

The One-Child Policy, Gay Rights, and Social Reorganization in China

By Kody Gerkin

China's youth are becoming adults in an unprecedented era. The Chinese have achieved rapid, sustained economic growth under a Communist government that has simultaneously been initiating a wide range of social planning initiatives. China's one-child policy (OCP) was instituted in 1979 and is arguably the most controversial social policy that the government has implemented in recent history. The OCP requires that couples from China's ethnic Han majority have no more than one child. While the policy has been enforced differently across time, socio-economic class, and different regions, it has spared China an estimated additional 250-300 million people. These hundreds of millions would have undoubtedly strained China economically, socially, and environmentally. While the policy remains largely popular in China, it has produced several unexpected "side effects." China's youth, particularly in urban areas, are part of a generation of "onlies," only children who are experiencing life in a unique milieu. One example of this phenomenon is that, in urban areas of China, the word "cousin" is completely losing meaning—if one's parents are only children, then it is impossible to have cousins, aunts, or uncles. This increases pressure on "only children" because networking with large extended families has been an important tradition in China, particularly as a tool for upward socio-economic mobility.

The One-Child Policy and the History of Gay Men in China

Due to cultural norms dating back to the teachings of the ancient Chinese philosopher Confucius, male children are preferred to female children in Chinese society. Therefore, if a family can only have one child, they will, until a male is born, practice sex-selective abortion, neglect female babies, fail to register female births, or put female babies up for adoption. This has resulted in an imbalanced sex-ratio within Chinese society—there are more men of marrying age in China than there are women. In a culture where the pressure to marry is already very high, men now face the prospect of marrying and having children as a cultural, social, and familial necessity in an environment where there are not enough women for every man to marry. One interesting possibility is the notion that homosexual men may not feel compelled to "pass"—i.e. submit to societal pressures to get married and produce children despite the fact that they are homosexuals. If Chinese men cannot all marry because there simply are not enough women, would gay men in China find it easier to escape the pressure to enter into a traditional, heterosexual relationship? If so, will China's OCP create a society more tolerant towards gay men?

To contextualize this question, homosexual culture and the history of gay tolerance in China warrants a detailed examination, particularly with regard to gay men. Ancient texts, novels from the Qing and Ming dynasties (1368-1911), and cultural myths and stories present a long, detailed history of homosexuality among men in China. Two such examples are "the love of the shared peach," and "the cut sleeve." The "love of the shared peach," a common euphemism for male homosexual relationships in modern China, is derived from a story dating back to the third century B.C., when Duke Ling of Wei shared a delicious peach with his minister and lover, Ni Xia. "The cut sleeve" comes from the story of the last emperor of the Han Dynasty (6-1 B.C.), who had many male lovers. Once, when napping on the couch with one of his most beloved homosexual partners, the emperor was called away to a meeting. According to the legend, the emperor cut the sleeve of his suit off to remove himself from the quiet embrace without awakening his lover. "The cut sleeve" remains a

popular literary term for male homosexuality. During the seventeenth century, references to homosexual acts among men within popular Chinese literature rose to previously unseen levels. In 1740, homosexuality figured so prominently in the public consciousness that the newly empowered Qing dynasty drafted a law that prohibited consensual sodomy. This law, as recorded in court records from the era, targeted acts of sodomy between men. The drafting and application of the sodomy law implied that female homosexuality or sodomy between men and women were perceived as less dangerous to the maintenance of society than coital expressions of male homosexuality.

The omnipotence of Confucian thought in the history of Chinese culture is worth noting. Confucius was a Chinese philosopher who wrote and lectured during the fourth and fifth century B.C. Undoubtedly, Confucianism has fundamentally shaped and colored Chinese culture. The clarity with which Confucian thought defines the roles of men, women, and children—if society is to function properly—leaves no space for expressions of homosexuality among men. Filial piety is a strict code of conduct described by Confucius with regard to the role of men, women, children, and elders within the familial structure. Confucian thought, specifically the notion of filial piety, inherently favors the birth of male children, who are seen as more capable than women of carrying on the family name. While homosexuality is never mentioned by Confucius, he does make clear the role of man, first as an obedient son, and later as a faithful husband and father. Chinese culture, influenced profoundly by Confucianism, allows men in modern China the option of entering into private homosexual relationships, as long as they publicly enter into heterosexual relationships, marry, and bear at least one child. This creates unsatisfying social arrangements for gay men, the women who gay men marry, and the children these couples bear.

