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The One Child Policy: A Moral Analysis of China's Most Extreme Population Policy

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**The One Child Policy:
A Moral Analysis of China's Most Extreme Population
Policy**

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Class of 2020

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I. Introduction

An invasive species is described by the United States Department of Agriculture as “a species that is non-native to the ecosystem under consideration and whose introduction causes or is likely to cause economic or environmental harm or harm to human health” (Beck et al. 2006) Under this definition humans qualify as an invasive species we are rapidly growing, destroying ecosystems, and at our rate of growth, it gets more and more difficult to aid in the protection of human health. If we the human race were a plant or an animal there would be strategies in how to rid our ecosystem of us the problematic species. This view of humans as an invasive species is a provocative one, but it is a logical extension of ecological concerns about exponential population growth popularly fostered by Ehrlich’s *The Population Bomb* (Ehrlich 1968). However, simply reducing the population is not a solution, there ought to be a more critical analysis of how this problem is addressed and not to sacrifice morality in the process.

The human population size and growth is a concern today because we have reached a size that has opened us up to the threat of collapse. Figure one is a graph of the world population growth broken down by region that highlights the large growth in population we have encountered in the last fifty years propelling us over seven billion people (Roser, Ritchie, and Ortiz-Ospina 2019). The issue with such rapid growth is that there is a concern about how we can effectively manage resources and avoid mass famines, economic collapse, and the most current concern of the environmental crisis.

Population control is seen as a solution to aid in the issue of managing resources, halting issues such as poverty and famine as well as the preservation of environment and humanity's effects of behaving like an invasive species. But how can population control be accomplished without violating human rights?

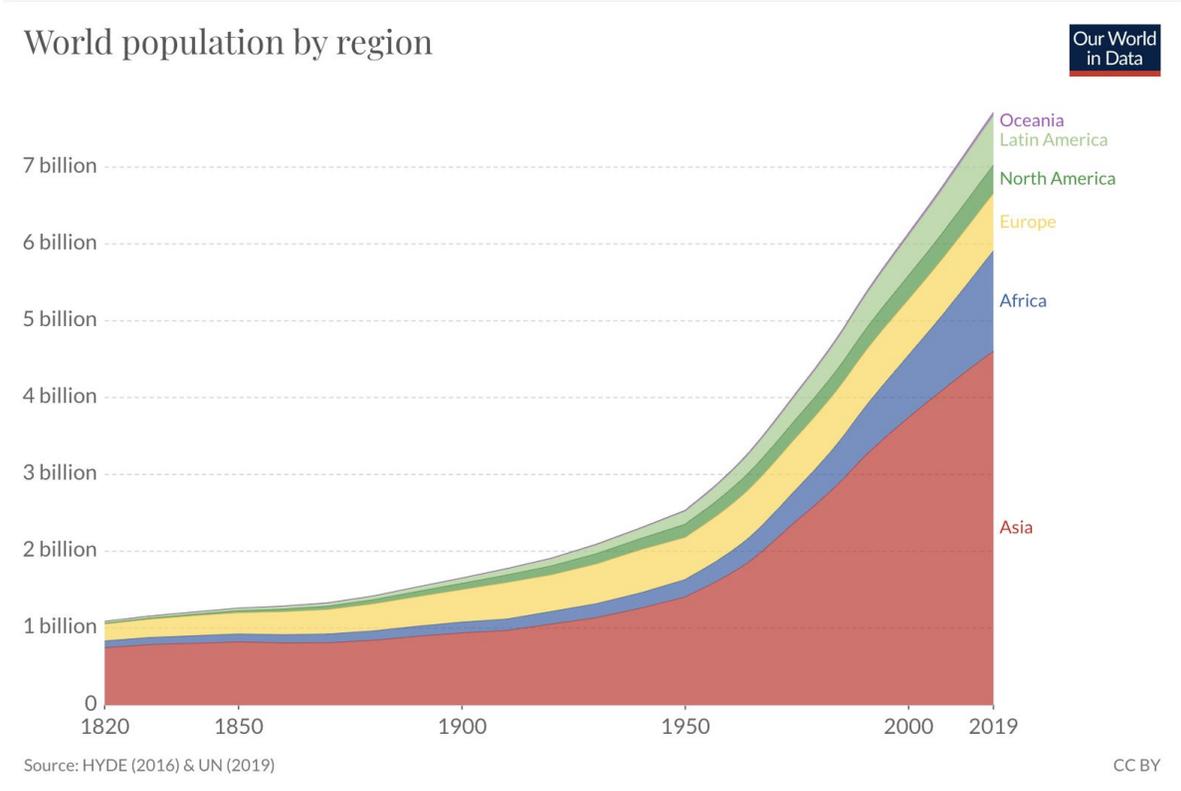


Figure 1. World Population by Region, 1820-2019. Our World in Data (Roser, Ritchie, and Ortiz-Ospina 2019).

The idea of controlling the population and regulating how many children people can have is not a new idea with it being discussed academically in the western world since 1794 amidst Thomas Malthus' population theory. Malthus' theory states that the increase in the human population rises exponentially while food production increases

much slower (Connelly 2008). Malthus is a staple when it comes to population control theory but he is often criticized for being incorrect because he could not have predicted the agricultural revolution that greatly accelerated the ability for the production of food (Connelly 2008). His theory though is still used as an argument for why population control is needed. His failure to predict the agricultural revolution is also used as evidence that human innovation will solve issues of resource scarcity and environmental problems.

Though our population may no longer be concerned with the exponential growth of population being larger than the exponential growth of food there is evidence that our population size is a concern as we are facing an unprecedented environmental crisis meaning the need for major cultural changes and the need for us to regulate our population is more pressing than ever. Today there are nearly 7.8 billion people in the world and growing with people physically changing and affecting all aspects of the planet, making the humans a pinnacle example of an invasive species. Regulating population is critical in addressing the environmental crisis and the depletion of resources like food, clean water, and health care. That is not to say there are no other factors and systematic failures that result in the mismanagement of resources leaving a small rich sector of the population power over the distribution of resources. That being said, we need to regulate our population, past attempts have made some extreme ethical violations including but not limited to eugenics, mandatory female sterilization, and forced abortions. With population control having a long history of violating women's rights and reproductive justice it is important to evaluate the ethics of

population control and how these policies are created and implemented. Figuring out a way to reduce the human population is imperative for the health of the planet, preserving the rights of women and reproductive justice is not something that can be sacrificed.

These larger issues of population control and its policies raise interesting questions. The first is what are unethical approaches to population control and how do they violate women's and reproductive rights? The second question is since we need to be more conscious about our reproduction rates, what is an ethical approach to population control? These are important questions that have motivated a focus on the effects of one population control policy, China's One Child policy.

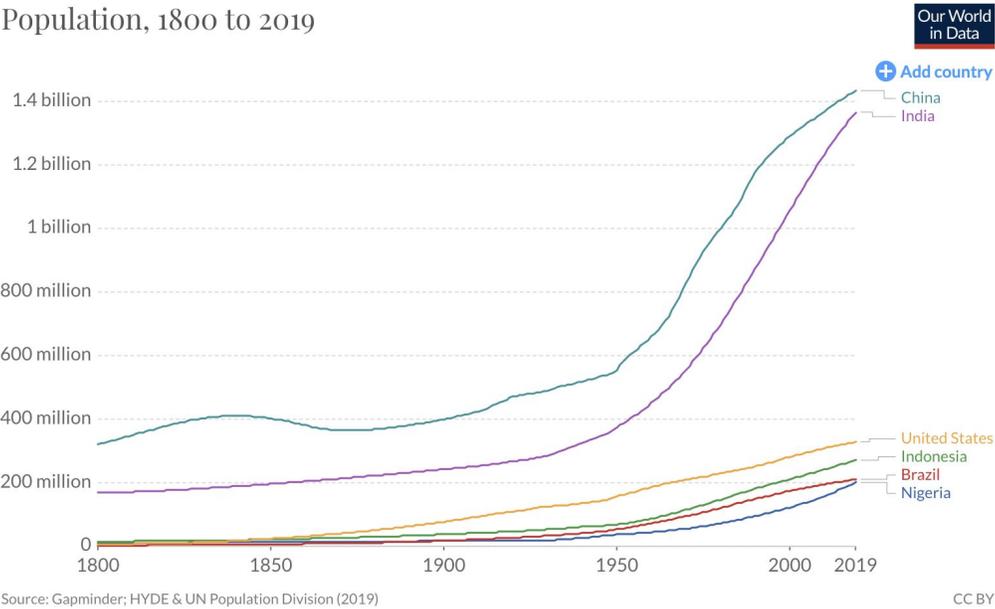


Figure 2. The population of selected countries, 1800 to 2019. OurWorld in Data (Roser, Ritchie, and Ortiz-Ospina 2019).

