



wombologue

**A clarion call
Hear them all**

“Wombologue is an online platform using illustrations to document stories of forced abortions in rural China.”



wombologue.com

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So...This still happens?

I know. The first ever question that pops in your mind might be this terrifying tragedy still happens? And my answer is YES. This still happens.

You should know

- Forced abortion still HAPPENS.
- These women are from poor families. Their average household GDP per capita is just about \$6,000.
- The penalty for overly birth is up to 30% to 120% of their annual income.

But...Why?

In the rural areas of China, a newly birth means a new labor force. A new labor force means more potential income in the future. Peasants want to improve their poverty so they give more births. However, they cannot do that because of the national wide population control.

With an underdeveloped economy and a lower literacy rate, people in power positions often take away the justice procedure. Instead, they reward or penalize officials based on how well they keep down the population. This enforcement of the policy leads to widespread abuses including forced abortions or tubal ligations. For those of you may not familiar the term, tubal ligation is a surgical procedure for female sterilization that involves severing and tying the fallopian tubes.

The awful persistence of forced abortions, sterilizations and infanticide in China reflects a contradiction in the Chinese system -- and in the one-child policy itself.

There are two ways out. You pay the penalty. Or you have to go through the horrifying experience. But the fact is that these women are from the poor families. They cannot afford that big amount of money. Their average household GDP per capita is just about \$6,000 while the fine they are facing is 30% to 120% of their annual income. Who wants to give away their sweat money so easily? That's when the tragedy happens

Who makes it happen?

The senior leadership in Beijing may set national policy, such as today's relaxation of the one-child policy, but it's local- and provincial-level officials who choose when, whether and how to actually enforce those policies. If these mid-level officials want to do things differently by continuing to use forced abortions to control birthrates, even though Beijing banned that years ago -- they often do.

