The Personal and the Political: Gender Equity and Attitudes toward Birth Restriction in Contemporary Urban China

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Abstract
Birth rates have declined globally over the past several decades. Extensive research has applied the gender equity theory to examine the link between individuals’ gender role attitudes and their fertility ideations in postindustrial democracies. A puzzle remains: do individuals’ gender ideology still matter for their fertility ideation when the state constrains individuals’ rights to have children? The author turns to a postsocialist authoritarian setting and examines the link between individuals’ gender role attitudes and attitudes toward the state’s birth restriction in contemporary urban China. Using four waves of the China General Social Survey between 2010 and 2015, the author demonstrates that individuals with more egalitarian gender role attitudes show significantly stronger support for the state’s birth restriction that limits the number of children. This article highlights an underarticulated dimension in research on gender equity and fertility ideation: the role of the state and how individuals experience the state’s reproductive control.

Keywords
gender equity, birth restriction, gender role attitude, fertility

Persistent low birth rates across parts of Europe and East Asia have captured the attention of social demographers over the past several decades. Scholars have turned to gender inequality as a possible explanation for the postindustrial fertility decline (Anderson and Kohler 2015; Esping-Andersen and Billari 2015; Goldscheider, Bernhardt, and Lappegård 2015; McDonald 2000a, 2000b, 2006, 2013). The gender equity theory posits that fertility is likely to remain low if women’s advancement in educational and labor market institutions is not matched by comparable changes in the gendered division of labor at home (McDonald 2000a, 2000b). As women become better educated and more career oriented, they are likely to reduce the number of births if they perceive their opportunities for advancement in education and employment are being curtailed by having children (McDonald 2013).

Micro-level empirical research that draws on the gender equity theory typically uses survey data to examine the association between individuals’ gender role attitudes or the division of household labor, on one hand, and their fertility ideations or behavior, on the other (for a review, see Brinton and Lee 2016). Numerous studies, using single-country or comparative cases, have applied the theory to a range of postindustrial democracies such as Germany, Italy, Spain, Sweden, Japan, South Korea, and the United States (e.g., Brinton et al. 2018; Brinton and Lee 2016; Brinton and Oh 2019; Cooke 2004, 2009; Kaufman 2000; Mills et al. 2008; Oláh 2003; Torr and Short 2004).

One lingering puzzle is: Beyond postindustrial democracies, with a coercive state, do individuals’ gender role attitudes still matter for their fertility ideations—and if yes, in what ways? In this article I draw on insights from the gender equity theory and turn to a low-fertility context in which the state has historically constrained individuals’ rights to have children. I investigate the link between individuals’ gender role attitudes and their attitudes toward the state’s birth restriction in contemporary urban China.

I focus on individuals’ attitudes toward state-imposed birth restriction for the following reasons: among individuals’ multifaceted ideations surrounding fertility and childbearing,
demographers have mostly examined fertility ideal (i.e., the number of children one ideally wants to have) and fertility intention (i.e., the number of children one intends to have) and delineated important differences between the two (Brinton et al. 2018). However, these two measures become muddied when a coercive state, by setting a birth quota, limits what individuals imagine as their possible options. Given China’s decades-long birth-planning efforts, I thus turn to individuals’ attitudes toward the state’s birth restriction—whether they are supportive or feel constrained—in studying their fertility ideations.

The empirical analysis incorporates four waves of the urban sample of the China General Social Survey (CGSS) between 2010 and 2015. Aside from some qualitative evidence (e.g., Greenhalgh 2001), Chinese individuals’ attitudes toward state-imposed birth restriction, and how such attitudes relate to their gender beliefs, have not been fully investigated using nationally representative survey data. I limit my scope to urban China because since the 1950s, China’s household registration (hukou) system has produced entrenched rural-urban differences across various aspects of social life (including the enforcement of the birth quota) and created what some scholars have called “one country, two societies” (Whyte 2010).

Contemporary urban China provides a fertile ground for understanding the link between individuals’ gender beliefs and fertility ideations beyond postindustrial democracies. First, state socialism and market reform have both left indelible marks on urban Chinese women’s roles in the labor market and at home. Women were actively incorporated into wage work under state socialism (Short et al. 2002). Despite declines during the reform years, China’s female labor force participation rate has remained one of the highest in the region (World Bank 2020). At the same time, the division of domestic labor and care work continues to be gendered, with women shouldering the lion’s share (Ji et al. 2017). Second, although for decades the authoritarian Chinese party-state has kept a tight rein on birth planning with the one-child policy, recent research consistently demonstrates a hesitancy for additional births after the first child among those facing a relatively relaxed birth quota (e.g., Zhang 2007; Zheng et al. 2009; Zhou 2019). Demographers have argued that China’s dramatic fertility decline since the 1970s to well below the replacement level cannot be attributed solely to the state’s draconian birth control (e.g., Cai 2010; Gu et al. 2007; Wang, Cai, and Gu 2013; Zhao and Zhang 2018). Rather, Chinese individuals have also begun to opt out of higher order births in recent years (Shi 2017; Zhou 2019).

By explicitly focusing on individuals’ attitudes toward state-imposed birth restriction, this research further considers an underarticulated dimension in the gender equity theory and research: the role of the state and how gender (in)equity matters in individuals’ fertility ideations as they experience the state’s considerable reproductive control. Doing so is important because reproduction links the personal and the political (Almeling 2015; Ginsburg and Rapp 1991): individuals formulate fertility ideations and make reproductive decisions within the macro-level cultural-institutional context of their inhabited worlds (McDonald, 2013). The state, through various policies, shapes the macro context individuals face and governs what choices are available to them (Morgan and Roberts 2012).

The rest of the article is organized as follows: I start with a discussion of bringing the gender equity theory into the Chinese context to study the link between individuals’ gender beliefs and fertility ideations when a coercive state constrains individuals’ rights to have children. Next I present the empirical data, analysis, and findings. I then discuss the potential mechanisms underlying the patterns observed in China, paying special attention to the current developments in China’s birth-planning policies. I conclude by highlighting the implications from the Chinese case for understanding the relationship between gender equity and low fertility beyond postindustrial democracies.

**Theoretical Background**

**The Role of Gender Equity in Fertility Decline**

Remarkable declines in birth rates have occurred globally over the past several decades: more than 83 countries, in all regions and accounting for almost half of the world’s population, currently experience below-replacement fertility (United Nations 2015). In industrialized societies, the decline in birth rate largely coincided with the rise in female education and employment, prompting a growing body of research to explicitly adopt a gendered lens (see Goldscheider et al. 2015; Mills et al. 2008). Following pioneering work on the link between gender inequality and low fertility (e.g., Folbre 1983; Mason 1997; Oppenheimer 1994), scholars have turned to women’s incompatible roles at home vis-à-vis in the labor market as an explanation for the postindustrial fertility decline. As Rindfuss, Brewster, and Kavee (1996) noted, “the stronger the role incompatibility between female labor force participation and childrearing, the lower the expected level of fertility. Anything that reduces this role incompatibility, or the perception of incompatibility, may raise levels of fertility” (p. 478).

