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Implications of China's Open-Door Policy for Families

A Family Impact Analysis

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China's open-door policy (ODP) was created in 1978 as a response to the severe economic depression affecting the country after the Cultural Revolution. The policy was designed to restore China's financial status and lift the nation out of destitution. By all accounts, the ODP has been successful in improving the country's monetary condition. However, the impacts to family structures and values caused by the sudden and massive industrialization of cities and towns are less well known. This article explores the unexpected changes to family life since the inception of the ODP and conducts a preliminary family impact analysis on how these alterations could be related to the ODP.

Keywords: *open-door policy; China; family impact analysis*

Family policies are generally created as a way to alleviate or remove a societal problem, and conducting a family impact analysis provides an opportunity to examine a particular policy or program and its sensitivity and support toward families (Gross, Bogenschneider, & Johnson, 2006). A family impact analysis critically assesses the past, present, and future effects of a policy or program on the well-being of the family as well as the positive or negative outcomes—whether intended or not (Gross et al., 2006). In 1979, the Chinese government created the one-child policy to maintain population control (Short, Fengying, Siyuan, & Mingliang, 2001). One year later, the first of several revisions to China's marriage laws took place, allowing divorce to be granted on the grounds of estrangement, bigamy, violence, gambling, drug abuse, or lack of mutual affection (Fang, Ling, & Thomason, 2007). Although no official family impact analysis has been conducted on these two policies to ascertain how they affected various

dimensions of family life and relationships, some research has explored the specific effects these policies have had on parent-child relationships and marital stability in Chinese families.

Short et al. (2001) examined the consequences of the one-child policy on the care of young children. Quantitative and qualitative data from the China Health and Nutrition Survey, administered in 1989, 1991, and 1993 to 3,800 Chinese households, revealed that the one-child policy has resulted in increases in parental involvement in the lives of children and some gender bias favoring boys to girls related to parental care. With regard to marriage, divorce in China has increased from 319,000 in 1979 to 1,190,214 in 1998, and the rate of divorce in China since 1980 has nearly tripled, to 1.37 couples out of every 1,000 getting a divorce in 2005 (Fang et al., 2007; Q. Wang, 2001). Some researchers have argued that the changes to China's marriage laws in 1980 and 2003, in particular, the modifications that instituted a waiting period (minutes as opposed to weeks or months) for obtaining a divorce (Bullough & Ruan, 1994; Q. Wang, 2001), help explain the surge in marital separations.

The limited research available on the one-child policy and the marriage laws appears to indicate that these programs have had some effect on family values, structure, and parent-child relationships. Although both of these policies have focused specifically on the family unit in China, another policy receiving very little attention in family science research is China's open-door policy (ODP) of 1978. This policy was created specifically to handle an ongoing major economic financial depression in China as opposed to focusing on a family-centered problem (Selimuddin, 1994). Although the ODP was technically an economic policy, it can be considered family friendly in that it strove to enhance a family's capacity to help itself and others by improving the financial status of the country during a severe economic depression (Bogenschneider, 2006; Yeung & Sung, 1996). The United States made a similar attempt through the creation of the New Deal by President Roosevelt during the Depression. The results of the New Deal economic policy on American families were both positive and negative in terms of family stability, structure, and values (Leiby, 1985).

Unfortunately, there are no data directly linking changes within Chinese families to the ODP, thus making it difficult to conduct a complete family impact analysis of this program. Huan (1986) and Yeung and Sung (1996) have acknowledged little government investment and no qualified research centers in China devoted to the study of the ODP and its relationship with families. Therefore, given the lack of research, this article examines some of the data regarding the changes in employment, poverty rates, household

composition, and family values since the inception of the ODP and offers suggestions regarding the research required to conduct a complete family impact study. The authors attempt to provide a model for how to initiate an analysis of a family policy or program, using an international policy.

Conducting a family impact analysis involves eight steps: (a) selecting a policy or program, (b) determining which family type might be affected, (c) identifying relevant family functions, (d) examining the implementation of the policy or program, (e) selecting family impact questions, (f) gathering and reviewing the data, (g) developing policy implications, and (h) applying the results (Gross et al., 2006). The selection of the impact questions is based on a checklist created by the Family Criteria (Ad Hoc) Task Force of the Consortium of Family Organizations to assess the intended and unintended consequences of policies and programs on family stability, relationships, and responsibilities (Bogenschneider, 2006). This article simulates an impact analysis to broaden the understanding of impact analysis and international policies.

