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The One-child Population Policy, Modernization, and the Extended Chinese Family

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Demographic processes and socioeconomic developments alter the traditional ways of household formation and family structure, as has been shown by changes in the family patterns in Western societies. Will the same changes take place in the traditional extended family in China as the world's largest nation carries out a rigorous one-child family policy and a strong modernization program? This paper examines structural, social-psychological and ecological factors affecting the direction and type of changes occurring in the Chinese family. It is concluded that multiple demographic and socioeconomic influences and the family's adaptive responses are creating conditions in China for the traditional household arrangement to survive, while generating new variants of family organization.

INTRODUCTION

The one-child population policy adopted in China in 1979 has evoked a demographic revolution which will greatly modify and reshape the age and sex compositions and growth tempo of the world's largest population in the coming decades. The powerful impact of this birth control policy, paralleled and reinforced by an ongoing modernization program, also has begun to generate rapid

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and profound changes in the extended Chinese family. The major questions to be raised are: What specific factors determine how these changes affect the structural and behavioral dimensions of the traditional family in China? What are the magnitude and the directions of these changes, and how will they influence the formation of the Chinese family in the future?

To answer these questions, this paper examines the ways in which the one-child population policy, modernization, and other identifiable factors exert strong effects on the extended family. Furthermore, through the illustrative case of China, the paper suggests that the robust nature of the extended kinship system in a modernizing society allows it to adapt. Thus, we reach this tentative conclusion: the interplay between demographic and socioeconomic forces and the family's responsive behavior tends to produce variant family patterns that do not fit either the stereotypical extended or the nuclear type.

A HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The 1982 Chinese national census (the third conducted since the revolution in 1949) reported that there are 220 million domestic households that contain 90% of the overall population.¹ The average size of the domestic household is 4.4 per-

sons, not a significant drop from the figure of about five persons per household documented by Levy (1949), Fried (1959), Hsu (1959) and Goode (1963). All of these authors pointed out that the average size of the Chinese household in pre-liberation China was relatively small in contrast to the widespread assumption of several generations living under one roof.

The historical literature on the Chinese family indicates that, both before and after the revolution of 1949, there has been a positive association between household size and the amount of land and other resources. Large farms required more laborers and thus resulted in large households. Those defined as large farms (averaging 7.2 acres) and very large farms (with an average of 13.0 acres) had household sizes of 8.3 and 10.1 persons, respectively. This is much larger than the estimated average household size of 5.3 before 1949 (Hsu, 1959). Some large households contained extended families of different generations which formed mutual support networks to even out the heavy burden of the labor-intensive agricultural production, while the same support structures existed in a less coherent manner in the sizable urban extended households. This relationship between size and economic resources reflects the traditional value of providing all the members with enough food from the "common pot." However, supporting a large household was costly, especially for those poorer households that could not keep everyone under the roof decently fed and clothed. Even the wealthy gentry often found it difficult to pull together resources to maintain the multifamily household (Levy, 1949). Thus, the general tendency moved toward separation of the large extended household into couple-centered conjugal units (Hsu, 1959:129).

Hence, there existed a gap between the ideal of a household based on the extended family and many families' inability to live up to the ideal. As a result, a compromise was struck in some geographic areas: the household was economically divided and separately managed, but it remained a common ceremonial and ritual whole (Hsu, 1959: 129).

Thus, historically the Chinese family has experienced structural strain. Economic factors tended to weaken the extended kinship system, causing an internal disintegration of the extended family into smaller household units; but the strong traditional intergenerational relationships among the separated units still tended to hold them tightly together. However, these two sets of factors also produced different effects under dire living circumstances such as famines caused by harvest failures and flooding. This was when

pooling together resources from various family members for joint economic survival could outweigh the psychological pressure for separation in tightening the extended system.

