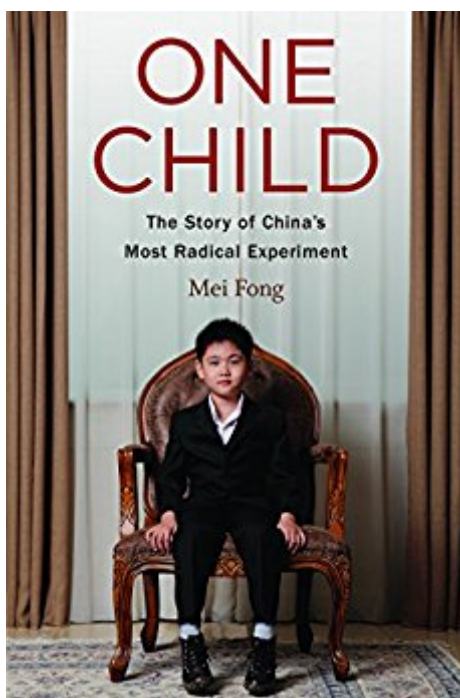


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# One Child: The Story Of China's Most Radical Experiment



## Synopsis

An intimate investigation of the world's largest experiment in social engineering, revealing how its effects will shape China for decades to come, and what that means for the rest of the world. When Communist Party leaders adopted the one-child policy in 1980, they hoped curbing birth-rates would help lift China's poorest and increase the country's global stature. But at what cost? Now, as China closes the book on the policy after more than three decades, it faces a population grown too old and too male, with a vastly diminished supply of young workers. Mei Fong has spent years documenting the policy's repercussions on every sector of Chinese society. In *One Child*, she explores its true human impact, traveling across China to meet the people who live with its consequences. Their stories reveal a dystopian reality: unauthorized second children ignored by the state, only-children supporting aging parents and grandparents on their own, villages teeming with ineligible bachelors, and an ungoverned adoption market stretching across the globe. Fong tackles questions that have major implications for China's future: whether its "Little Emperor" cohort will make for an entitled or risk-averse generation; how China will manage to support itself when one in every four people is over sixty-five years old; and above all, how much the one-child policy may end up hindering China's growth. Weaving in Fong's reflections on striving to become a mother herself, *One Child* offers a nuanced and candid report from the extremes of family planning.

## Book Information

File Size: 2609 KB

Print Length: 272 pages

Publisher: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt (November 3, 2015)

Publication Date: November 3, 2015

Language: English

ASIN: B00QPHNV4E

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Not Enabled

Word Wise: Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #161,174 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #22

in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Nonfiction > Politics & Social Sciences > Social Sciences >

Demography #34 in Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Women's Studies > Abortion & Birth

Control #45 in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Nonfiction > Politics & Social Sciences > Politics & Government > Public Affairs & Policy > Social Policy

## Customer Reviews

I am a closet cultural anthropologist and love learning about other cultures. This book was an excellent read. The exploration of the many repercussions of China's one child policy was informative and engaging. There are so many connections to recent world social policies, population changes, and social dynamics that no one could have foreseen. As an open minded educated individual I see both sides of the coin: China was darned if they enacted this policy...and darned if they didn't. This book tells us what happened as a result of the One Child Policy. But what would have happened if they did not? How many more people would live in China? Pollution? Overcrowding? Women's roles? Elderly care? The education system? rural vs urban? The list goes on and on. Thank you Mei Fong - this was a most interesting subject. I highly recommend.

Fines intensified, and not just for unauthorized childbirth. Women were fined for living with a man out of wedlock; for not using contraception, even if it didn't lead to pregnancy; or simply for not attending regular pregnancy checkups. In Jiangsu, women had to line up twice monthly for pregnancy tests and publicly pee in cups. The birth police weren't squeamish about how they got the job done, and their methods produced results. (Kindle Locations 1161 to 1164) Mei Fong's non-fiction book, *One Child: The Story of China's Most Radical Experiment*, offers an interesting, informative and comprehensive look at the history, the impact, and the likely long-term effects of China's recent 'one child' policy. Once again, central planning equals uneven application, widespread corruption, and mostly misery to the affected populations. Recommendation: If you're interested in/bothered by overpopulation, and efforts to do something about it you should read this book. In the end, perhaps the greatest damage inflicted by the one-child policy is how it forced people to think rationally "perhaps too rationally" about parenthood. (Kindle Locations 3092-3093). Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, Kindle Edition; 4,625 Kindle Locations, 272 pages.

Well-researched and related accessibly, *One Child: The Story of China's Most Radical Experiment* is informative and worth reading though it's a bit repetitive. Emphasized throughout is Fong's thesis: China's radical experiment has destabilized the social order and family structure of China to the point that long-term growth and productivity are not possible due to an aging population and a

decline in fertility rate. Part memoir and more investigative journalism, Fong does a serviceable job of providing context for understanding the why and how of China's one child policy before examining its short and long-term consequences.

From the Statham 2017 Reading Challenge. Book with a Number in the Title. I grabbed this in the Kindle Bookstore a few months ago after reading the title. I thought an in-depth examination in China's One Child policy to be really interesting and this book did not disappoint. In one light, the policy was a success. Despite the fact that this is no longer state policy, parents in China now are choosing to have one child families despite the recent returned freedom to have more. Now India while likely surpass China as the most populous country in the next two decades. Meanwhile, the side effects of over three decades of this policy include a massive bride shortage, a quickly disappearing work force, and an exploding retiree population. Amongst other interesting impacts addressed were bride payments, baby trafficking for adoptions, the massive in vitro fertilization industry there and international surrogates. The author is a former correspondent for the Wall Street Journal and does a great job here taking us inside another society. A great read for those who like books on sociology and world culture.

Incredibly interesting book. It gives an "insider's" account of how the One-Child policy has affected both individual people and China as a whole. It takes ideas that seem simple and doable (less people must mean more to go around, right?) and breaks it down into its more complex components. This book touches upon topics of economics, statistics, sociology, family, and the human heart.

I'll keep this short - I'm an overseas born Chinese, married to a social experiment myself. We have nothing in common apart from our skin color (then again I am much tanner as he grew up in a "fair/pale is beautiful" culture... Anyway, I was living in Beijing for 9+ whole years and frankly I thought I knew it all but Mei Fong presented a much in-depth analysis of this subject matter. I could also relate to the author in a sense that we are both Malaysians, but not in the part where her father preferred sons over daughters. This book isn't quite much of an eye opener if you are into current affairs, but it will do you some good if you happen to have ties with the Chinese from China - whether it's personal or business related. It's good to know and be "prepared" on what's it like to deal with products of the One Child Policy.

Even though I have heard about China's 1 child policy before it never occurred to me to find out exactly what that meant. This book was so interesting and it opened my eyes to what people in China were going through and what it really means to have the government make a decision about kids for you. I never would have imagined just what the consequences would be and how they impacted people at the beginning and how they will affect China's future.

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