The checklist contains six basic principles, each of which is accompanied by a series of family impact questions (Bogenschneider, 2006). It should be noted that not all questions on the checklist are necessarily relevant to a particular policy or program; the goal is to determine which questions and principles are most applicable and use those in the family impact analysis (Gross et al., 2006). In assessing China's ODP, only five of the six principles applicable to the extant policy were included in the analysis. Following is a description of the ODP and the historical background of the program.

Description and Historical Context

Based on international studies documenting the negative effects of poverty on family life (Cramer & Zhou, 1997; Danziger & Haveman, 2001), the economic situation facing China was similar to the 1920s American Great Depression. In 1978, at the Third Plenum of the 11th Party Congress Central Committee, the government adopted several economic reform policies known as the Four Modernizations, which eventually became known as the ODP (Huan, 1986; Train, 2002; Yiren, 1986). The Chinese government implemented the ODP to improve the adverse economic and structural conditions of the country. The ODP was created to improve China's trade and industry, which in turn would help to revitalize the stagnant economy and subsequently lead to financial prosperity transferred to the families living in the midst of a severe recession.

China's basic strategy in designing the ODP was to import technology and sciences from Western countries while maintaining traditional Chinese customs and beliefs, such as collectivism, filial piety, and fidelity to the government (Huan, 1986). The Chinese government implemented various strategies in its attempt to stabilize the economy and reduce poverty in the country. China opened its ports and began negotiations with neighboring countries to import and export various goods, services, information, and technology (Huan, 1986; Pomfret, 1991). The government also sent thousands of Chinese scholars and students to different industrial market economies around the world (Huan, 1986; Yeung & Sung, 1996) to learn financial strategies (Huan, 1986) to help further China's plans for economic growth and development. Additionally, China allowed thousands of Western scholars into the country to teach subjects including psychology, law, business, philosophy, sociology, and humanities (Huan, 1986). This effect of the ODP exposed families to other cultures, societies, values, and opportunities (Pomfret, 1991).

The country also focused on harvesting its own natural resources and expanding commodities for export, and it decentralized its foreign trade institutions, allowing regions such as Beijing, Shanghai, and other cities to conduct business directly with foreign corporations and determine their own fiscal renewal plan, thus creating greater profit margins and higher returns to the government of annual taxes (Huan, 1986; Pomfret, 1991; Yiren, 1986).

The second strategy was a two-part plan to attract foreign investment into China while simultaneously investing China's resources into different areas of the world (Deci, 1996). In 1979, China established four main economic zones, where corporations and factories within the zones were given greater personal control with less governmental intrusion in many business decisions made with foreign investors (Deci, 1996; Huan, 1986). By 1993, China was exporting and importing goods and services with 120 different nations, with sales and revenue for the nation totaling \$130 billion (Deci, 1996). According to Selimuddin (1994), China's gross domestic product grew by 9% from 1978 to 1991, nearly double the rate of the Japanese economy and 3 times the rate of that of the United States. The rapid increase in China's imports and exports (or total trade volume) propelled the country from 32nd in the world to 11th in 14 years (1979 to 1993; Deci, 1996). Technological exports, nonexistent prior to the ODP, surged to \$40 billion after China first began trading with other countries in 1978 (Deci, 1996). The generated revenue was used to rebuild China's crumbling

infrastructure, such as buildings, roads, and bridges, and to help modernize the country to make it healthier and safer.

An additional effect of these changes on China's economy was more jobs and services available to families because of the growing number of developing companies. Factories were built in rural China as well, further increasing employment possibilities for men and women (Davis & Harrell, 1993). The government now had the financial strength to offer more help for families throughout China, including better housing facilities, distribution of food to those in the extremely poor areas of the country, and enhanced health care services (Yeung & Sung, 1996).

Third, the ODP also affected family poverty in China through the expansion of the tourism market (Huan, 1986). In 1993, there were 18 million tourists, and the amount spent totaled \$4.67 billion, ranking China 7th and 15th in the world, respectively (Deci, 1996)—a remarkable change, given that China did not even allow tourism until 1979.

Each plan of the ODP called for a different method to generate money and resources to revitalize the economy. Each plan contributed to renew China's status in the world and resolve previous economic travesties. Most important, the increasing problem of family poverty was now starting to diminish in some areas (Yeung & Sung, 1996). As a government-instituted plan, the ODP was able to accomplish the goal to repair China's economy and bring the nation out of its recession.