Chinese Tolerance toward Gay Men: Is This a Human Rights Issue?

In 1995, the first official pamphlet to acknowledge homosexuality in China was released in response to growing incidences of HIV/AIDS in mainland China. The Chinese government's longstanding inability to admit that homosexuality exists in China complicates their approach to reducing HIV/AIDS transmissions among gay men. The denial surrounding Chinese homosexuality affects the nature of both the government's approach to promoting the rights of gay men and their efforts to fight the spread of HIV/AIDS. It cannot be assumed that, in publishing this pamphlet and other similar literature, the government's official recognition of homosexuality translates to healthier sexual, cultural, and social interactions among gay men. In fact, the opposite may be true. When the government releases pamphlets and information that allude to homosexual practices, the literature reflects the government's naïve presuppositions regarding homosexuality among men in modern China: namely, that homosexuality is immoral, anti-Chinese, and a medical condition or, worse yet, a disease. The government cannot be a trusted expert on homosexuality when, by and large, it pretends that homosexuality is not a natural tendency among human beings. The implicit ideology of the 1995 pamphlet, for example, implies that if gay men are armed with knowledge about HIV/AIDS—specifically the increased prevalence of the disease among homosexuals and the increased likelihood of transmitting the disease during anal sex—they will stop being gay.

Chinese policy's focus on homosexuality as a disease is an ineffective and dangerous approach to reducing the transmission rates of HIV/AIDS. Furthermore, it places a storied subset of the Chinese population in a state of chronic isolation. The Chinese government sponsors HIV/AIDS testing in China, not to identify the ill for medical treatment, but to expose dangerous carriers who pose a serious threat to public health. This provides little to no motivation for those who fear they may be infected to seek testing. If the Chinese government is not willing to accept the notion that

homosexuality, with its long history in Chinese culture, remains a practice among men in modern China, then society as a whole is being denied the fundamental human right of having access to the information and tools necessary to combat the spread of lethal diseases such as HIV/AIDS. Furthermore, as long as homosexuality is seen as an anti-Chinese disease, gay men and women will not have the personal freedom to express love, lust, and companionship in a safe environment that is free from government oppression.

Hope for the Future

The government has largely succeeded in convincing the Chinese population that homosexuality in China is not a condition that exists naturally among humans. This helps the government frame homosexuality as a disease. Given the rich history of the practice of homosexuality among men in China, this approach must change. Government policy impacts both sexes—if the government refuses to recognize homosexuality as a natural component of the human capacity to love, then gay men will continue to marry women. These men, bowing to social pressures, will have the allotted one child, and likely will continue to practice homosexuality in private places. This leaves the women and children to lives of sorrow and grief, trapped in hollow, unsatisfying familial arrangements. Guided research on the OCP's potential impact on the gay community would create the possibility for promoting safer cultural and social spaces for homosexuality among men. With increased tolerance towards homosexuality, Chinese men and women would not suffer due to needless stigma, discrimination, and oppression.

Annotations

Arnold, Fred, and Liu Zhaoxiang. 1986. "Sex Preference, Fertility, and Family Planning in China." *Population and Development Review* 12 (2): 221-246.

Annotation: Arnold and Zhaoxiang used extensive field research and compiled data from more than one million interviews while researching for this article. They examine the effects of China's one-child policy on the rising gender imbalance among the Chinese population. The authors examine practical aspects of the phenomena, such as the use of contraceptives and gender selective abortion in modern China. They also take into account long-standing cultural traditions, particularly the widespread practice of Confucian customs in rural areas, which tend to motivate families to have male children. Arnold and Zhaoxiang examine the extent to which any of these factors have a real or perceived effect on the gender imbalance in China. Far-reaching and data heavy, the article makes a clear case for altering Chinese family planning strategies to favor gender equity among birth rates, particularly in rural China.