The gender equity theory (McDonald 2000a, 2000b, 2006, 2013) represents the most recent development in this tradition. McDonald distinguished between gender equity in public-sphere, individual-oriented institutions (i.e., education and the labor market) and that in private-sphere, family-oriented institutions (i.e., marriage and family) in industrialized societies. In delineating the concept of gender equity and contrasting it with gender equality, McDonald specifically highlighted the significance of individuals’ perceptions of fairness: whether they believe an outcome (e.g., how household labor is divided) to be acceptable or not. That is, “gender equity
is about perceptions of fairness and opportunity rather than strict equality of outcome” (McDonald 2013:983).

According to McDonald (2013),

perceptions of unfairness arise because individually oriented institutions such as education and market employment open up new opportunities for women. However, if those new opportunities are not supported if they become mothers—by family-oriented institutions—many women will reduce the number of children that they might otherwise have had. (p. 983)

In other words, the gender equity theory posits that postindustrial fertility is likely to remain low if gender equity in the private sphere lags that in the public sphere. In this sense, the theory is motivated by the notion of the “stalled gender revolution”: although women have increasingly entered higher education and wage work as co-breadwinners, the changes at home and in men’s role as co-caregivers have not kept pace (Goldsheider et al. 2015; Hochschild 1989; Torr and Short 2004).

Individuals’ fertility decision making and their perceptions of gender inequality are rooted in the specific cultural-institutional contexts they inhabit. McDonald (2013) thus argued that an ideational aspect is an essential component of the gender equity framework, enabling the theory to travel across contexts. Along this line, among the theory’s empirical applications, one major approach is examining the link between women’s and/or men’s fertility ideations and gender role attitudes: what individuals regard as the appropriate roles and acceptable division of labor between women and men (e.g., Arpino, Esping-Andersen, and Pessin 2015; Brinton et al. 2018; Brinton and Lee 2016; Brinton and Oh 2019; Puur et al. 2008).

Beyond Postindustrial Democracies

The gender equity theory and its empirical applications have focused on advanced capitalist democracies. The theory emphasizes gendered work-family incompatibility and the separation of the public and private spheres. Such incompatibility is rooted in the development of industrial capitalism, which delineates a clear boundary between production and reproduction (Fraser 1994). Gender relations and inequality are organized and reproduced through this distinction (Acker 2004). By focusing on advanced capitalist democracies, however, empirical work in this vein relies on certain common presuppositions about the relationship between the state and its citizens—what the state can do to individuals—within this regime type. Specifically, the right to have children without limits is taken as a given. The number of children one ideally wants and/or intends to have is assumed to be unconstrained by the state.

McDonald perceptively noted the significance of cultural-institutional context in framing individuals’ gender ideology and fertility ideations. Although the decline in birth rates began in Europe and Northern America, as it stands today, low fertility is no longer only a postindustrial phenomenon. Since the 1970s, fertility has dropped across the world, with particularly pronounced reduction in eastern, southeastern, and southern Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean (United Nations 2015). Against the backdrop of a global trend of rapid fertility decline, it is worthwhile to consider if and how gender equity matters in contexts that are embarking on similar demographic transitions but differ in cultural-institutional arrangements and trajectories. The question remains: beyond postindustrial democracies, when the state constrains individuals’ rights to have children, is there still a link between individuals’ gender beliefs on one hand and their fertility ideations on the other? Answering this question further allows us to evaluate whether the gender equity theory can be applied beyond postindustrial democracies to understand the gendered root of low fertility.

On this note, the next section describes the Chinese context. In so doing, I highlight how contemporary urban China provides a fruitful case for extending the gender equity theory.

The Chinese Context

Reproductive Policy and Individual Preference

After 1949, Chinese Communist Party (CCP) leadership initially viewed China’s large population as a much needed labor reservoir. However, managing a mostly rural and poor population soon presented its challenges. The 1950s and 1960s saw sporadic voluntary birth-planning campaigns that yielded minimal results (Freeberne 1964). Mandatory and coercive birth planning began in the form of the “later (first marriage and first birth), longer (birth interval), fewer (births)” campaign in the 1970s (Whyte, Wang, and Cai 2015). Throughout the 1970s, China’s total fertility rate dropped significantly, from almost 6 to about 2.7 at the end of the decade (Whyte et al. 2015).

Despite an already sharp fertility decline during the 1970s, CCP leadership instituted the nationwide one-child policy in 1980 (Greenhalgh 2008). The official narrative framed “excessive population growth” as an urgent national crisis keeping China from attaining wealth, power, and its rightful place in the world (Greenhalgh 2001). Before the universal two-child policy went into effect in 2016, throughout the one-child policy period, limited relaxations (e.g., the “1.5-child policy” for the rural population) notwithstanding, CCP leadership maintained the position of an ongoing need for strict birth restriction. During those years, appeals for relaxations were frequently met with bitter oppositions and factional debates (Scharping 2019).

The authoritarian nature of the Chinese regime means that the state enforces a different type of governance over its citizens. Frontline bureaucrats have played a key role in successfully implementing the state’s coercive birth planning
program during the one-child policy era (Mattingly 2020): Couples that exceed the birth quota face substantial monetary fines, threats of job loss, and property seizure (Hesketh and Zhu 1997). Women are vulnerable to forced abortion and sterilization (Greenhalgh 1994; Whyte et al. 2015). Children born “above the limit” are at risk of being denied household registration (hukou) status, which is a prerequisite for receiving a wide range of social benefits (Greenhalgh 2003).

Demographers largely agree that China’s total fertility rate has fallen and stayed below the replacement level since the early 1990s (Cai 2008). National and provincial surveys since then have consistently indicated subreplacement average fertility ideals (for a review, see Zhou 2019). Recent studies have shown a hesitancy for second birth even among those for whom the option is allowed (e.g., Shi 2017; Zhang 2007; Zheng et al. 2009; Zhou 2019).

Contemporary China thus provides a low-fertility context that expands on the present research: the authoritarian party-state can and has played a coercive role in driving population control. At the same time, agentic individuals, with changing fertility preferences, make reproductive decisions within the constraints set by the state. In this context, does gender equity—what individuals perceive as women’s and men’s appropriate roles, rights, and labor division—still matter in their fertility ideations? As state-imposed birth quota limits the choices that are available to individuals, constraining what they imagine as the possible number of children to have, an important aspect of individuals’ fertility ideations is their attitudes toward the state’s birth restriction. I now describe the gender equity and work-family context in post-1949 China.

