

Abstract

This paper evaluates whether the Great China Famine had negative impacts on survivors. According to the fetal origins hypothesis, cohorts *in utero* during the famine should have suffered the greatest long-term damage. Consistent with this hypothesis, we find a broad spectrum of compromised outcomes for cohorts born in 1960 in the 2000 Chinese Census. These effects are greatest for rural areas, but extend to those who were born in urban areas. We also find that Hong Kong residents who were born in China exhibit inferior health outcomes, including reduced birth weight of children born to parents who themselves were *in utero* during the famine. Health effects exist among emigrants from mainland China despite the selective effects of emigration, which are generally positive. Moreover, we find no corresponding damage among cohorts born in Hong Kong and thereby shielded from the famine.