Aird, John S. 1990. Slaughter of the Innocents: Coercive Birth Control in China. Washington, DC: American Enterprise Institute (AEI) Press.

Annotation: Aird makes a compelling case that population control policies in China started long before the adoption of the one-child policy. Drawing from primary resources, mainly

official government documents and directives, Aird divides the book into three major sections: the use of coercion and human rights concerns with regard to China's one-child policy; birth control policies from 1949-1983; and finally, the contradictions and different interpretations of Party Document Numbers seven and thirteen. Aird contends that the Chinese government has shielded both the domestic population and the international community from the more brutal aspects of Chinese population control measures. The book is informative and includes extensive bibliographic information; it is fitting for anyone interested in exploring the harsh reality of China's one-child policy.

Blum, Susan Debra, and Lionel M. Jensen. 2002. China Off Center: Mapping the Margins of the Middle Kingdom. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.

Annotation: The goal of this extensive volume is to illustrate that China is more diverse in ideology, language, ethnicity, region, and religion than Western scholars typically assume. The authors of the various essays highlight China's ability to manufacture a homogenous image to foreigners while simultaneously recognizing the Western tendency to view China as a "centered" empire. However, the authors hope that, through a focus on the "particular, the local and the puzzling," a picture may emerge of many Chinas, wherein "flux is the only constant." Readers with an interest in Chinese-specific ideologies concerning sexual behavior will find Liu, Ng, Zhou, and Haebele's essay, "Sexual Behavior in Modern China" particularly fascinating. The authors' extensive research on sexual norms and "premarital and extramarital relations, homosexual relations...satisfaction with sexual practices and so forth," is of interest to anyone looking to deepen their understanding of China's diverse opinions on human sexuality.

Dalsimer, M. and L. Nisonoff. 1987. "The Implications of the New Agricultural and One-Child Family Policies for Rural Chinese Women." *Feminist Studies* 13 (3): 583-607.

Annotation: Laurie Nisonoff, a professor of economics at Hampshire College in Amherst, and Marlyn Dalsimer, a professor at Dartmouth, have collaborated extensively on works relating to women's issues in rural China. In this piece, they argue that the lack of effectiveness of China's one-child policy becomes clear when one examines the impact the policy has had on rural Chinese women in terms of their "work, family life, and fertility." The authors' succinct review of the policy's history and presentation of possible alternative strategies for population control are accessible and should be of interest to anyone concerned with issues affecting rural Chinese women.

Duberman, Martin B., Martha Vicinus, and George Chauncey (eds.). 1989. Hidden from History: Reclaiming the Gay and Lesbian Past. New York: New American Library.

Annotation: Editors Duberman, Vicinus, and Chauncey spent four years collecting various essays in an attempt to fill the void of comprehensive analysis on the development of gay culture around the world. The editors insist that, "for a century, the history of homosexuality

has been constrained by the intolerance of governments and academics alike.” In the essay “Homosexuality and the State in Late Imperial China,” Vivien W. Ng uses political writings, novels, and scholarly journal entries to explain the rising interest in male homosexuality that China experienced in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Ng concludes by examining the legislative backlash that the implicit acceptance of homosexuality inspired in the Chinese political bureaucracy. Both the essay and the book provide valuable insights for anyone interested in deepening their grasp of homosexuality as expressed in national and cultural contexts around the globe

Falbo, Toni, and Dudley L. Poston, Jr. 1993. “The Academic, Personality, and Physical Outcomes of Only Children in China.” *Child Development* 64 (1): 18-35.

Annotation: Falbo and Poston examine representative samples of four thousand children from four different Chinese provinces with the aim of revealing differences between children in single versus multiple child families. Through their extensive analysis of the data collected, the authors ultimately establish that China is not creating a generation of only children who are fundamentally different from their peers who have siblings. They note that Western scholarship may have created the myth of “little emperors,” a phrase used domestically and internationally to connote children born into single child Chinese families. To explain the rise of this notion, which their research refutes, the authors discuss cultural differences between the West and China. For example, Chinese youth introduce themselves to strangers not by name, but by their rank within the familial structure, i.e. “I am my father’s second daughter.” Social scientists will find the detailed explanations of the pair’s research methodologies insightful and informative.

