wide and yielded one hundred months of debate over local versus national demonstrations for gay civil rights, single versus multiple issues, and equitable distribution of gay and lesbian leadership. The 1978 assassination of San Francisco’s gay activist Harvey Milk, a national protest advocate, accelerated focus on and resolution of six core problems and yielded the October 14, 1979 National March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights. Organizers claimed 125,000 participants; the U.S. Park Police systematic estimation procedure yielded 75,000. Controversy between organizers and the U.S.P.P about protest event size has a long history irrespective of a protest’s substantive focus (McPhail and McCarthy 2004).

“Then came AIDS. And everything changed” (p.72). This prompted fifteen months of discussion and debate before the second National March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights on October 11, 1987. Organizers claimed 650,000 participants; the U.S.P.P. systematic estimation was 200,000.

Several television sit-coms in the early 1990s cast gays and lesbians in respectable roles as “regular folks.” Increasing numbers of gays and lesbians were elected to local, state and national political office. AIDS remained omnipresent and treatment drugs were finally developed but were prohibitively expensive for most victims. President Clinton did not deliver on campaign promises to gays and lesbians. Those disappointments fueled twenty-seven months of discussion, debate and decision-making prior to the April 25, 1993 National March on Washington for Lesbian, Gay and Bi Equal Rights and Liberation. Organizers claimed one million participants; the U.S.P.P. estimated 300,000.

The 1987 and 1993 marches were preceded and followed by multiple days of lobbying for the stalled gay rights bill. Those days were highlighted by displays of the awesome AIDS Memorial Quilt on the National Mall, by numerous ad hoc demonstrations in the streets by ACT-UP and “Dykes for Civil Rights,” and by more than a thousand couples taking commitment vows in front of the Internal Revenue Service building. In 1987 a civil disobedience protest staged on the steps of the Supreme Court resulted in hundreds of arrests. In 1993 thousands of protesters linked arms and completely encircled the U.S. Capitol with their backs turned toward the members of Congress who had failed to pass the gay civil rights bill.

Five years later that bill still languished in Congress. This miffed a lesbian comic who had participated in organizing the previous marches. She enlisted two leaders of national gay and lesbian groups headquartered in Washington. They pre-emptively called, and appropriated total authority, for planning and organizing the April 30, 2000 Millennium March on Washington for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Equality. The troika’s token invitations to grassroots activists were declined and the march was denounced by other national gay and lesbian organizations. The Washington Post reported that only “tens of thousands” walked from one end of the National Mall to the other. There was no dissentious dialogue among organizers in the 29 months between the initial call for and the occurrence of the fourth march; there was only animus between the troika and the excluded grassroots activists who had effectively developed the three previous marches. The ultimate dividend of dissent—a civil rights bill for lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgenders—remains in limbo.


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Just One Child: Science and Policy in Deng’s China is an innovative and fascinating study of how and why China’s one-child policy was created and promulgated between 1978 and 1980 and how and why it remained in place (with a few modifications allowing rural couples with only daughters to have an additional child) up to the present despite the problems and popular resistance it encountered.

Drawing on over 140 interviews conducted between 1985 and 2006, as well as participant observation among Chinese
scholars and officials and close readings of Chinese government documents and scientific documents, Susan Greenhalgh deftly constructs an engaging and highly revealing account of how a remarkable confluence of history, politics, economics, global discourses, and individual personalities caused China’s top leaders to shift from viewing attempts at population control with suspicion to viewing a one-child policy as absolutely necessary to avert a impending disaster.

The decade Greenhalgh spent working on issues related to China’s population policy for the Population Council and her sustained focus on China’s population policy throughout her academic career allowed her to have candid discussions with Chinese population scholars and high-level Chinese population officials whose views are rarely accessible even within China, much less to most other Western scholars. As part of the Western science and technology that Chinese scholars and officials sought access to, Greenhalgh played an active role in the internationalization of Chinese population studies and had opportunities to talk with almost all of the scientific principals involved in the making of China’s population policy. Her deep understanding of the politics, history, culture, and personalities at the center of China’s population policies enabled her to read between the lines of the propaganda and generic language in government documents and scholarly articles about those policies and discover surprising insights about the architects of those policies, their personalities, motives, and interests, and the micropolitical and discursive processes that led to the creation and promotion of those policies.

Greenhalgh’s writing is clear, concise, and powerful, and her book sometimes reads like a detective story, as she skillfully weaves together a meticulously well-documented account of how the one-child policy was created and ultimately elevated to a central tenet of China’s basic national policy. Once China’s one-child policy became part of the basic law of the People’s Republic of China, challenges to it were made off-limits. But Greenhalgh’s detective work recovers the voices of Chinese scholars and policymakers who had doubts about the one-child policy and offered a less drastic alternative of continuing the two-child policy of the 1970s.

