

# Early Fertility Decline and Sex Imbalance in Rural China

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During the 1970s, China experienced one of the most dramatic fertility declines ever documented, falling more than 50% throughout the decade. This decline coincides with a widespread fertility control campaign preceding the famous "One Child Policy" known as the Wan, Xi, Shao (or "Later, Longer, Fewer") campaign. In addition to declining fertility, male-biased sex ratios at birth appear to have risen during the campaign. We use a novel dataset combining previously unavailable data on the initiation of early fertility campaigns with birth history data to study the policy's effect on fertility and behavioral sex selection. We find patterns of parity-specific fertility decline closely follow the timing and focus of the Wan, Xi, Shao campaign. Our analysis also shows that sex ratios at birth among children born into households without surviving sons begin to rise approximately 2 years following the start of the campaign (and well before the One Child Policy).

Extended abstract removed at authors' request.