China deserves ethical analysis in its own right for two reasons, the first is that China has been one of the most populous countries in the world for the past two hundred years and one of the fastest growing for the past hundred years, in comparison to other countries. Figure 2 is a graph of the human population broken down by country and it depicts that China and India are growing much faster than the United States, Indonesia, Brazil, and Nigeria. Of the 7.5 billion people on this planet, China has the largest population of over 1.3 billion people, the most concerning is that China's large population was growing in a very short amount of time ("The World Fact Book 2016-2017" 2017). Before 1949 China's birth and death rates were both incredibly high. Everything shifted with the improved health and collective economics of China when the China Communist Party (CCP) came to power. The population grew from 540 million to 892 million people between 1949 to 1973 (Jisen 1998). China's rapid population growth makes it an ideal country to examine population control. Another reason is that their growth created one of the most famous cases of population control, the China One Child Policy introduced in 1979, and in 2015 it changed to a two child policy (Fong 2016). China's One Child Policy is the second reason why China makes an excellent case study for the ethical analysis of population control. Additionally this specific policy was implemented for decades and now it completed, allowing us to evaluate the repercussions of population control. When evaluating the ethics of population control policies using the China One Child Policy and is an effective structure to analyze modern population control. This indicates that China is a critical

country when it comes to population growth suggesting that it is one of the countries necessary to analyze in the use of population control.

China and its One Child Policy act as a great guide for analyzing the ethics of population control for two reasons. The first is that it is a policy that has a trackable beginning and ending, allowing an in-depth analysis of how China came to the conclusion for the need for population control and the government implemented this policy. The second being China has a unique demographic issue as a result of the China One Child Policy, this is China's large population that is also an aging population. China's population has been considered worrisome for both environmental and economic reasons. However, with China, the One-Child Policy created an aging population and a new type of burden on the generation that came out of the policy. This is because limiting the population to such an extreme created an unequal distribution of demographics with an elderly population not having enough young people to support them. China's unique demographic issues and population policy invites an in-depth ethical analysis of population control and the plethora of issues associated with it.

China's solution to their rapidly growing population was to limit each family to have a single child. This was carried out with planned parenting resources such as access to birth control must frequently a more permanent option like inter uterine devices, abortions, and sterilizations (Fong 2016). The system also included long registration forms to fill out to get permission to have children as well as forced sterilizations after a woman gives birth to her child (Fong 2016). It is notable that the

vast majority of the solutions to enforce population control were placed on the burdens of the woman.

Additionally, the One-Child policy is an interesting case study for population control because it is an example of a population reduction policy enacted internally by the Chinese government and not an overt act of imperialism or neo-colonialism imposed by the international community, as has been the case in other parts of the world. Because the One Child Policy is an example of a policy that was enacted internally it allows an analysis of the ethics of population control without the added complications of outside forces that use population control as a way to take advantage of vulnerable populations. Analyzing the One Child policy will allow there to be a way to look at the effects of a widely enforced population growth policy and the ethics of its enforcement.

Methodology

In this research, I analyze the ethics of the One Child Policy and how this government mandated population policy affects its people. The paper begins with the introduction of the policy with the historical origins of the policy and how it was implemented. Then I move into how this policy illustrates that population control is not just a matter of limiting reproduction, but has major social and cultural implications that will be later addressed in this paper. I am using a variety of sources to gain insight into the One Child Policy and how its implementation has affected the population of its

people. In 2019, Nanfu Wang released a timely documentary that used personal testimony to bring light to the greater concerns of One Child Policy. I used this documentary as an influence for what themes and consequences of the policy to further explore within the policy. Themes such as implementation and the women, families, and children affected by the policy. I then took these personal testimonies and used international reports from organizations such as the United Nations and the World Health Organization, western journalism outlets like the Atlantic and the New York Times, and peer reviewed academic papers. It is important to note that I was not able to find reliable sources from China itself and in some cases, there was no reliable data, that is due to a lack of record keeping or falsified documentation, in those cases, I rely on personal testimony and specific examples to analyze the scenarios the policy has put people in. I understand that this does not indicate how widespread these experiences are within China. However, assuming that these subjects are telling the truth it acts as good material to examine the ethical concerns of the policy. The paper will illustrate the consequences of China's One Child policy and the ethical concerns that need to be considered when implementing a population policy.

II. Origins of the One Child Policy

Mao vs Ma

The China One Child Policy was created in 1979, however, the debate for population control predated the One Child policy originating from the rise of the communist party, which resulted in the rapid growth of the Chinese population. When analyzing the One Child Policy it is critical to understand where the policy originated from. When it comes to the origins of the population control debate in China there are two main players, Chairman Mao Zedong and Ma Yinchu. Mao had a plan to push for increased population control and Ma being a proponent for population control the two were at odds. Their shared history illustrates China's path towards the need for population control and emphasizes the factors that lead China to its rapid growth. It also calls attention to the political and cultural power that the Chinese government had made it an ideal canvas for a strict population growth policy.

Prior to the Chinese Communist Revolution in 1949 China's population size was significantly smaller and it did not have a need to be concerned with population control policies. This is because China's demographics at the time were similar to low income developing countries with high infant mortality rates and low life expectancy rates. China's life expectancy from birth in 1949 was 30-35 years old; by 1980 that expectancy raised to 65 years old (Babiarz et al. 2015). This nearly doubling in life expectancy all occurred during the rule of Mao Chairman of the People's Republic of China who began

with the “Great Leap Forward” (1958-1962), the time when Mao was administering policies in an attempt to shift China from an agrarian society to a communist. This brought in major social and economic changes that drove population growth, which can be attributed to three factors.

The first factor was a public health intervention and Mao’s major health campaigns that played on Chinese nationalism overall, having a critical role in reducing mortality rates in China. Public health campaigns and efforts became popular all over the world making the quality of life and health better; however, Maoist China was able to use the nationalist spirit to implement them under the title “Patriotic Health Campaigns” (Babiarz et al. 2015). The 1950s had some of the first public health campaigns focused on sanitation, this included proper disposing of excrement, eradicating pests linked to major health issues: rats, fleas, mosquitos, and bed bugs, and refusal of amputation of the body that leads to greater infection (Jamison 1984; Banister 1987; Hipgrave 2011). As time went on Mao took these sanitation standards and expanded them throughout the country including rural areas. Within Maoist China came new innovations in life-saving vaccines. These vaccines include polio, measles, diphtheria, whooping cough, scarlet fever, cholera, and smallpox, which in the case of smallpox was distributed rapidly and widespread to that it was completely eradicated by 1960 with the last cases being in Tibet and Yunnan (Jamison 1984; Banister 1987). Finally, in order to address high infant and maternal mortality rates, most of China’s midwives were retrained in the 1950s under the ‘modern midwifery’ campaign, which had a high emphasis on the importance of sanitation during childbirth (Banister 1987).

These campaigns were critical for the health of the nation but also emphasized Mao's priority of health and mortality rates of the country. One of Mao's beliefs is that China's greatest resource is its workforce and that a larger workforce will make China a global power. Public health and the higher quality of healthcare was one of the campaigns and strategies to keep the workforce growing.

The next major factor for the population growth in China was the gain in education. Education plays a major role in health, an increase in basic education increases the quality of life, and the overall health of an individual. The Under Mao literacy rates skyrocketed from 20 percent to 80 percent (Dittmer 1980). During the 1950's China-made large investments in primary and secondary schools under Mao's Great Leap Forward. With an increase in investment in China's citizens results in greater health and a growth in population. Education and public health campaigns work together for people to absorb information on healthcare and have a more widespread effect.