Gender Equity in a Postsocialist Authoritarian State

Deemed crucial for China’s post-1949 socialist development, women were actively incorporated into the labor force, particularly in the late 1950s and 1960s (Short et al. 2002). Social welfare provision was closely linked to wage work (Davis 1991; Short et al. 2002). For urban citizens, state- and collectively owned work units (danwei) have eased the burden of domestic labor by providing a wide range of public goods such as housing, dining services, and low-cost childcare (Ji et al. 2017; Lv and Perry 1997). As such, China’s female labor force participation rate was high under state socialism (Short et al. 2002).

As China underwent market transition beginning with reforms in 1978, the market became another influential force in shaping gender relations in public and private spheres. Marketization significantly weakened the role of danwei in providing services that subsumed some of the domestic labor (Xie, Lai, and Wu 2009). Consequently, these responsibilities have been shifted back to the family, particularly to women (Ji et al. 2017). State policies have reemphasized women’s role as primary caregivers (Robinson 1985). Most notably, childcare leave is generous yet gendered, with the length of maternity leave far surpassing that of paternity leave (Zhou 2019). The party-state began to place a renewed emphasis on women’s roles at home (Sun and Chen 2015; Wang 2003). After the reform, women face intensified discrimination from employers, who believe that female workers would contribute inferior work because of their family responsibilities (e.g., Robinson 1985; Zhou 2019).

Yet despite China’s profound social transformations, some influences of the socialist ideal about female employment have persisted on the individual level (Short et al. 2002). Particularly, studies have shown that women remain committed to wage work, viewing it as an expected and taken-for-granted choice (Short et al. 2002; Zhou 2020).

Taken together, similar to the premise that motivates the gender equity theory, the gender revolution is also unfinished in contemporary urban China. What is more, this “stalled gender revolution” unfolds in a postsocialist authoritarian state that imposes restrictive birth limits. Examining the link between individuals’ gender role attitudes and their attitudes toward the state’s birth restriction thus contributes to research on gender equity and low fertility by highlighting how gender equity matters in an important dimension of fertility ideation: how individuals experience and respond to the state’s reproductive control. The following section describes the data and analytical strategy.

Study Design

Data

I used the CGSS (http://cgss.ruc.edu.cn) urban sample for the analysis. The CGSS is modeled after the General Social Survey in the United States. The CGSS adopts a stratified multistage probability proportional to size sampling design and offers a nationally representative cross-sectional sample of noninstitutionalized adults in mainland China. It is one of the highest quality and most widely used publicly available data sets on contemporary China.

I pooled four waves (2010, 2012, 2013, and 2015) of the CGSS urban sample. These four waves are the only ones that contained the same measures of gender role attitudes and asked about respondents’ attitudes toward the state’s birth restriction. The survey instrument also included comprehensive sociodemographic information on the respondents. The pooled full sample includes 18,435 observations.

Measures

Outcome: Attitudes toward Birth Restriction. The 2010–2015 CGSS instrument asked respondents whether they agreed with the following statement: “The number of children one wants to have should be up to oneself, and the government should not interfere.” Responses ranged from 1 = “strongly disagree” to 5 = “strongly agree.” During the survey
period, the one-child policy was still in place with restrictive birth quota, which limits what individuals imagine as the possible number of children one could have. Thus, rather than fertility intention, the CGSS surveyed individuals’ attitudes toward the state’s birth restriction. Disagreement with the statement (i.e., supporting the state’s interference) should be seen as indicative of support for restrictive state intervention that limits births.

Of all respondents, 20.30 percent strongly disagree with the statement, while 43.46 percent disagree. Those who strongly agree with the statement make up 4.98 percent of the full sample, while 18.47 percent agree. Only 40 percent of all respondents \((n = 74)\) have missing values on the outcome. Thus, I coded the responses into the following three levels: “pro restrictive state control,” “neutral,” and “pro individual freedom.” Subsequent analysis retaining the five-level coding yields largely similar findings.

One may argue that the apparent support for the state’s birth restriction simply reflects respondents’ hesitance to voice opinions opposing the party-state’s policy, thereby masking their true attitudes. In the survey instrument, immediately before and after the item on birth restriction, respondents were asked whether they agreed with the following two statements: (1) “Choosing where to work and live should be up to oneself, and the government should not interfere,” and (2) “If someone criticizes the government publicly, the government should not interfere.”

To alleviate any concerns about untruthful answers, Figures A1 and A2 in the Appendix visualize responses on these two items. If respondents were indeed unable to be critical of the party-state’s policies, we would expect to observe similar patterns of support for governmental interference. Instead, respondents demonstrate much more critical and pro–individual freedom attitudes on items related to internal migration and free speech, despite both aspects being equally, if not more, heavily monitored in contemporary China.

**Gender Role Attitudes.** To measure gender role attitudes, the CGSS instrument included the following five statements:

- **Q1.** For women, marrying well is more important than having a good career.
- **Q2.** Men are naturally more capable than women.
- **Q3.** When the economy is bad, women should be fired first.
- **Q4.** Men should focus on their careers whereas women should focus on the family.
- **Q5.** Housework should be divided equally between the husband and the wife.

These five statements were administered using the exact same wording across the four survey waves. Consistent with the gender equity theory’s emphasis on what individuals perceive to be the fair gender specialization, these items capture what individuals view as the acceptable roles, rights, and division of labor between women and men.

Responses ranged from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree.” I recoded the responses on the scale of 1 to 5, where higher numbers correspond to more egalitarian attitudes. This means that “strongly disagree” on items Q1 through Q4 was coded as 5, and “strongly agree” on item Q5 was coded as 5.

Given the ordinal nature of the items, I used polychoric factor analysis to construct a gender role attitudes index. The polychoric correlation matrix is more suitable than the commonly used Pearson correlation matrix for ordinal measures (Olsson 1979). The results indicated that one factor with an eigenvalue greater than 1 should be retained. The gender role attitudes index ranges from 1.04 to 5.34 (mean = 3.37, \(SD = .92\)). As a robustness check, I also used the five items as separate independent variables in later analyses.

**Additional Controls.** I included the following controls: educational level, employment status, age, marital status, gender, childbearing status, CCP membership, ethnicity, religion, self-rated English language ability, subjective social class position, and survey year. Additionally, I controlled for respondents’ attitudes toward the state’s control of free speech and internal migration. Furthermore, the CGSS also asked respondents about the number of children they wish to have, had there hypothetically been no policy constraint at all. As individuals who want more children than the birth quota allows may be more likely to view the state’s birth restriction as keeping them from realizing their desire, I also controlled for whether the desired number of children under the hypothetical condition of no policy constraint exceeds the state’s birth quota.

