhongguo zhiqingshi,* 319.

universally claimed that the male “baited” (*you’er*) or “seduced” (*jianwu)* the female youth, often with flowery and deceiving words (*huayan qiaoyu*).[456] These official accounts explicitly framed these relationship in terms of rape (*jianwu*). This language paints female youth as passive and denies them agency while possibly misconstruing the nature of the intercourse. Perhaps this was a product of the broader denial of female sexual desire or an effort to reinforce the trope of female sexual purity. In her memoir *Red Azalea,* Anchee Min describes the heartbreaking case of a fellow sent-down youth named Little Green. Little Green, the 18-year-old daughter of urban intellectuals, was caught having sex in a field with a young soldier. When Little Green’s brigade leader accused the man of rape, Little Green did not defend him although the act likely was consensual. It seems she wanted to preserve some degree of personal dignity, as girls who had premarital sexual contact with boys were scorned, ridiculed, and much worse. Ultimately the young man was given the death penalty, and Little Green went mad from guilt.[457] As in the case of Little Green, many of the circumstances in which sent-down youth engaged in sexual relationships suggest that there may have been consent. Often couples had sex many times over the span of several years before being caught and punished.[458] In other cases, couples were engaged to be married and still the man was charged with rape when he had sex with his fiancé.[459] All this suggests that charges were based less on concrete evidence and testimonials than on the whim of local authorities.

Gendered cultural norms also played a significant role in dictating how individuals responded to accusations of sexual indecency. The state’s assessment of whether a relationship fit with so-called societal values and expectations for the ideal family unit was critical in

[456] *Jianwu* can also be translated as “to violate.”
[457] Min, *Red Azalea*, 56.
[458] JTUA, Z1-10-883; JTUA, Z1-11-123.
[459] JTUA, Z1-10-929.

determining legality. In these cases, intercourse simply for pleasure, rather than for perpetuating the family line in marriage, was deemed unorthodox.

Having discussed the blurry line between "seduction" and rape in official sources, I will now consider what in the West is contemporarily understood to be rape—coerced sex (*qiangjian).* Indeed, a pandemic of rape accompanied the sent-down youth movement to the extent that the central government published a document in 1970 mandating that anyone who raped a female sent-down youth be thoroughly punished.[460] Numerous memoirs and court records recall instances of heterosexual and homosexual rape either committed by locals or cadres onto educated youth or by educated youth onto other educated youth.[461] The lack of formal supervision in rural areas made sent-down youth particularly vulnerable to sexual violence with few channels for recourse. According to a State Council report of violence against sent-down youth, incomplete national statistics reveal that between 1969 and 1973 23,000 cases of abuse of sent down youth were reported, 70 percent of which were cases of raped or seduced female sent-down youth.[462]

Many people assumed that female sent down youth were no longer virgins after returning from the countryside because rates of rape, consensual premarital sex, and unregistered cohabitation of couples in the countryside were so high.[463] In fact, likely because premarital sex was so common, in 1974 the central government decreed that contraceptives such as oral birth control, condoms, and cervical caps be distributed free in the countryside, in particular among

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[460] Liu Xiaomeng, *Zhongguo zhiqingshi: da chao* [A History of China's Sent-Down Youth: the Main Wave] (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 1998), 263-64.

[461] JTUA, Z1-10-929; "Nü zhiqing koushu wenge shiqi liangxing guanxi beican jingli rang ren zhenjing" [Female Sent Down Youths' Shocking Oral Histories of Tragic Sexual Experiences During the Cultural Revolution], *Liushu yaofeng de boke* [Shaking Willow Blog], June 8, 2015, http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog_443bf8ae0102voa4.html.

[462] "Nü zhiqing koushu wenge shiqi liangxing guanxi beican jingli rang ren zhenjing" [Female Sent Down Youths' Shocking Oral Histories of Tragic Sexual Experiences During the Cultural Revolution], *Liushu yaofeng de boke* [Shaking Willow Blog], June 8, 2015, http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog_443bf8ae0102voa4.html.

[463] Yang, *Spider Eaters,* 248; Honig, "Socialist Sex," 162; Ma Bo, *Blood Red Sunset: A Memoir of the Chinese Cultural Revolution*, Howard Goldblatt trans. (New York: Penguin Books, 1996), 174.

sent-down youth.[464] However, distribution of these products likely varied greatly by region according to local government preferences and infrastructure. The Department of Gynecology and Obstetrics within the Guangdong Province Bureau of Maternity and Child Hygiene even went so far as to conduct a survey of the menstrual schedules of female sent-down youth. The survey collected data on the menstrual cycles of 3125 sent-down youth dispatched from the cities of Guangzhou and Foshan to work on tea farms between 1969 and 1974. The study focused on the age at which most girls had their first period and the number of days between each period before and after being sent down. The survey's ostensible goal was to "attend to the physiological characteristics of female sent-down youth," that is to determine if the stress of working and living in the countryside had any negative physiological consequences, such as amenorrhea.[465] I suspect, however, that the study also served the purpose of legitimizing regular health inspections and menstrual reporting, thus deepening the state's knowledge of individual sexual health and providing consistent information regarding the likelihood of premarital pregnancy. Menstrual tracking in the early 1970s not only paved the way for stricter government control over reproductive health under the One Child Policy but also served as a way of preventing unreported, and potentially dangerous, abortions in the countryside.

Court records from this period charging males with helping female sent-down youth undergo abortions make little or no mention of whether the females consented or took any initiative in the matter. In fact, in almost every case only the male was arrested and charged with assisting in the abortion but the female appears to have only undergone "thought reform." If that is not telling enough, in only half of the abortion cases from Boyang county is the female youth's name listed in the court record (otherwise she is simply referred to as "woman") while the male's

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[464] SMA, B123-8-1051.
[465] GMA, 512-A1.6-8-21.

full name, including nicknames, is given in every case.[466] These observations raise several questions: Is only emphasizing the role of males in seeking abortions for their lovers accurate or simply further denying female agency? Were the female sent-down youth charged with additional crimes and punished in ways that went largely unrecorded or were only the males charged with crimes? Were males targeted because of their rural *hukou*, which legally prohibited unmarried peasants from undergoing abortions?

These questions are not easily answered but a closer examination of the rhetoric of court records provides a degree of insight. Official explanations for charging individuals with having premarital/extramarital sex or undergoing abortions were typically framed in terms of ideological crimes and personal moral failings because neither sex out of wedlock nor abortions were actually against the law. For example, many court records charged men who facilitated their lovers' abortions with disturbing societal order, negatively influencing society, espousing bourgeois ideologies, and failing to thoroughly study Marxist-Leninist-Maoist teachings.[467] Such accusations tied personal decisions to the fate of society as a whole while conflating sexual transgressions with ideological commitment. Official court records also charged that sexual relationships were efforts to undermine reeducation in the countryside, class struggle, and Chairman Mao's great strategic plan, all of which were considered counterrevolutionary acts.[468] Given the emphasis on productivity, the harsh realities of life in the countryside, and the "feminization" of agriculture work during the collective period, it is not surprising that impeding a woman's labor efforts was considered a very serious crime.[469] In addition, helping a lover obtain an abortion was sometimes interpreted as evidence of shirking personal responsibility for

[466] Unnamed female victims are referred to as *nüfang*, meaning woman.
[467] JTUA, Z1-10-884.
[468] JTUA, Z1-10-883; JTUA, Z1-10-928.
[469] Hershatter, *The Gender of Memory,* 220.

one's actions.[470] Some case records argued that by engaging in sexual intercourse, males enacted physical and emotional damage on the young female educated youths. In the case of abortions, sometimes the male defendant was accused of harming or destroying the young woman's body (*shenti shoudao cuican*).[471] However, the impact on the female was rarely the central focus of the court records and at no point was it evident what role the female played in the affair (unless she died, which would have made the charges more severe). These cases evince the dual mechanisms of formal and informal sanction in place whereby men received the brunt of the legal punishment, but women were ostracized socially.

The Rise of the Barefoot Doctors and the Evolving Role of the State

Based on data from the Ministry of Health, Thomas Scharping estimates that abortion rates nationwide nearly doubled from 13.3 percent in 1971 to 22.3 percent in 1975.[472] Although I have not been able to locate abortion statistics for the period from 1966 to 1970, Scharping approximates that the national abortion rate was only 6.5 percent in 1965 on the eve of the Cultural Revolution.[473] In her ethnographic study of women in rural Shanxi, Gail Hershatter found that abortions were already well known in the countryside in the late 1960s and some of her interviewees had undergone these procedures at a local hospital.[474] One way to account for the dramatic rise in abortions during the late 1960s and early 1970s is the deployment of Barefoot Doctors—young people with little training who worked as paramedics—to the countryside beginning in 1968.[475]

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[470] JTUA, Z1-10-884.
[471] JTUA, Z1-10-884.
[472] Scharping, *Birth Control in China*, 121.
[473] Scharping, *Birth Control in China*, *121*.
[474] Hershatter, *The Gender of Memory* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), 206-207.
[475] White, *China's Longest Campaign*, 54.

The rise of the Barefoot Doctors was part and parcel of the systematic deepening of state control over reproduction. Barefoot Doctors not only delivered a wide range of critical medical services to places with little to no health infrastructure, but they also served as vectors for disseminating information about contraception and abortion. The rise in publications of encyclopedic medical guides also facilitated the spread of state medicine into rural areas. *Rural Healthcare Handbook* (nongcun yiliao weisheng shouce), published in 1968, *Popular Handbook for Rural Healthcare* (nongcun yiliao weisheng puji shouce), published in 1969, *"Barefoot Doctor" Training Materials* ("chijiao yisheng" peixun jiaocai), published in 1970, and *Rural Doctor Handbook* (nongcun yisheng shouce), published in 1971, each contain a chapter dedicated solely to family planning. The introductions to these medical handbooks state that the contents are specifically designed to guide sent-down youth and middle-school, high-school, and college graduates in their efforts to bring healthcare to the countryside.[476] All three texts contain descriptions of birth control techniques including condoms, diaphragms, IUDs, oral contraceptives, contraceptive ointments, and the rhythm method. They also mention surgeries for abortion and sterilization.[477]

Generally speaking, these handbooks were not only inconsistent because each edition was compiled and published locally by region or by city, but the books also privileged different types of family planning strategies. While some guides contain diagrams and step-by-step guides to performing contraceptive surgeries and IUD insertions, others merely introduce these procedures with little explanation, indicating that not all of the information in the guidebooks was intended to be put into practice. The 1968, 1970, and 1971 editions all devote considerable space to the

[476] *Nongcun yiliao weisheng shouce* [Rural Healthcare Handbook] (Shanghai: Shanghai Science and Technology Publishers, 1968), 1; *Nongcun yiliao weisheng puji shouce* [Popular Handbook for Rural Healthcare] (Shanghai: Shanghai "Popular Handbook for Rural Healthcare" Publishing Group, 1969), 1.

[477] *Nongcun yiliao weisheng puji shouce* [Rural Healthcare Handbook], 346; "Chijiao yisheng" peixun jiaocai" ["Barefoot Doctor" Training Materials] (Beijing: People's Health Publishers, 1970), 254-257; *Nongcun yisheng shouce* [Rural Doctor Handbook] (Beijing: People's Health Publishers, 1971), 660-680.

details of inserting and removing IUDs, performing female and male sterilizations (Figures 4.1 and 4.2), and conducting surgical abortions (Figure 4.3), but the volume from 1969, *Popular Handbook for Rural Healthcare,* does not discuss these procedures in detail (Figure 4.4).[478] Based on the *Popular Handbook* alone, it would have been highly unlikely that a medic with limited training could have performed a successful abortion or sterilization surgery.

[478] Directions for Performing a Tubal Ligation, *Nongcun yiliao weisheng shouce* [Rural Healthcare Handbook] (Shanghai: Shanghai Science and Technology Publishers, 1971), 679; Directions for Performing a Vasectomy, *Nongcun yiliao weisheng shouce* [Rural Healthcare Handbook] (Shanghai: Shanghai Science and Technology Publishers, 1971), 677; Directions for performing an abortion (uterine dilation and curettage), *Nongcun yiliao weisheng shouce* [Rural Healthcare Handbook] (Shanghai: Shanghai Science and Technology Publishers, 1971), 675; Directions for performing abortions and sterilizations, *Nongcun yiliao weisheng puji shouce* [Popular Handbook for Rural Healthcare] (Shanghai: Shanghai "Popular Handbook for Rural Healthcare" Publishing Group, 1969), 346.

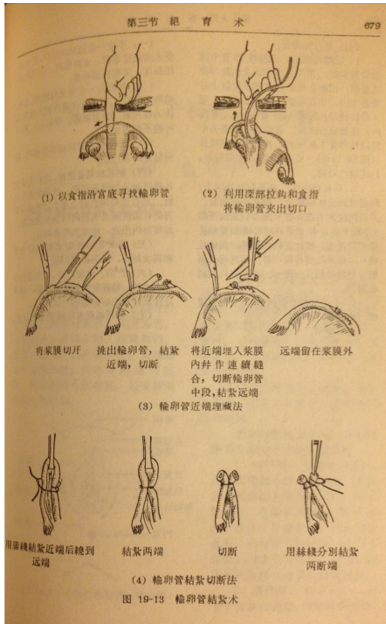

Fig. 4.2: Directions for Performing a Tubal Ligation.