Fong, V. L. 2007. “Parent-Child Communication Problems and the Perceived Inadequacies of Chinese Only Children.” *Ethos* 35 (1): 85-127.

Annotation: Harvard Professor Vanessa Fong is well-known for her extensive research on what will undoubtedly be the lasting effects of China’s one-child policy. In this article, she asserts that China’s youth, particularly those born into one child families, have chronic behavioral problems and “unsatisfactory personalities.” She supports these claims through the presentation of five longitudinal case studies of Chinese families. These children’s behavioral problems, she contends, result from mixed messages and unclear guidance that Chinese parents give their children. Of particular consequence is the dissonance that develops between only children and their parents, who were brought up in a different familial structure. This is relevant in terms of the only child’s perceived ability to achieve upward mobility within modern Chinese society, a society of only children. Scholars, students, and all parties interested in the one-child policy’s effect on youth will find this study useful.

Gil, Vincent E. 1992. "The Cut Sleeve Revisited: A Brief Ethnographic Interview with a Male Homosexual in Mainland China." *The Journal of Sex Research* 29 (4): 569-577.

Annotation: Vincent Gil uses one interview with an openly homosexual singer in a major, mainland Chinese city to open theoretical space on the subject of homosexuality in China. The transcribed and translated interview accounts for about half of the article. Gil maintains that homosexuality is frowned upon, stating that this is a result of cultural remnants left over from Confucian notions of the roles of men in families. He states that, "even now in the post-Maoist period, it is argued that no 'homosexual tradition' as such exists today or is known, even among the educated. In mainland China there is an adherence to seeing the sexual world according to moral ideals rather than empirical realities." The interview is useful insofar as it illustrates the connections between the male homosexual experience in mainland China versus other cultural and national settings around the world, particularly the United States. The interviewee's story would suggest that men in mainland China adapt their homosexual behavior to the cultural, legal, and social norms of their environment.

Greenhalgh, S., and J. Bongaarts. 1987. "Fertility Policy in China: Future Options." *Science* 235 (4793): 1167-1172.

Annotation: The authors, an associate and senior associate, respectively, of the Center for Policy Studies in New York, employ a broad range of demographic, social, and economic measures to present alternatives to China's one-child policy. Relying on mathematical projections, Greenhalgh and Bongaarts explore outcomes of one and two-child models in addition to models such as "stop at two and delay and space." The authors explore both the macro and micro-deficiencies of the current policy and demonstrate how alternative models would better suit the Chinese economy, the rights of women, and the ability of families to support the elderly. Scholars and social scientists would find the article's in-depth analysis useful as a tool for understanding population projections and the history of alternative strategies to the one-child policy.

Hesketh, Therese, Lu Li, and Wei Xing Zhu. 2005. "The Effect of China's One-Child Family Policy after 25 Years." *New England Journal of Medicine* 353 (11): 1171-1176.

Annotation: Hesketh, Li, and Zhu present a succinct account of the history of China's one-child policy and the myriad ways it has affected China in the twenty-five years since its inception. The authors draw primarily on statistics gathered from census data and other scholarly articles written on the topic. Specific impacts that are covered in the article include the policy's effect on population growth, the use of contraceptives, the sex-ratio, and old-age dependency in China. The authors conclude with a brief section on the future of the one-child policy. The format is such that graphs and easily-accessible charts are presented and followed by broad, clear analysis. Readers of any kind will find the article a useful, concise introduction to the policy's varied effects on Chinese society.

Hinsch, B. 1990. *Passions of the Cut Sleeve: The Male Homosexual Tradition in China*. Berkeley, University of California Press.

Annotation: Bret Hinsch has published extensively on the history of sexual and other traditions in Chinese culture. Hinsch's approach to the study of male homosexuality in China is refreshing, and any interested scholar will find it a well-researched introduction to the topic. What is unique about Hinsch's approach is that he refuses an imposition of Western values in his study, seeking an understanding of male homosexuality that is Chinese-specific. Hinsch relies primarily on available Chinese texts, from ancient to modern times, and he weaves aspects of Chinese culture from "romance and lewdness, tolerance and violence, power and poverty," into a narrative of homosexual identity. He explores the meaning and implication of homosexuality in society from political dynasty to political dynasty. By framing his account within cultural myths and romanticized stories of homosexual love, Hinsch succeeds in revealing the import and relevance of the male homosexual tradition in Chinese society.