Just as the average household size was an inadequate measure of the Chinese family system before 1949, the fairly constant family size after the revolution (5.3 in 1949, 4.4 in 1957, 5.3 in 1964, 4.5 in 1978, and 4.4 in 1982) requires further interpretation. Overall, the average family size exhibits a moderate decline after the revolution (except for 1964) and remains fairly stable for most of the past 30 years. Land reforms in the early 1950s eliminated polygamy, concubinage, and child betrothals which characterized Chinese families in general and the bulky gentry families in particular. The New Marriage Law promulgated in May 1950 and the 1953 campaign to popularize the marriage law functioned to weaken the practice of contracted marriages, therefore making free-choice and love marriages possible for women. The implementation of these laws helped to reduce the traditional family's attempts to increase women's fertility and induced women to reduce marital fertility in response to their expanded economic and community roles (Johnson, 1983:231). Agricultural collectivization put an end to household-based farm production by mobilizing individual peasants into joint production performed in mutual cooperatives and, later, in communes. Both of these movements accounted for much of the initial decrease in family size. The higher average family size in 1964 is primarily a reflection of the first baby boom (1954-1957) and the second one that lasted from 1962 to the early 1970s.

It is against this historical backdrop that we must analyze the present situation. As the one-child policy begins to gain momentum and the current modernization program proceeds further, a new round of changes is emerging which not only will produce further decrements in family size but will exercise more comprehensive influences on the extended Chinese family. In examining these influences both separately and in their interactions among one another, the present study's focus is more on urban families, while pertinent references are made to those in the rural areas.

COMPLEX TRANSFORMATION OR SIMPLE CHANGE

Family Size and Social-psychological Factors

Elder (1978:31-32) cautioned us to take a processual view of families and to examine the interaction between demographic processes and

TABLE 1. AVERAGE NUMBER OF CHILDREN EVER BORN PER FAMILY, CHINA, SELECTED YEARS FROM 1940 TO 1981 (DURING COMPLETED FERTILITY SPAN OF WOMEN 15-49)

Year	National		Rural		Urban	
	Number of Children	Change from Previous Time \pm	Number of Children	Change from Previous Time \pm	Number of Children	Change from Previous Time \pm
1940	5.25	— ^a	—	—	—	—
1945	5.30	+0.05	—	—	—	—
1950	5.81	+0.51	5.96	—	5.00	—
1955	6.26	+0.45	6.39	+0.43	5.67	+0.67
1960	4.02	-2.24	4.00	-2.39	4.06	-1.01
1965	6.08	+2.06	6.60	+2.60	3.75	-0.31
1970	5.81	-0.27	6.38	-0.22	3.27	-0.48
1975	3.57	-2.24	3.95	-2.43	1.78	-1.49
1980	2.24	-1.33	2.48	-1.47	1.15	-0.63
1981	2.63	+0.39	2.91	+0.43	1.39	+0.24

Source: Calculated and adapted from An Analysis of a National One-Per-Thousand-Population Sample Survey in Birth Rate, Special issue of *Renkou yu Jinji* (Population and Economics), Economics Institute of Beijing, China, 1983, Appendix 1, pp. 152-160.

^aNot available.

social structure. Changes can be anticipated in the structure of the Chinese family because of the demographic transformations that have been brought about by rigorous family planning programs since the early 1970s.

The grave nationwide famine around 1960 caused a sudden sharp drop in the average number of births from the record high of 6.3 in 1955 to 4.0 in 1960 (see Table 1). The dramatic increase in births per family by 1965 was attributable to the second baby boom and economic recovery from the famine. Successful family planning throughout the 1970s, especially in the latter half, brought about a continued decline in the average number of births per family. The further dip in births per family in 1980 was due to the continuously decreasing fertility trend and the introduction of the one-child policy, although the incentive-oriented agricultural policy (assigning plots of private land to peasants according to the number of heads in a rural family) was responsible for the slight upturn in average births in 1981 (Chen, 1983). The one-per-thousand-population sample survey⁷ conducted in 1982 revealed that 42.3% of women with one child signed contracts (acceptance of the "one-child certificate" issued by the Chinese government as an honor to couples who have undergone sterilization) to have no more children (*Renkou yu Jinji*, 1983).

Table 2 presents evidence regarding the decrease in high-order births (three children and above) and the dramatic increases in first births since the 1970s. The 15.7% increase of first-birth reproduction from 1977 to 1981 can be viewed as another demonstration of how influential the one-child policy has been. However, the policy has come into conflict with the traditional value of "male preference" which is deeply rooted in the

beliefs of many Chinese, especially peasants. The rural family, characterized by labor intensity and a traditional perception and practice of children as old age security assets, still encourages many couples to have more children, even at the risk of receiving heavy financial penalties from the government. These range from a fine of several hundred yuan (a large fortune by Chinese standards) for a unplanned birth in the countryside to a suspension of the monthly bonuses for parents who are salaried workers in the urban areas.