The Use of an Economic Policy to Assist Families

Even though the goal of the ODP was to restore China's economic status, the program directly affected families and their monetary problems by improving their financial security, lifting many out of their impoverishment and helping to improve their mental, physical, and emotional health (Cramer & Zhou, 1997; Deci, 1996). The ODP can be viewed as a tacit family policy (Moen & Jull, 1995), in that it was constructed in a manner to profoundly affect families in China even if not initially created with families or family policy in mind. The ODP was the government's answer to several family problems, and the programs and ideas implemented by this economic policy brought tremendous revenue into the country and helped to reduce a lot of the poverty in China (Deci, 1996). However, the impact the program has had on Chinese families' well-being, stability, relationships, and responsibilities is still unknown, further supporting the importance of examining the available data on changes to Chinese families in these areas.

Policy Effects on the Family in China

Policies and programs created by a government can have intended and unintended impacts on families. Conducting a family impact analysis allows for an in-depth examination of how a program such as the ODP supports and is sensitive to Chinese families (Gross et al., 2006). As mentioned earlier, no research has examined how families have been directly affected by the ODP, but applying the principles related to an impact analysis to this policy can hopefully start the process of exploring possible relationships between the ODP and changes to the family.

Principle 1: Family Support and Responsibility

Does the ODP support and supplement parents' and other family members' ability to carry out their responsibilities? Prior to the implementation of the ODP, the economic recession across China left many parents with the difficult task of trying to provide basic needs for their loved ones (Angang, Linlin, & Zhixiao, 2003). The cultural value of filial piety only served to aggravate their economic well-being, because it placed the responsibility of elder care solely in the hands of adult children as opposed to an institution or community organization, which may have left some families with fewer caregiving options (Chow, 2001; Leung, 2001). The ODP helped to stimulate the economy, which led to an increase in employment and higher salary opportunities, resulting in greater ability and opportunities for parents to take care of their children as well as the elderly in their kinship network (Cramer & Zhou, 1997; Deci, 1996).

Filial piety is applicable only to the extent that an individual is willing to subscribe to this cultural tradition (Chow, 2001). By allowing Western values to infiltrate into the country, the ODP may have introduced families to the idea of individualism, which focuses less on doing what is good for the family and more on what is beneficial for the individual (Tsui, 1989; Yi, 1996). People who have an individualistic perspective may not feel the need to take care of the elders in their family, thus choosing to use their monetary resources for personal gain (Zhan, 2004). The result of this ideological shift is that aging adults may find they have no alternative care at their disposal because of the lack of nursing homes and hospices in China (Chow, 2001; Leung, 2001). The question is whether the change in filial piety attitudes resulted from the ODP or the one-child policy, which created fewer progeny to take on the responsibility of elder care.

Principle 2: Family Membership and Stability

Does the ODP provide incentives or disincentives to give birth to, foster, or adopt children? When families add new members to their household, a steady and oftentimes substantial income is required, something not readily available to Chinese families before 1978 (Angang et al., 2003; Yeung & Sung, 1996). In 1978, the per capita income for Chinese families living in urban regions was approximately 1,200 yuan (or US\$9,800 after inflation) and approximately 500 yuan (or US\$800 after inflation) in the rural areas (Shane & Gale, 2004). The 2003 per capita income for Chinese families living in urban and rural areas was 8,000 (US\$64,000) and 2,000 yuan (US\$16,000), respectively (Shane & Gale, 2004). These increases in family income may have been influenced partly by the growth in the job market created by some of the ODP economic policies, including sending workers overseas to find jobs and allowing foreign corporations to build factories in areas where labor was abundant (Cramer & Zhou, 1997). More jobs can create greater opportunities for families to support a larger family composition because of the potential increases in financial resources. The question related to this principle is whether families in China viewed the alleviation of poverty created by the ODP as an incentive to have more children or if the one-child policy had more of an impact on their childbearing decisions.

Principle 3: Family Involvement and Interdependence

Does the ODP respect family decisions about the division of labor? In traditional Chinese culture, higher paying and more reputable jobs oftentimes were filled by males, whereas females were expected to be stay-at-home mothers or spouses (Pimentel, 2000). By introducing diverse employment opportunities and new values and beliefs to China, the ODP may have helped to change the cultural landscape by providing greater access to both domestic and international jobs, creating more opportunities for higher education and exposing women to the notion that they should have equal and sometimes superior job positions and socioeconomic status to men (Ferguson, 2000; Pimentel, 2000). These new ideas may have been a factor in women's seeking employment in the labor market. According to Du, Yang, and Xiao-yuan (2004), China's female labor force participation rate rose from 32.9% in 1978 to 39.4% in 1995. J. Yang (2003) compared urban household surveys from 1997 and 2002 and found that although women's labor force participation rates had declined during that time, the rate of participation (54.1%) was higher than it had been in 1978, supporting a shift in paid labor to Chinese women.