Education is a four-level ordinal variable (1 = primary schooling and below and 4 = some tertiary education and above). Age is coded as birth cohort. Marital status has three categories: 0 = never married, 1 = married and currently in union, and 2 = not in union, which includes divorced, separated, and widowed. Gender (1 = male), employment status (1 = working), childbearing status (1 = have children), party membership (1 = CCP member), ethnicity (1 = Han majority group), and religion (1 = no religious belief) are binary coded. Fertility hypothetical is also binary coded to capture the (mis)match with the state’s birth quota (0 = zero or one child, 1 = two children and more). English ability ranges from 1 = “knows little to no English” to 3 = “knows English well.” Respondents were asked to rate their subjective social class position on a 10-point scale, with the highest score corresponding to the top of the class hierarchy.

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics. The full sample \((n = 18,435)\) includes all respondents. The analytical sample \((n = 17,397)\) includes only those with no missing values on any of the variables. Table A1 in the Appendix reports the missing rate for each variable: the missing rates range from .02 percent to 2.43 percent and are therefore inconsequential.
Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of the Key Measures and the Sociodemographic Controls, 2010–2015 China General Social Survey Urban Sample.

|                                           | Analytical Sample ($n = 17,397$) | Full Sample ($n = 18,435$) |
|------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| **Reproductive control**                 |                                  |                            |
| Pro governmental control                 | 11,233  .65                      | 11,755  .64                |
| Neutral                                  | 2,104  .12                       | 2,283  .12                 |
| Pro individual freedom                   | 4,060  .23                       | 4,323  .24                 |
| **Gender role items**                    |                                  |                            |
| Q1 (marry better)                        | 3.02  1.19                       | 18,349  3.02  1.19        |
| Q2 (men more able)                       | 3.23  1.19                       | 18,366  3.23  1.19        |
| Q3 (men job primacy)                     | 3.98  .99                        | 18,281  3.97  .99         |
| Q4 (women stay home)                     | 2.80  1.22                       | 18,398  2.80  1.22        |
| Q5 (equal housework)                     | 3.87  1.00                       | 18,365  3.86  1.00        |
| **Gender**                               |                                  |                            |
| Male                                     | 8,565  .49                       | 9,063  .49                 |
| Female                                   | 8,832  .51                       | 9,372  .51                 |
| **Education**                            |                                  |                            |
| Primary school and below                 | 2,664  .15                       | 2,925  .16                 |
| Junior high school                       | 4,127  .24                       | 4,377  .24                 |
| High school                              | 4,964  .29                       | 5,217  .28                 |
| College and above                        | 5,642  .32                       | 5,885  .32                 |
| **Employment**                           |                                  |                            |
| Not working                              | 8,191  .47                       | 8,816  .48                 |
| Working                                  | 9,206  .53                       | 9,613  .52                 |
| **Birth cohort**                         |                                  |                            |
| Born in and before 1950s                 | 7,138  .41                       | 7,683  .42                 |
| 1960s                                    | 3,454  .20                       | 3,622  .20                 |
| 1970s                                    | 3,328  .19                       | 3,466  .19                 |
| 1980s                                    | 2,568  .15                       | 2,668  .14                 |
| 1990s                                    | 909  .05                         | 993  .05                   |
| **Marital status**                       |                                  |                            |
| Never married                            | 2,084  .12                       | 2,257  .12                 |
| In union                                 | 13,321  .77                      | 13,956  .76                |
| Divorced or widowed                      | 1,992  .11                       | 2,209  .12                 |
| **Childbearing status**                  |                                  |                            |
| No children                              | 2,784  .16                       | 2,988  .16                 |
| Have children                            | 14,613  .84                      | 15,417  .84                |
| **Party membership**                     |                                  |                            |
| CCP member                               | 3,375  .19                       | 3,534  .19                 |
| Nonmember                                | 14,022  .81                      | 14,854  .81                |
| **Ethnicity**                            |                                  |                            |
| Han ethnic majority                      | 16,355  .94                      | 17,309  .94                |
| Ethnic minority                          | 1,042  .06                       | 1,104  .06                 |
| **Religious belief**                     |                                  |                            |
| No religion                              | 15,464  .89                      | 16,322  .89                |
| Have religious belief                    | 1,933  .11                       | 2,042  .11                 |
| **English ability**                      |                                  |                            |
| No English                               | 14,194  .82                      | 15,058  .82                |
| Moderate English                         | 2,221  .13                       | 2,316  .13                 |
| Good English                             | 982  .06                         | 1,042  .06                 |
| **Subjective class position**            | 4.45  1.67                       | 18,342  4.45  1.68        |
| **Free speech**                          |                                  |                            |
| Pro governmental control                 | 7,490  .43                       | 7,833  .43                 |
| Neutral                                  | 3,791  .22                       | 4,031  .22                 |
| Pro individual freedom                   | 6,116  .35                       | 6,396  .35                 |
| **Internal migration**                   |                                  |                            |
| Pro governmental control                 | 3,384  .19                       | 3,577  .19                 |
| Neutral                                  | 2,046  .12                       | 2,220  .12                 |
| Pro individual freedom                   | 11,967  .69                      | 12,573  .68                |
| **Fertility hypothetical**               |                                  |                            |
| Zero or one child                        | 5,129  .29                       | 5,284  .29                 |
| Two children and more                    | 12,268  .71                      | 12,703  .71                |

Note: CCP = Chinese Communist Party.
Statistical Model

I used generalized ordered logistic regression (Fu 1998; Williams 2016) to examine the relationship between individuals’ gender role attitudes and their attitudes toward the state’s birth restriction. The Brant test suggested that the proportional odds/parallel lines assumption was not satisfied for the ordered logit model. A partial proportional odds model is thus more appropriate, as it relaxes the proportional odds assumption for variables for which it is violated (Williams 2016). For an outcome with $M$ categories, the model is specified as follows (Williams 2016):

$$P(Y_i > j) = \frac{\exp(\alpha_j + X_i\beta_j)}{1 + \exp(\alpha_j + X_i\beta_j)}, \quad j = 1, 2, \ldots, M-1.$$

For variables that satisfy the proportional odds assumption, the $\beta$ coefficients are the same for all values of $j$ (i.e., similar to the ordered logit model). The $\beta$ coefficients are different across values of $j$ for variables that violate the proportional odds assumption. Thus, the partial proportional odds model is more flexible than the ordered logit model and more parsimonious than the multinomial logit model.

