SHENG 剩.女 NÜ

CHINA’S LEFTOVER WOMEN

By: Jing Si Fan, Lee Ming Rui, Pua Jiaying, Tan Wee Han
DEFINITION

SHENG  剩·女  NÜ
DEFINITION

• Group of females
• Also known as “3 S” - Single, Seventies, Stuck
• Perceived by society to be passed-marriageable age (Around 27 years old)
• Mostly have high qualifications, salary and good looks
• Mainly found in cities with high standards of living
• Have high expectations for a life-partner
• Not to be confused with “恨嫁女” – Women who hate the idea of marriage
Categories of “Leftover Women”

- 25 - 28 years old: “Beginner” Leftover Women
- Still fighting valiantly to find a life partner (剩(圣)斗士)
- 28 - 32 years old: “Intermediate” Leftover Women
- Not many chances to find life partners anymore (必剩(胜)客)
- 32 - 35 years old: “Advanced” Leftover Women
- > 35 years old: “Super” Leftover Women
- Also known as “齐天大剩(圣)”
ORIGINS

• Characteristics of Leftover Women
• Reasons why they are leftover
  - Personal Factors
  - Society Factors
CHARACTERISTICS

• High qualifications, salary… and number in her age
• Loves staying indoors
• Excessively casual, sometimes even untidy
• Would not/Have not/Do not dare to date
• Unsure of her criteria for a life partner
• Has high expectations of herself, hence putting high expectations on men too
• Perfectionist, intolerant towards flaws in others
PERSONAL FACTORS

- Overly picky with men
- Not easy-going
- Self-centered
- Feminist
- Always think that a “better man” will come along next time
- Hurt by past relationships, afraid to fall in love again
- Priorities in life: Career comes first
- Overly-competitive: Afraid that they are unable to find a man that is better than their friends’ partners
PERSONAL FACTORS

- Yearns for a fairytale-like romance
- Overdependence on parents
- Treated like a princess at home
- Unmarried = Chance to depend on their parents for an even longer period of time
SOCIAL FACTORS

- Trend to not get married/get married late
- Follow what is popular, brainwashed by society
- Used to “两点一线” (two dots, one line) way of life, no other activities other than school or work
STATISTICS
SHENG 剩・女 NÜ
CHINA'S GENDER GULF (in hundred millions)

2011 Chinese population:
- Male: 51.9%
- Female: 48.1%

Source: United Nations Development Programme
5-2 全国分性别、职业、婚姻状况的人口

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>职业大类</th>
<th>16岁及以上人口</th>
<th>未婚</th>
<th>有配偶</th>
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<td>合计</td>
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<td>女</td>
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<td>1268771</td>
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<td>1020879</td>
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</table>
Map of leftover women

Q. Do you think you are a leftover woman?

Translated by Offbeat China
China's 'leftover women', unmarried at 27

By Mary Kay Magistad
PRI's The World, Beijing

Over 27? Unmarried? Female? In China, you could be labelled a "leftover woman" by the state - but some professional Chinese women these days are happy being single.

Huang Yuanyuan is working late at her job in a Beijing radio newsroom. She's also stressing out about the fact that the next day, she'll turn 29.

"Scary. I'm one year older," she says. "I'm nervous."

Why?

"Because I'm still single. I have no boyfriend. I'm under big pressure to get married," she says.

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Birds that bring gifts and do the gardening

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Census figures for China show that around one in five women aged 25-29 is unmarried.

The proportion of unmarried men that age is higher - over a third. But that doesn't mean they will easily match up, since Chinese men tend to "marry down", both in terms of age and educational attainment.
CAUSES

S H E N G  剩．女  N Ü
CAUSES OF 剩女 (SHENG NÜ)

- Women’s educational level is found to be negatively associated with entry into marriage

- Active in promoting gender equality

- Women’s participation in paid employment considered as key to women's liberation and China’s economic development

- Transition from a planned to a market economy has eroded the power of the state in sustaining gender equality
CAUSES OF 剩女 (SHENG NÜ)

- Strong incentives to marry up in status in categories such as age and education
- To achieve high living standards through marriage
- Breadwinner role of the husband and the homemaker role of the wife remain firmly in place
- Urban women’s domestic responsibilities are further reinforced by the one-child family policy.