The ODP never explicitly stated the need to respect family decisions regarding the division of labor, but it could have modified family roles. Greater job opportunities for women, combined with the attitude that women need not be automatically placed into the role of the stay-at-home mom, may have drawn or blurred gender demarcation lines. More research is needed as to whether the ODP has been influential in increasing the female labor participation rate and the reluctance of women to assume gendered roles of parent, stay-at-home mother or wife, or caregiver.

Does the ODP address issues of power inequity in families? There have been attitudinal changes with regard to the power that elderly parents have on their adult children as well as the power roles between a husband and wife. As mentioned in Principle 1, filial piety has less influence on Chinese children now than before the implementation of the ODP. Some adults have expressed an unwillingness to take responsibility for their elderly parents' needs (Chow, 2001; Leung, 2001; Zhan, 2004). The scope of filial piety has also been altered in that adult children believe that as long as they send money home and visit their parents, they have fulfilled their duties and obligations (Zhan, 2004). In contrast, parents feel filial piety constitutes more than money and sparse meetings with their progeny. The belief is that children need to support and take care of their parents in all phases of life, including their physical, emotional, and social needs and problems (Leung, 2001; H. Yang & Chandler, 1992; Zhan, 2004.)

Researchers have argued that the power in Chinese households has shifted to the adult children and has led to increased intergenerational conflicts, as aging parents strive—with little success—to hold on to their influence (Leung, 2001; H. Yang & Chandler, 1992; Zhan, 2004). The power roles between a husband and wife also have been modified. Western values emphasizing the importance of women and the need for equality between the sexes have contributed to Chinese women's asserting more control over family decisions and responsibilities (Ferguson, 2000; Zhan, 2004). Consequently, the ODP, creating more economic and employment options, may have had an impact, albeit an indirect one, on how authority should be divided.

Principle 4: Family Diversity

How does the ODP affect various types of families? The implementation of the ODP has helped to reduce poverty levels in the rural areas of China

by more than 89% since 1978. Families living in these regions have been able to find higher paying jobs in cities such as Beijing and Shanghai (Angang, Jakobson, & Mingming, 2005; Li & Piachaud, 2004). From 1982 to 2000, a total of 206,750,000 people moved from rural to urban areas to find employment in different sectors of the labor market, and these opportunities may have been related to ODP import and export policies focusing on rebuilding China's economy (Angang et al., 2005). In addition, nonagricultural-based industries began forming in rural areas as individuals and corporations built stores and factories to take advantage of the available labor force. The number of people employed in these enterprises rose from 28.27 million in 1978 to 130.86 million in 2001, accounting for 26.7% of the total rural workforce and an increase from the original ratio of 9.2% (Angang et al., 2003, 2005; Angresano, 2005).

Families living in the urban sectors of China have traditionally been less affected by poverty, because urban residents generally received the majority of government subsidies and assistance (Angresano, 2005). Employment opportunities were oftentimes given to urban residents, families could purchase food and other necessities at subsidized prices, and housing and health care were either free or provided at a reduced cost (Angresano, 2005; Liang, 2006). Given these advantages, the poverty level for urban families has always been much lower than those of rural families (Angresano, 2005). A few studies have looked at how poverty has affected urban households in China (Fan, Zhang, & Zhang, 2004; Y. Wang, 2005). Gustafsson and Zhong (2000) compared 1988 and 1995 poverty rates in China and found that the poverty index for urban regions was .37 in 1988 and .17 in 1995; in comparison, the poverty index for families in rural areas was 17.57 in 1988 and 14.91 in 1995.

Although there is an obvious discrepancy in poverty levels between the two geographic sectors, it should be noted that the poverty index decreased for both locations of families. How much of the changes in poverty levels in these two regions can be attributed directly to the ODP are unknown, and although China has experienced greater financial stability since 1979, more studies need to be conducted that examine which factors made a contribution to the decrease in poverty rates in the country. A surplus of money can potentially provide households with greater access to health care, education, housing, and other goods and services, but until more data are collected, it remains equivocal as to the impact the ODP has had on families being able to obtain these necessary resources.