Hull, Terence H. 1990. "Recent Trends in Sex Ratios at Birth in China." *Population and Development Review* 16 (1): 63-83.

Annotation: Terence Hull presents three plausible theories as to why the sex ratio in China has been rising, "reaching 111 males per 100 females in 1986-87." According to the author, infanticide, abortion, "faulty statistical reporting," or, more likely, a combination of all three practices accounts for the sex ratio disparity. Either way, Hull argues, women are suffering as a result. Hull reasons that, if women have been left out of census data and are hidden away from the government's sight, then they are likely not enrolled in school or involved in formal healthcare. Hull utilizes scant data but presents it in concise, readable graphs. His analysis consists mostly of hypotheses and conjecture, but his logical explanations and common-sense analysis make his article an appealing read for anyone interested in a historical overview of the growing sex ratio disparity in modern China.

Jones, Rodney H. 1999. "Mediated Action and Sexual Risk: Searching for 'Culture' in Discourses of Homosexuality and AIDS Prevention in China." *Culture, Health & Sexuality* 1 (2): 161-180.

Annotation: Jones examines homosexual culture in China within the view of the Chinese government, specifically in the context of the ways in which HIV/AIDS education and prevention campaigns are coordinated and implemented. In terms of how to combat the HIV/AIDS epidemic in China, Jones hopes that, by avoiding Western and Chinese cultural and social definitions of homosexuality, one could "reframe the question from one which sees individuals as parts of culture to one which sees cultures as parts of individuals." Through analysis of government documents regarding HIV/AIDS education and prevention, Jones reveals the multi-layered nature of China's official view of homosexuality. For example, when discussing the condom, he notes how it is often mentioned that condoms are not one hundred percent effective. Whereas abortion is an option to avoid

unwanted pregnancy within heterosexual relations, there is “no turning back,” with respect to AIDS, if a condom fails. Therefore, “preserving moral integrity” is the only way that avoiding AIDS is assured. This article is useful for anyone who seeks to explore HIV/AIDS prevention and education in cross-cultural contexts.

Kane, P., E. J. Croll, et al. 1985. China's One-Child Family Policy. Basingstoke, Hampshire: Macmillan.

Annotation: Written by a group of experts in topics ranging from feminism in China to Chinese elderly persons and population control, this book explores several phenomena already observable in the early 1980s as a result of China's one-child policy. The book resulted from a meeting of experts in 1983, when the policy was only four years old. Suggesting that the findings may be tentative, the editors note that the work gives an extensive overview of the history of the policy and the government's justification for it. These features make the collection of essays an excellent introduction to the topic, which most readers will find useful.

Louie, Kam, and Morris Low. 2003. Asian Masculinities: The Meaning and Practice of Manhood in China and Japan. London; New York: Routledge.

Annotation: Louie and Low's work makes a significant contribution to the exploration of masculinity in a specifically Asian context. The authors deliberately disconnect their own analysis from traditional discussions on masculinity, claiming that the majority of Western literature is of little value when searching for meanings of masculinity in China or Japan. Through an examination of ancient texts and more recent studies on patterns among varied social groups, including male soldiers, athletes, artists, and businessmen in both China and Japan, the authors explore how masculinity has evolved over time and in different ways between the two nations. Their findings would be useful for academics interested in the construction of masculinity within cross-cultural contexts.

McBeath, Jerry, and Jenifer McBeath. 2009. “Environmental Stressors and Food Security in China.” *Journal of Chinese Political Science* 14 (1): 49-80.

Annotation: In this article, the McBeaths present a succinct overview of some of China's most pressing environmental stress factors. More specifically, they focus on the Chinese government's attempts to address these problems in order to ensure sufficient grain production and food security. Extensive citation of China's state-controlled, daily English language newspaper may draw criticism from some readers; the paper is censored heavily and known for its favorable portrayal of the Chinese government. The McBeaths contend that China's one-child policy is the “single most important reduction of environmental stress to have occurred globally in the past generation.” Their analysis of the government's efforts to mollify environmental stressors from the 1970s through 2008 offers a well-rounded introduction to the proposed efficiency of the Chinese government's initiatives.