- Career-oriented women are commonly criticised as “selfish,” “non feminine,” and “irresponsible to household needs.”
CAUSES OF 剩女 (SHENG NÜ)

First marriage rates, by education and age, males

Note: <HS = less than senior high school, HS = senior high school.
CAUSES OF 剩女 (SHENG NÜ)

First marriage rates, by education and age, females

Note: <HS = less than senior high school, HS = senior high school.
CAUSES OF 剩女 (SHENG NÜ)

Table 2: Percentage distribution of husbands’ and wives’ educational attainment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Husbands’ Educational Attainment</th>
<th>Wives’ Educational Attainment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Less than high school</td>
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<tr>
<td>Less than high school</td>
<td>23.29</td>
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<tr>
<td>High school</td>
<td>11.39</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vocational college</td>
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<tr>
<td>College or above</td>
<td>0.70</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>37.01</td>
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</table>

Note: N = 2,151. Table entries may not sum to 100.00 because of rounding error.

- Most men and women in urban China marry within the same educational category
- More men than women marry spouses with lower educational attainment than themselves
PROBLEMS FACED BY LEFTOVER WOMEN
PROBLEMS FACED BY 剩女(SHENG NU)

- Collective pressure from the society
PROBLEMS FACED BY 剩女(SHENG NU)

- Collective pressure from the society

- Average age of a woman's first marriage on the rise

  - In 2012 (Shanghai),
    - Average age of 剩女(sheng nu): 27.3 years
    - Up from 26.4 in 2007
    - But by age 35, more than 90% of Chinese women have married

    - Roseann Lake, a Beijing-based researcher
PROBLEMS CAUSED BY LEFTOVER WOMEN

S H E N G  剩．女  N Ü
PROBLEM CAUSED BY LEFTOVER WOMEN

- Population Structure Disorder
- Change in Family structure
- Gender Imbalance
POPULATION STRUCTURE

Fifth National Census (2000)

- 0-14 yrs old: 10.33%
- 15-59 yrs old: 22.89%
- 60 yrs old: 66.78%

Sixth National Census (2010)

- 0-14 yrs old: 13.26%
- 15-59 yrs old: 16.60%
- 60 yrs old: 70.14%
POPULATION STRUCTURE DISORDER

- Increase in the number of leftover women

Decrease in fertility rate

Aging population

The increasing number of leftover women will lead to irregular decline in birth rate which will subsequently lead to an increase in the proportion of agings in the entire population.
Researches show that ‘left women’ are more likely to have depression or anxiety as compared to people who have a partner.
GENDER IMBALANCE

Human Sex Ratio:
The ratio of males to females in a population.

Birth Sex Ratio:
The sex ratio at birth is commonly thought to be 107 boys to 100 girls.

Marriage Squeeze:
In a marriage market who find it difficult to meet and marry desirable and eligible partner.
# GENDER IMBALANCE

China Birth Sex Ratio from 1983 to 2009  
( to every 100 female)

<table>
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<th>年份</th>
<th>出生性别比</th>
<th>年份</th>
<th>出生性别比</th>
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<td>1984</td>
<td>108.5</td>
<td>1985</td>
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<td>1986</td>
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<tr>
<td>1989</td>
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<td>116.1</td>
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<td>1995</td>
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均值：112.19

- Marriage Squeeze
- Marriage Difficulty
- Disordered Society
- Crime rate increase

National Bureau of Statistics of China
GENDER SOCIALIZATION

SOCIAL PERCEPTIONS

Leftover Women vs Men

Leftover Women vs Bachelorette
DOES THE TERM “LEFTOVER MEN” (剩男) EXIST?
SINGLE MEN = GUANG GUN (光棍)

Singles' Day (A.K.A Bachelors' Day or Guanggun Jie)

Eligible Bachelor（黄金单身汉）

“男人四十一朵花，女人三十豆腐渣”

“Men in their forties are flowers in bloom, but women in their thirties are tofu residue.”
REFLECTION OF GENDER PERCEPTIONS IN MODERN CHINA

• **Cultural relativism** - The attitude that in order to understand the traits of another culture, one must view them within the context of that culture.

• **China’s Cultural Background / Traditional Backdrop**

  **Polygamy Society**: Marriage between one man and more than one woman.

• **Leftover Women = Stigma? Alienation?**
SOCIAL PERCEPTIONS

Leftover Women vs Men

Leftover Women vs Bachelorette
BACHELORETTE

/ˈbætʃələrɛt/ an unmarried young woman.

Origins:
1900s, American English, from bachelor with French ending -ette. Replaced earlier bachelor-girl (1895).
REFERENCES

  Retrieved from http://gb.oversea.cnki.net.ezlibproxy1.ntu.edu.sg/

  Retrieved from http://gb.oversea.cnki.net.ezlibproxy1.ntu.edu.sg/


CONCLUSION

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