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One-Child Generation Middle-Class Women's Fertility Perceptions under the Three-Child Policy in Urban China

My DPhil topic explores one-child generation middle-class women's fertility perceptions and population dynamics in urban China under the Universal Three-Child Policy which was implemented in 2021, marking a departure from the previous One-Child Policy (OCP) and the Universal Two-Child Policy that had been in force since 1979 and 2016, respectively.

I investigate a) how these women perceive the shift from anti-natalism to pro-natalism in China's population control policy, b) how they balance, navigate and reconcile manifold meanings and pressures of child-bearing, c) how transformed family structures, intergenerational relations and the patriarchal hierarchal system influence women's reproductive choices and understanding of motherhood and d) how these women's middle-class consciousness facilitates their views on urban population agenda, their child-bearing intentions and the subjectivity-forming process as the one-child generation. I use qualitative research methods to collect data and analyse these research questions. I conduct long-term ethnography and109in-depth interviews in Shandong, the province with the highest fertility rate after the Universal Two-Child Policy. I also use participant observation to supplement the interviews by observing conversations and interactions between different family members, reflecting how norms are reproduced in daily life. Overall, I hope to achieve an interdisciplinary analysis of women's fertility perceptions under manifold transformations, contradictions, and compromises in urban Chinese society and families. It contributes to the theoretical development with attention to culture, politics, economic, social and institutional change and its workings at micro and multi-scalar level of women's subjective discourse of fertility, population control policy and family dynamics.