The wide differential between the number of childbirths in the rural and urban areas is noted in Table 3. Compared with the extremely high percentage of first births in the cities and a very small proportion of higher order births, third- to fifth-order births constitute 35% to 40% of all rural births in both 1980 and 1981. The long-standing discrepancies in cultural and socioeconomic development between the cities and the countryside in Chinese society operate to offset the powerful impact of the one-child policy. (For an extensive discussion of differential fertility behaviors in the context of public response to the one-child family policy, see Chen, 1983.)

The one-child family policy has both direct and latent effects on the physical formation of the extended family, the manner in which family members relate to one another, and the content and features of intergenerational ties. First, the thrust of the one-child policy's impact has begun to weaken the extended family network by greatly trimming the average family size. The absence of siblings; the subsequent loss of in-laws, uncles and aunts; and the thinning out of extended consanguineous relationships remove a large number of branches from the previously complex family tree.

Second, the immediate and long-term effect of

TABLE 2. COMPARISON OF FIRST, SECOND, AND HIGHER ORDER BIRTHS AND PERCENTAGE CHANGE, CHINA—1970, 1977 AND 1981

Year	Total ^a Number of Children	Number of Births								
		First Birth		Second Birth		Third Birth and Above				
		Number of Children	Percentage of Total	% Change	Number of Children	Percentage of Total	% Change	Number of Children	Percentage of Total	% Change
1970	29,295	6,073	20.73%	—	4,998	17.06%	—	18,224	62.21%	—
1977	19,997	6,171	30.86	+10.13	4,918	24.59	+7.53	8,908	44.55	-17.66
1981	21,342	9,938	46.57	+15.71	5,411	25.35	+0.76	5,993	28.08	-16.47

Source: P. 56 of the same source shown in Table 1 in the present paper.

^aThe numbers in this column refer to the total number of babies born in that particular year by reproductive women included in the 1/1000 sample survey conducted in 1982.

TABLE 3. PERCENTAGES OF SINGLE- AND MULTIPARITY BIRTHS, 1980 AND 1981 AND PERCENTAGE CHANGE, CHINA, 1980-1981

Order of Birth	National						Rural			Urban		
	1980		1981		1980-1981		1980		1981		1980-1981	
	Percentage of Total	% Change	Percentage of Total	% Change	Percentage of Total	% Change	Percentage of Total	% Change	Percentage of Total	% Change	Percentage of Total	% Change
One birth	38.83%	+13.75%	44.17%	+13.75%	36.01%	+12.33%	40.45%	+12.33%	72.62%	+18.50%	86.04%	+18.50%
Two births	25.21	-5.91	23.72	-5.91	25.40	-1.50	25.02	-1.50	22.76	-48.81	11.65	-48.81
Three births	14.52	-11.78	12.81	-11.78	15.62	-11.33	13.85	-11.33	3.31	-47.73	1.73	-47.73
Four births	8.94	-17.11	7.41	-17.11	9.49	-14.54	8.11	-14.54	0.87	-80.00	0.50	-80.00
Five and above	12.38	-5.74	11.67	-5.74	13.51	-6.88	12.58	-6.88	0.35	0.07	0.07	0.07

Source: P. 53 of the same source shown in Table 1 in the present paper.

reduced family size is reflected through expected changes in the power relationships among the generations. That taking care of one child usually requires less time and effort than two or more further lessens married women's traditional role of childrearing and related household chores. It reinforces the fact that the great majority of married Chinese women work and, thus, may facilitate the formulation of an equal marital relationship between the husband and the wife by giving the latter more leisure time and bargaining power. In the long run, the trio-based nuclear family will balance the unequal relationship between the mother and her daughter-in-law, for as the child-bearing parents with one child (a daughter in this case) age and their daughter gets married, the mother tends to lose power because the daughter usually moves into her husband's household. This potential familial structure differs considerably from the traditional situation in which aged parents—especially women—with multiple children possessed absolute authority over their daughters-in-law, with the tense interactions between them being a constant source of familial conflict and disintegration.