Mosher, S. W. 1993. *A Mother's Ordeal: One Woman's Fight against China's One-Child Policy*. New York: Perennial.

Annotation: Mosher is the president of Virginia's Population Research Institute, and the book reflects his pro-life stance. Mosher is also fluent in both Mandarin and Cantonese. Here, he relays a harrowing first-person account of the life of Chi An, a Chinese woman. Chi An was born in rural China shortly before Mao's creation of a New China in 1949. Mosher's first-person narrative follows her through her ascendancy to a career in nursing and her involvement in the abortions which resulted from China's one-child policy. Through Mosher, the reader follows Chi An through several illicit births and her eventual asylum in the United States. Chi An's story is unique, and the format of *A Mother's Ordeal* makes it a fitting introduction to the personal side of China's one-child policy. Any reader with an interest in the abortion debate or nationalist population control policies would find Mosher's work worth reading.

Neilands, Torsten, Wayne Steward, and Kyung-Hee Choi. 2008. "Assessment of Stigma Towards Homosexuality in China: A Study of Men Who Have Sex with Men." *Archives of Sexual Behavior* 37 (5): 838-844.

Annotation: Neilands, Steward, and Choi explore the role that stigma plays within Chinese society, specifically in terms of how it impacts the effectiveness of HIV/AIDS education and prevention campaigns in modern China. More specifically, the authors investigate social and cultural stigma associated with men who have sex with men (MSM) behavior, as well as the stigma experienced by MSM as a result of the Chinese government's quasi-official stance on homosexuality. Until recently, homosexuality was classified by the government as a medical condition. The authors note that the Confucian notion of man's role in society as the principle courier of ancestral lineage creates a China-specific context for the perpetuation of stigma towards homosexuals. Through a combination of small cash payments and HIV/AIDS and syphilis testing and counseling, the authors conducted half-hour interviews with nearly five hundred MSM. Their findings, presented in a readable, accessible manner, will prove useful for any reader interested in social interpretations of homosexual behavior in China and the effects of stigma on MSM in modern China.

Ogilvy, J. A., P. Schwartz, et al. 2000. *China's Futures: Scenarios for the World's Fastest Growing Economy, Ecology, and Society*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Annotation: Schwartz and Ogilvy have each made significant commercial, political, and social impacts through their ability to "spin scenarios" in an attempt to predict patterns in future business and political processes. In *China's Futures*, the authors set their sights on China. We may, according to the authors, be entering "China's century." Their work is a summation of potential future scenarios for China's political, social, economic, and

ecological futures. Topics range from the role of the internet in China's future, a case study of the hypothetical question, "Would the U.S. go to war for Taiwan?" and potential social impacts of China's one-child policy, including the possibility that a skewed sex-ratio could impact the tolerance of homosexuality in China. Of interest to anyone curious about Chinese possibilities and their potential to have global effects, Schwartz and Ogilvy's work is accessible and engaging.

Dunn, Robert, Leo A. Orleans, and Hsiang-yang Han. 1979. Chinese Approaches to Family Planning. White Plains, NY: M. E. Sharpe.

Annotation: Leo A. Orleans, former China Specialist at the Library of Congress, has helped craft a judgment-free revision of the propaganda, scientific justifications, and social implications of China's one-child policy. Interestingly, the book stands apart from other literature in the field, in that it is a collection of essays written almost exclusively by Chinese scholars. Orleans et al. contend that the Chinese are, by nature, planners—the Chinese plan nearly every other facet of their lives with rigor, and so "it is only natural for them to plan births." In the book, Orleans et al. present several translated brochures and other propaganda distributed by the Chinese government in China's rural countryside. The materials were meant to serve as inspiration for stage shows and community sing-alongs in what Orleans refers to as "the entertainment starved countryside." The messages the government sought to promote were embedded within the stories and anecdotes, which had similar "problem, ideological struggle, happy ending plots." The book concludes with some more scientific pieces about the nature of feminine health, abortions, and a brief, judgment-free revision of the policy's history.