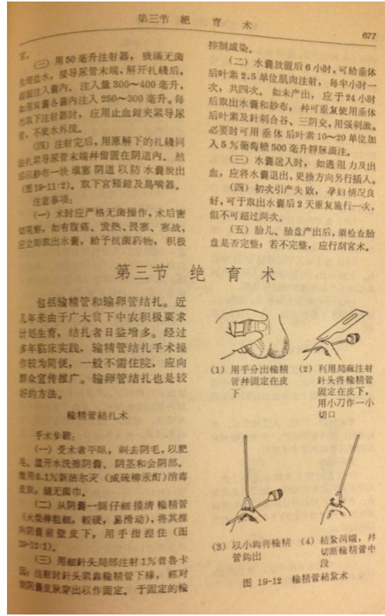

Fig. 4.2: Directions for Performing a Vasectomy.

Fig. 4.3: Directions for performing an abortion (uterine dilation and curettage.

五、其他避孕法：如安全期、避孕油膏等方法，但效果不可靠。

人 工 流 产

人工流产也是一种节育的方法。在怀孕2、3个月以内做人工流产手术比較安全，对健康的影响也小。人工流产方法有两种：

一、电吸法。

二、瓶吸法。

【术后注意】

一、注意外阴清洁。

二、休息两星期，避免过度疲劳。

三、避免性生活及盆浴一个月。

人 工 绝 育

是永久避孕的好方法，分男子绝育和女子绝育两种：

一、男子绝育术：結扎輸精管，方法简便。

二、女子绝育术：結扎輸卵管，可于产后、人工流产后或月經后进行。

• 346 •

Fig. 4.4: Directions for performing abortions and sterilizations.

Upon closer examination, other inconsistencies appear in these medical guides. While the party had officially discouraged using traditional herbal remedies for family planning in 1962 in response to numerous reports of negative and even fatal reactions to the formulas, some Barefoot Doctor manuals from the 1970s explicitly promoted these types of traditional contraception methods. Barefoot Doctor's Manuals published in 1974 and 1977, for example, provided herbal recipes for contraception and for inducing abortion and sterilization.[479] According to anthropologist Susan Rigdon's interview with a barefoot doctor, herbal methods were typically used in late term abortions. This involved either grinding up the root of *yuanhua,* a small yellow flower that grows in northern China, and inserting it into the cervix to induce abortion or extracting a powder from the root of *tianhua*, another plant widely used in abortions, and injecting it into the patient to trigger abortion.[480] The latter method was discontinued in some parts of China because it caused nausea and weakness in some cases. At the same time, other health guides from this period completely elided the topic of herbal abortifacients and contraceptives, likely because they were thought to be dangerous and unreliable. Critically, even as some health workers were promoting abortions in the countryside either using TCM formulas or biomedical practices, unmarried people were being punished for undergoing and performing abortions. Although the barefoot doctor's guides made no mention of the fact that these medicines and procedures were reserved for married couples, that seems to be the underlying assumption. Clearly, in the eyes of the authorities there was no tension between promoting abortions as birth control among married couples and punishing instances of abortion among

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[479] U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare Public Health Service, *A Barefoot Doctor's Manual (Translation of a Chinese Instruction to Certain Chinese Health Personnel)* (John E. Fogarty International Center for Advanced Health Studies, 1974), 173-175; Weisberg, Marvin E. and John R. Graham. *A Barefoot Doctor's Manual: A Guide to Traditional Chinese and Modern Medicine (The American Translation of the Official Chinese Paramedical Manual* (Cloudburst Press, 1977), 61-62.

[480] Susan M. Rigdon, "Abortion Law and Practice in China: An Overview with Comparisons to the United States," *Social Science Medicine* 42, no. 4 (1996): 548-549.

unmarried couples. Moreover, decreasing population growth took precedence over female health as women were encouraged to use family planning methods only recently deemed too dangerous for public consumption.

Despite very real inconsistencies in medical discourse and practice, the state continued to systematize and standardize birth planning. In 1971, the State Council issued a directive calling for the establishment of local birth planning offices and small groups. At the same time, greater emphasis was placed on subsidizing family planning through free birth control supplies and reimbursements for medical procedures.[481] As a complement to Barefoot Doctors, the state sent birth control teams into the countryside to monitor fertility and appointed "sister-in-law team leaders," rural woman cadres and brigade leaders, to serve as the "backbone" of birth planning implementation in the countryside.[482] Over the course of the 1970s, women's leaders' responsibilities expanded from simply mobilizing resources and personnel for birth planning and disseminating contraceptives and information about family planning to monitoring the menstrual cycles of women of childbearing age and disseminating birth targets.[483] As early as 1970, a reporting system that compiled county, municipal, and provincial levels birth planning information was in place in some provinces.[484] By 1973, specific birth targets were being disseminated throughout whole nation as part of the national economic plan, and by 1974 governments down to the county level were being assigned specific annual targets for population growth.[485] As a precursor to later policies which mandated that only couples with birth permits

[481] White, *China's Longest Campaign*, 59.
[482] Zheng, *Ethnographies*, 46, 84; White, *China's Longest Campaign*, 85.
[483] White, *China's Longest Campaign,* 85-86.
[484] White, *China's Longest Campaign,* 87.
[485] White, *China's Longest Campaign,* 87.

have children, in the 1970s some communes and brigades were already allocating birth permits to individual couples permitted to have a baby.[486]

Another factor that facilitated more effective reproductive policing and paved the way for the One Child Policy was the rise of even more detailed and elaborate record keeping in the 1970s. In the 1950s and 1960s, individuals' official dossiers contained minimal information about reproduction other than the name of his or her spouse and the number of living children. By the 1970s, however, these files included exact details regarding reproduction and family planning. In fact, prior to the 1970s the standard forms in individual dossiers only contained categories like name, age, class background, education level, work hours and attendance rate, etc. During the 1970s, a new section titled either "late marriage and birth planning" (*wanhun jihua shengyu*) or "birth planning situation" (*jihua shengyu qingkuang*) was added to the forms and included information like the number of children a person had as well as what type of contraception that person and his or her spouse were using.[487] Some forms were more detailed than others, featuring a chart with boxes to be filled in regarding "number of children that met birth planning conditions," "number IUD insertions and removals," "rate of successful birth control use," "number of male or female sterilizations," "number of abortions," and "use of oral contraceptives."[488] These details were juxtaposed with information about individual work productivity, highlighting the centrality of family planning to meeting national labor goals.

Changes in record keeping were part of the larger epistemological move toward conceptualizing the people within China's borders as a "population" and viewing individual health as integral to strengthening the nation. In her book on the campaign to eradicate snail fever in Maoist China, historian Miriam Gross chronicles the emergence of two phenomena

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[486] White, *China's Longest Campaign,* 87.
[487] ECNUA, Ai 0358-024-003; ECNUA, Ai 0358-024-008; ECNUA, Ai 0358-024-001.
[488] ECNUA, As 0358-099-040; ECNUA, Ai 0358-024-001; ENUA, Ai 0358-024-009.

relevant to family planning: “grassroots science” (campaigns to mobilize the rural population in mass science campaigns) and “scientific consolidation” (a new mechanism of state power that facilitated state control over rural areas through an emphasis on accurate health statistics).[489] Tong Lam and Arunabh Ghosh emphasize the paradigm shift in the late Qing, Republican, and Mao eras from seeking truth from Confucian values to privileging empirical social facts as the basis for modern governance.[490] Lam shows how the concept of “society” emerged as a site of political discourse and how social surveys came to be seen as a cure for Western charges of Chinese weakness.[491]

In rural China, this transition involved teaching medical teams how to collect accurate statistical data and how to determine what constituted a useful statistic. In the case of the snail fever campaign, in the late 1950s when grassroots groups noticed that they lacked the baseline data necessary to evaluate the effect of the anti-snail fever campaign, they began collecting data such as the sex, age, occupation, and disease stage of patients. However, because there were no set forms, statistics were inconsistent and difficult to compare. In fact, standardized medical forms were not identified as useful at the prefectural, provincial, national, or campaign level until after the 1950s.[492] Furthermore, hospitals records were not kept on individual patients and their medicines/doses, making it impossible to track the larger public health situation and the effect of health campaigns. Aside from the larger cultural shift toward emphasizing social facts and data, the lack of emphasis on record keeping was also due in part to the fact that Mao had once

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[489] Miriam Gross, *Farewell to the God of Plague: Chairman Mao’s Campaign to Deworm China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2016), 2-3.

[490] Tong Lam, *A Passion for Facts: Social Surveys and the Construction of the Chinese Nation State, 1900-1949* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), 3-4; Arunabh Ghosh, “Making It Count: Statistics and State-Society Relations in the Early People’s Republic of China, 1949-1959” Phd Diss., Columbia University, 2014.

[491] Lam, *A Passion for Facts,* 4.

[492] Gross, *Farewell to the God of Plague*, 214.

deemed record keeping a bourgeois waste of time.[493]

The training of barefoot doctors and the banishment of urban doctors to the countryside, as well as the formation of rural cooperatives and the establishment of the household registration system, played a critical role in facilitating the "legibility" of the countryside.[494] As with the snail fever campaign, record keeping regarding birth planning also become far more detailed and systematic in terms of local reporting, especially in cities but also to a degree in villages. For example, birth planning records for Wenshui county in Shanxi for the year 1976 delineated by village the numbers of sterilizations by gender, abortions, IUD insertions, and children born that met birth planning conditions (Fig. 4.5).[495] The villages were also ranked in terms of family planning rate and ability to meet birth planning targets. These statistics were largely representative of the birth planning ratios apparent in other parts of rural China. For the year 1976, 588 women in Wenshui underwent sterilization whereas only 18 men were sterilized, highlighting the tendency for women to bear the responsibility for sterilization. Of 31,604 eligible women (there is no corresponding statistic for men), 4,305 women had IUDs inserted and another 759 had abortions.[496] What all of these statistics suggest is not only an increase in overall birth control use, but also that public discussion of personal birth control practices both at the individual and collective levels became normalized during the 1970s. This trend likely eased the transition to the One Child Policy, when more uniform reproductive monitoring became

[493] Gross, *Farewell to the God of Plague*, 216.
[494] Gross, *Farewell to the God of Plague*, 40, 210.
[495] "Jieyu cuoshi luoshi qingkuang paidui gongbu" [Village Ranking in Terms of Implementation of Birth Control Measures], 1976.
[496] ECNUA, As 0358-099—038.

standard.

办公室

节育措施落实情况排队公布

76 8 31

	公社	有生育条件妇女数	1—7落实节育措施数				1—7人流数	历年落实节育措施数				节育率	排队	附记
			合计	上环	男扎	女扎		合计	上环	男扎	女扎	%		
百分之八十以上	会立	359	74	54		20	5	305	232		73	85	1	
	东社	1078	160	154		6	31	910	857	5	48	84	2	
	中庄	441	31	14		17	14	369	281	1	87	83.3	3	
	孝义	2153	323	287		36	78	1783	1704	4	75	82.9	4	
	西榴头	1267	192	191		1	50	1038	983	1	54	81.9	5	
	南武	1975	287	266	1	20	65	1464	1406	4	56	81.6	6	
	宜儿	2073	419	400	5	14	39	1692	1619	7	66	81.6	7	
	杜家庄	1499	114	109		5	28	1191	1158		33	80.4	8	
	开榍	2977	294	273		21	77	2394	2277	2	115	80.4	9	
	上曲	1185	217	205		12	21	956	923	1	32	80.1	10	
百分之七十以上	北张	2543	338	333		5	42	2018	1926	15	77	79.3	11	
	苍儿会	490	77	62		15	18	378	313		65	77.1	12	
	马西	981	290	108		182	33	761	552	2	207	77	13	
	南齐	1298	248	236		12	74	1001	940		61	77	14	
	胡兰	2406	484	460		24	60	1787	1653	2	132	73.8	15	
	下曲	2321	982	923	9	50	69	1698	1607	9	82	73	16	
70%以下	城关	3227	417	317	4	150	52	2333	2072	7	254	72.2	17	
	县直	2962						2066	1844	12	210	69.7	18	
	枝尖	369	81	65		16	9	249	190		59	67.4	19	
	合计	31604	4911	4305	18	588	759	24297	22442	71	1784	76.8		

Figure 4.5: "Village Ranking in Terms of Implementation of Birth Control Measures."

Under the One Child Policy, a comprehensive system of rewards and fines for practicing birth planning was implemented, but a nascent program of financial incentives and penalties was already underway in the mid 1970s. The extent of such fines and benefits, however, depended on locality. In Shanghai and Tianjin, abortions and sterilizations were free of charge by 1971 and individuals undergoing these procedures could enjoy paid leave, but a number of my interviewees claimed they had no knowledge of this policy at the time.[497] In 1973, the Ministry of Health also issued a document outlining standardized vacation allowances for birth control procedures.[498] Nevertheless, relatively few women would have enjoyed access to these benefits.

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[497] Wang et al., *Dangdai zhongguo de weisheng shiye* [Public Hygiene Undertakings in Modern China], 235; interview with author, Shanghai, November 7, 2016; interview with author, Shanghai, December 12, 2017.

[498] White, *China's Longest Campaign,* 103.