In addition to recovering a critical part of Chinese history, Greenhalgh also contributes to science studies and policy studies by offering an innovative way of looking at how politics, science, policies, and culture shaped each other. Using her account of the history of China’s population policy as a case study, Greenhalgh convincingly argues that “Taking apart policies that seem natural or inevitable and revealing their historical contingency and cultural specificity provides a way to imagine, and to propose, alternative policies that are less unjust than the ones we have now” (p.308).

Greenhalgh tells the remarkable story of how Song Jian, a missile systems control scientist from the Ministry of Aeronautics and Astronautics, became the main advocate and architect of the one-child policy that eventually became part of China’s basic national law. Spurred by their belief that a population crisis was imminent, Song Jian’s team’s proposal drowned out the voices of social scientists who argued for a less strict policy. Unlike demographers who suffered from the politicization associated with social science, scientists like Song Jian were sheltered from political suspicions due to top Chinese leaders’ belief that their work was critical to China’s military strength and the widespread perception that science was itself apolitical. As Greenhalgh demonstrates, however, the making of science was itself a deeply political process. Greenhalgh’s sophisticated reconstruction of the process through which Song and his team cultivated allies among top political leaders by identifying themselves with the prestige and presumed infallibility of science reveals much about the way policies are made in China and possibly elsewhere. By showing how the continuing allure of scientism can explain how and why policy flaws can be overlooked and the voices of critics drowned out, Greenhalgh makes a compelling case for how her approach to integrating science studies and policy studies can help us better understand the making of other policies in China and elsewhere.

Just One Child: Science and Policy in Deng’s China is a groundbreaking book that tells an important and previously largely hidden
story about the making of China’s one-child policy, while offering a fresh and innovative way of looking at the relationship between science and policy. It should be of great interest to anyone interested in China studies, science studies, policy studies, or the role that anthropology can play in integrating these fields.


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In compiling The Long Night of Dark Intent: A Half Century of Cuban Communism, Irving Louis Horowitz gave himself a difficult task. A prolific writer on topics Cuban, hemispheric, and indeed global, Horowitz had no dearth of material from which to choose. And it shows: the 594 pages of text include articles, lectures, reviews, and congressional testimony on topics as varied as the nature of the Castro regime, anti-Semitism in Cuba, the value of Cuban-American social scientists, Cuban militarism, and the “Cuba Lobby,” among others.

The book is organized chronologically into five sections, corresponding to the now five decades of the Cuban Revolution and Horowitz’s writing on it. In theory, a lifetime retrospective offers the unique opportunity to see the evolution of an author’s thought as Cuban realities changed over time. It offers the chance to revise past work, or to reevaluate an argument or assertion not borne out by time. For example, Horowitz predicted the fall of the Castro government in 1992, asserting that there were “five basic elements” that portended its demise. Notwithstanding the lack of evidence to back up his assertions, there was—and is—some truth to each point. However, they clearly did not lead to the death of the regime within the year, nor have they in the 17 years since. What would be fascinating, and indeed would make the book an utterly worthwhile read, would be a retrospective analysis of past arguments. However, while Cuba has evolved and improvised its way through the geopolitical vicissitudes for five decades, Horowitz’s conclusions have not.

Instead of reflection, Horowitz is more interested maintaining steadfast support for the trade embargo, even after over forty years of failing at its presumed goal: bringing down Castro. For Horowitz, political change must precede economic change; any policy that does not isolate Cuba is a form of appeasement. But the analogy to Hitler’s expansionist Germany is facile. Cuba was at worst a destabilizing force, never posing a serious threat to the United States. If Horowitz’s argument rests on the internal dynamics of Cuba, then China would stand as a better parallel than Nazi Germany. But he rejects such a comparison, even as he admits that China is on the road to achieving the “three frees: Free Enterprise. Free Parties. Free Elections” (p.458). Horowitz does not mention that Chinese movement to freer economics, and towards improved (though not ideal) human rights, is the result of over three decades of engagement, not isolation.

This is not to say that the work offers no insight. In chapters that focus on literature reviews, Horowitz’s keen intellect and acerbic style are on full display. This is particularly the case in “Militarization of Guerilla Communism,” as he reviews the first ten or so years of social science writing on the revolution. Similarly, “Cuban Models and Democratic Choices,” raises important questions about social scientific modeling. Models and predictions often fail, he notes, because of “thinking, calculating people“(p.428).

On the whole, however, the work is unsatisfying. At times the book is repetitive: Chapter Nine reprints, with no substantive changes, four pages from Chapter Seven (110–114 and 144–148); a passage about nepotism appears on page 37 in the same form as it did only ten pages earlier. Other selections in the compilation are solely defensive in nature, while one (Chapter 24) highlights the contributions of Cuban-born and Cuban-American social scientists. These chapters focus more on debates within Cuban studies than they do on Cuba, and as such do not deepen one’s understanding of the past 50 years of Cuban society. More baffling, perhaps, are the chapters that only tan-