The main model (model 1) includes the key predictor (i.e., gender role attitudes index) and the full set of controls. Additionally, I conducted a series of robustness checks. These checks include (1) treating the five gender role attitudes items as separate predictors in a partial proportional odds model, (2) retaining the original five-level coding for the outcome variable in a partial proportional odds model, (3) specifying a multinomial logit model, and (4) exploring interaction effects with partial proportional odds models.

Results

Gender Beliefs and Attitudes toward the State’s Birth Restriction

Table 2 presents the results of model 1, which examines the association between individuals’ gender role attitudes and their attitudes toward the state’s birth restriction. I report the odds ratios for easy interpretation.

Most notably, model 1 points to a significant negative association between egalitarian gender role attitudes and pro–individual freedom views toward birth restriction. On the basis of the survey items, individuals espousing gender-egalitarian attitudes emphasize women’s right to equal work over the primacy of her roles in the private sphere, reject the notion of male primacy, and support the equal division of household labor.

As illustrated in model 1, the gender role attitudes index does not violate the proportional odds assumption. As such, we could interpret the coefficients as we would an ordered logit model. Specifically, all else equal, with every unit increase in the gender role attitudes index (more egalitarian), the odds of having a more pro–individual freedom attitude toward the state’s birth restriction (i.e., being neutral and pro individual freedom rather than being pro restrictive state control; being pro individual freedom rather than being neutral and pro restrictive state control) are 20 percent (i.e., $[1 - .80] \times 100$ percent) lower. In other words, holding all else constant, respondents with more egalitarian gender role attitudes are more likely to be supportive of the state setting restrictive birth limits.

Higher educational attainment is similarly associated with significantly less pro–individual freedom attitudes when it comes to birth restriction (as indicated by the odds ratio coefficients smaller than 1). For example, all else controlled, compared with those with primary (and less) schooling, the odds of having a more pro–individual freedom attitude on birth restriction are 34 percent (i.e., $[1 - .66] \times 100$ percent) lower for individuals who have obtained tertiary education. We observe similar patterns when we compare individuals with (less than) primary school education on one hand with junior high school or high school graduates on the other. In other words, all else equal, individuals with higher educational attainment are more likely to support the state’s birth restriction.

In addition, CCP membership is associated with significantly lower odds of having more pro–individual freedom attitudes on birth restriction (as indicated by the odds ratio coefficients smaller than 1). Compared with CCP nonmembers, for CCP members, all else equal, the odds of having neutral and pro–individual freedom attitudes rather than being pro restrictive state control are 32 percent (i.e., $[1 - .68] \times 100$ percent) lower, whereas the odds of being pro individual freedom rather than having neutral and pro–restrictive state control attitudes are 24 percent (i.e., $[1 - .76] \times 100$ percent) lower. It is likely that individuals who self-select into joining the CCP tend to favor the party-state’s policies and thus exhibit greater support for the state’s birth restriction.

In contrast, all else equal, respondents who are in favor of individual freedom regarding internal migration and free speech are significantly more likely to show similar support for individual freedom when it comes to birth restriction (as indicated by the odds ratio coefficients greater than 1). Moreover, holding all else constant, those who are younger, with no religious belief, or know English well also show significantly more pro–individual freedom attitudes toward birth restriction, agreeing that the number of children should not be limited by the state.

One notable result here is that educational level and self-rated English language ability are moderately correlated (Spearman’s $\rho = .44$) and have opposite effects on
individuals’ attitudes toward the state’s birth restriction. Education is a crucial part of the socialization process. Individuals encounter prevailing cultural beliefs and narratives in schools. As such, it is possible that those with higher educational levels have also experienced greater exposure to the state’s “overpopulation as China’s national crisis” narrative, leading them to be more supportive of the state’s birth restriction that has largely been framed as “good for the nation.” By contrast, individuals with better self-rated English language ability may be better exposed to the critiques of the one-child policy, which largely happen outside of China and come from Western scholars, journalists, and human rights advocates. As such, all else equal, they are more likely to hold pro–individual freedom attitudes toward birth restriction.

The effects of gender and fertility hypothetical are both not significant: all else equal, women and men do not differ in their odds of supporting the state’s birth restriction. Holding all else constant, there is also no statistically significant difference between those who, under the hypothetical condition of no policy constraint, want zero or one child and those wanting two or more children, when it comes to attitudes toward the state’s birth restriction.

### Robustness of the Findings

Model 1 shows that having more egalitarian gender role attitudes is associated with stronger support for the state’s birth restriction that limits the number of children. This relationship is robust to alternative model specifications.

#### Table 2. Generalized Ordered Logit Model Predicting Pro–Individual Freedom Attitudes on Reproduction, China General Social Survey 2010–2015 Urban Sample (n = 17,397).

| Model 1 | Pro Governmental Control vs. Neutral + Pro Individual Freedom | Pro Governmental Control + Neutral vs. Pro Individual Freedom |
|---------|---------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| Gender role attitudes | .80*** (.01) | .80*** (.01) |
| Male | .96 (.03) | .96 (.03) |
| Junior high school | .81*** (.04) | .81*** (.04) |
| High school | .74*** (.04) | .74*** (.04) |
| College and above | .66*** (.04) | .66*** (.04) |
| 1960s birth cohort | 1.15*** (.06) | 1.15*** (.06) |
| 1970s birth cohort | 1.20*** (.07) | 1.20*** (.07) |
| 1980s birth cohort | 1.24*** (.09) | 1.24*** (.09) |
| 1990s birth cohort | 1.05 (.11) | 1.05 (.11) |
| Working | .97 (.04) | .97 (.04) |
| In union | .90 (.08) | .97 (.09) |
| Divorced or widowed | 1.04 (.11) | 1.04 (.11) |
| Have children | .94 (.08) | .94 (.08) |
| CCP member | .68*** (.03) | .76*** (.04) |
| Han ethnic majority | 1.23*** (.09) | 1.09 (.09) |
| No Religion | 1.15* (.06) | 1.15* (.06) |
| Moderate English | 1.31*** (.07) | 1.19*** (.07) |
| Good English | 1.59*** (.12) | 1.59*** (.12) |
| Subjective class position | .97** (.01) | .99 (.01) |
| Speech | 1.50*** (.02) | 1.50*** (.02) |
| Migration | 1.23*** (.02) | 1.58*** (.03) |
| Fertility Hypothetical: two children and more | 1.00 (.04) | 1.07 (.04) |
| 2012 | 1.17*** (.05) | 1.17*** (.05) |
| 2013 | 1.56*** (.07) | 1.32*** (.07) |
| 2015 | 1.95*** (.09) | 1.95*** (.09) |
| Pseudo-R² | .08 |

Note: Odds ratios are reported. Values in parentheses are standard errors. CCP = Chinese Communist Party. *p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001.
First, using gender role attitudes items as individual predictors produces similar findings. More egalitarian views on items regarding the primacy of marriage for women, the intrinsic primacy of men, women’s right to equal work, and the division of household labor are significantly associated with stronger support for the state setting restrictive birth limits. Table A2 in the Appendix reports the full results.