In fact, the Maoist welfare state deepened the income gap between the city and the countryside by depriving urbanites working in the largely female collective sector and rural residents of access to critical labor insurance benefits, such as family planning subsidies and post-surgery vacation allowances.[499]

The initial program of penalties for having too many children was equally uneven and differed across rural-urban lines, but in contrast to welfare benefits, the system of financial penalties favored the rural population. Interviewees in Shanghai and Luoyang said that in the mid-1960s they knew people who had paid fines (*fakuan*) and even lost their jobs for having too many children (more than one in the city and more than two in the countryside).[500] One interviewee, a doctor from Luoyang, said that in 1976 her brother and his wife, who were the parents of a little girl, had a second child without permission, hoping the child would be a boy. The baby turned out to be a girl and the couple was fined 700 *yuan,* even though they only made several hundred *yuan* annually. Still not deterred, in 1978, the wife gave birth to another baby, again without permission but it too was a girl. Consequently, the husband's work unit took away the family's housing and a year's salary. My interviewee suggested that had her brother and his wife been rural residents, perhaps the policy would not have been so harshly enforced, as rural couples typically faced milder penalties for family planning violations.[501] By the time the One Child Policy was implemented in 1979, couples who only had one child were receiving healthcare subsidies (*baojian fei*), retirement funds, priority housing, and larger grain allotments.[502] One couple I interviewed said they received five *yuan* a month throughout the

[499] Dillon, *Radical Inequalities,* 3.
[500] Interview with author, Luoyang, August 2, 2015; interview with author, Shanghai, January 25, 2017; White, *China's Longest Campaign,* 104.
[501] Interview with author, Luoyang, August 2, 2015.
[502] ECNUA, Ai 0358-032-015.

early 1980s from the Tianjin government as incentive not to have a second child.[503] Conversely, couples who had more children than permitted were forced to pay an "excess-child fee" (*duo zinü fei*), which typically consisted of 10 percent of each parent's salary for the next 14 years. The exact terms of the sanctions were determined at the provincial rather than the national level and therefore were not uniform.[504] The precursors to more stringent later measures—including the inconsistency in their enforcement—can be found in the regional policies of the mid to late 1970s.

The Partial Transition from Reactive to Proactive Population Control

IUDs

Another aspect of deepening state control over reproduction was an attempt to shift from reactive birth control to proactive birth planning. As the previous section suggested, IUD use within the context of marriage became more widespread throughout the 1970s and insertions reached record numbers—16.74 percent—in 1975 (although annual IUD insertions would briefly exceed this number in the 1980s).[505] Many interviewees said this was the first type of birth control they used and they did so starting in the early 1970s.[506] For urban residents, and to a lesser extent, rural dwellers, the state encouraged and then mandated that mothers have an IUD inserted after their first birth and sterilization after their second birth.[507] IUDs, however, elicited different responses from different acceptors. According to one interviewee from Luoyang, "Men always wanted more children—if a couple only had daughters the husband might rip the IUD out of his wife by hand, which could destroy her uterus. Alternatively, women with only daughters

[503] Interview with author, Tianjin, February 15, 2017.
[504] Scharping, *Birth Control,* 137; White, *China's Longest Campaign,* 105.
[505] Scharping, *Birth Control*, 121.
[506] Interview with author, Luoyang, November 16, 2016; interview with author, Tianjin, September 17, 2016; interview with author, Shanghai, August 30, 2016.
[507] Interviews with author, Luoyang, November 14, 2016.

who hoped for another chance to have a son might also rip out their IUDs or insert wires into their vaginas to remove their IUDs by hand if there was no professional to help them. This was very dangerous and could lead to death."[508] Interviewees in Shanghai told similar stories about how in the 1970s the only safe way to remove IUDs was with professional assistance but that doctors were often unwilling to help women remove their mandatory IUDs.[509]

As with many other aspects of family planning, access to IUDs was not uniform. Even as some women sought to secretly remove their IUDs, others could not obtain them. According to one 77-year-old man from Luoyang: "One big problem in the 1970s was a shortage of IUDs especially in more backward parts of the countryside (*luohou de difang*). People seeking birth control would go to many different clinics looking for IUDs but in many cases the clinics had run out. People would try to get jobs in more urban areas in part because urban residents had much better access to IUDs."[510] In fact, one senior family planning official said that as of 1965 the national supply of IUDs could meet just eight percent of the demand, but that the supply of IUDs expanded gradually throughout the 1970s.[511] In this way, even those people who wanted to limit the size of their families were left to fend for themselves without state support.

The combination of IUD shortages and high rates of failure among contraceptive users resulted in a rise in the birth rate in the mid-1970s.[512] In the 1970s, Chinese IUDs were stainless steel rings, which often caused heavy menstrual bleeding. More than 30 percent of these IUDs either failed or were expelled from the body within two years of insertion.[513] High birth control failure rates had another consequence: a rise in abortion rates. Joan Kaufman et al. have shown that even in the late 1980s, a large proportion of abortions were performed as a follow up to

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[508] Interview with author, Luoyang, November 14, 2016.
[509] Interview with author, Shanghai, December 22, 2016.
[510] Interview with author, Luoyang, November 16, 2016.
[511] Scharping, *Birth Control*, 181.
[512] White, *China's Longest Campaign,* 138.
[513] Scharping, *Birth Control*, 107.

contraceptive failure resulting in unintended pregnancy.[514] A 1985 fertility survey showed that IUDs had a failure rate of 8 to 14 percent, while other fertility surveys in the late 1980s indicated a 29 percent failure rate among IUD users.[515]

<u>"The Pill"</u>

During the late Republican period and the early years of the People's Republic, Tianjin's Huifu Pharmaceutical Factory produced a type of oral contraceptive, which was discontinued in 1958 after users reported abdominal pain. It is likely that early oral contraceptives were ineffective, and yet Tianjin vowed to renew production in 1963, which it eventually did.[516] In 1967, mass production of the female pill began and expanded in 1969 when production of oral contraceptives was included in the national economic plan.[517]

In the process of developing the oral contraceptive formulas most widely used today, researchers experimented with a variety of different oral contraceptive methods and formulas. In 1971, researchers even began developing an oral contraceptive for men derived from cottonseed oil.[518] The inspiration to use cottonseed oil as a contraceptive emerged in 1969 when the Chinese Academy of Science sent a team to study an outbreak of fever, malaise, and burning sensations among peasants in Hebei province.[519] The symptoms were eventually linked to cottonseed oil, which contains a compound called gossypol. While peasants had traditionally boiled the cottonseed before pressing it, which rendered the gossypol inactive, under the commune system cottonseed was pressed cold, resulting in the outbreak. Studies of Chinese rats demonstrated that doses of gossypol caused male infertility in two to four weeks, but that healthy sperm production

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[514] Kaufman et al., "Family Planning Policy and Practice in China: A Study of Four Rural Counties," *Population and Development Review* 15.4 (1989), 725.
[515] Scharping, *Birth Control*, 107.
[516] TMA, X0110-D-000192–005.
[517] Scharping, *Birth Control*, 182.
[518] Wang et al., *Dangdai zhongguo de weisheng shiye* [Public Hygiene Undertakings in Modern China], 243.
[519] Djerassi, *The Politics of Contraception*, 203.

returned gradually after the treatment ceased. The male pill containing gossypol was approved for use in 1972, but never became popular. While it is not totally clear why male oral contraception never caught on, one Chinese doctor explained that "Men are not very enthusiastic [about taking birth control]."[520]

At the same time, researchers developed "the Chinese vacation pill" (literally, the pill for visiting relatives, or *tanqinyao*). Also called Anordrin, *tanqinyao* is a post-coital pill developed for married couples who live apart for extensive periods and only meet once or twice a year, generally for periods of about four weeks. Something like contemporary Western emergency contraception (i.e. "Plan B"), Anordrin blocks the production of progesterone, thus preventing the implantation of a fertilized egg in the uterus. Anordrin should be taken immediately after sex and then again the following morning. This contraceptive method is recommended for couples who have frequent sex during a short period of time because the pill is less effective when used sporadically. Since the dose of steroid each pill contains is near or exceeds the recommended monthly maximum for hormone consumption in the US, 200 mg, this type of pill was never approved for American use. Nonetheless, Anordrin was formally approved for public use in China in 1974 and is still available today.[521]

Chinese researchers eventually developed four different types of oral hormonal contraceptives in various doses: compound 18 (*shiba jia*) short-term oral contraceptive made of methyl-norgestrienone; ethinyl estradiol (*guicichun)*; oral contraceptive one (*yi hao*); and oral contraceptive two (*er hao*).[522] Significant challenges regarding the manufacturing of oral contraceptives, however, initially impeded their mass production. In the manufacturing of compound 18 tablets, for example, workers reported negative side effects associated with the

[520] Djerassi, *The Politics of Contraception*, 202-204.
[521] Djerassi, *The Politics of Contraception*, 202-204.
[522] GMA, 296-A2.2-32-57.

process of coating the pills in sugar. On the one hand, male workers suffered from swollen breasts and impotence due to excessive exposure to estrogen. On the other hand, female workers experienced abnormal menstrual cycles, vomiting, and dizziness, symptoms typically associated with the first trimester of pregnancy. Despite months of treatment, a portion of the workers suffering from adverse health effects never recovered.[523]

In seeking to develop oral contraceptives with a safer production process, Shanghai Pharmaceutical Factory Number 7 began working on the "Chinese paper pill." This oral birth control consisted of medicated sheets each containing 22 squares, one for each day. The production process was safer for workers, the medicine's structure was light, small, and easy to ship and store, and the product simple and inexpensive to produce.[524] While the daily version of this pill never caught in China, a "paper pill" that only needs to be consumed every 30 days eventually became popular and continues to be used in China today.[525]

Still seeking a safe way to manufacture compound 18 tablets while protecting workers, a pharmaceutical factory in Beijing began trial production of polyethylene glycol 6000 in May 1972. Polyethylene glycol 6000 was first tested on white mice and dogs and then underwent human trials when the substance was declared harmless. The Shanghai Municipal Health Bureau approved the medicinal specifications for polyethylene glycol 6000 and agreed to aim for production. In 1973, the Tianjin Municipal Health Bureau approved the use of polyethylene glycol 6000 as the excipient in birth control tablets in lieu of coating the pills in sugar, the process of which had been dangerous to workers.[526] The idea to change to production of polyethylene glycol 6000 was in fact inspired by pharmaceutical literature from the United

[523] BMA, 135-002-00654.
[524] Djerassi, *The Politics of Contraception*, 201.
[525] Nicole Smith, "Some Surprising Insights on Birth Control and Contraception Practices in China," *Article Myriad*, December 7, 2011, http://www.articlemyriad.com/birth-control-contraception-china/.
[526] BMA, 135-002-00654.

States, the United Kingdom, and Japan. Following the switch to production of polyethylene glycol 6000, workers in the oral contraceptive factory reported no adverse side effects.[527]

According to a 1974 report from the Beijing Pharmaceutical Factory Revolutionary Committee, in 1970 Beijing produced 600,000 tablets of compound 18, in 1971 this number increased to 111.3 million, in 1972 a Shanghai factory produced 98.05 tablets, and in 1973 a total of 303.6 million tablets of compound 18 were produced to meet rising demand.[528] In 1974, a nationwide total of 14,949,700 doses (*renfen)* of oral birth control pills had been produced, consisting of two different doses of oral contraceptive one and two of oral contraceptive two, as well as compound 18 and ethinyl estradiol.[529] By 1974, oral contraceptives were available to some degree in nearly every province, centrally-governed municipality, and autonomous region and were distributed free of charge.[530] Oral contraceptives made of different combinations and doses of hormones were distributed to different provinces. And yet initially, oral contraceptives seem mainly to have been sold in major cities, namely Beijing, Shanghai, and Guangzhou.[531]

Oral contraceptives never became the most common method of birth control in China for several reasons. First, the supply was never great enough to serve anyone other than urbanites. Second, beginning in the late 1980s, obtaining oral contraceptives required users to pay a deposit, as this method was not specifically regulated under the One Child Policy and users needed to prove their willingness to consistently take the pills.[532] And third, surveys showed that oral contraceptives even in the mid and late 1980s had failure rates of 27 to 33 percent.[533] A 73-year-old woman from Shanghai told me that once she had briefly considered taking oral birth

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[527] BMA, 135-002-00654.
[528] BMA, 135-002-00654.
[529] GMA, 296-A2.2-32-57.
[530] GMA, 296-A2.2-32-57.
[531] GMA, 296-A2.2-32-57; Anibal Faundes and Tapani Luukkainen, “Health and Family Planning Services in the Chinese People’s Republic,” *Studies in Family Planning* 3.7 (1972), 174-175.
[532] Scharping, *Birth Control*, 108.
[533] Scharping, *Birth Control*, 107.

control tablets, but that she decided against it because so many women who used it ended up become pregnant unintentionally.[534] For these reasons, it is not surprising that oral contraceptive use in China remained between three and six percent in the 1980s and early 1990s, whereas IUD acceptors constituted 30 to 35 percent of contraceptive users during the same time frame.[535]

Sterilization

Like IUD insertions, sterilization surgeries became increasingly common in the 1970s, in part because they became mandatory in some places for couples with at least two children. Kaufman et al. argue that 88 percent of sterilizations took place after 1971 when Premier Zhou Enlai official endorsed the "later, longer, fewer" policy, encouraging later marriage, longer spacing between children, and fewer children per couple.[536] Under this policy, rural couples were allowed two have three children, but the limit was subsequently lowered to two in 1977.[537] However, different parts of China had different timelines for peaks in sterilization. Gail Hershatter notes in her oral histories of women in rural Shanxi that 1971 was the first year tubal ligations became available in a number of villages and "many women actively sought them out."[538] According to Tyrene White, the earliest mass sterilization campaign took place between 1973 and 1975 and was followed by another sterilization campaign between 1979 and 1980.[539] In a study of four rural counties in Fujian and Heilongjiang provinces, Kaufman et al. reported that "high tides" of female sterilization occurred in one county in Heilongjiang between 1979 and 1980 and in another in 1981, whereas two counties in Fujian witnessed peaks in sterilization rates from 1979 to 1980 and in 1983, respectively.[540] Peaks in IUD insertions and sterilizations