This major restructuring of the Chinese family propelled by the one-child requirement has directly weakened family extendedness, but other factors have had an even more detrimental effect on the extended family. The shrinking family size has been accompanied by new patterns of social-psychological and spatial relations within the family. An increased individualistic consumption orientation, limited spatial mobility and a shortage of residential housing are all factors that are contributing to changes in the family. The configuration of these factors creates a favorable climate for the survival of the extended-family structure.

Consumption Orientation

A growing individualistic attitude toward life among the present childbearing generation is contributing to ongoing changes in the Chinese family. It is a product of the economic progress following modernization and the government's effort to raise the standard of living by promoting mass consumption. Two phenomena indicate the younger generation's shifting focus of interest to their own individual nuclear units.

First, there is an increasing tendency to request a large number of gifts or real money, a modern version of the traditional dowries, from the parents of both the bride and groom. This is especially true for the bride-price, which traditionally is supposed to compensate for the lower status of women. Some would-be married couples go as far

as borrowing funds from relatives and friends in order just to put on a respectable wedding ceremony. A fairly common way in which the newlyweds spend their obtained resources is to stage big celebrational dinners to entertain mostly peer friends of their generation. Other expenditures, especially purchases of major wedding items,³ contribute to elevate the total marriage cost to a phenomenal level in some instances. A survey in 1982 in Shanghai (a vanguard city in pursuing a more colorful lifestyle) reported that some new couples spent as much as 6,000 yuan or about \$2,400 (US) on their whole wedding, while those who were willing to settle for a lower standard still used 2,000 or about \$800 (US). Marriage budgeting at such a high level far exceeds what the lower incomes of young people can handle, since the average national monthly salary (including the higher incomes of older employees) in 1982 was only 44.61 yuan or about \$18 (US) (State Statistical Bureau, 1983:492). As a result some young couples who follow this fashionable trend end up turning the happy wedding into an unhappy process of incurring and paying debts. When parents have to step in to take care of the large expenses of their children who marry, it can almost exhaust the parents' savings from their previous working careers, which in turn lowers the quality of their later life (Li and Gu, 1984). This strong impact of marriages on financial well-being across generations certainly deserves more focused research from a life-course perspective.

The above discussion suggests that the moderate incomes of the young working couples, which are inadequate to meet their consumption tastes for marriages and rising expectations for comfortable marital lives, largely explain the widespread modern practice of the traditional wedding rituals. Phrases like the "small cozy family" and "tiny enjoyable nest" to some extent have replaced the previous militant, altruistic terms such as the "big revolutionary family" and "noble collective interest," which conveyed unselfish and cooperative orientations. A recent survey in Beijing indicated that nearly 90% of the respondents between 15 and 25 years old hoped to set up financially independent families (Chen, 1983).

Second, the newlyweds, in addition to accumulating resources for their own enjoyment, have begun to realize that the only child they are allowed to bear should be entitled to the lion's share of whatever they have. It is very common to find that young parents today double or triple the amount of resources (time and money) spent on the single child compared with what the older generations would divide among two or three chil-

dren, even though the current generation has lower incomes than their forebears. This intergenerational inequality has been generated and maintained by the combined forces of the age-based Confucian tradition and policies favoring the old generations after 1949. The child's educational attainment has become a priority for the young parents who now devote more attention to the preschool education and physical development of their offspring than to the well-being of their parents. The nature of childhood is also changing. Huang (1982) reported that the child often becomes self-indulgent and demanding emotionally and financially. This emerging type of resource transfer from young parents to their children indicates a reversal of the Chinese family tradition characterized by young couples contributing more to their parents. As part of the social-psychological gravitation toward consumption, young couples also have begun to develop a strong interest in leisure activities, as more and more recreational facilities become available. Thus, the wealth flow within the extended family has changed to a flow in the direction of the nuclear family of procreation. This retreat from the mutual support system of the extended family culminates in the younger generation's deliberate effort to distance themselves from their parents both financially and physically. It exacerbates the negative effect of decreased family size, as older parents will have fewer children to turn to for support. This will put a heavier burden on the state pension program for the retired elderly.