The final factor for China's increase in population is an improvement in basic medical care. Under Mao, the supply of physicians, hospitals, and funding for care increased (Babiarz et al. 2015). There was also a major push and support for a rural health system, including the creation of China's 'barefoot doctors'. The barefoot doctors were secondary school graduates with three to six months of medical training. The quality of these barefoot doctors varied from ill-trained health workers to skilled clinicians (Hipgrave 2011). These doctors would provide basic primary care and

emergency medicine for free to rural populations (Babiarz et al. 2015). More consistent basic health care increases life expectancy and likelihood for people to reproduce. Though having simplified medical training for widespread practitioners is not the ideal solution because they lack a majority of the information and education needed to be a fully functional doctor. But they have saved and improved the lives of many where accessibility to health care is low. These “barefoot doctors” provide a critical service of basic and emergency care for populations that lack them, especially in rural communities.

Having big changes in public health and educational policy has done a lot of good for the population under Mao’s rule but it was not done with selfless intention. The purpose of these policies is to reach numbers that are used to determine the level of a developed country. A few key measures are infant mortality rates, life expectancy, literacy rates, and Gross Domestic Product (GDP). His policies within the great leap forward were all actions he hoped would make these numbers as close to countries like the United States and the United Kingdom in order to prove that China can be a global power even though they do not conform to their methods of reaching that power. He was obsessed with the numbers allowing them to guide his decision making as a leader (Jisen 1998). However, he had a limited view of how to obtain those critical numbers leading to the greatest famine in modern history.

Mao’s belief that the Chinese workforce is the biggest resource of China and its need to grow as big as possible to be the largest possible in order to be a world power

plays a major contribution to the rise of population and the result is widely considered to be one of his greatest failures. Mao declared that a good Chinese citizen's duty is to have many children because he believed that people were the greatest resource of the Chinese Republic and reproduction was the way to get there (Dittmer 1980). Mao's thinking was flawed creating the biggest famine in China in the 20th century from 1959-1961 resulting in at least 36 million deaths (Dittmer 1980). This was under China's Great Leap forward, with China's rapid growth rate and newly found economic power to care for its citizens and able to keep up with the demand with the population growth.

The Famine was a result of the mismanagement of China's resources and workforces leading to a large scale tragedy affecting an entire generation. The Great Famine was due to Mao's attempts in raising China's GDP by dismantling agriculture communities and families and instead of using a commune model. He then reorganized the labor placing more of the workforce in the industry and building infrastructure in attempts to boost China's economy. This meant less labor and resources in agriculture left it vulnerable to a mix of natural disasters such as drought and locusts that left China in the great famine with one of the most devastating mass casualties. The results of which lowered Mao's power and dismantled his plans under the Great Leap forward. It also created a nationwide shared experience of fear that permeates generations and can explain how the One Child Policy could be widely accepted. The fear of the famine and an event like that happening again lives with generations to this day because Mao's failure in managing resources and inability to care for the rapidly expanding population

made them realize that their size makes them vulnerable if they don't have the resources that can care for the population.

This sentiment of fear gave rise to the exploration of population control and the later ability for there to be a strict and extreme policy to decrease population growth. Though the great famine was a mistake by the limited viewpoint of Mao and his goals of building China a global superpower. Even though this was a mistake by the person in power it gave rise to the concern about China's unprecedented growth and size of the population.

Ma Yinchu is considered the founder of Chinese population control and was one of the few voices warning Mao about the dangers of the rapid and uncontrolled growth of the Chinese population. Starting his campaign for government control of fertility in 1957 at the same time Mao Ze Dong was advocating for the Great Leap Forward. He based his population theory on the ideas of Thomas Malthus and attempted to discredit the blind faith in a large workforce being the economic solution for China's success. Ma Yinchu was the political opposition to Mao and was the biggest advocate for population control. He went to school in the United States at Yale for his undergrad and Columbia where he got his doctorate in economics (Jackson 2012). There he was introduced to western philosophies and theory of population control. After he finished his education in the United States he went back to China as an academic and started to teach and bring attention to his New Population Theory.

In 1953 the Chinese Government had some efforts towards family planning even including language for birth control in the National Agricultural Development Plan for 1956-1967, endorsed by Chairman Mao (Jackson 2012). Ma took this as his opportunity to submit his theory on population and even gained support from Chairman Mao. This was quickly revoked when Mao reverted back to the traditional Chinese position of the Chinese population and its large size being their most valuable resource. After the famine when Mao lost some of his political power he attempted to remedy this and regain his power through the Cultural Revolution. Here he attempted to change cultural attitudes and rebuild his power through the people. This included the restriction of all outside media and opinions not sanctioned by Mao and the communist party including media and within the universities. Mao claimed Ma as a western Malthusian who is against the party and a traitor to China. This is the same time where Mao was persecuting academics who preached against him and his cultural revolution and sending a lot of them to death. Ma, one of the lucky ones, was placed in exile for two decades until Mao's death.

With Mao's death, Ma was welcomed back to China, he became the President of the University of Beijing and to this day celebrated as the father of family planning (Jackson 2012). That being said, his push for family planning in China brought the One Child Policy, resulting in a critical sex ratio, forced abortions and sterilizations, and rigid application of the policy creating one of the largest aging populations. Ma was vocally against the implementation of the policy more specifically its use of abortion instead he was pushing for delayed marriages and conception with universally

accessible birth control so people could plan their family for a later time frame than past generations. That being said, these two men together were able to set China up to implement the One Child Policy. Ma began conversations and instilled an urgency for family planning. While Mao created a political power, The People's Republic of China, that could create large scale cultural changes and enforce strict and rigid policies (Jackson 2012).

The grasp China has on the culture of the people is how it was able to create a strict policy and effectively implement it throughout China. It is one of its unique features of the Chinese government because whether it identifies as communist or socialist in practice it is authoritarian and once the government makes a decision it can carry it out nationally with little resistance. Attempts of nationwide policy for population control in other countries have often been unsuccessful because there are too many barriers for implementation and even passing legislation. Take India, a country that shares China's concern with having over a billion people, they are unable to have a widespread policy to be enforced like China because they don't share a united authoritarian ruling party and instead have democracy. Mao's legacy both the good and bad has primed China for a radical population control policy and that is where the One-Child Policy is created.

Implementation

The China One Child Policy was intended as a temporary push to reduce the overall population within China in order to address the concerns of resource management and the overall economic and lifestyle wellbeing. China was rooted in Communism now Socialism as a society, there is value collectivism allowing China and its government to change the culture. This also highlights one of the critical differences between the China One Child policy and other population control policies being that it was implemented within the country instead of on to it. When examining China and its population control policy it is critical to also be examining the state's tools and its ability for implementation.

A key to China's Population policy being ethically more reasonable than some of its counterparts like in India and Africa is because it is an act of self-regulation in order to address its rapid population growth that threatens their economic growth and quality of life. In other cases of population control policy, the policy has clear themes of imperialism and the targeting of vulnerable populations from more affluent outsiders. For instance, in the United States, population reduction and family planning programming is disproportionately targeting low income and black women (Kuumba 1993). In African countries like Kenya, population growth concerns and pushes towards population growth regulation is coming from outside organizations like the International Planned Parenthood Federation, which is supported by the United Nations through WHO and UNFPA, and the United States through USAID (Karanja

1997). These organizations together attempted depopulation of Kenya at the expense of Kenya's people and the potential for economic growth (Karanja 1997). This is a clear act of imperialism and neo-colonialism using population control as a way to control vulnerable countries and maintain political and economic power over them. This differs greatly from China's population policy because it was created and enforced all internally without international pressures and regulations.

China has self-implemented a strict nationwide population control policy that targeted the majority of the population, and that it didn't come from outside forces is the basis of it being able to work so widespread and enforcing it through a change of culture. In fact, China was able to engulf daily life with its message of the importance of population control and how having no more than a single child is their duty to the country.

China itself created the China One Child Policy as a way to slow down population growth in fear that they would reach a point where there are not enough resources to support that number. As a result, they created the One Child Policy which placed restrictions on couples having more than one child. More specifically this restriction was more focused on the majority ethnic group the Han and in the cities. Rural communities, ethnic minorities, and people whose parents are only children have an exemption and can apply for a second child, but there are minimum requirements of years between the two children. On a national level, the policy enacted universal access to birth control and family planning for all people. The majority of which were birth

control methods that were more permanent contraceptive like implants, intrauterine devices, and sterilization. A critical tool of getting the entire country invested in the policy was through incentivizing at the family level to the local government to the national level.