[534] Interview with author, Shanghai, December 22, 2017.
[535] Scharping, *Birth Control*, 114.
[536] Kaufman et al., "Family Planning," 725.
[537] Susan Greenhalgh, "Controlling Births and Bodies in Village China," *American Ehtnologist* 21, no. 1 (1994): 6.
[538] Hershatter, *The Gender of Memory,* 207.
[539] White, *China's Longest Campaign,* 135.
[540] Kaufman et al., "Family Planning," 721-723.

often corresponded to "shock attacks" or "crash drives" (*tuji*)—intense period of birth planning campaign activity with emphasis on fast results. For example, in Hebei mobile medical "shock teams" performed 1.1 million contraceptive procedures in 1972 and 1.98 million in 1973.[541]

My interviews suggested that, at times sterilization surgeries were welcomed and appreciated, and at other times they were deeply resented and viewed as unwelcome intrusions of state power.[542] As discussed in chapter 2, although male sterilization rates rose throughout the 1980s in response to more stringent and coercive population policy implementation, tubal ligations continued to be three to four times more common than vasectomies.[543]

Conclusion

During the 1960s and early 1970s, birth control practices continued to vary significantly. The Cultural Revolution and the Youth Reeducation Movement increased opportunities for sexual contact among male and female youth in unprecedented ways, disseminated knowledge about abortion to the countryside vis-à-vis Barefoot Doctors, and exposed sent-down youth to overt discussions of sexuality. Even as family planning, including abortion, became mandatory in cities couples who became pregnant out of wedlock were being punished by law for undergoing abortion in the countryside. While males suffered legal punishment, females were shunned socially. Nonetheless, abortion remained the de facto method of fertility control, rather than prophylactics, for unmarried people.

This chapter has demonstrated the deepening of state control over reproduction from the start of the Cultural Revolution until the implementation of the One Child Policy, although as we

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[541] White, *China's Longest Campaign,* 108.
[542] Interview with author, Shanghai, August 31, 2016; interview with author, Shanghai, December 10, 2016; interview with author, Shanghai, December 12, 2016.
[543] Scharping, *Birth Control*, 114.

have seen, this was not a smooth or linear process. During this period, the state gradually and unevenly expanded its role in policing sexuality and reproduction to include determining what constituted legitimate forms of sexual intimacy, and therefore who was eligible for and required to use family planning. Techniques such as more detailed and systematic record keeping, deployment of birth control teams, and a new system of financial benefits and penalties helped the state monitor the cities and penetrate the countryside more deeply. Even so, enduring problems with the quality and quantity of contraceptives as well as their reception plagued efforts to systematize family planning. The origins of the gendered birth control practices common today in China—the rapid surge in IUD insertions and sterilizations, emphasis on tubal ligations rather than vasectomies, and persistently high abortion rates, for example—can also be seen in the family planning practices of the late 1960s and 1970s. Escalating attention to all aspects of reproductive life—biological, financial, social, and cultural—facilitated a declining population growth rate toward the end of the 1970s but within the context of continuous population growth in absolute terms.[544]

[544] National Birth Planning Committee Integrated Planning Division [*Guojia jihua shengyu weiyuanhui zonghe jiahua si*], *Chinese Birth Planning Statistical Yearbook* [Quanguo jihua shengyu tongji ziliao huibian] (N.p.: n.p., 1983), 1.

Figure 4.6: "Implement Birth Planning for the Revolution."
Hebei: The Office of the Huangshi City Revolutionary Committee Birth Planning Group, 1975, http://k.sina.cn/article_5898468734_15f937d7e001004l7c.html?http=fromhttp.

Figure 4.7 (right): "The Times are Different, Males and Females are the Same. Criticize 'Regard Men as Superior to Women,' Implement Birth Planning." Tianjin: Tianjin Birth Planning Committee Office, 1974, http://www.360doc.com/content/14/1214/20/4441170_432920997.shtml.

Figure 4.8: *"Chijiao yisheng xuanchuan jihua shengyu haochu, gei sheyuan tigong meifei biyun yaoju"* [*A barefoot doctor disseminates the benefits of birth planning; the commune provides free contraceptives]. Beijing: Beijing People's Arts Press, 1977, "Zhe xie jianzheng le jihua shengyu de haibao…" [Posters Attesting to Birth Planning..." Shishe shishi de boke [The Collecting Historical Events Blog], March 24, 2016, http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog_e39346e40102wej2.html.*

Chapter 5: The Rise and Demise of the One Child Policy, 1979-2015

In late 1979, when leaders determined that the population growth rate was not declining rapidly enough to achieve national targets, the CCP replaced the "one is best, two at most" fertility policy—which rewarded families with one child and penalized those with more than two—with the infamous One Child Policy.[545] This policy, as the name suggests, permitted only one child per couple with consequences for violations ranging from fines to mandatory abortion or sterilization. Initially, the One Child Policy not only applied to the Han majority, but even extended to China's 55 officially recognized minority groups. While most urban couples were indeed limited to one child per couple unless they met specific requirements, enforcement waxed and waned in the countryside.[546] Even after these restrictions were relaxed in some places during the 1980s, the name "One Child Policy" endured. From its inception, the One Child Policy was controversial both inside and outside of China. So, how did this course of action come to be considered the best solution to China's swelling population?

In her eye-opening monograph, *Just One Child: Science and Policy in Deng's China,* Susan Greenhalgh charts the origins of the One Child Policy. She reveals that rather than being developed by demographers, as one would expect, the One Child Policy was the brainchild of policy entrepreneur, Song Jian, and a group of missile scientists. The group claimed its methods were objective and scientific, when in reality demographic predictions were made on the basis of political ideology. Nonetheless, the CCP used the mantle of "modern science" to legitimize itself

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[545] White, *China's Longest Campaign,* 65; for a detailed examination of various aspects of the One Child Policy, see Elizabeth Croll, Delia Davin, and Penny Kane, eds., *China's One-Child Family Policy* (London: Macmillan, 1985).

[546] Karen Hardee-Cleaveland and Judith Banister, "Fertility Policy and Implementation in China, 1986-88," *Population and Development Review* 14, no. 2 (1988): 273.

and its One Child Policy.[547]

The questionable tactics used to dramatically reduce population growth in China have triggered Western accusations of coerced abortion and sterilization, as well as other human rights abuses. In particular, many Westerners were horrified to see legalized abortion—a coveted emblem of feminist victory, as well as an anathema to many religious groups—transformed into coercive family planning. Whereas the official party line argues that the One Child Policy prevented 400 million births, suggesting a sharp decline in population growth post-1979, demographers have shown that three fourths of the fertility decline since 1970 occurred *prior* to the policy's enactment. In fact, they argue, most of the post-1980 fertility decline was due to improved socio-economic conditions rather than policy enforcement—a product of the demographic or fertility transition that typically follows industrial development.[548] As the most ambitious social engineering project to date, the policy has been a topic of global interest since the 1980s. Innumerable publications in the social sciences, the field of public health, and the popular press have debated the pros and cons of this policy. For that reason, I devote less space to analyzing this phase in China's family planning trajectory than to the years leading up to it. Here, rather than aiming for a comprehensive analysis of the One Child Policy, I highlight several key themes—both well-worn and underexplored—that I believe are useful for understanding this period.

Given the current lack of access to primary source documents on the One Child Policy—in recent years these documents were effectively purged from official Chinese archives, giving the appearance that such materials never existed—this chapter draws on ethnographic and

[547] Susan Greenhalgh, *Just One Child: Science and Policy in Deng's China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 48-50.
[548] Martin King Whyte, Wang Feng, and Yong Cai, "Challenging Myths About China's One-Child Policy," *The China Journal* 74 (2015): 144.

sociological studies, news articles, fiction, and oral histories to reflect on the 36-year lifespan of the One Child Policy in China in general and Shanghai, Tianjin, and Luoyang in particular. On the one hand, in some parts of China birth control policies and sexual policing became more systematic with the establishment of the One Child Policy. On the other hand, grassroots resistance through selective local policy enforcement and sophisticated evasion techniques meant that the state's power was never hegemonic. At the same time, the policy, combined with the introduction of decollectivization, exacerbated the historical preference for boys, leading to an unprecedented gender imbalance in China. Another notable feature of the One Child Policy era was the renewed interest in and emphasis on eugenics, as parents felt pressure to "optimize" the qualities of their one and only child, and official rhetoric explicitly emphasized the "quality" of the population. This chapter also considers the state's efforts to introduce sex education and the ongoing challenges in this arena. I conclude by discussing the continued reliance on dangerous abortion methods, such as herbal abortifacient use and the misuse of Western medications to terminate pregnancies, even during the One Child Policy era.

Compliance, Collusion, and Resistance

In 1979, when the One Child Policy was implemented, the national population stood at 975,428,000 with 184,959,000 people living in cities and 129,401,000 living in towns. The other 661,068,036 people still lived in the countryside. Nationwide, 79.8 percent of people were already practicing birth control, the highest rates of which corresponded to major urban centers. Indeed, Shanghai had a staggering contraception rate of 97.3 percent, while 85.7 percent of people were practicing contraception in Tianjin.[549] While I have been unable to locate a concrete

[549] National Birth Planning Committee Integrated Planning Division, *Chinese Birth Planning Statistical Yearbook*, 28.

statistic for Luoyang's contraception rate, the contraception rate that year for all of Henan province, where Luoyang is located, was 85.9 percent. From this it can be inferred that the contraception rate was slightly higher for Luoyang proper, as birth planning was more strictly carried out in cities than in rural areas.[550]

In urban China, enforcement of the One Child Policy was relatively uniform and authorities faced little resistance compared to in the countryside.[551] As discussed in the previous chapter, part of the codification of the One Child Policy involved setting strict birth planning targets for local cadres to achieve and supporting these efforts with monetary rewards and penalties, preferential access to housing and healthcare for those with only one child, and even higher work production quotas for those who violated the policy.[552] Work units were charged with policing their employees, and urban couples accepted being limited to one child for fear of themselves or their relatives losing their jobs or being forced to pay high fines.[553]

My interviews support these conclusions. Two doctors and some elderly residents I interviewed in Luoyang recalled that most forced abortions, IUD insertions, and sterilizations occurred in the 1980s and early 1990s.[554] Several men and women I interviewed in Shanghai admitted that they were forcibly sterilized as part of sterilization drives or compelled to undergo IUD insertions immediately after the birth of their first child.[555] I heard similar stories elsewhere, though sterilization and IUD insertions seem to have become common earlier in Shanghai than in Tianjin and Luoyang. Couples who were in their 50s in the late 1970s and early 1980s typically

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[550] National Birth Planning Committee Integrated Planning Division, *Chinese Birth Planning Statistical Yearbook*, 30.
[551] Greenhalgh, "Controlling Births and Bodies," 14.
[552] White, *China's Longest Campaign*, 105.
[553] Hardee-Cleaveland and Banister, "Fertility Policy and Implementation in China, 267; interview with author, Shanghai, December 10, 2016; interview with author, Shanghai, December 12, 2016; interview with author, Shanghai, August 23, 2016.
[554] Interview with author, Luoyang, August 2, 2015; interview with author, Shanghai, December 10, 2016.
[555] Interviews with author, Shanghai, December 10, 2016.

were not forced to insert IUDs or undergo sterilization because they were assumed to be past reproducing age. As an aside, many people I interviewed could not remember whether the One Child Policy was implemented in the late 1970s or the early 1980s, a phenomenon I attribute to old age, differences in local implementation rates and individual circumstances, and the fact that during the late 1970s and early 1980s the central government passed a series of increasingly stringent family planning policies, making it difficult to keep track of which policy corresponded to which year.

In 1984, the policy was relaxed slightly, and exceptions were made for Han and minority people in certain situations. Urban couples were permitted to have a second child if their first child was disabled and unable to perform "normal" amounts of labor, in the case of remarriage where only one spouse had a child from a previous marriage, and if a couple raised their first child to adulthood and unexpectedly became pregnant again. The specific conditions for determining eligibility for a second child were outlined at the provincial level and therefore varied geographically.

In the countryside, enforcement of the policy was more uneven but there was also greater resistance to family planning. As in the city, in 1984, certain rural couples were permitted to have a second child. Reasons for permitting rural couples to do so included all of the previous reasons plus additional ones: having a first child who was a girl, both parents being only children, and facing special hardships, among others.[556] Numerous ethnographic studies of the response to birth planning in rural China show that peasants' desire for more children was primarily motivated by the practical concern with not having children to take care of and support

[556] Wang et al., *Dangdai zhongguo de weisheng shiye* [Public Hygiene Undertakings in Modern China], 70; Luoyang renkou he jihua shengyu weiyuanhui [Luoyang Population and Birth Planning Committee], *Luoyangshi renkou he jihuashengyu zhi*, 1985-2014 [The Chronicle of Population and Family Planning of Luoyang, 1985-2014] (Luoyang: Luoyang Population and Birth Planning Committee, 2015), 27.

them in old age.[557] Given the patrilocal structure of most Chinese communities, couples desired at least one son because daughters married out of the family, leaving their biological parents to fend for themselves in old age.[558] In addition, the symbolic importance of sons for carrying on the family line in a patrilineal society and the social pressure to have a son perpetuated a preference for boys. Nonetheless, according to Susan Greenhalgh's research, rural couples in Shaanxi viewed the ideal family as one having both a son and a daughter.

