

China One Child Policy And Multiple Caregiving: The Impact on Society and Family Dynamics

China's one-child policy, implemented in the late 1970s to control population growth, has had far-reaching consequences on society and family dynamics. This policy restricted most couples to have only one child, leading to a significant increase in multiple caregiving scenarios within families. In this article, we will explore the effects of the one-child policy on Chinese society, the challenges faced by families, and the long-term consequences of multiple caregiving.

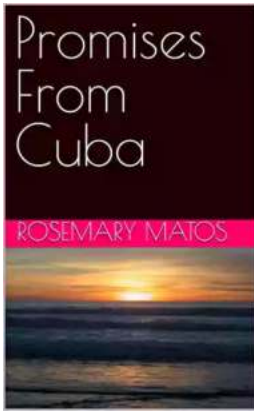
The One-Child Policy and its Goals

The primary goal of the one-child policy was to curb population growth and alleviate economic and social pressures. With China being the most populous country in the world, the government believed that limiting family size would contribute to a better quality of life for its citizens. However, this policy had unintended consequences that have shaped Chinese society in profound ways.

Impact on Chinese Society

The one-child policy led to a significant gender imbalance in China, as traditional cultural values placed a higher emphasis on male heirs. This resulted in a preference for male children, leading to a rise in illegal gender-selective abortions and cases of female infanticide. The societal consequences of this gender imbalance continue to be felt today, with a shortage of brides in some regions and a rise in human trafficking.

**China's One-Child Policy and Multiple Caregiving:
Raising Little Suns in Xiamen (Routledge)**



Contemporary China Series)

by Linda Papadopoulos(1st Edition)

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

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The policy also disrupted traditional family structures, as families were no longer able to rely on extended kin networks. With only one child, the burden of caregiving fell solely on the parents and sometimes grandparents. This lack of support from extended family networks had a significant impact on family dynamics and increased the pressure on parents to provide for their child's well-being.

Challenges Faced by Families

For families, the one-child policy brought both advantages and challenges. On one hand, having only one child allowed parents to focus their resources and attention on providing the best possible upbringing. However, the pressure to succeed academically and economically was immense, as parents invested heavily in their child's future. The fear of failure and the weight of parental expectations often led to high levels of stress for both parents and children.

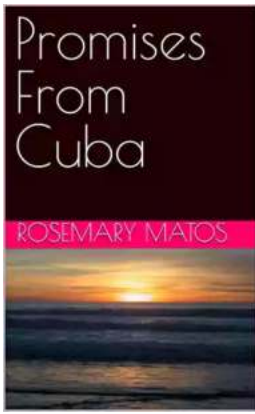
Additionally, the absence of siblings meant that children grew up without the typical companionship and support that comes with having brothers or sisters. This lack of socialization could stifle their emotional development and interpersonal skills, making it difficult for them to build relationships later in life.

Long-Term Consequences of Multiple Caregiving

One of the most significant consequences of the one-child policy was the rise of multiple caregiving scenarios within families. With only one child to take care of, parents and grandparents often played a more significant role in the child's upbringing. This resulted in a generation of "little emperors" and "little princesses" who were accustomed to receiving undivided attention and constant affirmation. As a result, some children developed a sense of entitlement and struggled with independence and resilience.

Furthermore, the expectation of providing financial support to aging parents became more pronounced with a decreasing number of children available for caregiving. This placed a significant burden on the only child, who had to bear the responsibility of providing emotional and financial support, often to multiple generations. These caregiving obligations often affected the career and personal lives of the only child, leading to decreased opportunities and delayed milestones.

The China one-child policy and the resulting multiple caregiving scenarios have had a profound impact on Chinese society and family dynamics. The policy's goal of curbing population growth and improving living standards came at a considerable cost, including a gender imbalance, disrupted family structures, and immense societal pressure on parents and children. The consequences of multiple caregiving continue to shape the lives of individuals in China, highlighting the complexities and challenges of implementing population control measures.



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This book explores the effects of China's one child policy on modern Chinese families. It is widely thought that such a policy has contributed to the creation of a generation of little emperors or little suns spoiled by their parents and by the grandparents who have been recruited to care for the child while the middle generation goes off to work. Investigating what life is really like with three generations in close quarters and using urban Xiamen as a backdrop, the author shows how viewing the grandparents and parents as engaged in an intergenerational parenting coalition allows for a more dynamic understanding of both the pleasures and conflicts within adult relationships, particularly when they are centred around raising a child.

Based on both survey data and ethnographic fieldwork, the book also makes it clear that parenting is only half the story. The children, of course, are the other.

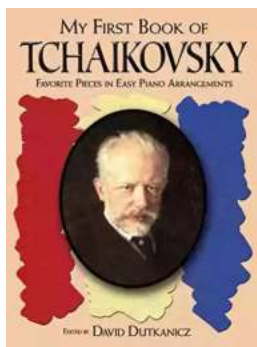
Moreover, these children not only have agency, but constantly put it to work as a way to displace the burden of expectations and steady attention that comes with being an only child in contemporary urban China. These ‘lone tacticians’, as Goh calls them, are not having an easy time and not all are living like spoiled children. The reality is far more challenging for all three generations.

The book will be of interest to those in family studies, education, psychology, sociology, Asian Studies, and social work.



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