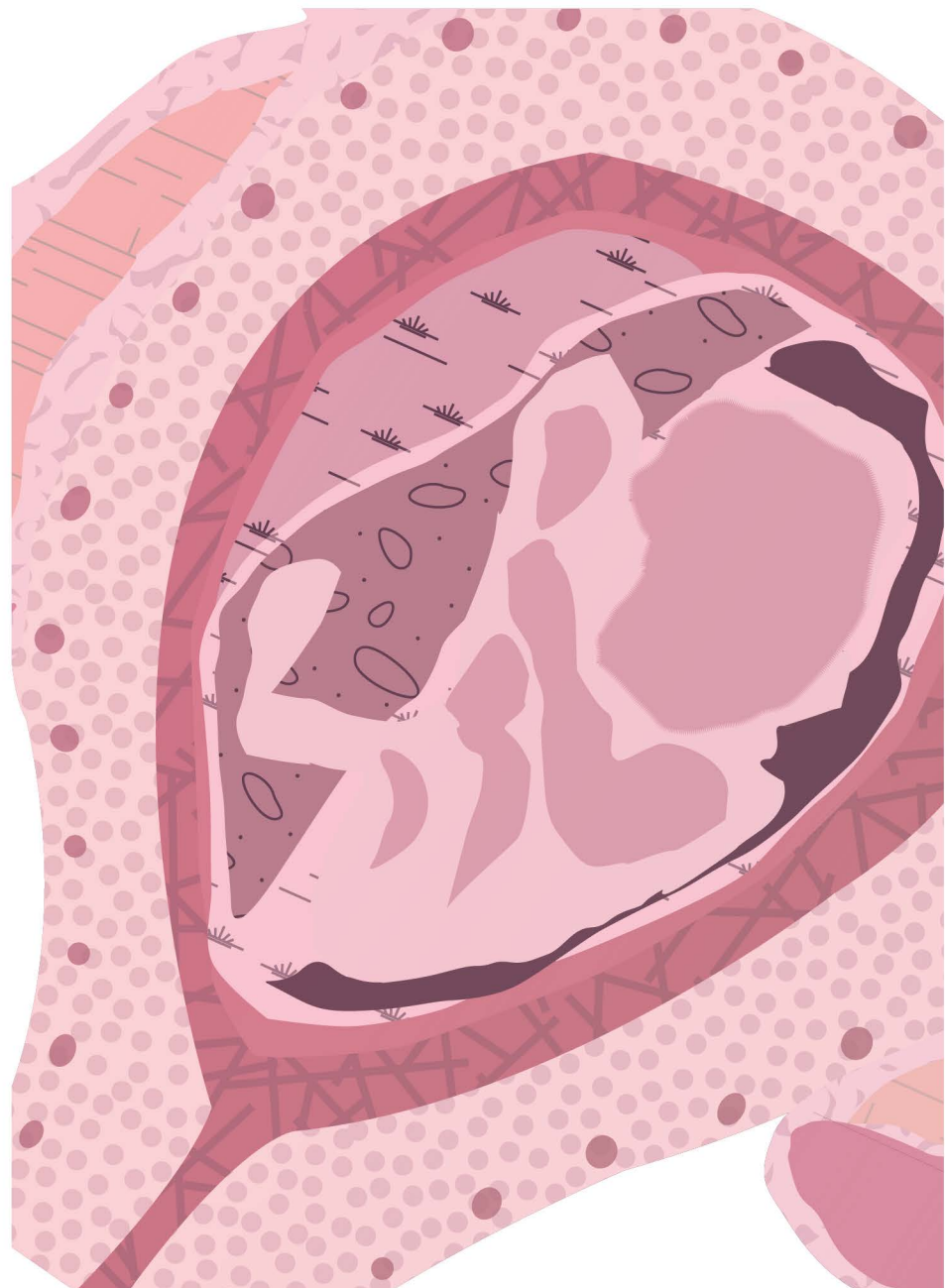
You should know

- It's local and provincial level officials who choose when, whether and how to actually enforce one child policy.
- Forced surgery includes late-term abortion and tubal ligation (sterilization)

But...How?

More than 10 officers could take and seize them on their way out shopping or home. These women are threatened to listen to them. Otherwise officers will beat them. Finally they are forced to have their fingerprints onto the authorization, as late-term abortion or tubal ligation surgery depends on their situations.

Family members cannot accompany them on the way to the hospital. And hours after a poisons injection, the baby in the woman's womb enters the world as a small purple corpse.



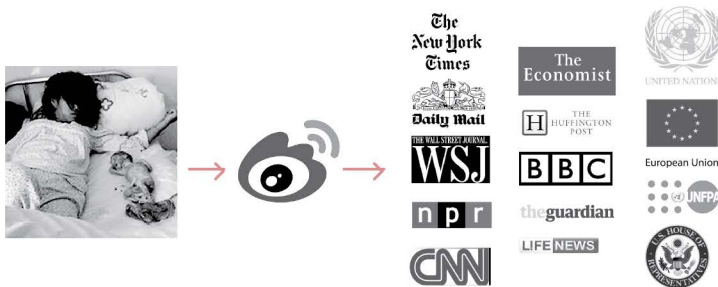
A Case study

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Jianmei Feng, in Shaanxi province, was forced to preform a late-term abortion in early June of 2012, while the fetus was already 7 months old.

Jianmei Feng was the first well know case that was reported by New York Times. On June 11, Feng's family posted graphic pictures of her stillborn child on Weibo, a Chinese micro-blog social media platform. The images soon became a viral phenomenon, sparking controversy within China and drawing international attention to the issue of forced abortions.

On July 5, the European Parliament passed a resolution condemning both Feng's prosecutors and forced abortion in general.



Feng's case has been cited in editorials critical the one-child policy, and has also been used as an example of how the Internet is empowering ordinary people in an environment of government censorship.

Although the international attention kept hit on, reporters inside China often follow one side because they are afraid of being muzzled. Some of the reporters and local newspapers pay attention to the issue but it's not enough yet. **The domestic focus in China on Feng's case faded out within one month.**

What Feng has undergone is a tragedy and she's lucky some kind. Just imagine of those women who have had also gone through the same experience but hardly known by others.

You should know

- Stories of forced abortion are told from only one side.
- The Chinese domestic focus on Feng's case faded out within one months.
- Too many things are behind the curtain. And people are deserved to know better.

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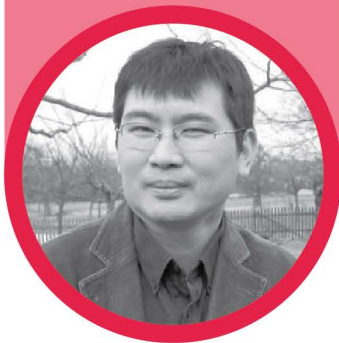
Problems to solve

I ask myself, how can I tell the stories in women's perspective, keep these forced abortion stories visible to the public and make through the government censorship at the same time? Before telling you what I have done of my thesis, allow me to answer these three questions first.

You should know

“(Forced abortion) Stories are always written from the angle of nation. Women's voice are never spoken. Policy is a heavy hat, hence it's more easily to blame. Stories like these need the perspective of gender equality. Who's the one enduring everything? Finally they are women themselves.

Chang Ping, previous editor-in-chief of iSun Media Group of Hong Kong and editor-in-chief of Southern Weekly.



Angle - Women's perspective

Stories are always being told from only one side. Women have seldom speak out and loud that her body was being used as a playground for money and power. Nonetheless to say other journalist article could cover the issue in a perspective rather than the mouthpiece of the government.

