The Demographic Consequences of Gender Discrimination
——Simulation Analysis Based on Public Policies

Extended Abstract

Background. The strict patrilineal family system in China cultivates son preference and discrimination against girls. Discrimination against girls is not only influenced by culture, social system and household economic considerations, but also influenced by public policies. Patrilineal family system establishes men's leading status; Traditional culture based on Confucianism makes Chinese peasants' childbearing choice take pursuing male descendant as the ultimate purpose; Sons have the right to inherit parents' property and also the obligation to provide their parents old age support; The governmental family planning policies had a great effect on son preference. At present, one of the demographic consequences of son preference and discrimination against girls is increasingly rising SRB and relatively higher GMR, which surely exerts impacts on China's population development. And its harm to human beings and life quality will damage productivity, efficiency and economic development, and will reduce the quality of administration and the efficiency of development policies. Gender inequality will force human to pay out costly expense and will restrict developing foreground of the whole country. As a result, we should take public and personal action to promote gender equality. Gender division of labor and patrilineal family system are the main causes of the social difference between men and women. In order to carry out the basic policy of promoting gender equality, we should mitigate the traditional gender division of labor and patrilineal family system. Up to now, Chinese government has adopted a series of policies to reduce gender discrimination.

Objectives. The influence of "missing girls" phenomenon caused by gender discrimination on population growth has not aroused enough attention. Different public policy choices will definitely have influence on the degree of gender discrimination and "missing girls", and accordingly influence China's population development. However,

the policy simulation in terms of China's future population is rarely seen. The objective of this paper is to give some supplementary policy suggestions combined with the policies that Chinese governments have already carried out and based on the analysis of the factors causing gender discrimination. The paper presents a simulation model. According to the direct influence of public policy on population, we simulate the tendency of China's population development in the future and give the estimations in terms of size and composition of the population, number of laborers, aging and marriage squeeze. Based on the simulation results, we draw a conclusion so as to provide theoretical evidence to reduce son preference and to eliminate gender discrimination, and to give suggestions for policy making.

Methods.   This paper analyzes the causes of China's gender discrimination in the view of social system, culture, economic factors and public policies, and analyzes the demographic consequences of gender discrimination and its influence on China's social development. By use of public policy analysis method, the paper puts forward some policy suggestions based on the policies that Chinese governments have already carried out. And then, combining the progression model by age in demographic forecast and fertility and sex ratio by parity, and using a modified demographic model, the paper predicts tendency of the population growth of the 21st century in China under differential SRB and GMR caused by differential policies.

Results and conclusions. We adopt four schemes. In the first one, the discrimination against women is the strongest and their survival risk is the greatest. In the second and the third, it weakens in turn. In the last scheme, the discrimination against women and their survival risk is the weakest. Our simulation term is from 2001 to 2100. The results of the simulation show that gender discrimination have a profound influence on size of population, sex structure, population of laborers, the speed of aging, marriage market and so on.

1.   Although "missing girls" phenomena resulting from high SRB and high mortality rate

of women under gender discrimination has a little direct influence on population scale, it has a long-term and prominent influence on population growth because these women's potential reproductive ability disappear. The results of forecast show that, the population size when the present excess SRB and GMR goes on will be 84.2% of the one when SRB and GMR are normal in 2100. It means that 15.8% of the total population disappears because of the influence of missing girls.

2. Same with the tendency of population size, the long-term influence of missing girls on population of laborers can't be underestimated. According to the simulation results, up to 2100, compare with the forth scheme, 17.77% of the total number of laborers in the first scheme with the strongest gender discrimination disappears because of gender discrimination. "Missing girls" phenomena helps to mitigate employment force.

3. Discrimination against women is positively correlative to the speed of aging. From the proportion of the elderly aged 65 and above we found that, the more severe the "missing girls" phenomena is, the faster the proportion of the elderly aged 65 and above increases. Discrimination against women cuts down female population directly and drives up the speed of aging indirectly, which will bring heavy pressure on the immature social security system and aggravate social burden of old age support.

4. The increase of survival risk of women aggravates marriage squeeze. In this paper, we also research the difference between gross size of males and females from 20 years old to 50 years old and the proportion of gross male population in the same age section. Our results indicates that, the proportion of gross male population will be 20.73% in 2100 if the present SRB keeps and it will be 4.69% if SRB is normal.

The results of our analysis reveal that, the government play a dominant role in reducing son preference and restraining gender discrimination. Ineradicable tradition of son preference and discrimination against women still exist widely in China. Therefore, gender must be considered adequately in public policies in China, so as to change social

order of gender inequity step by step. Although it takes a long period of time to change the ideology of son preference, gender must be considered adequately in public policy in terms of women's political participation, equal employment, access to education and social security, etc. Consequently, gender equality will optimize the quality, structure and distribution of population in China, thus promote sustainable social development.