Poston, Dudley L., Jr., and Toni Falbo. 1990. "Academic Performance and Personality Traits of Chinese Children: 'Onlies' Versus Others." *The American Journal of Sociology* 96 (2): 433-451.

Annotation: This article is the result of extensive research performed to compare and contrast children born into one-child families in China and the West, primarily the United States. Of particular emphasis in the study are the academic performance indicators and personality traits exhibited by only children. The study included 1,460 Chinese schoolchildren, their parents, and their teachers. The authors relied primarily on conclusions drawn from empirical evidence based on studies performed in the United States for comparison. Ultimately, the researchers found very little disparity between Chinese only children and their American counterparts. However, they do point to disparities between rural "onlies" and urban "onlies." This study would be helpful for scholars and students interested in cross-cultural child development and familial studies.

Rofel, L. 2007. *Desiring China: Experiments in Neoliberalism, Sexuality, and Public Culture*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Annotation: Rofel's work examines the emergence of gay culture in China in a post-socialist, post-Cold War world. She builds on works of previous theorists of sexuality, combining social, political, and economic analysis to reveal how a new, urban China defines itself sexually. Rather than rely on Western value projections, she works directly with gay members of Chinese society and investigates recent court cases dealing with homosexuality. Ultimately, she seeks to illuminate desire and its Chinese manifestations within an increasingly globalized world. In post-Mao, urban China, Rofel asserts that these values are at once local and global. Rofel's work would be suited for those with a sincere interest in sexuality and progressive elements of modern Chinese culture; the book's breadth and length make it an appropriate read for serious scholars.

Ruan, F. F., and Y. M. Tsai. 1988. "Male Homosexuality in Contemporary Mainland China." *Archives of Sexual Behavior* 17 (2): 189-99.

Annotation: Ruan and Tsai recognize that literature and research on homosexuality in China since 1949 leave much to be desired. The Chinese government's implicit rejection of homosexuality as a legitimate practice, combined with a social and cultural lack of recognition of homosexuals leaves little room for open male expressions of love and companionship in China. In 1985, a relatively progressive article was published in a widely-circulated health magazine in China that supported the rights of Chinese homosexuals. The article received overwhelmingly positive responses and was reprinted in the most widely-read magazine in China, "The Reader's Digest." In all, sixty letters were written in response to the article, almost exclusively by male homosexuals in China who appreciated the letter's contention that gays in China should be free from oppression and accepted in society, largely because, as the article pointed out, homosexuals exist in all human societies across time and space. Ruan and Tsai provide an overview of the main currents that run throughout the letters and present a thorough investigation on the diversity of male homosexual practitioners in modern China.

Scharping, T. 2005. *Birth Control in China, 1949-2000: Population Policy and Demographic Development*. London; New York: Routledge.

Annotation: Noted German demographer Dr. Thomas Scharping makes a considerable contribution to the study of population problems facing China. Based on extensive field research and several studies stretching from the late 1980s through the early years of the new millennium, Scharping's work attempts to explore Chinese population problems that resulted from official state policies of the latter half of the twentieth century. Scharping's voluminous contribution to the study of China's One-Child Policy includes analysis of the policy's impacts on social, economic, and political developments in modern China. An important work in the field, Scharping's work is of interest to scholars and academics searching for an in-depth study of population control dilemmas in modern China.

Short, Susan E., and Zhai Fengying. 1998. "Looking Locally at China's One-Child Policy." *Studies in family planning* 29 (4): 373.

Annotation: Drawing primarily from data collected in three separate studies performed in 1989, 1991, and 1993 by the China Health and Nutrition Survey (CHNS), the authors seek to examine the effectiveness of the one-child policy in different areas and within different socio-economic classes in China. The authors claim that, despite having been enforced for over a decade, very little reliable information has emerged about how the one-child policy affects the Chinese population in different local communities in rural China. To illustrate their point, Short and Fengying report inaccuracies within the CHNS data, the vast differences between the communities examined, and several changes that took place within the examined communities in the two year intervals between studies. Making generalizations about nationwide trends or patterns which hold true across communities with regard to the success or failure of China's one-child policy becomes difficult. Anyone interested in questioning the effectiveness of China's one-child policy would find the authors' argument a useful and relevant one.