Due in part to these realities, policy enforcement differed by region and even by county. Karen Hardee-Cleaveland and Judith Banister, John Aird, and Steven Mosher all have argued that "remedial measures"—forced abortion or sterilization—were common in cases of unauthorized pregnancies.[559] Similarly, Ma Jian's novel about the excesses of the One Child Policy, *The Dark Road,* depicts the grotesque violence inflicted upon rural women with unauthorized pregnancies and the ways in which family planning officials forcibly performed late term abortions and sterilizations.[560] In contrast, Kaufman et al. found that in some counties in rural Fujian and Heilongjiang, sympathetic local cadres, who were well aware of the practical need for more children, did not force women with unauthorized pregnancies to abort. Instead, these women were fined for second or higher order births. In other cases, couples were given up to 14 years to pay off their fines or not forced to pay at all because cadres understood the villagers' limited economic means.[561] At other times, peasants and cadres colluded to fight the

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[557] Jeffrey Wasserstrom, "Resistance to the One-Child Family," *Modern China* 10, no. 3 (1984): 361; Wasserstrom reveals that, rather than being based solely on prejudice, the preference for male babies was grounded in patrilocal marriage patterns.

[558] Huang Shu-min, *The Spiral Road: Change in a Chinese Village Through the Eyes of a Communist Party Leader* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1998), 180.

[559] Hardee-Cleaveland and Banister, "Fertility Policy and Implementation in China", 258; John Shields Aird, *Slaughter of the Innocents: Coercive Birth Control in China* (Washington, DC: AEI Press, 1990), *32*; Steven Mosher, *Broken Earth: The Rural Chinese* (New York: The Free Press, 1983), 254.

[560] Ma Jian, *The Dark Road: A Novel*, trans. Flora Drew (New York: Penguin Press, 2013), 7.

[561] Kaufman et al., "Family Planning Policy and Practice in China: A Study of Four Rural Counties," *Population and Development Review* 15.4 (1989), 720; Hardee-Cleaveland and Banister, "Fertility Policy and Implementation in China," 255.

policy; village cadres either turned a blind eye to early marriages and early childbirth or they permitted the illegal buying and selling of birth permits. In addition, some cadres hid unauthorized births or inflated the contraception rates in their jurisdictions when reporting to higher authorities. In some instances, cadres did not even take birth planning targets seriously if these measures were not used to evaluate cadre performance.[562]

Evidence also suggests that clever villagers drew on their own resourcefulness to resist the policy. One common resistance strategy, as mentioned in the previous chapter, was secretly and illegally removing an inserted IUD, a procedure that was dangerous and could even result in death.[563] According to other studies and some of my interviewees, women without a son were significantly more likely to find a way to remove their IUDs. In Mo Yan's novel *Frog*, for example, the narrator's wife Renmei, a woman living in Northern Gaomi Township, Shandong province, secretly had her IUD removed in an attempt to produce a son.[564] According to anthropologist Huang Shu-min's interviews from Lin village in rural Fujian, a woman could pay a mere 10 *yuan* to an "illegal midwife" to remove an IUD, and the frequency with which this occurred affirmed many cadres' beliefs that villagers would not practice contraception unless forced to do so.[565] Women secretly removing their IUDs became such a major problem that in April 1981, the Ministry of Justice ruled that unauthorized IUD removals would be prosecuted as instances of fraud and bodily harm, and in cases where the consequences were fatal, manslaughter. By the 1990s, compulsory regular gynecological exams to confirm that IUD acceptors were still using their IUDs had become standard in some places.[566]

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[562] White, *China's Longest Campaign*, 183, 192.
[563] Wasserstrom, "Resistance to the One-Child Family," 361.
[564] Mo Yan, *Wa* [Frog] (Shanghai: Shanghai wenyi chubanshe [Shanghai Literature and Art Press], 2009), 76.
[565] Huang, *The Spiral Road*, 181.
[566] Scharping, *Birth Control*, 106-107.

Other resistance strategies included evasion and confrontation. Women might run away or hide from birth planning work teams, wait to conceive until after biannual examinations and then give birth in their natal villages, or conceive during a holiday break and then give birth while working away from home.[567] *The Dark Road,* for example, portrays a rural husband and wife who flee their village and become migrant workers in a polluted town in Guangdong so they can evade family planning authorities and have a second child—although they already have a daughter, they try desperately for a son to carry on the family name.[568] In extreme cases of evasion, family planning authorities might arrest policy violators and even demolish their homes. As for confrontation, some peasants who were unhappy with strict family planning policies physically attacked local cadres attempting to collect taxes or enforce birth planning. In addition, sometimes villagers damaged the property of cadres as retaliation or resorted to arson.[569]

Strategies of resistance well documented in the Western media were abandoning daughters, putting them up for adoption, or committing infanticide. Kay Ann Johnson shows that parents were often heartbroken over having to give up their daughters and only did so out of fear of unendurable physical and financial punishments.[570] In some instances, couples hid their unauthorized children and secretly raised them. Often children were quietly put up for local adoption, but the adoptions were never formally registered. Parents would simply leave their daughters in public places or on doorsteps in the hope that other people might take them in. Less frequently, daughters were adopted overseas. In the 1990s and early 2000s, over 120,000 Chinese children were adopted internationally.[571] As for infanticide, or more commonly, gendercide (female infanticide), this practice reemerged in the 1980s in response to the One

[567] Huang, *The Spiral Road*, 182; White, *China's Longest Campaign*, 173-174.
[568] Ma, *The Dark Road*, 30.
[569] White, *China's Longest Campaign*, 193-197.
[570] Kay Ann Johnson, *China's Hidden Children: Abandonment, Adoption, and the Human Costs of the One-Child Policy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016), 18.
[571] Johnson, *China's Hidden Children*, 11.

Child Policy. Based on countless interviews with rural Chinese women, the author Xinran graphically depicts gendercide in her book *Message from an Unknown Chinese Mother: Stories of Loss and Love*. She relates stories of widespread gendercide through smothering, abandonment outdoors in winter, and drowning during the height of the One Child Policy.[572] Sometimes the mothers would feel so guilty after killing their baby girls that they would commit suicide.[573] Officially, infanticide was widely condemned and in some cases, perpetrators were sentenced to prison terms.[574]

A final method of resistance that is also relatively well known globally is sex selective abortion. In 1979, China produced its first ultrasound machine capable of fetal sex determination, and by 1987 there were 13,000 ultrasound machines nationwide.[575] Amidst rising concerns about sex selective abortion, in September 1986 the National Commission for Family Planning and the Ministry of Health prohibited prenatal diagnosis at the request of the mother, except when used by authorized hospitals to diagnose certain hereditary diseases. Individuals or clinics that violated this ban were made liable to penalties, and the ban was repeatedly affirmed in the late 1980s, early 1990s, and early 2000s.[576] Nevertheless, the sex ratio continued to shift in favor of male babies. According to the official Chinese Women's Federation statistics, nationwide in 1987 there were 106.32 boys for every 100 girls. In some provinces, according to these statistics, the gender disparity was more pronounced, as in Anhui province where the ratio of boys to girls was 110.28:100 and Shaanxi where the ratio was 109.28:100 in 1987.[577] While disconcerting,

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[572] Xinran, *Message from an Unknown Chinese Mother: Stories of Loss and Love*, trans. Nicky Harman (New York: Scribner, 2010), 68, 76, 81.
[573] Xinran, *Message from an Unknown Chinese Mother*, 121.
[574] Wasserstrom, "Resistance to the One-Child Family," 356.
[575] White, *China's Longest Campaign*, 202.
[576] Nie Jing-bao, "Non-Medical Sex-Selective Abortion in China: Ethical and Public Policy Issues in the Context of 40 Million Missing Females," *British Medical Bulletin* 98 (2011): 13.
[577] Zhonghua quanguo funü lianhehui yanjiusuo [All China Women's Federation Research Institute], *Zhongguo funü tongji ziliao, 1949-1989* [Statistical Data on Chinese Women, 1949-1989] (Beijing: Zhongguo tongji chubanshe

Chinese officials at first argued that a gender imbalance had existed throughout China for much of the twentieth century, so the skewed gender ratio was nothing new.[578] The national census from 1990 revealed that there were 114 male births for every 100 female births with the largest gender ratios (about 117:100) found in Guangxi and Zhejiang provinces.[579] At this point officials stopped denying the link between the One Child Policy and the gender ratio crisis. Indeed, the 2010 census indicated that the national sex ratio had reached an alarming 120 males for every 100 females, with a gender ratio as distorted as 150:100 in some parts of Guangdong.[580]

There are a few notable features of sex selective abortion as practiced in Mainland China. First, studies have shown that the likelihood of sex selective abortion increases with higher order births. Typically, if a couple has a daughter and is permitted to have a second child, the mother will conceive, undergo prenatal screening, and have abortions until the fetus is a boy, ensuring a male heir. Second, socioeconomic status plays an important role in determining the probability of sex selective abortion. Studies have shown that in some areas, higher levels of income and maternal education actually increased rates of sex selective abortion.[581] Third, contrary to expectations, sex selective abortion was not confined to the countryside but was present in both rural and urban areas. Many of my interviewees assured me that not only were sons and daughters considered equal in cities, but in some cases girls were preferred over boys because in practice daughters were more loyal to their natal families than sons.[582] However, national statistics paint a different picture. Barbara Miller has argued that wealthy urban elites in China

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[Chinese Statistical Press], 1991), 25.

[578] All China Women's Federation Research Institute, *Zhongguo funü tongji ziliao, 1949-1989* [Statistical Data on Chinese Women, 1949-1989], 24-25.

[579] Barbara Miller, "Female-Selective Abortion in Asia: Patterns, Policies, and Debates," *American Anthropologist* 103, no. 4 (2001): 1084-1085.

[580] Nie, "Non-Medical Sex-Selective Abortion in China," 9.

[581] Douglas Almond, Hongbin Lin, and Shuang Zhang, "Land Reform and Sex Selection in China," National Bureau of Economic Research Working Paper, http://www.nber.org/papers/w19153.pdf, 14.

[582] Interview with author, Luoyang, November 17, 2016.

were more likely to select for male babies, as one report from hospital delivery rooms in Shanghai reported 125 baby boys born for every 100 baby girls, indicating that sex selective abortion is not simply a rural phenomenon.[583] Fourth, regional differences and the introduction of land reform and the household responsibility system were directly correlated with sex selective abortion rates. Certain provinces, such as Guangdong, Anhui, Guangxi, and Shaanxi, had more severe gender imbalances than others. Provinces with large minority populations had some of the most balanced gender ratios nationwide. In addition, decollectivization in the 1980s made household productivity most important for raising rural family income. Therefore, families desired sons to maximize revenue from their newly privatized land, especially as the social security net of the Mao years was pulled out from under them.[584] Improved standards of living after land reform, rather than diminishing the rate of sex selective abortion, provided rural couples with disposable income for expenses like traveling to major cities for prenatal testing and abortion when not available locally.[585]

Tyrene White astutely observes that through strategies such as sex selective abortion, parents "rejected the state's claim of ideological hegemony and sovereignty over the production of offspring, but adapted its principles of social engineering to reengineer the shape of their own households."[586] In other words, even as people resisted total state control over reproduction, they adopted a similar eugenic logic and applied it to their families.

More broadly, this trend has resulted in approximately 40.9 million "surplus men" in China who will not be able to find wives, and as of 2010, a deficit of over 100 million girls

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[583] Miller, "Female-Selective Abortion in Asia: Patterns, Policies, and Debates," 1085-1087.
[584] Wasserstrom, "Resistance to the One-Child Family," 363.
[585] Almond et al., "Land Reform and Sex Selection in China," 22-23.
[586] White, *China's Longest Campaign*, 207.

worldwide due to related factors in other parts of Asia and Eastern Europe.[587] From this trend, Mara Hvistendahl and others have forecasted that "a world full of men" will bring heightened levels of violence, crime, prostitution, child marriage, and other social ills.[588]

Making Better Babies: Eugenics in Post-Mao China

In his analysis of scholarship on the global dynamics of eugenics, Frank Dikotter writes, "Far from being a politically conservative and scientifically spurious set of beliefs that remained confined to the Nazi era, eugenics belonged to the political vocabulary of virtually every significant modernizing force between the two world wars."[589] Indeed, from the late nineteenth century through the 1970s, eugenics was the international language of scientific modernity and today it continues to quietly shape such diverse fields as public health, psychiatry, and social services.[590]

Following World War II and the Holocaust, overtly eugenic language in much of the world was reframed as "social welfare" or "family planning," meaning that individuals from dysgenic groups were encouraged or even forced not to reproduce to reduce their "burden" on society.[591] In China, however, the term for eugenics used in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, *yousheng*, never gained the same negative connotation it did elsewhere. In fact, this term was in wide use in official rhetoric from the 1970s onward. For example, the slogan "*yousheng youyu*" (bear and rear better children) appeared frequently in 1980s birth

[587] Nie, "Non-Medical Sex-Selective Abortion in China," 8.
[588] Mara Hvistendahl, *Unnatural Selection: Choosing Boys Over Girls, and the Consequences of a World Full of Men* (New York: Public Affairs, 2011), 237.
[589] Frank Dikotter, "Race Culture: Recent Perspectives on the History of Eugenics," *American Historical Review* 103, no. 2: 467.
[590] Dikotter, "Race Culture," 467.
[591] Dikotter, "Race Culture," 469.

planning propaganda.[592] In 1982, the State Council and Central Committee of the CCP issued a joint statement calling for the dissemination of information about "scientific" birth control, administration of premarital and prenatal checkups, improving the safety and reliability of contraceptive procedures, and increasing the "quality" (*suzhi)* of the population. Measures of population quality included infant mortality rate, overall population mortality rate, average life span, and rate of illness.[593]

One aspect of this eugenic program involved reaffirming the policy that marriage between people related within three generations was prohibited because intermarriage within families increased the likelihood of congenital diseases. According to a law promulgated in 1982, couples related within three generations, as well as those suffering from previously untreatable illnesses such as mental illness and tuberculosis, were prohibited from marrying.[594] While this may seem like a radical departure from earlier practices, in fact the 1950 marriage law of China also forbid marriage between individuals related within three generations and those with certain illnesses.[595] The 1982 law simply built on this foundation.