At the national level State was enforcing this policy by placing pressure on local governments to hit certain numbers including the number of children each year. This is done by rewarding them if they don't exceed the quota and punished if they surpass them. This, however, does not specify how the local government is to reach the goals given to them resulting in extreme solutions for implementation including but not limited to forced abortion and sterilization, large fines around one-third of a family's income, or the destruction of homes and belongings. Though the government on the national level is not directly enacting these problematic implementation strategies they create a system of pressure that allows these practices and does not intervene local government from doing this as long as they reach the numbers. The star system is an example of how the national government incentivizes communities and families to reach their numbers.

The star system is a visual and public reward system that pressures both local government and households to embody ideals and reach the numerical goals of the state. For individual families, the stars represent and reward them for what makes a good Chinese citizen, including a star for having only one child (Fong 2016). This use of a reward system creates a culture of pride and motivation. China is a society that values

the collective and visually being able to show that you are playing your role for the collective by not having more than one child. This can also act as a negative reinforcement for those who cannot achieve that star. When a family has more than one child they do not earn that star and it is a public marker that they did not play their part in the collective and create shame for not conforming to the policy even if they got approval for a second child (Wang 2019). Visual reinforcement of the One Child policy was a successful tool in making the actions of a community member the responsibility of the entire community.

China was also able to financially incentivize the One Child policy through the One Child Certification program. After a couple has had their first child they are allowed to sign a contract promising that they would not have a second child and as a result receive tax exemptions and other incentives (Park and Han 1990). The incentives awarded were based on the community. In urban areas, people would receive cash allowances for the health of their child up to 14 years old (Park and Han 1990). In rural areas, it was the allotment of more land or the retainment of grain (Park and Han 1990.) If they broke this contract they would lose all of these incentives. An incentive based implementation of the policy is more ethical than their method of coercion and force and resulted in people choosing to follow the One Child policy and make certain reproductive choices. This, however, gets corrupted on the implementation of the policy by local government and national government placing the pressure to allow these unethical practice

Propaganda was critical in the indoctrination of the policy and there are examples of efforts around the country. This includes everything from idealist posters



Picture 1: Translation: Carry out family planning, implement the basic national policy, 1986. (chinese posters.net, 2006).

of the amazing life that comes with only one child to videos of children threatening prison if someone breaks the policy. The propaganda about the One Child Policy has become a part of the daily lived experience in China which creates a big effect it has on the ability to change the culture.

There were two strategies that the state would implement in their propaganda, the first as demonstrated in picture one is romanticizing the lifestyle of following the One Child policy. The second being through threats of imprisonment or large fines for violating the policy. Photo one uses a picture of a mother and child in light and futuristic symbolism like the atom the child is holding to suggest those who follow the One Child policy will be given prosperity and good fortune. Photo two is a banner that is hung in towns, this



Picture 2:(Wang 2019)

is a threat for women who refuse to get sterilized. Unlike the first photo, it is just plain text with no art nor imagery to further carry out the message. The country started with propaganda like photo one to encourage people to follow the policy targeting loyalty for their family and the nation. Then they shifted toward threatening and fear tactics to get people to follow the policy. Aggressive propaganda pushes with threats that were happening when the government needed money. The Chinese government looked towards social policy violations like failure to follow the One Child policy and fine them or threaten imprisonment (Wang 2019). These two different approaches for propaganda highlight the ethical and unethical way to implement a policy. The first photo uses encouragement and cultural ties for the nation to have people's views and culture to change and value single child homes. The second uses threats of imprisonment or losing all of their money to force people to get sterilizations, abortions if they accidentally conceive, and using fear to make them follow their rules.

However, these forms of propaganda both have a concerning similarity which is they exclusively are targeting women. This is because the policy itself was built to target women and the propaganda represents that. The first photo uses mother and child as a symbol for the policy and the sterilization in the second photo is targeted towards women since the government targeted permanent birth control campaigns were for women. The One Child policy like many population policies disproportionately targets women and uses them as instruments of the policy.

Another place where the implementation of the policy is in the workplace under the mandatory family planning manager. Under Mao there was a rise in women in the workplace which continues to this day, resulting in the workplace being an area to address family planning and enforcement of the China One Child policy. At jobs from factory work to university positions, a woman has to take on the role of managing family planning for all of the women within that job. This is a fellow female colleague who has the role of keeping track of the reproductive health and practices of all other women in that place of work; including invasive questions about their periods, methods of birth control, and time frame for reproduction. This role and line of questioning were not extended to their male counterparts emphasizing that this policy targets women and it's a disproportionate effect on women.

Implementation is the enforcement that the national government of China is placing on local government, business, and individuals to encourage widespread adoption of the China One Child Policy. Though the National government's idealism of the policy was what they preached with the implementation of the policy it placed pressures and permitted local government and families to perform ethical violations. The following section will further explore the specific ethical violations such as abortions and sterilization, gender imbalance, child abandonment, and family burdens. The reality is that though China's national government didn't directly call for the questionable practices and consequences of the policy they are still responsible for the outcomes of the One-Child Policy because they used fear tactics to enforce it.

III. Moral Arguments of the One Child Policy

The following ethical analysis of the China One Child Policy is broken into two main ethical concerns. The first is an issue of consequentialism, meaning the negative consequences far outweigh the benefits of this policy. Most notably there are a plethora of demographic consequences that resulted from the One Child policy, some of them are addressed like the following ethnic minorities sections, others will be demonstrated through the issues of familial burden and gender inequality. China's One Child policy, though well-intentioned, created a cultural environment for harms done both to and by China's people that will be further explained in this section. This form of ethical violation is rooted in the idea that the consequences are more harmful than the benefits of the policy

The second ethical concern that will be addressed in the following section on the moral argument of the One Child Policy is rights violations, specifically violations of women's reproductive rights. This is different from consequentialism because these violations would be wrong even if the benefits resulting from them outweighed their harms.

The final section of my moral argument attributes both the consequentialist and rights criticisms to China's authoritarianism. The abuse of compulsory powers with which it created the One Child policy, gave way to the ethical violations.

The following subsections will reveal the moral consequences of the One Child policy and explain how China's lack of foresight placed its citizens in morally questionable scenarios. It will reveal the consequences of the policy and how the One Child policy and the different victims of this policy

Ethnic Minorities and Other Exceptions of the Policy

The strength of the One Child policy because it is implemented towards the majority of the population instead of minority and disenfranchised groups. The One Child policy is targeted and most strictly enforced towards the Hans ethnic groups which makes up 92% of the total population (Bolick 2020). Under the One Child policy in order to slow the population growth, it restricts couples to having a single child but there were exceptions made for minority groups, rural communities, and families who have had both parents in a couple that is only children. Permitting specific groups to have two or in rare cases, three children. These exceptions were created in order to address the concern of eugenics and erasing minority groups as well as rural communities through a restrictive population policy. Though the exceptions for the policy are dependent on the region the fact the minority groups and the concern of erasing them from the population are considered indicates a level of thoughtfulness for the needs of the population. Targeting a population policy towards the majority population is a strength for China's One Child policy because it makes it clear that the

purpose of the policy is to reduce population growth and not further oppress marginalized groups.

In the creation of the One Child policy, there were set exceptions allowing a couple to have a second child, these exceptions usually include: (1) the child has a non-inheritable disability that will inhibit them to be able to become laborers; (2) the couple is in their second marriage where only one of the partners has a child from their previous marriage; (3) the couple was unable to conceive for many years adopt a child and then conceive a second child; (4) couples belong to an ethnic minority group; and (5) rural couples for whom the limitations of having only one child will create “hardship” (Park and Han 1990). These exceptions are created in order to address the economic and demographic concerns that come with limitations on how many children people can have.

According to the 1953 and 1964 census minority groups were not only significantly smaller than the Han majority but the growth rate of ethnic minorities is also lower to the point where some groups were at the edge of extinction (Park and Han 1990) This trend shifted between 1964 and 1982 the growth rate of ethnic minorities growing 68.4% while the Han growth rate is 43.2% (Park and Han 1990). This rise in growth for minority groups can be contributed to two things, the introduction of exceptions for minority groups from the One Child policy in many communities and the enactment of the Restorations and Correction of Ethnic Status in 1978. This was the enforcement of correctly measuring the number of minorities that are in their

population for the good of these groups resulting in many people who previously concealed their ethnic identity (Park and Han 1990). The provisions that were created for the ethnic minorities highlights that the policymakers were flexible enough to the adjustments to maintain the health of their demographics and not target marginalized groups. However, even though there were exceptions for minority groups, the cultural influence and negative attitude for having more than one child resulted in the majority of couples not having the permitted two or three children (Clark and Bryant, 2009).