The current Chinese situation is socially very similar to the process of individuation described by Bott (1971:100-101): the elemental family is separated off, differentiated as a distinct and, to some extent, autonomous group. Appearing to constitute the most powerful force in undermining the foundation of the extended family structure, the attitudes of the young parent generation toward consumption at the expense of the elderly have evoked a strong government response. A new marriage law mandated in 1980 stipulates that children are obligated to support their parents and are subject to legal punishment if they fail to do so (Chen, 1983).

Mobility and Housing

While the reduction in family size and a nuclear family oriented toward consumption operate to weaken extended family relations, limited residential mobility and scarce housing constitute countervailing forces. The increase in the desire for autonomous conjugal family units gives rise to a demand for more small housing units. In China the slow decline of household size and the rapid

increase of the urban population (which grew from 57 million in 1949 to 212 million in 1982*) has greatly exceeded the increase in housing construction.

During 1978 there were 26,000 young couples in Beijing who either had to wait for houses before they could get married or did not have separate houses to live in after getting married. Therefore, even though the young couples today struggle to obtain more independent control over their own earnings by loosening intimate contact with their parents,⁵ the shortage of housing space severely delays their spatial movement. The extended Chinese family still can be identified and to a large extent sustained by its physical closeness. However, there are few large extended families in recent years: 108,000 households in Beijing (about 5% of the total of 2.2 million) contained three generations or more, including married children.⁶

Other related factors facilitating the maintenance of the extended family structure are the rigid control of geographic mobility across rural-urban and within-city boundaries and the underdeveloped means of communication, such as the scarcity of home telephones and the absence of private automobiles. Young couples who have been fortunate enough to be assigned separate housing usually move only within the same city and often into a nearby neighborhood. The parents and their married children can visit one another without much difficulty by public transportation. There are very few chances for the young couples to move away and live without being monitored. Such barriers put a check on the nucleating tendency originating from within the family circle.

Economic Interdependence

China and Japan have the tradition of honoring and relying on financial assistance and caretaking between generations. The practice, however, is not limited to these two Oriental societies but reflects more general socioeconomic influences. Angel and Tienda (1982) presented empirical evidence that the same type of household support exists among black and Hispanic families in the United States: the presence of non-nuclear members increases the flexibility of the household in coping with economic hardship.

It has become clear from the previous discussion that the factors examined so far work against one another in their impact on the extended family. The factor of intergenerational financial assistance works to differentiate the process by which other cultural, economic, ecological, and social-psychological variables interact to affect

the existing and potential family arrangements in Chinese society.

Furthermore, the limited day care for preschool children helps maintain the extended family, for young couples prefer and often ask their parents to take care of the sole child. Limited kindergarten availability and expensive private babysitters make the caring grandparents a cheap and trustworthy alternative, and their presence in the house is less disruptive than that of an outsider. The traditional affection of the grandparents for the third generation prompts them to frequent the houses of their married children.

Household formation and family composition are determined to a considerable degree by income and occupational differentials among family members (Litwak and Szelenyi, 1969; Angel and Tienda, 1982; Morgan and Hiroshima, 1983). The benefits of independence and the absence of parental intervention—as the young couples perceive them—are offset by the conjugal unit's weak structural feature—lack of human resources. The extended family may be able to mediate the intergenerational inequality in income. Young couples earn comparatively low salaries when they marry and have children because they are just beginning their careers. One solution to this life-cycle strain may be coresidence—housing and child costs can be partially borne by the couple's parents (Morgan and Hiroshima, 1983:270), as has been the case with the Japanese family. Davis-Friedmann (1983) analyzed the existing intergenerational inequalities in China with the emphasis on the higher occupational prestige and income of the older generation over the younger one. The popular phrase "reimbursement by the two olds," which means that the parents contribute a portion of their income to their married children, captures a common budgeting system and lifestyle of the current urban Chinese family.

However, the degree and magnitude of intergenerational financing varies across the socioeconomic spectrum. Under the increasingly identifiable pattern of 4—2—1,⁷ families high on the socioeconomic scale (usually those Party cadres and government officials with handsome salaries or retirement pensions) show a one-way flow from the better-off parents to the younger generation and the only grandchild. On the other hand, in families in the lower occupational strata (e.g., the grandparents may be workers in collectively owned enterprises which offer meager salaries and hardly any pensions or fringe benefits), assistance tends to flow in both directions.