Beginning in 1980, to realize the goal of a "better quality" population, major cities like Beijing, Shanghai, and Tianjin started establishing premarital health clinics and popularizing premarital health examinations. As premarital testing became more commonplace in China, some provinces even made it mandatory for obtaining a marriage certificate. Between 3 and 5 million people were found to have congenital mental impairment. Official rhetoric claimed that people with mental disabilities, deformities, "abnormal or defective" sex organs, or chromosomal

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[592] Wang et al., *Dangdai zhongguo de weisheng shiye* [Public Hygiene Undertakings in Modern China], 247.
[593] Deng, Ma, and Wu, *Dangdai zhongguo de jihua shengyu shiye* [The Contemporary Chinese Birth Planning Project], 206.
[594] Wang et al., *Dangdai zhongguo de weisheng shiye* [Public Hygiene Undertakings in Modern China], 251.
[595] Huo, "Dayuejin zhihou de jihua shengyu, 1962-1966" [Family Planning Policy after the Great Leap Forward, 1962-1966], 54.

disorders presented "an obstacle to birth planning." [596] Therefore, couples with genetic diseases were encouraged not to have children, and pregnant couples with genetic diseases were encouraged to voluntarily abort.[597]

At first, some provinces introduced more stringent eugenic policies than others, but eventually a more uniform policy was passed at the national level. In 1988, Gansu province passed China's first law prohibiting mentally retarded people from having children, and a similar law was soon enacted in Liaoning province. Laws passed in 1992 in Zhejiang and Henan provinces mandated that if one partner in a married couple suffered from a chronic mental disorder, he or she should be sterilized.[598] Finally, at the tenth National People's Conference in late 1994, the central government passed the Maternal and Infant Health Law, which made premarital health examinations compulsory and stipulated that if one person in a married couple has a serious hereditary disease, venereal disease, mental disorder, or contagious disorder, he or she "should" undergo sterilization to prevent "inferior births."[599]

In 2003, mandatory premarital health checks were phased out. A birth planning official and gynecologist in Luoyang informed me that since premarital health examinations are no longer required for marriage registration, many young people are simply not having them. The doctor attributed this trend to the fact that few people want to share information about their personal lives or sexual behavior.[600] In addition, these examinations were highly intrusive and could potentially destroy a match, so it makes sense why young people would not voluntarily subject themselves to this type of treatment.

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[596] Wang et al., *Dangdai zhongguo de weisheng shiye* [Public Hygiene Undertakings in Modern China], 254.
[597] Wang et al., *Dangdai zhongguo de weisheng shiye* [Public Hygiene Undertakings in Modern China], 254; Deng, Ma, and Wu, *Dangdai zhongguo de jihua shengyu shiye* [The Contemporary Chinese Birth Planning Project], 209.
[598] Dikotter, *Imperfect Conceptions,* 173.
[599] Population Council, "The New Chinese Law on Maternal and Infant Health Care," *Population and Development Review* 21, no. 3 (1995): 699.
[600] Interview with author, Luoyang, August 2, 2015.

The continuing salience of eugenic thought in contemporary Chinese policy was evident when I visited a birth planning clinic in Luoyang in August 2015. Upon entering the clinic, visitors were greeted by a large pink billboard hanging from the ceiling that said "Free National Prenatal Eugenics Project" (*guojia mianfei yunqian yousheng xiangmu*) (Figure 5.1).[601]

Figure 5.1: "Free National Prenatal Eugenics Project."

The walls were lined with brightly colored posters depicting happy families and illustrating the correct steps to be taken as part of the "three big projects" (*san da gongcheng*): (1) high quality birth control service, (2) birth deformity intervention, and (3) genital tract infection intervention (Fig. 5.2).[602] The posters demonstrated correct contraceptive practices, as well as methods for preventing, diagnosing, and addressing the transmission of genetic diseases and uterine infections that can lead to premature birth or miscarriage. Most controversially, the posters demonstrated how to test for and intervene (via abortion) in the case of congenital deformities. The "three big projects" initiative has been in place since at least 2001 and its

[601] "Guojia mianfei yunqian yousheng xiangmu," [Free National Prenatal Eugenics Project], Luoyang, 2015.
[602] "The Three Big Projects of Top Quality Birth Planning Service" [jihua shengyu youzhi fuqu san da gongcheng], Luoyang, 2015.

expansion is ongoing nationwide in an effort to improve the quality of the population as a whole.[603] My guess is that posters similar to those in Luoyang are on display in birth planning clinics across China, but unfortunately I could not confirm this theory, as I was not given privileged access to those spaces.

Figure 5.2: "The Three Big Projects of Top Quality Birth Planning Service."

Whatever the perceived societal benefit of this and related projects, the preoccupation with high quality babies in contemporary Chinese cities—as measured by physical appearance, cognitive ability, and genetic pedigree—cannot be denied. Indeed, I saw official statements promoting eugenic births at all three of my research sites as well as in other places. What might have been a more marginal discourse has become mainstream due to the constraints of the One Child Policy.

The Challenge of Sex Education

[603] Lu Yongbing, "Shixing 'san da gongcheng' zhuli chuangjian shengji wenming xiancheng" [Implementing the 'Three Big Projects' to Help Establish Provincial Level Civilized County Seats], *Xinhua*, December 15, 2017, http://www.hn.xinhuanet.com/2017-12/15/c_1122115836.htm.

Another aspect of the One Child Policy era reproductive reforms was introducing premarital sex counseling. You may recall that information about sex and birth control was only disseminated to married couples during the Mao era. As part of the initiative to produce higher quality births, the Maternal and Infant Health Law stipulated that Chinese young people be offered guidance on sexual hygiene and birth control strategies in addition to premarital health examinations. Sex education had never been institutionalized in Chinese history, but this marked a step in that direction. Nevertheless, throughout the 1990s implementation of sex education programs in secondary schools and universities was slow and unsystematic.[604] Further compounding this issue was the fact that the predominant approach to sex education preached sexual morality through abstinence, rather than the "safe sex" approach, for preventing pregnancy and disease transmission.[605] Young people were simply told to control their sexual impulses, which they were warned could be dangerous, and to stay away from degenerate publications like pornography.[606] Such rhetoric may appear familiar because, as Harriet Evans has shown, many of the discourses on sexuality promoted in the 1980s and early 1990s simply replicated those advocated in the 1950s.[607]

Just before mandatory premarital health examinations ended in 2003, the government enacted a law making sex education compulsory in schools. An article published in *The Lancet* in 2004 reported that progress was slow on this front and that some teachers were reluctant to use sex education textbooks, which had been introduced for the first time in 2002.[608] Similarly, some

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[604] Alessandra Aresu, "Sex Education in Modern and Contemporary China: Interrupted Debates Across the Last Century," *International Journal of Educational Development* 29 (2009): 537.
[605] Aresu, "Sex Education in Modern and Contemporary China," 538.
[606] Emily Honig and Gail Hershatter, *Personal Voices: Chinese Women in the 1980's* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988), 61.
[607] Harriet Evans, "Defining Difference: The "Scientific" Construction of Sexuality and Gender in the People's Republic of China," *Signs* 20, no. 2 (1995): 365.
[608] Jonathon Watts, "China Sex Education Lags Behind Sexual Activity," *The Lancet* 363, April 10, 2004, http://www.thelancet.com/pdfs/journals/lancet/PIIS0140673604159941.pdf.

parents were resistant to their children learning about sex, arguing that young people will learn through experience at the appropriate time.[609] There have been several recent cases in which members of the public became angry about sex education. In one case, a mother in Zhejiang took issue with schools teaching sex education when her second grader obtained access to a sixth-grade sex education textbook. As a result of her protest, at least one local school recalled the textbook.[610] The mother also argued that the textbook's images, which even included references to homosexuality, were far too graphic (Fig. 5.3 and 5.4).[611] Sex education books, even those that promoted a strictly heteronormative vision of Chinese society, provoked similar responses among parents in Guangdong and Guangxi.[612]

Figures 5.3 and 5.4：A Sex Education Textbook from Zhejiang Province.

In another case, the decision to install free condom machines on Zhejiang University's campus sparked fears that the school was encouraging (premarital) sex among students.[613] Given these responses to measures promoting sexual wellness, it is not entirely surprising that a survey from

[609] Hu Jiawei, "Why It's Time for Chinese Educators to Open Up about Sex," *Sixth Tone*, June 19, 2017, http://www.sixthtone.com/news/1000361/why-its-time-for-chinese-educators-to-open-up-about-sex.
[610] Jiayun Feng, "Controversy Over Sex-Ed Textbook," *SupChina*, March 6, 2017, https://supchina.com/2017/03/06/controversy-sex-ed-textbook.
[611] "Xiaofang huiying xiaoxue xing jiaoyu keben zhengyi: jiang zejie tui xiangguan kecheng" [School Responds to Textbook Disputes in Primary School Sex Education: Will Select Opportunities to Promote Related Courses], *China News,* March 7, 2017, http://www.chinanews.com/sh/2017/03-07/8167055.shtml (accessed May 30, 2018).
[612] Aresu, "Sex Education in Modern and Contemporary China," 539.
[613] "China's Campus Condom Giveaway Both Protects and Offends," *Global Times*, November 29, 2015, http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/955525.shtml.

the Shanghai Municipal Government showed that only 15 percent of high school students had received some form of sex education from either teachers or parents.[614]

The central government ultimately deemed sex education imperative for a number of reasons. First, studies have shown that many young people are not knowledgeable about sexual harassment and therefore cannot protect themselves from it.[615] Indeed, sociologist Liu Dalin confirmed in his broad study of sexuality that the number of rape cases in China increased in the 1980s and 1990s.[616] Sex education was introduced in some places in the 1980s for this reason, yet, reports show that the scope of these reforms was limited.[617] Numerous interviewees and friends who married in the 1980s and early 1990s told me that they simply knew nothing about sex and sexual hygiene until marriage.[618] Second, sexually transmitted diseases are on the rise because young people do not know to use protection. HIV infections, for example, are increasing among young people with the annual growth rate at about 35 percent for people between ages 15 and 24.[619] Similarly, syphilis is still a problem as nearly 500,000 new cases were reported in China in 2014.[620] Third, China is experiencing a rise in unwanted pregnancies, and abortions are common among young women who have no knowledge about sex or contraception.[621] According to surveys conducted by sociologist Li Yinhe and official government organs, more than 70

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[614] Jonathon Watts, "China Sex Education Lags Behind Sexual Activity," *The Lancet* 363, April 10, 2004, http://www.thelancet.com/pdfs/journals/lancet/PIIS0140673604159941.pdf.

[615] Hu, "Why It's Time for Chinese Educators to Open Up about Sex."

[616] Aresu, "Sex Education in Modern and Contemporary China," 536.

[617] Harriet Evans, *Women and Sexuality in China: Dominant Discourses of Female Sexuality and Gender Since 1949* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1997), 35.

[618] Interview with author, Tianjin, February 13, 2017; other interview with author, Tianjin, February 13, 2017; interview with author, Shanghai, February 10, 2017.

[619] James Griffiths, Nanlin Fang, and Serenitie Wang, "China's Lack of Sex Education is Putting Millions of Young People at Risk," *CNN*, December 6, 2016, https://www.cnn.com/2016/11/30/health/china-sex-education-world-aids-day.

[620] Laurie Burkitt, "Sex in China: Abortion, Infection and Lack of Education," *The Wall Street Journal*, December 8, 2015, https://blogs.wsj.com/chinarealtime/2015/12/08/sex-in-china-abortion-infection-and-lack-of-education/.

