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Just One Child Wins Post-1900 Levenson Prize

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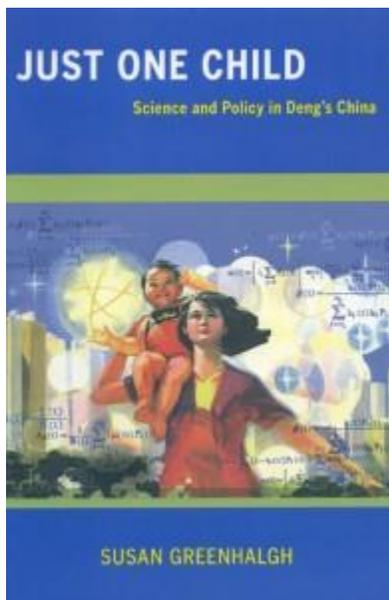
April 6, 2010 in [Awards](#), [Books](#) by [The China Beat](#) | [2 comments](#)

Though *China Beat* contributors come from around the globe, the blog's editorial team is based at UC Irvine. For that reason, we take special pride in announcing that at last month's Association for Asian Studies annual meeting, UCI Professor of Anthropology [Susan Greenhalgh](#) won the Joseph Levenson Prize for Best Book on China Post-1900. Professor Greenhalgh's book, *Just One Child: Science and Policy in Deng's China*, was published by the University of California Press in 2008, and attempts to answer several questions that have permeated her work as a population specialist during the era of the one-child policy:

Why? Why did China's leaders adopt a population policy that was certain to fail in reaching its demographic goals while producing so much harm in the attempt? Where did the one-child policy come from? (xii)

In *Just One Child*, Greenhalgh links the origins of the one-child policy to the work of Chinese missile scientists in the early Deng years, and also demonstrates how reforms during that era were influenced by the allure of *scientism*, or "the view of science as a panacea for all the nation's ills" (24). From the AAS citation for *Just One Child*:

What makes Greenhalgh's book outstanding is that she insightfully utilizes her case study to address questions of a broader scope. She shows how policy gets made at the top of the Chinese party-state and how Deng reformers thought about policy-making in general. She examines the role in modern policy-making of "scientism". . . and shows how this had a particular attraction in the immediate post-Mao period. She sheds new light on the circumstances in which intellectuals began to enter the policy-making arena, and also shows the ways Western models (in this case, the Club of Rome's population/resource projections) influenced Chinese policy. Throughout, she insightfully links her discussions to international discourses in the social sciences. To an unusual degree, *Just One Child* combines entirely original scholarship, a sophisticated conceptual framework, and rigorous analysis.



We're also pleased to note that UCI now has two Levenson Prize winners on its faculty, as Dorothy Solinger, Professor of Political Science, won the award in 2001 for her book, *Contesting Citizenship in Urban China: Peasant Migrants, the State, and the Logic of the Market* (UC Press, 1999).

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