Another possible impact the ODP may have brought to families was the change in the structure of Chinese households. The composition of Chinese families has changed since 1978 through the steady increase in the number

of nuclear families and little growth in the number of extended families. Tsui (1989) conducted a study in 1982 of family organization and found that more than 50% of families were nuclear, whereas only 20% constituted an extended family. Yi (1996) examined the Chinese Census in 1995 and found that nuclear families made up 71.4% of households, whereas extended families grew by only 2.05%, to 22.05%. Both researchers concluded that the extended family was slowly becoming a dying tradition, with more adult children choosing to live in homes away from their parents.

Traditional Chinese culture dictates that grandparents live with their children once they become married as a way of reversing the caretaking cycle and allowing the grandparents to be supported by their adult children (Tsui, 1989). Some have argued that the ODP brought in Western values from other countries, including the belief that children should be free from obligations when they become adults and be allowed to focus on their family of creation as opposed to their family of origin (Chow, 2001; Leung, 2001). The extended family form that existed in China prior to the ODP is now the exception rather than the rule, although more analysis is needed to ascertain whether these changes are a direct result of the policies of the ODP.

The final impact levied on family types in China is the creation of single-parent households through divorce and separation. According to current Chinese data, the number of divorces has increased from 319,000 in 1979 to 1,190,214 in 1998, and the crude divorce rate (number of divorces per 1,000 in the population) has almost tripled, from .327 to .954 during the same period (Q. Wang, 2001). China's ODP created more opportunities for higher education for both men and women in China and exposure to different philosophies regarding the value of women, which may have provided the needed catalyst for women to leave tumultuous and/or dangerous marriages (Pimentel, 2000; Q. Wang, 2001).

These unexpected changes to family types have left China with several problems. The first is the paucity of facilities and institutions available to take care of the elderly population, who can no longer rely on their adult children to provide for their needs (Chow, 2001; Leung, 2001). The corollary to the first problem is that divorced women, because they either do not live with their family of origin or live too far away to have access to their assistance, could have less options available for child care service (Q. Wang, 2001).

How does the ODP acknowledge intergenerational relationships and responsibilities among family members? One of the focuses of the ODP program was to uphold the values of Chinese culture in the midst of massive economic reform and new ideas and philosophies (Huan, 1986; Pomfret, 1991). The Chinese government strongly encouraged families to continue

the practice of filial piety and the value of collectivism (Pomfret, 1991). Shortages in jobs and severe financial burdens created by the depression made it difficult to continue and maintain these traditions (Pomfret, 1991). For filial piety to be practiced, families need the financial capability to take care of a large household.

The principle of collectivism means the needs of the group supersede those of the individual (Bond, 1996), but when a person is struggling to fulfill financial responsibilities, the emotional and psychological strain created can make it difficult to subscribe to this collective concept, and adult children may be unwilling or incapable of subverting their needs for their family and kinship network (Bond; 1996; Zhan, 2004). As a result, many families living in poverty may have been severely hampered in their ability to fulfill their familial duties and intergenerational relationships.

Though never explicitly expressed, the ODP could have provided the financial means necessary for adults to take care of the needs of all family members, in turn releasing them from some of the emotional and psychological encumbrances associated with poverty (Y. Wang, 2005). The reduction of these intrapersonal issues may have helped many families improve their relationships among members and increased the likelihood of group cohesion and solidarity, but if individuals do not believe in the concept of filial piety and collectivism, then having a surplus of income may not have a positive impact on intergenerational relationships. To date, there are no reported studies researching the connection between the ODP and its effects on intergenerational relationships and responsibilities; therefore, additional research is needed before a comprehensive impact analysis can be conducted.

Principle 6: Support of Vulnerable Families

How does the ODP identify and publicly support services for families in the most extreme economic or social need? The government never acknowledged that the ODP was created to publicly support services for families in the most extreme economic need, but it did identify rural families as the group most in need of financial assistance (Pomfret, 1991). The outcome of this plan has been for the most part successful in that overall rural poverty has been reduced in China over the years, although the gap in poverty rates within these rural regions is still unequal. Most recently, Li and Piachaud (2004) and Angang et al. (2003) suggested that 29 million people in western rural China live in poverty, 18 million live in poverty in the middle inland rural area, and 11 million live in poverty in the eastern (coastal) rural areas.