In addition, retaining the five-level coding of the outcome variable in a partial proportional odds model yields largely comparable findings (see Table A3 in the Appendix). Similarly, results from a multinomial logit model are also consistent with the main findings reported above (see Table A4 in the Appendix). Again, we observe that holding more egalitarian gender role attitudes, having a higher educational level, and belonging to the CCP are associated with stronger support for the state’s birth restriction. Younger cohorts, those having more pro–individual freedom attitudes regarding free speech and internal migration, and those having better knowledge of English are more likely to agree that the number of children should be a personal decision free from state-imposed limits.

Furthermore, I explored several potential interaction effects. I estimated partial proportional odds models that included interactions between (1) gender role attitudes and education, (2) gender role attitudes and gender, (3) gender role attitudes and age, and (4) gender role attitudes and fertility hypothetical. Although the models consistently show that having more egalitarian gender role attitudes is significantly associated with stronger support for the state’s birth restriction, none of the interaction effects is significant, suggesting that the strength of this association does not differ by educational level, gender, birth cohort, or fertility desire under the hypothetical condition of no policy constraint. Given the space limit, results of models with interaction terms are not included here but available upon request.

**Discussion and Implications**

This study shows that in contemporary urban China, individuals with more egalitarian gender role attitudes show stronger support for the state’s birth restriction that limits the number of children. I now turn to the potential mechanisms underlying this observed association. In so doing, I highlight how findings from the Chinese case hold implications for evaluating the gender equity theory beyond postindustrial democracies.

**Why Gender-Egalitarian Individuals Support Birth Restriction: Potential Mechanisms**

Contemporary urban China presents a case in which women have made some headway in the public sphere, yet the gender revolution is incomplete and stalled. On one hand, women were actively incorporated into wage work during the socialist era, the legacy of which has remained to this day (Short et al. 2002; Xie 2013). Women expect themselves to work, viewing employment as a taken-for-granted choice (Short et al. 2002; Zhou 2020). In recent years, women have also begun to outperform men in China’s higher education (Zhong and Guo 2017). On the other hand, Chinese women’s advancement in the public sphere (i.e., wage work and education) is not matched by men’s entry into the private sphere as co-caregivers (Ji et al. 2017). Gendered family and child-care policies reinforce the unequal division of unpaid household labor and care work (Robinson 1985). Caught between the competing demands of work and family, women face intense discrimination in China’s postreform labor market because employers perceive them as being distracted by family and childcare responsibilities (Zhou 2019).

The link established using survey data between more egalitarian gender role attitudes and stronger support for the state’s birth restriction is consistent with qualitative evidence from China during the one-child policy era: drawing on interviews with Chinese feminists and reproductive health advocates, Greenhalgh (2001) found nuanced views toward the one-child birth limit. Particularly, some respondents voiced ardent support for the state’s population planning agenda, arguing that the restrictive birth quota has liberated Chinese women from their childbearing burdens and reduced the amount of their care work at home. Along the same line, research has also found that urban singleton daughters, to some extent, felt empowered by the one-child policy, as they no longer had to compete with male siblings for parental investment in education (Fong 2002).

The main result of this study is also in line with current findings on individuals’ attitudes toward the ending of the one-child policy. Driven by growing concerns surrounding China’s diminishing demographic dividend and rapid population ageing, CCP leadership formally replaced the one-child policy with the universal two-child policy that took effect in 2016 (Zhou 2019). A three-child policy was announced in May 2021, further upping the birth quota to three children for all married heterosexual couples. Recent qualitative research has demonstrated that the universal relaxation of the one-child birth limit ignited anxiety and anger, particularly among those worried about worsening labor market gender discrimination and ever intensifying pressure for women to have more than one child (Zhou 2019).

In this sense, the stalled gender revolution in contemporary urban China underlies the apparent support for state-imposed birth restriction from those holding egalitarian gender role attitudes. To individuals who emphasize women’s participation in the public sphere over her roles in the private sphere, the state’s birth restriction, which seemingly reduces the gendered work–family incompatibility and alleviates women’s reproductive burden by eliminating the options of higher order births outright, may appear to benefit women. That is, the restrictive state-imposed birth quota may seem like a “cover,” enabling women to opt out
of childbearing, minimizing disruptions to their career trajectories, and guarding against gender discrimination from employers who regard women as being preoccupied with childrearing.

**Extending the Gender Equity Theory: Implications from the Chinese Case**

The findings of this study lend additional support for the gender equity theory, which highlights the connection between the stalled gender revolution and the retreat from childbearing. A large body of research, focusing on postindustrial democracies, has examined the link between individuals’ gender beliefs—what they view as the appropriate gender roles and fair division of labor—and their fertility ideologies. Consistent with the direction of the link suggested by the gender equity theory, in the Chinese context, we observe an association between more egalitarian gender role attitudes and greater support for the state’s birth restriction (i.e., limiting the number of children).

The findings invite further reflections on the gender equity theory. As birth rates drop across the globe, it is important to consider how well the gender equity theory may travel beyond the postindustrial democratic setting. This research asks, when the state holds substantial power in governing reproduction, do individuals’ own gender role attitudes still matter for their fertility ideologies? When the state constrains individuals’ rights to have children, fertility ideal and fertility intention provide muddied measurements of fertility ideation. Instead, by focusing in this study on individuals’ attitudes toward the state’s birth restriction in contemporary urban China, I consider gender equity alongside an underexamined dimension of individuals’ fertility ideation: how they experience and respond to the state’s considerable reproductive control.

This undere xplored dimension of fertility ideation is important because scholars studying gender and fertility have long been interested in the “politics of reproduction” across the globe (Ginsburg and Rapp 1991). The development, implementation, and enforcement of the state’s reproductive policies often involve scrutiny, surveillance, and control of individuals’, particularly women’s, reproductive choices and bodily experience (Clarke 1998; Takeshita 2011). Contestations surrounding the state’s governance of reproduction are frequently framed through the discourse of individual rights (Morgan and Roberts 2012). In the United States, for example, reproductive autonomy was one of the central concerns in women’s rights movements throughout the twentieth century (Almeling 2015). In the Chinese context, however, it is those who espouse more egalitarian gender role attitudes who show stronger support for the authoritarian state’s efforts in restricting births. This study shows that in a postsocialist authoritarian setting in which the gender revolution is similarly unfinished, the proposed link between gender egalitarianism and the retreat from childbearing manifests as the association between egalitarian gender role attitudes and support for the state’s autocratic birth restriction. Therefore, in examining individuals’ fertility ideation and decision making, not only is it important to consider how individuals perceive gender equality in public and private spheres, it is further critical to “bring the state back in” (Skocpol 1985) and consider how individuals respond to the state’s reach into their private life.