[621] Griffiths, Fang, and Wang, "China's Lack of Sex Education is Putting Millions of Young People at Risk"; "China's Campus Condom Giveaway Both Protects and Offends," *Global Times*, November 29, 2015, http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/955525.shtml.

percent of young people have had premarital sex—up from 15 percent in 1989—and many young women in China use abortion as their primary form of birth control.[622] While official statistics estimate that over 13 million abortions are performed annually, 62 percent among women ages 20 to 29, experts argue that this is a "vast underestimation" because it overlooks non-surgical (i.e. medicinal) abortions and those carried out in unlicensed clinics.[623] According to Qi Rongyi, chief physician of the gynecology and obstetrics department at a hospital in Tianjin, the number of girls under 16 undergoing abortions at her hospital is increasing 30 percent annually.[624] Zhao Jing, the founder of an internet based sex education company, notably stated that many women "think having an abortion is like taking a nap" because many advertisements claim to offer "painless abortions." Therefore, young women underestimate the seriousness of these procedures.[625]

Even though the central government employs approximately 700,000 full and part time workers for dispensing contraceptives nationwide, sex educators, who are concerned about unsettling phenomena related to lack of sex education and the government's delayed ability to address these issues, have taken matters into their own hands. Some have set up their own sex education apps, such as Yummy and Buzz and Bloom (*mifeng lanhua*), which provide sexual hygiene tips via the messaging app, WeChat.[626] Others have organized sex education meetups

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[622] Alyssa Abkowitz, "More and More Chinese People Are Having Pre-Marital Sex," *The Wall Street Journal*, April 16, 2015, https://blogs.wsj.com/chinarealtime/2015/04/16/more-and-more-chinese-people-are-having-pre-marital-sex/.

[623] Griffiths, Fang, and Wang, "China's Lack of Sex Education is Putting Millions of Young People at Risk"; Yang Wanli, "High Abortion Rate Triggers Fears for Young Women," *China Daily*, January 27, 2015, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2015-01/27/content_19412949.htm.

[624] Yang Wanli, "High Abortion Rate Triggers Fears for Young Women," *China Daily*, January 27, 2015, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2015-01/27/content_19412949.htm.

[625] Griffiths, Fang, and Wang, "China's Lack of Sex Education is Putting Millions of Young People at Risk"; Yang Wanli, "High Abortion Rate Triggers Fears for Young Women," *China Daily*, January 27, 2015, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2015-01/27/content_19412949.htm.

[626] Griffiths, Fang, and Wang, "China's Lack of Sex Education is Putting Millions of Young People at Risk"; Yang, "High Abortion Rate Triggers Fears for Young Women."

and classes for students.[627] Educators and activists have praised the rapid progress China has made in embracing sex education, but agree that there is still much more work to be done.[628]

The Enduring Use and Abuse of Abortifacients

Matthew Sommer has argued that despite various campaigns to end the use of herbal abortifacients, these practices endured even after the implementation of the One Child Policy. Indeed, medical reports from Beijing, Gansu, Guangdong, Guizhou, Hebei, Hong Kong, Hubei, Jiangxi, Qinghai, Shaanxi, Shandong, Tianjin, and Yunnan all mentioned attempts—typically among unmarried women—to induce abortion using various decoctions made of herbs, insects, and roots.[629] One hospital in Shandong, for example, reported 88 cases between 1989 and 1996 of poisoning from consuming ground up mylabris—a type of toxic blister beetle—to induce abortion. Another hospital in Shandong reported 42 such cases between 1997 and 2001. The active ingredient in blister beetles can cause severe burns and even death but rarely terminates pregnancy.[630]

Other kinds of herbal abortifacient use can be found in cases from the late 1970s through the 2000s. In 1981, a woman surnamed Yang, who was a 26-year-old worker at a Shanghai Plastics Factory, discovered that she was pregnant and inserted a root called "local ox knee" (*tu niuxi*) into her cervix. 24 hours later, Yang experienced spells of coldness and fever, and even after undergoing dilation and curettage at the hospital, she still passed away from complications

[627] Sarah O'Meara, "Workshop Teaches Children How to Guard Against Sexual Abuse," *Sixth Tone*, July 5, 2016, http://www.sixthtone.com/news/1034/workshop-teaches-children-how-guard-against-sexual-abuse.
[628] Hua Shengdun, "Sex Education in China Evolving," *China Daily USA*, April 16, 2015, http://usa.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2015-04/06/content_20010305.htm.
[629] Sommer, "Abortion in Late Imperial China," 146; Xu Xianwen, "banmao zhongdu siwang erli" [Two Cases of Death from Mylabris Poisoning], *Zhongguo fayixue zazhi* [Chinese Journal of Forensic Medicine] 3 (1990): 156; Chen Jinhua, "Yong banmao duotai yinqi zhongdu siwang" [Using Mylabris to Induce Abortion Leads to Fatal Poisoning], *Xingshi jishu* [Forensic Science and Technology] 5 (1980): 37-38.
[630] Sommer, "Abortion in Late Imperial China," 146.

related to the ox knee. In other cases, unmarried women secretly inserted motherwort herb (*yimu cao*), white leadwort roots (*baihua dan*), or trichosanthes root (*tianhua fen*) into their vaginas to induce abortion, but all of the reported cases resulted in death.[631]

In some places, state run medical facilities even employed related methods, seeking to subject herbal abortion formals to rigorous, Western-style testing. For example, in 1979, Henan province began testing the use of *tianhua* (trichosanthes root) and *yuanhua* (lilac daphne) injections for inducing late term abortion, and Luoyang doctors used the latter method in 1158 cases from 1979 to 1980.[632] Clearly, use of herbal abortifacients was not confined to unauthorized spaces. Each year to this day, numerous academic papers are published discussing the benefits and drawbacks to using herbal abortifacient methods that have been refined through clinical trials. More recent testing of herbal abortion methods suggests that the methods themselves are not always dangerous or ineffective, and that with some fine-tuning these approaches could be deemed viable. This is not entirely surprising given the long history of herbal abortifacient use worldwide. However, the vast majority of women utilizing herbal abortifacients in China during this and early periods were not doing so under professional supervision, and as reports on the fatal consequences of such methods suggest, these abortion techniques as generally practiced were unsafe and unreliable.

Reports also indicate that in the 1980s and beyond women were still practicing other types of abortion via traditional, non-herbal abortion methods and the misuse of potent Western pharmaceuticals. According to one medical report, 32 women between 1990 and 1993 underwent

[631] Yao Jisheng, Zhang Taiyun, and Li Yanji, "32 li duotai siwang an fenxi" [An Analysis of 32 Cases of Fatal Abortion], *Xingshi jishu* [Forensic Science and Technology] 5 (1982): 14; Zhang Cun, "Baihua dan duotai baixiezheng jixing shen gongneng shuaijie siwang yi li baogao" [A Case of Death by Septicemia and Kidney Failure from Use of *Baihua dan* as an Abortifacient], *Guangxi zhongyiyao* [Guangxi Journal of Traditional Chinese Medicine 1 (1986): n.p.

[632] *Luoyang shizhi* [Luoyang Gazetteer], October 15, 2009, http://www.lydqw.com/DB/BookContent.aspx?BookID=200904080002&Content=Digital.

abortion through massage (*anmo*), moxibustion, and acupuncture (*zhenjiu*) with relatively high rates of success—84.3 percent.[633] Another recurring theme in abortion records from this period, as in earlier ones, was overdosing on antimalarial drugs. According to one report, 18 women consumed various combinations of quinine and chloroquine to induce abortion.[634] Others reports support the claim that these practices were common elsewhere in China.[635]

These cases and trends bring to mind several observations. First, the vast majority of individuals using the aforementioned methods, rather than relying on doctor-administered surgical or medically-induced (with mifepristone and misoprostol) abortion methods, were young and unmarried women.[636] Often these women were ashamed that they had engaged in premarital sex and that they had become pregnant out of wedlock, conduct which was still considered immoral and taboo in many places. Furthermore, they feared legal repercussions as premarital sex was still technically classified as a type of "hooliganism."[637] Therefore, these young women sought to secretly remedy their situations and avoid having unauthorized children. According to a Chinese news article from 1986, 27.9 percent of abortions that year in Beijing were performed on unmarried women, often who engaged in intercourse with their fiancés but could not get formal permission to marry due to age or work restrictions. Similarly, high abortion rates among unmarried women were reported in other major cities like Tianjin.[638] Second, while one might hypothesize that women in cities were using safer abortion methods while women in poorer, more rural areas were engaging in traditional or alternative abortion practices, in reality

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[633] Li Ming, "Anmo liuchan 32 jingyan jieshao" [Introducing the Experience of 32 Abortions Through Massage], *Anmo yu daoyin* [Chinese Manipulation & Qi Gong Therapy] 4 (1993): n.p.
[634] Yao, Zhang, and Li, "32 li duotai siwang an fenxi," n.p.
[635] Pan Zhengzhong and Feng Guozhen, "Weihun xianyu suo yinqi de" [What Premarital Pregnancy Gives Rise To], *Shehui* [Society] 2 (1986): 21.
[636] Wei Xia, Shouzhang She, and Taihing Lam, "Medical versus Surgical Abortion Methods for Pregnancy in China: A Cost-Minimization Analysis," *Gynecologic and Obstetric Investigation* 72 (2011): 257.
[637] Burkitt, "Sex in China."
[638] Rigdon, "Abortion Law and Practice in China," 549-550.

the line between urban and rural women was not so fixed. Indeed, records show that cases of herbal abortifacient use took place in both rural and urban environments, and the same goes for surgical abortions. The influx of rural young women to urban factories in the 1990s and 2000s further blurred the rural-urban medical divide. While many cases of herbal abortifacient use were associated with women with little wealth or education—and therefore, it is likely that women with higher levels of education generally chose safer abortion methods—validating this claim requires further investigation.

Conclusion

Scholars and journalists have examined the effects of the One Child Policy from many different angles. Mei Fong, for example, has shown how the uneven age distribution in contemporary China has produced a generation of "little emperors"—stereotyped as self-centered, spoiled, and weak—who in reality face formidable pressure from their parents to become educated, marry, and purchase a home.[639] Similarly, others have examined the One Child Policy in terms of a shrinking labor force, lack of old age support, rising rates of kidnapping and sex trafficking, skewed sex ratios, and other social issues.

As a complement to this literature, this chapter has highlighted several key aspects—some relatively well known and some rarely discussed—of the One Child Policy. While techniques for monitoring and policing reproduction became more systematic and sophisticated from the 1980s onward, in some places—particularly in rural areas—uneven local enforcement and resistance undermined efforts to fully plan births. Furthermore, even though the policy's name remained unchanged, pressure to have only one child fluctuated with sterilization drives

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[639] Mei Fong, *One Child: The Story of China's Most Radical Experiment* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2016), 95.

and relaxation of the policy in certain circumstances. Against this backdrop, the practical need for sons' labor amid decollectivization, the symbolic importance of male heirs, and the advent of prenatal testing distorted the sex ratio to an unprecedented degree. The demand that couples have only one child, government promotion of "quality" births, and the passage of the eugenic Maternal and Infant Health Law inspired an increased emphasis on bearing children with "good" genes, that is, without hereditary illnesses, birth defects, or other congenital conditions. These concerns, as well as climbing rates of sexual harassment and rape, abortion among unmarried women, and HIV/AIDS infections, stimulated national efforts to introduce sex education. Dovetailing with the need for more ubiquitous sex education is the continued use of abortion as a primary birth control method and reliance on dangerous herbal abortion techniques, particularly among unmarried women. Despite some improvements in these areas, detractors continue to criticize compulsory sex education in schools. The next chapter will position these findings within the arc of reproductive and contraceptive trends in twentieth and early twenty-first-century China.

Epilogue: Continuity and Change, 1927-2018

In 2015, the One Child Policy—what has become emblematic of efforts to demographically engineer modernity—was formally replaced with a Two Child Policy. The central government is now encouraging larger families to support China's graying population. As with the One Child Policy when it was first introduced, at first glance this policy reform appears to mark a sharp break with the previous era. However, as chapter 5 has shown, since the 1980s exceptions were made for second children in a variety of circumstances. With that in mind, what can be garnered from examining birth control practices from the late Republican era to the end of the One Child Policy?

Most academic and journalistic analyses of the decades surrounding the One Child Policy have painted this period as one of seismic shifts: the shift from pro-natalism to anti-natalism, the dramatic increase in state policing of sexuality and reproduction, and the move from nonexistent or non-scientific reproductive medicine to ubiquitous contraceptive medicines, devices, and surgeries. Moreover, the One Child Policy is typically portrayed as much signifying a larger shift in Chinese society. In other words, the One Child Policy's implementation is often viewed, alongside Deng Xiaoping's launching of economic reforms in 1978, as denoting the start of the post-Mao reform, in which the CCP sought to reposition itself as the source of socioeconomic prosperity rather than Communist ideology in China.[640] Similarly, because the year 1978, along with 1949, marked a significant power change that drew global attention, these two years are also viewed as significant milestones and often treated as the cut-off points or starting points for research on demography in China. Susan Greenhalgh and Edwin Winkler, for example, use this chronology in their book *Governing China's Population: From Leninist to Neoliberal*

[640] Wang Feng, Yong Cai, and Baochang Gu, "Population, Policy, and Politics: How Will History Judge China's One-Child Policy?" *Population and Development Review* 38 (2012): 118.

Biopolitics, in which they argue that population planning in the Mao era was "soft" and grounded in ideology and only became bureaucratically enforced in the post-Mao era beginning in 1978.[641]

While these observations about rupture and change are valid to a degree, they are derived more or less exclusively from official narratives and state propaganda, which tend to overemphasize the role of the Party in enacting significant societal change. An examination of this period from the perspective of individuals and local circumstances reveals critical continuities in reproduction from the Republican period through the Mao era and into the Reform era (1978-present). These trends in turn help us rethink and challenge the prevailing periodization of twentieth and early twenty first century Chinese demographic history by showing that while state power over reproduction did gradually deepen, efforts to promote certain reproductive practices and limit others were challenged and negotiated, producing unforeseen and deeply gendered consequences. Furthermore, despite frequent policy changes emphasizing the importance of the collective, reproductive and contraceptive practices at the local level remained deeply rooted in a constellation of individual and familial decision making. Perhaps the so-called Reform era, then, did not mark the paradigm shift many have suggested it did. Here, I briefly examine several salient sexual and reproductive continuities I have identified in the *longue durée* and divide them into three broad categories: law, gender, and medicine.