The ODP was intended to first provide economic relief to the large metropolitan cities, with the expectation that positive results could be distributed

to other regions (Davis & Harrell, 1993; Selimuddin, 1994). Disparities in rural and metropolitan poverty rates appear to indicate that the ODP has not been successful in eliminating poverty in equal measures across China, perhaps because of the size of the country and the potential problem that comes from trying to distribute financial resources to remote areas of the nation (Davis & Harrell, 1993). The income gap between families living in urban and rural areas has increased since 1978. According to Li and Piachaud (2004), the average income for rural residents in 2001 was 2,366 yuan (US\$18,929) and 6,860 yuan (US\$54,880) for urban residents. The average 2003 income for a rural family was 3,582.42 yuan (US\$28,659.36) and 9,061.22 yuan (US\$72,489.76) for an urban family (Angang et al., 2005), although some estimates of family income are lower (see Shane & Gale, 2004). Data suggest rural families make a substantial amount less than urban families, and the difference between the two groups is growing larger (Angang et al., 2005; Angresano, 2005; Fan, Fang, & Zhang, 2001).

How does the ODP give support to families who are the most vulnerable to breakdown and have the fewest resources? Because of the difficulties that some rural families may have had in receiving the financial benefits created by the ODP, one of the strategies of the ODP was to open China's borders and lower visa restrictions so tourism could flourish in the country (Deci, 1996; Yuan, 1986). Access to the country's sightseeing sights may have helped increase rural families' income because of the influx of international travelers visiting souvenir shops and kiosks marketing China's culture in these bucolic regions (Davis & Harrell, 1993; Deci, 1996). The extra income provided by tourism also helped to supplement income gained from farming and other agricultural services (Deci, 1996).

In 1993, China ranked 7th and 15th in the world, respectively, in terms of tourism volume and revenue (Deci, 1996). It is unknown as to how much of this revenue was attributed to visits to rural areas of China, but the opportunities for financial gains for families in these provinces may have been made possible via the ODP (Deci, 1996; Selimuddin, 1994). The creation of commercially based jobs has allowed rural families to secure higher salaries in different regions of China, and the opportunity for entrepreneurship can help some rural families become self-employed and potentially have access to greater disposable income (Angang et al., 2003, 2005).

Apart from these economic changes, the ODP has not offered other means of assistance or services to rural families. Government subsidies and financial aid primarily are still targeted for urban families, and for rural families who are unable to find work at a corporation or take advantage of

the tourism market, they have limited economic options (Angresano, 2005). Health care services remain inadequate in many rural regions, and some families in the poorest rural areas of China (western) are without running water or electricity (Angang et al., 2005; Li & Piachaud, 2004). The overall poor quality and low levels of governmental support afforded to rural families should be further reviewed to assess how the ODP may fall short in its effort to assist families in need.

Conclusion and Policy Considerations

As an economic policy, the ODP has made considerable progress in alleviating poverty across China, and the positive benefits have led to improved and better employment opportunities and greater access and availability of goods and services (Angang et al., 2005; Deci, 1996). The impact that the ODP has had on the family unit in terms of structure, roles, and values is still unknown. Although many families now have greater financial resources to take care of one another, the desire or belief in fulfilling familial obligations may be changing because of the influx of cultural values from other foreign countries. Women are also experiencing a transition in the roles they occupy within their family and their social realm; this change may partially account for the increases in divorce rates and lower marriage rates. Whether these familial modifications are the direct result of the policies found in the ODP is equivocal.

What emerges from the available data on the ODP is that the current social and cultural landscape in China is different now than prior to the implementation of the ODP program in 1978. The ODP has left an indelible mark on Chinese families, and the positive remunerations created by this policy have helped many people recover what they lost during the economic depression. The policy has also created some unexpected impacts to family stability and behaviors that have only recently begun to manifest themselves. More research is needed to accurately assess and understand the relationship between the goals of the ODP and the changes to Chinese households. Additional data will allow for a more thorough and comprehensive impact analysis to be conducted to more directly link the intended and unintended effects of the ODP to families.

This article is an attempt to start a model for conducting an impact analysis on policies and programs in China. To date, this type of review and critique has not been attempted with any of the policies implemented in China. As China continues to make changes in this new century, assessment

of the impact of the ODP on the family must be extended. Any future course of action taken by the government through the ODP will most likely have intended and unintended consequences for every person living in the country; thus, conducting a family impact analysis can help to highlight the strengths and weaknesses of the ODP policy and its implications for families.

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