Although more and more nuclear families will be formed, given the continued intensive imple-

mentation of the one-child policy, the nuclear family in the Chinese context should be different from that in the West due to different socioeconomic, cultural, and environmental conditions. In the West the core of the nuclear family unit is the husband and wife. Children are born, reared, and leave home to establish their own families, with the primary continuity of the unit being the parental couple. Despite the fact that Chinese families, especially those in the rural areas, may be reduced in size, the child is very often not able to set up an independent household when he or she gets married due to resilient intergenerational solidarity (Bengtson and Cutler, 1976), economic pressures, and housing shortage. Thus, a diverse array of family types, some of which are variants of the stereotypical models of extended and nuclear families, are emerging and will coexist for a considerable period with the traditional forms.

Table 4 describes various types of family arrangements. The continued increase in the number of one-child families will certainly facilitate the growth of the nuclear family (Type A), which is the most appealing form to young couples in the cities and, thus, is expected to become the dominant urban family structure in the future. The housing shortage will continue to force some new couples to compromise by accepting Type B, the extended nuclear family, at least in the beginning. Financial interdependence, especially among low-income families, will insure that some families will continue to approximate Types C and D. A relatively slow improvement in the urban housing situation also is likely to perpetuate the existence of Types C and D in the cities, especially in the very large, overcrowded ones, such as Shanghai. Some traditionally oriented rural families may continue to approximate Type E, but this type should become increasingly rare as Chinese society, especially in the rural areas, is further modernized. However, the return to household-based and more diversified production from collective farming that was brought about by the rural economic reforms in the past few years has redefined the family as the basic unit of production and has increased the demand for labor. This dramatic change in the mode of agricultural production is conducive to creating and maintaining Types C and D, and probably even E. Table 4 presents a formal and tentative typology which identifies some discernible differences in the emerging processes of changes in the extended Chinese family. The discussion presented here suggests that this period of family transformation, initiated and shaped by the various factors examined, will produce diverse patterns in the Chinese family system. There will be a simul-

TABLE 4. DEFINITIONAL CLASSIFICATIONS OF EXISTING AND EMERGING FAMILY TYPES IN CHINA

Type	Household Composition	Characteristics
A. Nuclear family (or conjugal family)	Husband, wife, and their unmarried child	Independent financial responsibilities; separate housing; relatively loose ties with grandparent generation
B. Extended nuclear family (or quasi-nuclear family)	Husband, wife, and one married child, as well as the child's spouse	Shared household; separate bedrooms and budgeting; fairly close relations with grandparent generation
C. Modified extended family (or stem family)	Husband, wife, and more than one married child and their spouses, maybe including one or two of the latter's offspring	Shared living arrangements; usually separate bedrooms; combined or separate budgeting; close contact and mutual aid with grandparent generation
D. Classical extended family (or joint family)	Three or four married generations together with usually grown-up fourth-generation children	Residing in one household; often shared bedrooms; multiple inter-generational ties; complicated network of financial support
E. Lineal family (sibling-related and patrilineal or matrilineal-based)	Husband, wife, with either married sons or daughters and sometimes the latter's cousins, as well as their children	Shared residential quarters; tight consanguineous bonds; joint budgeting and mutual moral and financial support; tight hierarchical control

Note: This typology is constructed by the author on the bases of other classificatory schemes developed by Litwak (1960), Kerckhoff (1965), Sussman (1976), and Gallin (1984).

taneous redrawing and blurring of the boundaries of each of its components, and no single pattern will emerge in the near future.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Levy (1949) predicted that the traditional extended Chinese family would be replaced by the conjugal units of the West rather than a patchwork of parts from the East and West. The changes taking place, however, point to the fact that the extended Chinese family is not simply giving way to the nuclear family of the Western type under the impact of the one-child population policy and sweeping modernization. Instead of a linear change toward nucleation, the conflicting influences of the one-child policy, a consumer orientation, the constraints of the housing shortage, and the opportunities at different socioeconomic levels will encourage more diverse family types to grow and take shape. In summary, the analysis in this paper leads to the following expectations for changes in the future family system in China:

1. The one-child policy may sustain the greatly reduced average family size. However, its impact is counteracted by the traditional values of "more children" and "boy preference," which lead many childbearing couples, especially in rural areas, to have more than one child, particularly if their

first child is a girl. Smaller families can have either a positive effect on the extended family (because several generations can fit more easily into a single household) or a negative influence (generating nucleated households).