Law

While to an extent laws from earlier periods policing sexuality and reproduction were revised, in reality their execution remained much the same throughout the twentieth century. For one, laws in the mid-Republican period sought to apply the Qing criminalization of adultery more evenly to men and women, so rather than simply charging woman adulterers with adultery,

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[641] Greenhalgh and Winckler. *Governing China's Population*, 5.

beginning in 1935 men could also be charged with this crime.[642] Extramarital relationships continued to be policed through the Mao and post-Mao eras.[643] The same was true for premarital sex, which until 1997, was categorized as an illegal act of "hooliganism."[644] This application of the law, as we have seen, continued throughout the Mao era and even into the Reform period. While the degree of punishment varied throughout this timeframe, reaching its height in the Mao era, the basic principle remained the same. While adultery is not punished to the extent it used to be, in a 2011 case of "wife swapping," the perpetrators were given three-and-a-half-year jail sentences, which were lighter than what they might have received in the 1970s and 1980s, but consequential nonetheless.[645] In this way, adultery and premarital sex were continually policed from late imperial times to the present, showing that in fact the state had a relatively large degree of involvement in private life prior to the Mao era and the One Child Policy.

Also related to the reach of the state is the ways in which demographic differences determined the extent of reproductive policing. In the Republican period and much of the Mao era, differences in access to contraceptives and the types of fertility control methods used varied significantly based on education level, class, and location with more educated, urban people having privileged access to contraceptives and abortions. While gaps in access to contraceptives and birth planning enforcement narrowed from the 1970s onward, these differences never completely disappeared. As chapter 5 demonstrated, lax policy enforcement in the countryside and exceptions to the One Child Policy were enduring phenomena, while urbanites' childbearing was strictly and comprehensively policed.

Eugenic language and practices have also endured from the Republican period to the

642 Tran, "Sex and Equality in Republican China: The Debate over the Adultery Law," 214
643 Shao-Chuan Leng, "The Role of Law in the People's Republic of China as Reflecting Mao Tse-Tung 's Influence," *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology,* 68, no. 3 (1977): 368.
644 Burkitt, "Sex in China."
645 Burkitt, "Sex in China."

present. The global fascination with eugenics in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries spoke to elite Chinese reformers concerned with strengthening the nation. Building on a much longer history of prenatal education for producing smarter, healthier babies, eugenics fit nicely with emerging ideas about racial fitness and nation building. The concern with making better babies endured through the Mao era when health campaigns sought to improve maternal and infant health, lower infant mortality rates, and prevent those deemed unfit for childbearing from doing so. Although the explicit goal of emphasizing the "quality" of births over the quantity only emerged in the late 1970s and early 1980s, similar sentiments had been expressed by some since the early twentieth century. In fact, the eugenic slogan "yousheng, youyu" (to bear and rear better children) espoused in government rhetoric since the 1980s was taken directly from the Counseling Center for Birth Control (*Shengyu jieyu zixunbu*), one of China's first sites promoting birth control education. Established by professors Lei Guqiong and Chen Da during the Republican period, in the 1930s the center advocated "*shaosheng, yousheng, youyu*," meaning "fewer births, eugenics (bearing better children), and excellent education (rearing better children)."[646] Furthering illustrating historical continuities, the establishment of mandatory premarital health examinations and the Maternal and Infant Health Law passed in 1994 merely affirmed and extended the 1950 ban on marriages among people with hereditary illnesses. In the context of the One Child Policy, it became even more critical to parents that they do everything in their power to ensure that their sole child was born as healthy as possible, including aborting fetuses which tested positive for congenital issues. Even with the switch to the Two Child Policy, few urban parents are voluntarily having two children, meaning that the emphasis on perfecting

[646] Lei Guqiong, "Huainian Yang Chongrui yishi" ["Remembering Dr. Yang Chongrui"] in *Yang Chongrui Boshi, Danchen bai nian jinian* [Dr. Yang Chongrui, 100 Years Memorial Since her Birth], ed. Yan Renying (Beijing: Beijing Medical University and China Union Medical College, 1990), 1.

one's only child will likely continue.

Gender

An enduring theme in China's modern reproductive history has been the uneven and gendered burden of fertility control. From Republican times (and much earlier) to the present, it has consistently been the responsibility of women to either prevent conception or prevent childbirth through abortion. Women were and continue to be statistically more likely to have sterilization surgeries than men even though tubal ligations are more invasive than vasectomies. According to China's National Population and Family Planning Commission, in 1971 42.6 percent more women than men were getting sterilized in 1971. In 2015, 723.7 percent more women were sterilized than men.[647] One major reason for this trend is that many men fear that a cut to the body will result in a critical loss of *qi*, which in turn will lead to impotence. For this reason, and the deeply rooted belief that family planning is a feminine task, men only undergo vasectomies when forced to by the state, if they are cadres seeking to prove their loyalty to the Party, or when their wives are too sick to survive this type of procedure.[648] The ubiquity of sterilizations is not likely to diminish any time soon, as annual sterilization quotas are still in place in some areas of China. In particular, mothers with two daughters—who might want to try for a son outside of the policy—are the primary targets for sterilization.[649]

The issue of gender inequality with respect to birth control is further compounded by the persistent dislike of condoms among Chinese men, many of whom argue that condoms significantly reduce the sexual experience, that birth control is the sole responsibility of women,

[647] Miao Xin and Liu Chang, "Chinese Women Bear the Major Burden of Contraception," *Sixth Tone,* March 8, 2018, https://twitter.com/SixthTone.
[648] Huang, *The Spiral Road*, 181.
[649] Meng Zhao and Danni Fu, "Sterilization Quotas Endure in Two-Child Policy Era," *Sixth Tone*, February 22, 2017, http://www.sixthtone.com/news/1964/sterilization-quotas-endure-in-two-child-policy-era.

and that rejecting condoms is masculine and liberating.[650] Rather than forcing their reluctant partners to use condoms, in the Republican and early Mao era, women were encouraged to insert vinegar-covered cotton balls in their vaginas as suppositories or wash vigorously with soapy water after coitus. Studies have shown that in the early 2000s, women were advised to douche with soap or vinegar and take the "morning after pill" if their husbands refused to use condoms.[651]

A final example of the enduring role of gendering in determining reproductive practices is the phenomenon of sex selective abortions. The rise in sex selective abortions in China is well documented, but what it sometimes overlooked is the fact that often mothers themselves seek these procedures to improve their own status.[652] Although sex selective abortion only emerged in the One Child Policy era, in fact women in China had long been seeking help in guaranteeing that their unborn babies would be male. Certain aspects of *taijiao*, or fetal education, for example, were believed to help ensure that a fetus would be male.[653] Prior to 1949 and to some extent afterward, pregnant women would seek out the advice of a fortune teller to determine fetal sex. Such practices re-emerged in the post-Mao period alongside more technologically advanced methods like prenatal screening.[654] In the age of web marketing, the preference for male babies can even be seen in internet advertisements, such as this one propagated by the Chinese internet mega-retailor, *Taobao*, advertising an alkaline pill for mothers with a daughter hoping to conceive a son as their second child (Figure E.1).[655] An alkaline environment is believed to be

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[650] Zheng, *Ethnographies of Prostitution*, 8.
[651] Zheng, *Ethnographies of Prostitution*, 51.
[652] Hvistendahl, *Unnatural Selection*, 37.
[653] Ann Anagnost, "Family Violence and Magical Violence: The Woman as Victim in China's One-Child Family Policy," *Women and Language* 11, no. 2 (1988): 4.
[654] Anagnost, "Family Violence," 3.
[655] Wang Kaiqiang, "Shengle nü'er zenme ban? Taobao yao ni chi yao bao shengnan, xingbie qishi jinri hai zai?" [What Can Be Done if You Have a Daughter? Taobao Wants You to Take Medicine to Guarantee That You Give Birth To A Boy; Does Gender Discrimination Still Exist Today?" *Sina*, April 29, 2018,

more conducive to conceiving a baby boy than a baby girl.[656] Although this advertisement and others promoting related products were criticized and removed from the internet, they speak to an enduring cultural preference for sons, even on the part of mothers.

Figure E.1: "What Can Be Done If You Have a Daughter? Take an Alkaline Pill for Your Second Child."

Medicine

The relationship between Western and traditional methods of birth control also evolved between the Republican period and the present while retaining certain notable similarities. In the Republican era, Western medicine and TCM were not distinctly defined categories. To the extent that these two systems could be teased apart in the Republican and Mao eras, Western contraceptive and abortion methods never fully supplanted traditional ones. Even in the post-

http://k.sina.com.cn/article_5334137897_13df07c29001009vfz.html.

[656] Zhang Yiling, "Taobao guanggao cheng shingle nü'er zenme ban, Jiangsu fulian zazhi huyu daoqian" [Jiangsu Women's Federation Magazine Calls for an Apology Regarding Taobao Advertisement Entitled 'What To Do if You If You Have A Daughter?'] *Sina*, April 27, 2018, http://news.sina.com.cn/s/2018-04-27/doc-ifztkpip4325744.shtml.

Mao era, birth control practices remained diverse and imbued with specific cultural meanings. *Tiaojingyao* and *tongjingyao*, for example, were widely used in the Republican and Mao eras and are still commonly available in China today, drawing on the language and semiotics of both medical traditions. In addition, Western and traditional abortion and contraceptive techniques have been synthesized into new methods, such as creating an injection that induces abortion from ground up Chinese medicinal roots.

As we have seen, abortion was the most well recorded form of fertility control in the Republican period, and abortion rates have remained high since the 1970s.[657] While abortion was one of the most common forms of birth control worldwide in the early twentieth century, this changed in many parts of the world with the invention of mass manufactured condoms, spermicidal douches, and oral contraceptives. In the early 2000s, medical ethicist Nie Jing-Bao interviewed hundreds of Chinese women about their experiences with abortion and found that the two most common reasons for undergoing this procedure were premarital sex and being forced to adhere to the national family planning policy. This would seem to suggest that the taboo nature of premarital/extramarital sex, harsh enforcement of the One Child Policy at its height, the limited cultural stigma associated with abortion, and a persistent lack of general knowledge about safe and effective birth control methods among unmarried women have contributed to the enduring reliance on abortion in China. Zheng Tiantian has also attributed this trend to engrained gender inequality and lack of respect for women's bodies.[658] Whether this trend will reverse itself with the introduction of more systematic and comprehensive sex education and the continuation of the Two Child Policy remains to be seen.

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[657] Nie Jing-Bao, *Behind the Silence: Chinese Voices on Abortion* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2005), 96.
[658] Zheng, *Ethnographies of Prostitution,* 26.

As the One Child Policy fades into the past, other historical continuities and ruptures with respect to law, medicine, and gender may become evident. More open archival access may someday also shed light on the less understood aspects of contraception and reproduction in twentieth century China. To what extent future contraceptive practices will continue to draw on historical paradigms, as well as the position the One Child Policy era and its precursors will occupy in the popular historical imagination, are as of yet unknown.

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Appendix: Interviews

Interview Date	Interview Location	Interviewee Information
August 2, 2015	Luoyang	Husband and wife – both in their late 50s
June 8, 2016	Shanghai	Two men – one in his 50s and one in his 70s
June 12, 2016	Ningde	Woman – age 70
August 10, 2016	Shanghai	Man – age 70
August 11, 2016	Shanghai	Woman in her late 50s
August 23, 2016	Shanghai	Woman in her mid 50s
August 30, 2016	Shanghai	Five women – all in their 60s
August 31, 2016	Shanghai	Woman – aged 46
September 17, 2016	Tianjin	Man – age 70
October 23, 2016	Beijing	Woman – age 85
November 7, 2016	Shanghai	Man – age 73
November 14, 2016	Luoyang	Woman – age 52
November 16, 2016	Luoyang	Man – age 77
November 17, 2016	Luoyang	Two men – both age 76
November 21, 2016	Luoyang	Woman – age 77
December 10, 2016	Shanghai	Five men – all in their late 50s to early 60s
December 20, 2016	Shanghai	Two women – one aged 67 and one aged 84
December 22, 2016	Shanghai	Two men – one age 65 and one age 76
December 22, 2016	Shanghai	Woman - age 73
December 24, 2016	Shanghai	Husband and wife both age 74
January 12, 2017	Shanghai	Woman – in her 60s
January 12, 2017	Shanghai	Woman – age 86
January 25, 2017	Shanghai	Two women – one age 62 and one in her late 80s
February 5, 2017	Shanghai	One man (age 64) and one woman (age 66)
February 10, 2017	Shanghai	Two men in their late 60s
February 13, 2017	Tianjin	Two women – one in her late 50s and one age 75
February 13, 2017	Tianjin	Man - age 69
February 13, 2017	Tianjin	Man - age 58
February 14, 2017	Tianjin	Man - age 63
February 14, 2017	Tianjin	Man - age 74
February 14, 2017	Tianjin	Mother (late 70s) and daughter (late 50s)
February 15, 2017	Tianjin	Husband and wife - both age 70
February 15, 2017	Tianjin	Woman - in her early 70s