Circumstance	Rural (N)	Urban (N)
First child is a girl	51.3 (113)	24.5 (53)
First child is disabled	34.2 (114)	22.6 (53)
Parents are only children	70.3 (111)	47.2 (53)
Parents have special occupations	66.7 (111)	34.6 (52)

Figure 3. Percentage of select rural and urban communities that changed the policy at least once between the years 1989-1993 in consideration for what circumstances allow a couple to have another child (Short and Fengying 1998).

There were additional exceptions that were created after the policy was created and adjustments for the policy were happening until its ending in 2016. This is also what makes it a strength of the policy because it is an example of China changing the policy and creating exceptions until the very end. Figure 3 depicts a set of randomly selected communities and whether they created expectations in the policy and for which circumstance. This figure demonstrates that rural communities make more exceptions to the One Child policy. It also demonstrates that these circumstances were

created for the preservation of families when a second child was necessary to reduce physical and financial burden. Creating exceptions for families that have a first child as a girl allows them to have the financial support that is more guaranteed with a boy as seen in the section below on the family burden and sex-selective abortion. The exception for people with a disabled child also gives them the opportunity to have a child that can support them financially. Though it is considered for communities to create an opportunity for financial security, it also highlights the systematic issues that are discriminatory to women and disabled people. Though a second child will aid in the financial concerns there also needs to be the addressing of systematic issues that cause these families to need a second child. The exception for parents with special occupations that second children are necessary for their survival like farmers and family businesses that rely on the work of a large family to survive. Having exceptions for circumstances in the One Child policy is the strength of the policy and is evidence that the policy creation is for the reduction of population growth and not for the erosion of marginalized groups.

This is unique in comparison to population policies and family planning implementation that has occurred in the United States. In the United States attempts for family planning have a long history of targeting the marginalized groups more specifically poor ethnic minorities. For example, Margret Sanger, an American pioneer in Family planning who opened up the first clinic for birth control, was also a eugenicist. She used family planning and her rhetoric of eugenics to encourage

targeting poor women of color perpetuating the history of sterilization and segregation for the white majority (Latson 2016).

Using family planning as a tool for the further marginalization of women was not just occurring with Margret Sanger and her eugenic rhetoric but between 1919 and 1952 more than 20,000 women were sterilized under eugenic laws that sought control of reproduction and sterilized individuals that they found unfit and defective (Stern et al. 2017). The people that were found unfit and defective were poor women of color - mainly Latinas, which is the result of racism and eugenic sentiment. Family planning and population policy that target marginalized groups are most concerned with resource management and the health of the demographics but instead is a policy that is concerned with the erosion of marginalized groups.

Though there were exceptions for ethnic minority and rural communities, China did target people with disabilities and birth defects. This included the coercion of women who conceived a child with any birth defects to abort their fetus. The Chinese national government had mandated that all fetuses with a birth defect must be aborted (Freedman 1994). Not only were women in general encouraged to get abortions but the Chinese government also was discriminating against disabled people through the attempt in aborted all fetuses with a disability at any level of development. When a policy relies on the coercion and control of women's bodies to accomplish its task of reducing the growth of the population it is failing in the ethical treatment of women and is a failure as an ethical population policy.

Not only were women who had their allotted child, forced to be sterilized but also people with any disability. As a form of eugenics, the Chinese government forcibly sterilized all individuals who had a disability (Freedman 1994). Though the sterilization of women after their first child was done through local government this was an example of the national government forcing sterilization and as an act of eugenics. This was one part of the population policy that was directed towards minority groups and not majority groups.

The ethical strength of China's One Child policy is that it is implemented on the majority of the population and makes exceptions for marginalized groups to assist with economic constraints and preserve minority groups. This indicates that the policy's purpose is the reduction of population growth and not the control and erosion of marginalized groups.

Family Burden

The China One Child policy has created major demographic discrepancies affecting family dynamics and the care of an aging population. The foundation of China's care is based on the duties of the family and the cultural value of sons. The burden on the family is one of the ethical consequences of the policy and analyzing the effects it has on generations has created economic instability.

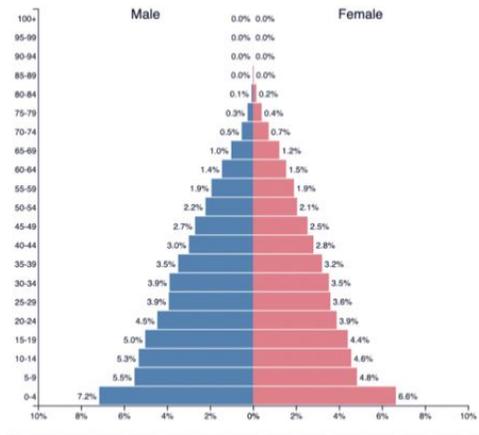
When it comes to the Chinese culture, the care of the parents as they get older is placed on the son. With one child the one child has to care for their parents and both

sets of their grandparents creating what is known as the 4:2:1 burden. This is all based on the Confucious ideal of filial piety and how it is the ultimate respect of parents, elders, and ancestors (Tsai 2005). Filial piety as a value stems from Chinese culture and family structure is exemplified by being a collective society and not an individualist (Ringmar 2005). Having this emphasis on familial duty and a person's values, motivations were based on how they represent the family which in turn develops a sense of responsibility for caring for your parents and grandparents. This sense of duty and care is mainly placed on the male progeny in a family because when women are married they are considered to be a part of their husband's family and no longer responsible for their parents. This principle is so ingrained into the public identity that laws and public opinion have enforced familial support being the main source of care for elders (Liu 2000). This is such a staple in care that there is a belief to have children as a sense of social security and few people save for elder care and age (Jiang and Sánchez-Barricarte 2011). The care of the elderly is now becoming an issue in the wake of the One-Child Policy because traditionally more children meant more happiness meaning there would be plenty of care support. Now with people only having one child, all of the care is placed on a single person.

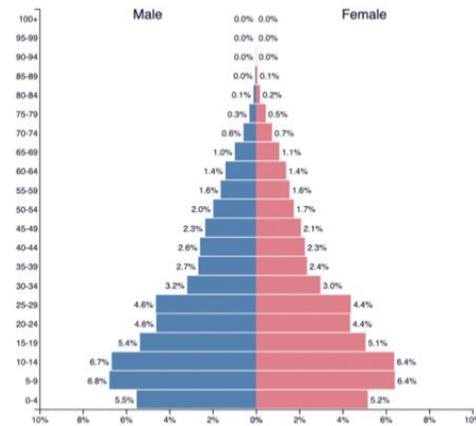
Though Mao under the cultural revolution attempted to end the tradition of filial piety and instead reinforce that loyalty to the nation, the cultural ties to family are still strong. After the One Child policy families no longer had a largely younger generation to take care of the elderly both physically and financially

When it comes to the One-Child Policy this responsibility for caring for one's parents becomes a burden. The 4:2:1 burden means for families one child is then responsible to care for their parents and two sets of grandparents, creating an emotional and economic burden on one person and considerable vulnerability for the grandparents' generation. For the segment of the population in a low socioeconomic standing, this can pigeon hole them with no space for economic growth. There are some social security programs being created for both rural and city elderly populations that are set to not be able to maintain the growing aging population, reinforcing the informal family system of care. Not only is this burden felt by family members but it is felt by the economy and well being of the entire nation, and that is because the One-Child policy has created the issue of an aging population. An aging population is defined as a country where more than 10% of the population being over the age of 60, China has 13% of its population over the age of 60 (M. Jiang et al. 2018).

