

“Bigger Budgets for Raising Daughters”—A Backlash Against Son Preference and Its Implications among Chinese College Students

Guodong Ju¹, Wen Ma², Dr. Yunsong Chen³

London School of Economics and Political Science, United Kingdom

Abstract

Objective: This study investigates whether current Chinese parents provide more financial support for girls than boys in college, and how this parenting strategy affects the sexual attitudes and behavior of their children.

Background: The prevalence of the parenting strategy “bigger budgets for daughters” indicates a backlash against the deep-rooted son preference in Chinese families. Its primary motivation is the belief that girls raised in wealthier environments are less likely to be tempted into intimate relationships. However, the existence and implications of this tip remain unexplored in academia.

Method: By combining two waves of a stratified random sampling survey of undergraduates in Beijing, this study measures the gender difference in family financial support using OLS and PSM. Interaction terms and stratified regression are employed to examine moderating effects of family wealth and sibling structures. The impacts of financial support on youths’ sexual attitudes and behavior are distinguished.

Results: The results reveal that Chinese parents, especially those from middle-income families, provide girls in colleges with more financial support than boys, and the difference is about half the gap between one-child and multi-children families. Youths receiving more financial support have earlier sexual intercourse, regardless of gender.

Conclusion: The “bigger budget for girls” strategy is mainly followed by middleincome families. Youths receiving more financial support become more liberal in sexuality.

Implication: Bigger budgets for girls give a backlash against traditional son preference, but families are highly stratified in following it.

Keywords: family financial support, gender difference, backlash against son preference, social strata, sexual attitude & behavior