**Limitations and Future Work**

Using survey data, I have established a robust association between egalitarian gender role attitudes and support for the state’s birth restriction. I conclude by addressing three remaining questions and limitations that warrant future research.

First, despite recent relaxations to the one-child policy, state-imposed birth limits continue to constrain the number of children one can have in contemporary China. As such, it is important to develop suitable measures of fertility ideal and fertility intention that fit China’s reproductive policy context. One possibility is to collect national data on individuals’ ideals and intentions for second- and/or third-birth transitions under the 2021 three-child policy. Future studies could investigate the link between Chinese individuals’ gender role attitudes and intentions for higher order births and, in so doing, provide additional evaluations of the gender equity theory beyond postindustrial democracies. Second, although I have discussed some potential mechanisms underlying the link between egalitarian gender role attitudes and support for the state’s birth restriction, additional analyses, especially those using qualitative data, are needed to further elucidate how individuals perceive and experience the state’s reproductive control. Third, I have focused on urban China alone. Additional work is needed to examine the link between gender equity and individuals’ fertility ideations in the rural Chinese context.

**Appendix**

![Figure A1](image-url). Descriptive distribution of attitudes toward governmental control of internal migration, China General Social Survey 2010–2015 urban sample (n = 17,397).
Table A1. Missing Rate of the Key Measures and the Sociodemographic Controls, 2010–2015 China General Social Survey Urban Sample, Full Sample (n = 18,435).

| Measure                        | Missing n | Missing % |
|--------------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Reproductive control           | 74        | .40       |
| Gender attitude role items     |           |           |
| Q1 (marry better)              | 86        | .47       |
| Q2 (men more able)             | 69        | .37       |
| Q3 (men job primacy)           | 154       | .84       |
| Q4 (women stay home)           | 37        | .20       |
| Q5 (equal housework)           | 70        | .38       |
| Education                      | 31        | .17       |
| Employment                     | 6         | .03       |
| Birth cohort                   | 3         | .02       |
| Marital status                 | 13        | .07       |
| Gender                         | No missing|           |
| Childbearing status            | 30        | .16       |
| Party membership               | 47        | .25       |
| Ethnicity                      | 22        | .12       |
| Religion                       | 71        | .39       |
| English language ability       | 19        | .10       |
| Subjective class position      | 93        | .50       |
| Free speech                    | 175       | .95       |
| Internal migration             | 65        | .35       |
| Fertility hypothetical         | 448       | 2.43      |

Figure A2. Descriptive distribution of attitudes toward governmental control of critical speech, China General Social Survey 2010–2015 urban sample (n = 17,397).

Table A2. Generalized Ordered Logit Model Predicting Pro–Individual Freedom Attitudes on Reproduction, Separate Gender Role Attitudes Items, China General Social Survey 2010–2015 Urban Sample.

| Model A1 | Pro Governmental Control vs. Neutral + Pro Individual Freedom | Pro Governmental Control + Neutral vs. Pro Individual Freedom |
|----------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
|          |                                                                 |                                                               |
| Q1 (marry better) | .95*** (.01) | .95*** (.01) |                                               |
| Q2 (men more able) | .93*** (.02) | .93*** (.02) |                                               |
| Q3 (men job primacy) | .81*** (.02) | .85*** (.02) |                                               |
| Q4 (women stay home) | 1.01 (.02) | 1.01 (.02) |                                               |
| Q5 (equal housework) | .91*** (.02) | .91*** (.02) |                                               |
| Male     | .91*** (.03) | .91*** (.03) |                                               |
| (Reference: primary school) | | | |
| Junior high school | .82*** (.05) | .82*** (.05) |                                               |
| High school | .75*** (.04) | .75*** (.04) |                                               |
| College and above | .67*** (.04) | .67*** (.04) |                                               |
| (Reference: born in and before 1950s) | | | |
| 1960s birth cohort | 1.15*** (.06) | 1.15*** (.06) |                                               |
| 1970s birth cohort | 1.22*** (.07) | 1.22*** (.07) |                                               |
| 1980s birth cohort | 1.27*** (.09) | 1.27*** (.09) |                                               |
| 1990s birth cohort | 1.09 (.11) | 1.09 (.11) |                                               |
| Working | .98 (.04) | .98 (.04) |                                               |
| (Reference: never married) | | | |
| In union | .91 (.08) | .98 (.09) |                                               |
| Divorced or widowed | 1.04 (.11) | 1.04 (.11) |                                               |
| Have children | .95 (.08) | .95 (.08) |                                               |
| CCP member | .69*** (.03) | .76*** (.04) |                                               |
| Han ethnic majority | 1.22* (.09) | 1.08 (.09) |                                               |
| No religion | 1.15*** (.06) | 1.15*** (.06) |                                               |
| (Reference: no English) | | | |
| Moderate English | 1.32*** (.07) | 1.19*** (.07) |                                               |
| Good English | 1.57*** (.12) | 1.57*** (.12) |                                               |
| Subjective class position | .97*** (.01) | .99 (.01) |                                               |
| (Reference: pro governmental control) | | | |
| Speech | 1.50*** (.02) | 1.50*** (.02) |                                               |
| Migration | 1.26*** (.02) | 1.60*** (.03) |                                               |
| Fertility hypothetical: two children and more | 1.01 (.04) | 1.08 (.04) |                                               |
| (Reference: survey year 2010) | | | |
| 2012 | 1.17*** (.05) | 1.17*** (.05) |                                               |
| 2013 | 1.49*** (.07) | 1.26*** (.06) |                                               |
| 2015 | 1.86*** (.09) | 1.86*** (.09) |                                               |
| Pseudo-$R^2$ | .08 | | |
| Number of observations | 17,397 | | |

Note: Odds ratios are reported. Values in parentheses are standard errors. CCP = Chinese Communist Party. *$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$. |
## Table A3. Generalized Ordered Logit Model Predicting Pro–Individual Freedom Attitudes on Reproduction, Outcome with Five-Level Coding, China General Social Survey 2010–2015 Urban Sample (n = 17,397).