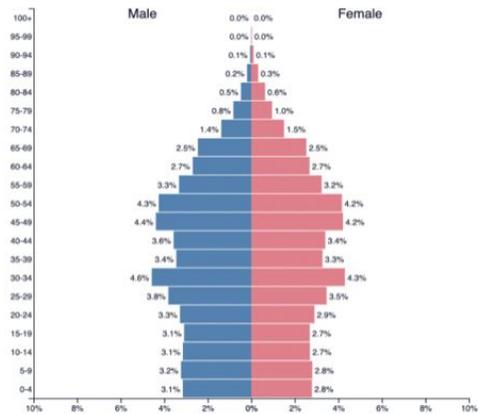
China ▼
1950
Population: 554,419,268



China ▼
1979
Population: 986,132,213



China ▼
2019
Population: 1,433,783,691



China ▼
2040
Population: 1,449,031,420

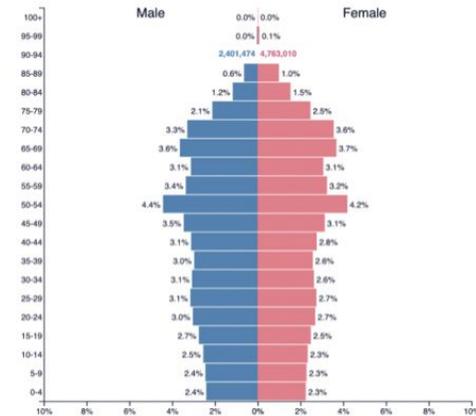


Figure 3. China's population pyramids from the years 1950,1979,2020, and the prediction for 2040 broken down by sex and cohort. 1950 is the year Mao took. 1979 is the year China enacted the One Child policy. 2019 is the current demographic of China. The 2040 population pyramid is the prediction for what China's demographics will look like in 20 years. (PopulationPyramid.net 2019)

The population pyramids demonstrate how the One Child policy created an aging population and highlights how the policy has depleted the Chinese workforces and increased its elderly population. The 1950 population pyramid is from before Mao and the Great Leap Forward, this pyramid is the classic shape of a low-income country which is making a nearly perfect pyramid shape. Prior to Mao and the communist party

making major changes to China and their quality of life, there was both a high infant mortality rate and a low life expectancy resulting in a slow-growing population. During Mao's control, there was a lot of healthcare and infrastructure improvements that resulted in China's rapid growth and the reason why China decided to enact the one Child Policy. At this time the population pyramid is bottom-heavy, meaning the majority of the population is young and as a result, China has a large portion of their population in the age range to be in the workforce. China's large labor forces were what propelled them in the global market and made them an economic powerhouse allowing them to compete with high-income countries (Campbell 2019). With the policy being enforced for more than 20 years it has permanently impacted China's demographics to this day, as seen in the 2019 population pyramid. The 2019 population pyramid is an unhealthy rectangle shape. This means that the largest cohort is in their 45-55 and the younger cohorts are shrinking and the elderly cohorts are growing. Finally, the 2040 projection indicates that in the next 20 years the population pyramid will be a more rectangle shape with fewer people in the age group to be in the labor force and not a large enough replacement rate for people to enter the workforce. With more people out of the workforce than it creates economic issues for the entire country.

As an aside, this trend of an aging population and concern is not only seen in China but also has major effects in Japan. In Japan people in their twenties are putting off reproducing and having fewer children than was traditional, resulting in an aging population and fewer people to replace the elderly in the workforce. Japan has the

oldest population in the world and as they have become more industrialized and have stepped away from the agrarian culture the birth rate has dropped with having an extremely low 0-14 years old population of 13% while the total world's 0-14 years old population is 25.8% (The World Bank 2019). This has created a huge economic crisis within Japan, including mass closings of local businesses, the inability for them to replace the workforce, a strain on the social security and health care system (Takeo and Dormido 2019). Japan and its aging population is the warning of the economic strains for high income countries and was the first place where we saw this trend that is not occurring all over the world including the United States, the United Kingdom, and now China.

China's One Child policy has created a burden on the family and the economy by not being able to care for the aging population. One of which is the impact it has on health care. Elderly people with their declining physical function and increased morbidity they utilize a lot of the healthcare system. For instance, in the United States, 33% of health expenditure is spent on the elderly (M. Jiang et al. 2018). In China, with a growing elderly population, it is more difficult to cover their health needs and the younger generations cannot keep up with this demand of care.

Between families unable to support the financial burden of the family's entire elderly generation and the rapidly aging population that has resulted from the One Child policy indicates how a population policy without careful planning can have negative effects on the demographic and financial health of the country. Population

policies target the limiting of the reproduction but when done too quickly it results in the extreme financial and demographic burdens that negatively impact all of the people of the nation.

The Second Child

When a woman gets pregnant with her second child the government expects her to get an abortion regardless of how far along she is - a violation of her reproductive autonomy already discussed above. So if she chooses to give birth to the child she has limited options. The first is to keep the child and risk being caught, incurring large fines, confiscation of personal possessions, destruction of their home, and imprisonment. The child would be undocumented meaning they would be unable to get a job, education, and health care. Her other options are to give or sell the child to an adoption agency or abandon her child which can result in death. This means her options are extremely limited and no completely ethical solution and both situations severely damage the quality of life for both the parents and the child.

Since the unapproved second child is illegal, finding reliable data is not possible. Instead, I will rely on one poignant piece of personal testimony from sources and the analysis of this specific instance to indicate the ethical responsibility the government has to these children that are suffering because of the One Child Policy.

According to journalist Mei Fong in her book *One Child: The Story of China's Most Radical Experiment*. A woman during the 2016 Beijing Olympics stands in the

middle of the Olympic village with a sign, written on it says “I just want to go to school”. She is quickly forcibly removed by police and the bustle of the Olympics continues. She returns every day with her sign just to be removed within minutes. According to Fong and the small amount of coverage of this protestor, there are people in China who are undocumented in their own country of birth. These lost children are a result of high fines for unapproved second children that can range to be four times the annual income of a family, resulting in them growing up legally not be recognized by China (Fong 2016). Assuming she is correct, the inability of this portion of the population to gain legal recognition creates numerous effects including no access to education and healthcare as well as the inability to get a job. These consequences are entangled with major ethical concerns.

This is all a result of one of the main regulatory tools of the One Child Policy being large fines as punishment for those who have more than one child. However, these fines are so large that they can be completely debilitating and result in families unable to pay. Without being to pay the fine the child can never be registered and is left legally not existing. With a financial barrier being a major deterrent for breaking the One Child policy, it lends to the idea of how a policy like this unequally affects those of low socioeconomic backgrounds and creates a greater burden for those disenfranchised.

When China refuses to give legal personhood to the people who are born in China but are the second child it is an injustice to the person. That is because in China

the government provides everything necessary for survival healthcare, education, and jobs. Without being recognized as a citizen of China they have to be completely dependent on a family who has citizenship to house, clothe, and feed them for the rest of their life and also be the risk of their family losing all of their money, home, and job. When China created the One Child policy they did not plan for the people who exist in violation of the policy and have left people without the accessibility of the necessary resources to survive.

The predicament people are in when they get pregnant with the second child whether on purpose or not they are faced with impossible choices in how to handle this situation and what to do with the child. When a policy's solution to an unapproved pregnancy is forced abortion only it leads to greater problems and in the end is an ethical violation of the child. The One-Child policy was too simple in thinking it had the authority to stop people from conceiving more than one child and was not prepared to address and care for the second child.

Sex-Selective abortion

While analyzing the China One Child Policy the discussion inescapably goes to discussing the disproportionate distribution of gender and how the policy "forced" families to get rid of any first-born daughters in preference of sons. The biologically stable birth sex ratio is 104 boys to 100 girls without any social and cultural interference (Yi et al. 1993). In China, the sex ratio reached its highest skew in 2004

with about 120 boys to every 100 girls. Today it is making improvements on getting back to the biologically stable ratio of 105 boys to 100 girls (Tatlow 2017). Though this may seem minor, it amounts to 33.59 million more men than women (Tatlow 2017). Though the country is once again becoming a biologically stable gender ratio the damage to China's demographics has been done. It can be attributed to the China One Child Policy and unaccounted consequences and practices that occurred due to it.

The rise of reproductive technology allowed individuals to misuse it for reasons unrelated to health. This technology like prenatal ultrasounds and IVF was used for sex selection in China creating an imbalanced sex ratio. Sex-selective abortions, in particular, became a major issue in China due to the cultural importance of having a son.

As discussed above, China's culture has emphasized the importance of the role of a son because they act as a sense of economic security for couples in their old age and the continuation of the family name and legacy. This is because in China there is a stronger and more explicit role of the family in a culture where family becomes a source of material, social, and emotional support (Ringmar 2005). Sons act as a retirement and elderly care plan. This is because the male's fidelity lies with the family they are born into while a female's fidelity will eventually shift to her husband's family once she is married. Therefore once the State passed the One Child Policy its families wanted to have their one child to be a son that can carry on the family name and legacy as well as

have elder care. As a result, a lot of people resorted to practices like sex-selective abortion, putting daughters up for adoption.

