

I. Background and Literature Survey

Guangdong province is the most southeastern province of China, covering 179,756.5 square km with over 1400 islands (Fig. 1) [1]. Despite being one of the richest provinces in China, Guangdong still has about 38 million agricultural persons [2]. To understand better contraceptive use in rural Guangdong currently, it is imperative to examine its population, education, economy, culture, and governmental foundations.

Staggering population increases in Guangdong has been a continual source of major problems for the Chinese government. During the population census of 2000, the population of the Guangdong Province was up to 86.42 million, a 23.59 million increase from a decade ago. Within the next five years, the population nearly doubled, with news reports revealing a staggering population of 142 million [3]. This population increase makes Guangdong the most populous province within China [4]. A major divide can also be seen between the sex populations within Guangdong. Currently, there are 2.6184 million more registered male than females [2].

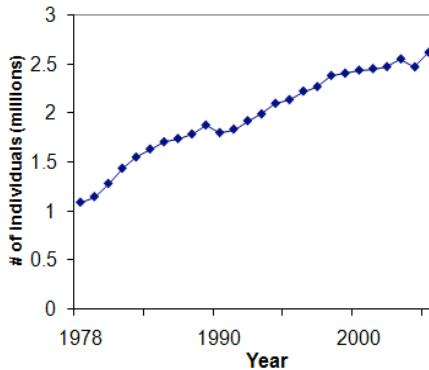


Fig. 1: (right) Population Status Difference in Sex Figures in Guangdong, China from 1978-2005 [2]

Education

Wing Yu 6/17/09 11:24 AM

Comment: It was important for me to mention that contraceptives in rural Guangdong had been scarcely researched. Hence my paper gains its support a great deal from primary resources (journals are secondary; newspapers, census data, etc. are primary). This is atypical for many undergraduate papers—journal/scholarly articles are far more credible sources. However, because there were hardly any that I could find, I had to rely on primary.

Wing Yu 6/17/09 11:27 AM

Comment: This sentence lays out my background section completely. It also enables me to establish a foundation so that anybody who reads this paper (whether they are familiar with China or not) can gain a better understanding of the residents that live there.

You can't always expect that the people reading your paper are going to be in your field and know exactly what you're talking about. One of the biggest issues that I encountered with writing this thesis was that I included a lot of key words and jargon that people in the field might know, but not others. I limited my use of jargon to reach a broader audience.

Wing Yu 6/10/09 11:18 PM

Comment: I am a visual person, so I tend to put charts/graphs wherever I can. In regards to doing this particular thesis, I have to point out a major fault—my graphs/tables weren't completely the same throughout. You ALWAYS want to stay with the same formatting. I had issues regarding retrieving some of this data; hence I had to stick with the graphs I made years ago. If I had the time to change, I would definitely go back and fix this.

Quality of education within Guangdong has increased a substantial amount in the past 15 years. The majority's education level was primary school or lower in 1990. By 2005, the majority had at least a junior secondary education (Fig 2). The rise of improved education suggests a more susceptible audience towards open communication and possible change. These statistics also support Guangdong families shift towards having fewer children in light of potential benefits.

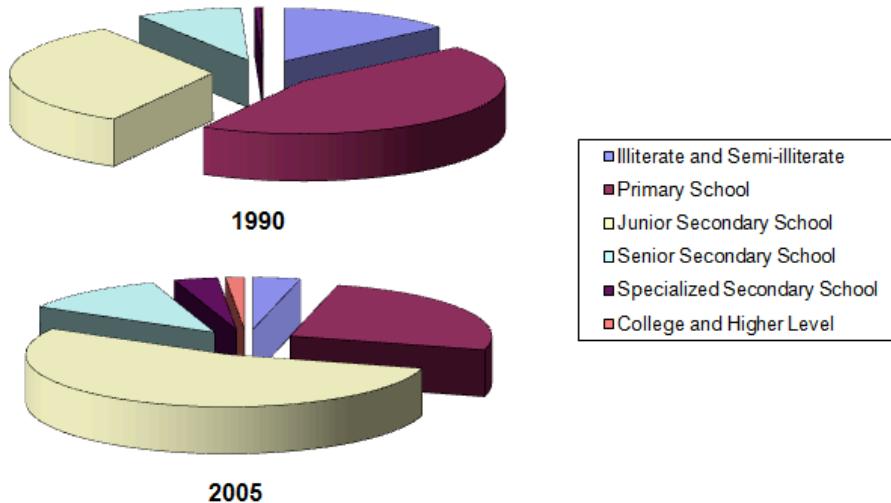


Fig. 2: Education Level in Rural Guangdong in 1990 vs. 2005 [2]

Economy

Since 1980, the province of Guangdong itself has gone through many changes, even in villages. Starting in the 1980s, many households along the Pearl River were given permission to manage their own fish production independently of a team leader [8]. By 1984, farmers were able to sell extra produce to whomever they wanted and at their own price [8]. This new sense of autonomy fueled the growth of individuality, which is a concept that the opposed central ideologies of the past [12]. Currently, Guangdong is one of the richest provinces in China, and a center for much international trade and profit [2].