| Model A2 | SD vs. D, N, A, SA | SD, D vs. N, A, SA | SD, D, N vs. A, SA | S, D, N, A vs. SA |
|----------|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|------------------|
|          | .80*** (.02)      | .77*** (.02)      | .79*** (.02)      | .89*** (.03)     |
| Gender role attitudes | .93* (03)        | .93* (03)        | .93* (03)        | .93* (03)        |
| Male     |                  |                  |                  |                  |
| (Reference: primary school) |          |                  |                  |                  |
| Junior high school | .80*** (.04)    | .80*** (.04)    | .80*** (.04)    | .80*** (.04)    |
| High school | .76*** (.04)    | .76*** (.04)    | .76*** (.04)    | .76*** (.04)    |
| College and above | .70*** (.04)    | .70*** (.04)    | .70*** (.04)    | .70*** (.04)    |
| (Reference: born in and before 1950s) |          |                  |                  |                  |
| 1960s birth cohort | 1.14** (.05)  | 1.14** (.05)  | 1.14** (.05)  | 1.14** (.05)  |
| 1970s birth cohort | 1.18*** (.06) | 1.18*** (.06) | 1.18*** (.06) | 1.18*** (.06) |
| 1980s birth cohort | 1.19** (.07)  | 1.19** (.07)  | 1.19** (.07)  | 1.19** (.07)  |
| 1990s birth cohort | .99 (.09)   | .99 (.09)   | .99 (.09)   | .99 (.09)   |
| Working  | .96 (.04)        | .96 (.04)        | .96 (.04)        | .96 (.04)        |
| (Reference: never married) |          |                  |                  |                  |
| In union | .91 (.07)        | .91 (.07)        | .91 (.07)        | .91 (.07)        |
| Divorced or widowed | .86 (.09)   | 1.03 (.10)    | 1.01 (.10)    | .94 (.13)   |
| Have children | .93 (.07)    | .93 (.07)    | .93 (.07)    | .93 (.07)    |
| CCP member | .73*** (.04)  | .68*** (.03)  | .76*** (.04)  | .85 (.08)  |
| Han ethnic majority | 1.23*** (.08) | 1.23*** (.08) | 1.23*** (.08) | 1.23*** (.08) |
| No religion | 1.29*** (.08) | 1.16*** (.06) | 1.15* (.07)  | .84 (.09)  |
| (Reference: no English) |          |                  |                  |                  |
| Moderate English | 1.25*** (.08) | 1.29*** (.07) | 1.14* (.07)  | .96 (.10)  |
| Good English | 1.47*** (.10) | 1.47*** (.10) | 1.47*** (.10) | 1.47*** (.10) |
| Subjective class position | 1.01 (.01)  | .97*** (.01)   | .99 (.01)   | .99 (.02)   |
| (Reference: pro governmental control) |          |                  |                  |                  |
| Speech | 1.43*** (.03) | 1.57*** (.03) | 1.60*** (.03) | 1.59*** (.05) |
| Migration | 1.05*** (.02) | 1.29*** (.02) | 1.65*** (.04) | 3.84*** (.24) |
| Fertility hypothetical: two children and more | 1.20*** (.05) | .99 (.04)   | 1.06 (.04)   | .92 (.07)   |
| (Reference: survey year 2010) |          |                  |                  |                  |
| 2012 | 1.47*** (.07) | 1.17*** (.05) | 1.22*** (.06) | 1.11 (.10) |
| 2013 | 1.79*** (.09) | 1.59*** (.07) | 1.35*** (.07) | .98 (.10) |
| 2015 | 2.99*** (.18) | 1.99*** (.09) | 1.98*** (.10) | 1.13 (.11) |
| Pseudo-$R^2$ | .07           |                  |                  |                  |

Note: Odds ratios are reported. Values in parentheses are standard errors. SD = strongly pro birth restriction; D = pro birth restriction; N = neutral; A = pro individual freedom; SA = strongly pro individual freedom; CCP = Chinese Communist Party.

*p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001.

## Table A4. Multinomial Logit Results of Gender Beliefs and Attitudes toward the State’s Birth Restriction, China General Social Survey 2010–2015 Urban Sample.

| Model A3 | (Reference: Pro Governmental Control) Neutral | (Reference: Pro Governmental Control) Pro Individual Freedom |
|----------|-----------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| Gender role attitudes | .81*** (.02) | .78*** (.02) |
| Male | .98 (.05) | .95 (.04) |
| (Reference: primary school) |          |              |
| Junior high school | .74*** (.06) | .81*** (.05) |
| High school | .72*** (.06) | .72*** (.05) |
| College and above | .63*** (.06) | .64*** (.05) |

(continued)
Table A4. (continued)

| Model A3                              | (Reference: Pro Governmental Control) Neutral | (Reference: Pro Governmental Control) Pro Individual Freedom |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| (Reference: born in and before 1950s) |                                              |                                                            |
| 1960s birth cohort                    | 1.11 (.08)                                   | 1.16* (.07)                                               |
| 1970s birth cohort                    | 1.14 (.10)                                   | 1.23** (.08)                                              |
| 1980s birth cohort                    | 1.12 (.12)                                   | 1.29** (.11)                                              |
| 1990s birth cohort                    | .89 (.14)                                    | 1.10 (.14)                                                |
| Working                               | .96 (.06)                                    | .98 (.05)                                                 |
| (Reference: never married)            |                                              |                                                            |
| In union                              | .75* (.10)                                   | .97 (.10)                                                 |
| Divorced or widowed                   | .89 (.14)                                    | 1.08 (.13)                                                |
| Have children                         | .97 (.12)                                    | .92 (.09)                                                 |
| CCP member                            | .62*** (.05)                                 | .72*** (.04)                                               |
| Han ethnic majority                   | 1.48*** (.18)                                | 1.12 (.10)                                                |
| No religion                           | 1.13 (.09)                                   | 1.18* (.08)                                               |
| (Reference: no English)               |                                              |                                                            |
| Moderate English                      | 1.51*** (.12)                                | 1.24*** (.08)                                             |
| Good English                          | 1.65*** (.19)                                | 1.63*** (.14)                                             |
| Subjective class position             | .93*** (.01)                                 | .99 (.01)                                                 |
| (Reference: pro governmental control) |                                              |                                                            |
| Speech                                | 1.32*** (.03)                                | 1.56*** (.03)                                             |
| Migration                             | .94** (.02)                                  | 1.46*** (.03)                                             |
| Fertility hypothetical: two children and more | .92 (.05)                              | 1.05 (.05)                                                |
| (Reference: survey year 2010)         |                                              |                                                            |
| 2012                                  | 1.06 (.08)                                   | 1.23*** (.07)                                             |
| 2013                                  | 1.92*** (.13)                                | 1.39*** (.08)                                             |
| 2015                                  | 1.77*** (.12)                                | 2.09*** (.11)                                             |
| Pseudo-R²                             | .07                                          |                                                            |
| Number of observations                | 17,397                                       |                                                            |

Note: Relative risk ratios are reported. Values in parentheses are standard errors. CCP = Chinese Communist Party.

* p < .05. ** p < .01. *** p < .001.

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