Sex selective abortion affects the culture with participation in marriage more difficult and contributes to China having one of the lowest birth rates in the world leading to its issue with an aging demographic. As a result, China is trying to remedy this issue and make policies against sex-selective abortion in hopes of correcting the sex ratio discrepancies. In the 1980s this policy included the banning of both prenatal diagnosis of sex and abortion based on sex without medical reasoning (Nie 2010).

The Law on Maternal and Infant Health Care of 1994 and the 2001 Law on Population and Family Planning strictly banned the use of medical techniques for fetal sex identification and abortion under the pretense of sex (Nie 2010). According to Nie, these bans and restrictions were placed under three critical reasons. The first being the using fetal screening for sex like ultrasound could directly oppose the One Child Policy if the woman would carry her unauthorized child to term if it were a boy, in spite of the fetus being a breach of the One Child Policy (Nie 2010). The second reason being that fear if the family found out it was a girl then they would abort with hopes to get a boy adding to the imbalanced sex ratio (Nie 2010). With the main motive of these bans being based on the violation of the policy, this implies that the stance of being anti-abortion in this case doesn't originate from fear of violating bioethical concerns such as benevolence and the debate of personhood of a fetus instead. That being said the third reason given to these bans on the screening of sex and sex-selection abortion

is the idea of it violating bioethics however the law does not specify the violation (Nie 2010). Though these are the given reasons for the need for banning the practice of sex-selective abortion there are a plethora of critical bioethical arguments in order to support the ethical violations of sex-selective abortion.

While sex-selective abortion is a practice that highlights the perception that males are of more value than females it doesn't mean this is a sentiment held by all Chinese people. It is a practice that is occurring due to a cultural responsibility that males have to care for their parents as they age and that men have a greater earning potential meaning that in this cultural context they have more socio-economic value, even though this inequality of sex is in opposition of the socialist ideology. That is not to say the families who have girls do not love their daughters, in fact now with many families' only progeny being female, the legacy of the family that was traditionally placed on sons is now thrust upon daughters.

The practice of sex-selective abortion in China is a violation against women's rights due to it being active discrimination against women and a result of devaluing women in comparison to men. It is a violation of ethics under the principle of consequentialism because though the damage to a family of not having a boy can cause concern for a person's elderly care and leave them vulnerable is less consequential than the overall damage it has on the entire socio-economics of the population. Though I agree that the state needed to address sex selective abortion in order to restore the biologically occurring gender balance they also need to address the gender bias that has

created the preference for boys and the country's insufficient care of their elderly. This is because though they need to get people to stop practicing sex-selective abortion China also needs to care for its citizens and why people are practicing this and ensure their elderly cared for.

Sex-selective abortion as a result of the One Child policy is an unethical consequence of the population control policy. When policy limits people to one child it demonstrates the preference for boys and how this policy is a violation of women's rights. In conclusion, the fact China's imbalanced sex ratios create a strain on the culture and the economics of the country is evidence of how when a population control does not address the social dynamics of family and gender leads to unethical practices.

Adoption

China opened up international adoption in 1992 and from 1999-2016 78,257 children were adopted out to America and about 267,000 total adopted out internationally (International Adoption 2018). This is a result of the effects of the One-Child Policy and the actions taken due to its enforcement. This includes children being removed from families, abandoned, or given to a "matchmaker". The corrupt adoption system is an unintended consequence of the One Child policy and is an example of how the policy has affected the world impacting hundreds of thousands of families.

By 2005 China was considered the gold standard for adoption (Tong 2010). This is because they were able to provide a large number of healthy babies, and since it was government-sanctioned it was a very streamlined process and not too expensive. Worldwide China had a reputation that their orphanages were overflowing due to the One Child Policy so people felt less guilty than when they would adopt from places like Ethiopia where they could be accused of buying babies or exploiting the poverty of birth parents (Fong 2016). The western perception of Chinese adoption is that these families who are adopting from China are taking these unwanted children that were mainly girls who were abandoned due to the patriarchal One Child Policy. In fact, at China's peak for international adoption, when the United States was adopting around 8,000 babies a year there was a significant amount of scandal happening in China with how they obtained the babies they were adopting out; including baby buying programs by the orphanage, and confiscations of children by government officials(Stuy 2014). The system in which adoption was handled and its ethical violations against humanity is not only the ethical responsibility of China it is also the responsibility of America for incentivizing and funding these actions. This is a misguided attempt to do the right thing when in reality it is a white savior complex and misguided feminism

Finding reliable data on where the children who have been adopted from China came from is very difficult. This is because of falsified documents of adoption records, people do not report when they abandon their babies due to its sensitive subject matter and fear of persecution, as well as the Chinese government itself concealing this

information to the public. As a result, I am using personal testimony as an indication of what is occurring in China and its adoption system.

Nanfu Wang's documentary *One Child Nation* explores the consequences of the One-Child Policy and its effects on families including her own. The documentary depicts the practice of the abandonment of children and the human trafficking of babies to the orphanages. Wang highlights stories of family members and other families in their village abandoning their babies in hopes someone would take the child. Once international adoption was opened families would their children to "matchmakers" who are human traffickers that take babies from the village to orphanages to then be put up for adoption internationally (Wang 2019). These human traffickers also collect these infants abandoned in markets, along the roads, and in other public spaces to bring them to the orphanages. The human traffickers, in this case, are different from those who are frequently talked about in the United States. These human traffickers are collecting abandoned babies that would have died if someone did not intervene. They then take the child to orphanages that will adopt them out of China. This practice is illegal under the Republic of China because it promotes the abandonment of children and the sex-selective preference for boys. The Chinese government ethically ought to have provided a safe place for the babies and that is where adoption and the orphanages come in place, they are where these abandoned babies can be taken and then placed in families around the world that can give them proper care.

One Child Nation also depicts the use of adoption as a tool for the enforcement of the policy. When people violate the policy by having a second child, some local governments changed their tactics for enforcement and instead of destroying the home or taking all of a family's possessions they would remove the child from the home and place them up for adoption. This extreme enforcement of the policy though not officially sanctioned by the state as a result of communities trying to maintain their standing and rewards for family planning from the state. This use of adoption to enforce the policy means that a portion of children adopted from China were not orphans and instead was forcibly removed from homes to uphold a policy.

Nanfu's documentary is one perspective focusing on one town and how adoption was used as a means to work around the one-child policy and guarantee that they can get a male perspective. It emphasizes the social and familial pressures that individuals have placed on them to have a boy and the extent of sacrifice people go to get that. Whether it be your mother threatening to kill the baby and herself if you don't get rid of your child because she is a girl, or leaving your child in the hands of human traffickers in hopes that it will lead to her having a better life, there is no evidence in the documentary to point towards how widespread this practice is. But the reality is through my research I can not find any numbers on how many babies were abandoned or how many were placed up for adoption and where they came from and this is because there is an extreme amount of falsified documents and illegal practices occurring in

Chinese international adoption. This is most clear when examining the arrest and conviction of the Dunan family.

The Dunan family is a group in China that was arrested and convicted for human trafficking abandoned babies to orphanages. In 2005, Dunan Yuangeng was wrapped in the 2005 scandal where it was revealed that six orphanages in Hunan, one of the largest suppliers to western adoption centers, were found to have been buying babies (Fong 2016). Dunan Yuangeng and his family were placed in jailed labor for the trafficking of 85 infants, but the reality is they were involved in many more adoptions. They would take these babies in milk powder boxes and travel 600 miles from Guanfonf to Hunan to deliver them to the orphanages (Fong 2016). According to Dunan Yuangeng, he estimates that he alone had sold at least 1,000 babies to orphanages, whether it be from families giving them the infant or being informed that an infant was abandoned in a public place (Tong 2010). He was only charged for 85 infants because it was common practice for the orphanages to falsify documents, as a result making it nearly impossible to track where these babies are from, resulting in thousands of people having no way to know where they came from or under what circumstances they were put up for adoption. China has claimed that no babies that were adopted by Americans were involved in this scandal. The reality is there is already evidence that people adopted to America from several different provinces and adoption centers have been connected to Dunan and the various ways adoption centers have falsified their records.