Culture

Wing Yu 6/10/09 11:20 PM

Comment: So if I had the opportunity to re-do this chart again, I would make it so that it wasn't 3D because it's hard to read. Plus, if you are anticipating on people printing in black and white you might want to change it so that the colors can be more distinct, if not add a different pattern.

The Chinese definition of “family,” or “gaa” in Cantonese, is met with high regards and deeply associated with one’s honor. Persons without family are deemed an outcast, resulting in heavy bias, prejudice, and discrimination. Acceptance of any such persons often leads to association. Dr. Jod Taywaditep believes such roots has evolved into seven important values that play a predominant role over Chinese life and culture: (1) High Respect for Elders, (2) Shame, (3)Self-Control, (4) Assumption of a Middle Position, (5) Awareness of the Social Milieu, (6) Fatalism, and (7) Inconspicuousness [5]. Understanding these values is helpful to analyzing the strong social stigmas associated with contraception in China at present time.

Elders are the foundation to Chinese families. Chinese children are expected to comply with family’s wishes, despite sacrifice of their own wishes and ambitions. This relays justification for any decision for the “benefit of the family” [5]. It also is worrisome in light of the One Child Policy (OCP), as the elderly are the fastest growing percentage of the population (details discussed in OCP section).

Male dominance is another strong trait of Chinese culture. A male heir is often cited as a source of power and ‘proper’ lineage [5]. Gender roles are therefore strictly defined and the female’s subservience to be met without question. Help-seeking and support groups are not reflected among the female population [5]. This idea is deeply rooted in the Confucian belief, which states that one of the gravest acts is failure to have a son [31]. Rural areas specifically show compliance with such belief, as the value of sons determined the security one would have at an elder age. Thus, males represent labor, prestige, and a future that no female could guarantee [31]. Having a male child is therefore the strongest argument against birth control. It also helps explain the rising gender imbalance in Guangdong, a province with already a 1.6:1 male to female ratio [2]. This ratio is one of the highest in China, which was reported as a nation to having an overall average male to female ratio of 1.23:1 between 1996 and 2001 [7].

Male heritage is another aspect that clashed substantially with compliance to the One Child Policy (OCP), a policy initiated in 1979 to combat China’s population problem (see OCP section for background). These two components heavily exposed the Chinese to contraception; though the success and understanding of modern birth control is under question.

Wing Yu 6/16/09 11:59 PM

Comment: I'm pointing this out specifically because this is an important aspect that shows up again very clearly in the results of my study. It's always best to connect your background to your results because it shows your understanding of the foundation of your research.

Intimacy, or sexual intercourse, is often met with high levels of embarrassment and premarital sex remains one of the most sinful acts among families [6]. Many Chinese believe strongly in fate and that individuals are powerless in controlling their destiny. Sex, marriage, and children are predetermined—those that engage in such acts are condemned [5]. Talks of sex, much less contraceptives, are never to be brought up in the home; any suggestion of such topics brought up by any son would end up with harsh punishment.

There is also the last matter of attracting attention. Chinese are known for their avoidance of attracting attention—attracting attention is often considered to be shameful, selfish, and very immature [5]. As an effect, communication is often tainted. Resources on topics that go against the social ideology are limited, and often lopsided in their views.

[cut]

Contraceptive use in rural Guangdong China has evolved greatly over the past half century. As this region of China has been scarcely studied, it is imperative that the results of research aims be applied under the proper framework to best approach an understanding of health and contraceptive disparities within the region. In accordance to the research approach set forth by the National Institutes of Health and Centers for Population Health and Health disparities in 2008, the study will be analyzed in a manner that combines population, clinical, and biological science (Fig 3) [34].

Wing Yu 6/17/09 11:29 AM

Comment: Parts of this background section were omitted here to keep this annotation shorter.

Fig. 3 Model for analysis of population health and health disparities. For this current research, the disparate health outcomes are the concerns, misconceptions, and issues Guangdong rural residents, both current and prior, have currently. Their interviews will be strictly analyzed according to this scale.

II. Research Aims:

With the limited amount of research that has been conducted on contraceptives in rural China, there are great limits on our current understanding. From the beginnings of the implementation of One Child Policy, Guangdong has proven to be the most problematic provinces. With currently over 40,000 reported cases of HIV in Guangdong Province alone, there is a strong demand for research to better understand current contraceptive use, especially in the poor rural areas. This proposal aims to complete the following over a one-year time period.

Wing Yu 6/17/09 11:29 AM

Comment: Your data are only as good as the methods you use to analyze them. It's important to select a structure that can combine the different aspects of your data. For this part I would really advise you to talk to whomever your research supervisor is. Though I would suggest that it's important to keep up to date with the research in your field—my research approach was one that I originally encountered through reading publications on research approaches in the American Public Health research journal (and my mentor later approved that I used this analysis style).

Wing Yu 6/17/09 11:31 AM

Comment: Most people don't need a separate section for their research aims because the aims are in the background section. I used this section because I already had it from getting IRB (Institutional Review Board) approval. I omitted the aims here for reasons of confidentiality.

Penny Hirsch 6/17/09 11:31 AM

Comment: I introduced the research aims with this paragraph.