Tsui, Anne S., Claudia Bird Schoonhoven, Marshall W. Meyer, Chung-Ming Lau, and George T. Milkovich. 2004. "Organization and Management in the Midst of Societal Transformation: The People's Republic of China." *Organization Science* 15 (2): 133-144.

Annotation: China's meteoric economic rise illuminates interesting enigmas for scholars of management. This is the premise of Tsui et al.'s article on Chinese management structure. The authors focus on how elements of Chinese society have impacted China's rise to the status of an economic superpower. While they never mention the one-child policy, it is interesting that the new economic era and the one-child policy started at essentially the same point in Chinese history. The article provides "a close examination of how massive corporate transformation in China has influenced inter-firm relationships, affected opportunity structures and social processes, and modified individual behaviors within firms." The authors present a brief overview of the nine articles contained within this edition of *Organizational Science*, asking readers and scholars to explore the articles through the lens of Chinese development. This article is accessible to anyone interested in China's rapid economic development. That this boom occurred—during the same period of time that China's one-child policy began to be enforced—and has its own set of political and social ramifications will help any interested reader understand the prevailing socio-economic culture over the last several decades.

von Falkenhausen, Lothar. 2006. Chinese Society in the Age of Confucius (1000-250 BC): The Archaeological Evidence. Los Angeles: Cotsen Institute of Archaeology, University of California.

Annotation: von Falkenhausen takes a unique approach in his study of the influence that Confucius has had on Chinese society. The author attempts to use archaeology to prove that Confucius was not an innovative thinker so much as he was a recycler of older notions of

Chinese social organization, particularly in ways that resonated with the China of his lifetime (circa 551-479 BC). “Straddling” the humanities and the social sciences, with a focus on the latter, the author traces the archaeological evidence that suggests that Confucius was in fact “a transmitter, not a creator.” The history of Confucian notions, Falkenhausen’s archaeological evidence suggests, began in the Zhou and Shang dynasties and dates back to 1600 BC. Falkenhausen’s work will be of interest to anyone who seeks clarity on Confucian impact on the evolution of Chinese social structure. The evidence is technical in nature, so those readers with an interest or background in archaeology will find it particularly useful.

Wang, Feng. 2005. “Can China Afford to Continue its One-Child Policy?” *Asia-Pacific Issues* No. 77.

Annotation: Readers from all disciplines will find Wang’s overview of the major problems associated with China’s one-child policy both accessible and informative. Wang uses graphs and straightforward analysis to demonstrate some of the havoc that the one-child policy is beginning to wreak on the Chinese economy, society, and culture. These problems include rapidly increasing age and gender imbalances, high economic and political costs, and the potential for marriage to return to its status as a privilege for wealthy men (the gender imbalance results in there being more Chinese men than Chinese women). Wang claims that the government needs to revisit the policy and loosen population control legislation. He warns that “bureaucratic inertia and political caution” within the Chinese political system are dangerous because “Chinese demographic profiles show that a further delay will result in higher long-term costs.”

Wu, Cuncun. 2004. Homoerotic Sensibilities in Late Imperial China. London; New York: Routledge.

Annotation: Wu reviews literature from the late Imperial (1500-1911) time period in China to argue that homosexuality has a long and storied history, particularly among the elite literati. Drawing on primary sources as diverse as poetry, diaries, letters, and fictional works, Wu provides an accessible guide to navigating the evolution of meanings of homosexuality in late Imperial China. He dismisses the notion that homoeroticism and homosexual acts among men disappeared during this time, and reviews examples within each dynasty to prove that, at least as a trend among the literati in Beijing, homosexual references and practices among men were prevalent during this time. After the ban on female prostitutes was enforced during the Xuande reign (1425-35), elite writers, politicians, and scholars in mainland China turned to song boys as an acceptable outlet for their sexual yearnings. Wu’s work will enlighten any reader with an interest in the evolution of homosexual thought and practice in the late Imperial era in China.