Channel - Keep being visible and reach to the younger audience: WeChat

There is no harder riddle to solve in politics than reaching young Chinese who are very interested in the future of their country, but don't engage with traditional news, WeChat may have just made it a whole lot easier to solve this riddle.

WeChat, (Weixin in Chinese), is a mobile text and voice messaging communication mobile app launched by Tencent in China since 2011. It supports users to register as regular user or as public accounts, which enables them to push feeds to subscribers, interact with subscribers and provide them with service. In China, nearly 30% of the whole population actively use Wechat. Besides, Wechat public accounts have become a common service or promotion platform for government, news media companies, NGOs and so on.

A trick - way to escape censorship, or at least to gain extension of time

Government researches keyword in order to take away the content they don't want them to exposed more on the Internet. Yet it's very hard for government to key-word-censor illustration if text was included within the picture. That means if I embedded the information I'd like to post, then it's safer, at least taking them longer time to work things out.

Wombologue

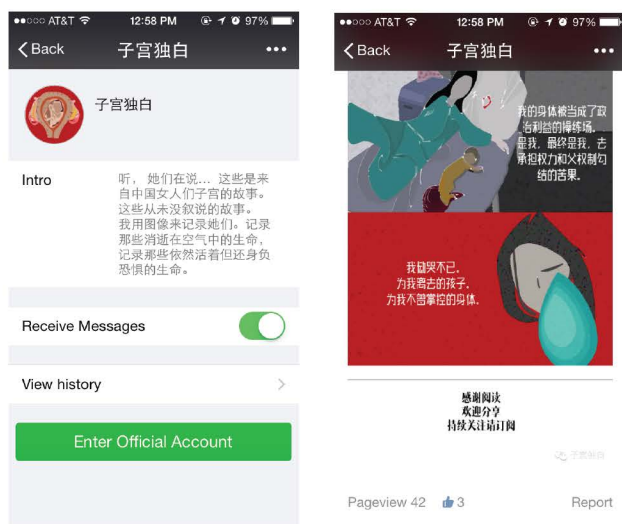
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Wombologue is an online platform using illustrations to document stories of forced abortions in rural China.

I illustrated Jianmei Feng's story as a pilot test.



And uploaded to Wombologue Wechat account.



I got 42 views of Fend's story and 11 subscribers after sharing within my friend circle on WeChat official account services in first 20 hours.

People want to know what's going on behind the curtain. People want to realize that their basic rights are emphasized at their fingertips.

One subscriber, who is from Fujian province, asked me to update quickly with more content. Another official account "Nv Chuang" also connected with me that they'd like to collaborate in the future.

(Nv Chuang, based in Guangdong province, created by a NGO dressed women equality issue, is mostly focused on city females who choose not to give birth.)

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Readers' reactions

Wombologue doesn't want to stop at just being visible. And readers are speaking up for woman's rights!

You should know

- Readers' identities are anonymous.
- Each of them will get a postcard from NYC as a reward.
- They are encouraged to share their post onto their social media as wish.

Who are speaking?

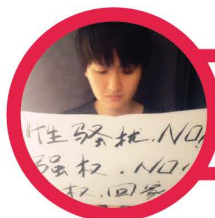
They are the subscribers of Wombologue WeChat account. Through interaction, they are willing to stand up to speak for women body's rights though in a anonymous way.

5 subscribers gave me gratifying reactions after they read the story. Hear what they have said.



"Listen to women. Forced abortion is the captivity. Womb has its own freedom!"

"Giving birth is the basic human right. This should not be stopped. Say NO to forced abortion surgeries!"



"(...Grab women on their way home is) Sexual harrassment. Say NO to nation power. Human rights, please come home."

"Woman has her self-body determination. And womb has its own freedom! Say NO to forced abortions."



"It's totally up to myself to give birth or not. I own my body. No more forced abortion!"

What next?

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Any big picture? Yes! I say it's the time to end forced abortion and I hope it will end soon.

I will keep collect and then illustrate these forced abortion and forced sterilization stories in rural China. And of course, Wombologue.com will continue to document them.

Wombologue.com has both English and Chinese versions of the stories where readers can index the them either by woman's name or location in more depth. There is also a comments section where viewer can leave their thoughts and opinions. Compared with WeChat, the website serves a larger audience most of whom don't use the mobile app and have more interest in viewing the narrative in detail.

If one story arosed 5 persons to speak up and to call to end the forced abotion, then there's still hope to imagine things are getting better.

Wombologue is drawing a bridge, a bridge to make vanished stories visible on one hand and to call to action on the other hand. It's the time to listen to women and it's the time to end forced abortion.

I am hell-bent for a wave. A wave that's a weapon for good. And for sure, you will hear it roar very soon.

Special thanks to Archie Lee Coates IV,
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