2. The persistence of the extended Chinese family will be negatively affected by the modernization trend in general and a growing consumption orientation in particular.
3. However, the traditional collective-oriented value, the lower incomes of young people, limited residential mobility and housing space, and the legal requirement to support one's parents will all work to hold back the centrifugal drift of individualization and nucleation.
4. Increased housing construction ultimately will overcome the housing shortage, thus accelerating the physical separation of multi-generational households.
5. While financial and emotional interdependence among generations will encourage the survival of the extended family structure, the mutual support network will continue to vary by socioeconomic status.
6. The structural emergence of more nuclear families will tend to reinforce the rising consumption orientation and individualistic materialism, thereby fostering the continued weakening of the extended family structure.

The government program of one child per family has introduced an external factor that tends to foster the nucleation of the extended Chinese family. However, the demographic features of the future family structure in China will not become very obvious until the next century when the one-child generation starts getting married and establishing its own families. However, the widespread eager response of the younger generation to modernization and its concomitant influence on material consumption has a more immediate impact on loosening the bonds of the extended family system. The new construction strategy, which aims at smaller space but complete facilities in apartment buildings, encourages neolocal households. As a result single-family dwellings eventually will become the dominant type of living arrangement in urban Chinese society. The coexistence of peasants' freedom and their financial ability to build houses and the necessity of joint economic activities and old-age support is most likely to sustain both independent familial living and extended households in the rural areas. Nevertheless, the overarching extended traditions and reciprocal intergenerational relationships undoubtedly will continue to exert a binding force on divided conjugal units in both urban and rural contexts.

It is clear that both social policy and economic development have strongly influenced the changes that recently have taken place in the Chinese family. The prospective direction and degree of these changes also will depend on the presence of these sources of influence and their interactions with other factors. Therefore, the changing extended Chinese family, in the face of rapid demographic and societal transformations, remains an interesting and illuminating case for comparative family research in the future.

FOOTNOTES

1. These census data show that China has a total of 221,173,785 households, of which 220,100,775 are domestic households (headed by a married couple) and the remaining 1,073,010 are collective households, generally consisting of widows, widowers, and the childless elderly in the countryside (State Statistical Bureau of China, 1982).
2. Following the national census, the 1/1000 fertility survey started on September 1, 1982 and was completed in two weeks. The total sample contained 1,017,574, constituting 1.02% of the total population. Included in the sample were 310,485 women aged 15-67. Of the women sampled, 99% returned their questionnaires (Yu and Xiao, 1983:3).

3. Faddish terms such as "many legs" and "three turns" have appeared. The term "many legs" refers to a complete set of foreign-made furniture that is in short supply and very expensive. "Three turns" are the watch, cassette recorder, and sewing machine, which have become indispensable items for wedding purchase. For some more fashionable young people, the composition of the triadic wedding package has recently become even more expensive, with the increasingly popular Japanese-made motorbikes replacing the sewing machine as a major component.
4. Zhang (1983) argued that demographic processes are closely related to housing development. The large existing and rapidly growing rural population in China poses little of a housing problem, for peasants are allowed to build their own, usually spacious houses. However, urban housing has become very problematic given the crowded cities, limited space, and restrictions on the construction of private houses. By the end of 1981, 7.8 million households were classified as having inadequate space.
5. This might be called "distance in proximity." Sussman (1976) and Rosenmayr and Köckeis (1965) termed the desire of elderly persons to live close to relatives "intimacy at a distance." What is happening in China seems to be the very opposite: young couples try to keep a distance from their parents, even though they reside close to the latter physically.
6. Newly constructed apartments in Beijing from 1949 to 1978 more than doubled the total living space, with an average of 1,000,000 square meters every year; but the urban population increased from 1.65 million to 4.63 million during that period, almost tripling the original figure. As a result, the actual average living space per capita has dropped by 0.20 square meters; 164,000 households were defined as crowded households, of which 10,000 averaged less than two square meters per person (Gui, 1983).
7. The 4-2-1 pattern refers to the only child and his or her spouse related to their single offspring on the one side and the four grandparents on the other.

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