Though the selling and lying about babies is clearly unethical, the reality is the reason it grew to the international criminal empire is all due to the demand for healthy babies. Americans and other high-income countries were creating a high demand to adopt babies giving a “donation” of around \$3,000 and by 2009 rising to \$5,000, resulting in orphanages receiving annual donations of about \$300,000 to \$500,000 making this a lucrative source of income for the orphanage and their employees (Stuy 2014). As a result, the orphanages were adopting out infants quickly and they were trying to restock their numbers and that is where these human traffickers got involved. The Dunan Matriarch said the orphanage, in the beginning, would pay them \$120 a baby and as they reached the early 2000’s they would be paid \$250 and by 2005 they got \$500 a baby (Fong 2016). When there are not a lot of ways to make money and the alternative is abandonment or infanticide many families and individuals like Dunans would enter the illegal selling of babies to these orphanages.

Once international adoption was open up local family planning agencies worked with orphanages to get them more infants by using coercion and confiscation of children. When a family would violate the One Child policy and have additional children local government and family planning would either threaten the family with unpayable fees similar to ransom situations requiring them to pay anything for \$8,000 to \$20,000 dollars to keep their child or they would just forcibly remove the child and take the collectors fee from the orphanages (Stuy 2014). This practice happened all over the Hunan province and would be asked of families with both registered and unregistered children (Stuy 2014). So now instead of performing forced abortions or

ransacking people's homes they remove and sell the child to the adoption agencies for people outside of China to adopt.

This is a clear ethical violation of both the parents and the child involved in these confiscations. That is because they are removing children from their parents that are properly caring for them only because the town or city is over their quota for children and they use them to make money. It is even more problematic when family planning removes the registered child from a home because the family is being unlawfully punished. Government organizations using adoption as a way to punish people instead of as a way to protect children is unethical.

The reason why Americans and other people who adopted from China are ethically responsible for the selling and confiscation of infants during the One Child policy is that they funded these ethical violations and perpetuated a system that encourages the abandonment of children specifically girls and cruel and unusual punishment for the violation of the One Child Policy. When the market for adoption is being run by the demand and benefit of the parents who want to adopt and not for the safety and care for the children it is a violation of justice and benevolence of the child. Everybody has the right to have a parent but not everybody has the right to be a parent. Instead, every child has the right to a parent and when a child is being treated as a good and being removed from parents to service others it is violating that child's personhood. Anyone who participated in China's adoption program ethically responsible for the selling and forced removal of babies.

In adoption, the families who adopted children from China are culpable for creating a financial market that incentivizes the actions of coerced abandonment and forced removal of children. The families who abandon the children whether leaving them in public places or with these human traffickers are also ethically responsible in the corrupt system. But ultimately these individual actions are dwarfed by the responsibility the Chinese government has in the violation of the rights of the children in this system through the creation of an oversimplified population policy that didn't take into consideration the cultural and social pressures of child rearing and the families dynamic.

Sterilization and Abortion

When the One Child policy was founded in 1979 by engineers, not demographers, according to Fong, treated women and their ability to reproduce like a faucet that they can turn off to slow down the population growth (Fong 2016) . When the policy was put in place the means to slow down population growth was the solution was to increase family planning resources by offering birth control methods. Making birth control options universally accessible for people regardless of economics, social, and racial background without targeting any specific group is ethical because it gives people the option to practice family planning and empowers women in having the ability to have to make choices for their own body.

A key element of reproductive rights and freedoms is that everyone has the right to control one's body and choose what happens with it (Dixon-Mueller 1993). The problem with China and its implementation of the One Child policy is the government took control and decided what is to happen with the women and their bodies in order to enforce the policy. When it came to what birth control women had access to, China prioritized sterilizing women, an invasive surgical procedure, over any other form of birth control.

Sterilization ensured life long birth control when compared to the pill and the IUD. Sterilization itself is not a bad thing if the woman chooses it without coercion or force. However in China that was not the reality. One of the methods villages and their family planning officers used to slow the growth of their population and not exceed their government allotted birth rate was to require all women to be sterilized after the birth of their first and only child. This is because the village leaders and the larger Chinese government did not trust people with the choice and control of nonpermanent methods of birth control (Fong 2016). Even places like the city of Yicheng, which had a more flexible two-child policy, required women to get sterilized as their main form of birth control and they had to have their second child no earlier than 5 years after the first or risk high fines or coerced abortions (Fong 2016).

Though there is no data for how many women in China were forcibly sterilized during the One Child policy, in 1989 at the height of the enforcement for the One Child Policy there were 20 million women sterilized in that year alone (Beijing: Peking Union

Medical College Press 2010). There are three ways a woman becomes a part of this statistic: the first and only ethical way is they choose to get sterilized of their own free will; the second is those who are coerced into being sterilized; the third it those who are forced. No doubt these are part of a continuum rather than discrete possibilities.

In the cities, towns, and villages of China that used forced sterilization practices as a method of regulating population growth, it was all a part of the procedure of giving birth to their first child. According to Nanfu Wang, a filmmaker from the Jiangxi Province and her interview with her villages, midwife an 84-year-old Huaru Yuan, a woman either in a hospital or at home with a midwife would give birth to her child and before the woman is given her newborn she would sterilize her. Huan Yuan explained how family planning officials would also abduct women to tie them up like pigs and bring them to her to be sterilized (Wang 2019). Assuming this is a widespread practice in China a policy that forces a woman to be sterilized is a clear ethical violation against reproductive justice and a woman's right to choose what happens to her body.

The way a woman is coerced into sterilization is mainly by the threat of what is to happen if they do not get sterilized and have a second child. According to Huang Denggao, the former village head of a small town Huangjipau say that their usual form of punishment for those who violate the One Child policy was large fines. But in his town, many people were unable to pay these fines where the village leader, and the family planning employees would ransack their homes, taking televisions, appliances, and furniture - all of which could be worth a family's annual income (Fong 2016). This

is one person's account of how a town and its leadership enforced the policy. Assuming he is telling the truth and this is representative of what was happening around the country, it illustrates how these tactics of "persuasion" leave women and their families in a situation with little personal choice. Either they get sterilized or they risk losing years of their income risking bankruptcy and poverty for their entire family.

Additionally, women were encouraged to be sterilized through monetary gain whether it be directly through payment or indirectly through tax increases for each additional child (Freedman 1994). Women's coercion of sterilization is a common practice within-population policies and the government incentivizing sterilizations. When a woman is coerced into sterilization it is no longer her choice with what she does with her body and as a result a violation of her reproductive justice.

The other way the One Child policy has violated a woman's reproductive rights by removing their ability to choose what they can do with their body is the practice of forced abortion. When a woman gets pregnant and they are not approved to have that child, local government, and family planning authorities used similar methods of coercion as they did for the sterilization of women. Local government leaders like Haung Denggao admit to using persuasive tactics like large fines and the confiscation of valuables to persuade women to get abortions. Not only would these children be aborted, but sometimes the midwife or doctor would induce labor to deliver the baby and kill it (Wang 2019). In this case, women were being coerced into abortion meaning they lost their right to choose what they can do with their bodies. China has some of the most open accessibility for women to get abortions as a means of reducing the

population as a part of the open accessibility for family planning resources that came with the One Child policy (Dixon-Mueller 1993). With a lack of regulation by the national government on how to enforce the policy, it has resulted in the coercion of women to abort the children unwanted by the government (Li 2012).

Both abortion and sterilization are using women's bodies and through surgically invasive procedures to change their body so the population growth will not increase. The responsibility of this policy's success is on women, and there is no responsibility being taken by their male counterparts. It takes two people to create a child, both the man and the woman are responsible. Yet there are no examples in China of male sterilization or attempts to change man's biology to slow down reproduction. So not only are these practices a violation against women's reproductive rights but it is also unequally targeting women perpetuating gender inequality. A policy that places the sole responsibility of reproduction on the woman is unjust and sexist.

Population policies that use women as the tool for the reduction of population growth are inherently wrong. This is because the structure of policy demands that the government and other authoritative entities involved in the policy are taking away the women's right to control what physically happens to her body. From the beginning of the One Child policy, women and their bodies were used as a means to regulate the population growth and implement the policy. Using women's bodies as the mechanism for the policy allowed egregious acts against women including forced sterilization and abortion practices. A population policy that uses women's bodies in particular as a

vehicle for implementation leads to ethical violations against women's rights and the well being of women.

Though this is an example of the local government implementing policy and it is not the national government who is committing these ethical violations China with its creation of the One Child policy is ethically responsible. That is because even if the national government did not instruct local leaders to practice sterilization and abortion as a way to enforce the policy, they created the circumstance and demanded they leaders lowering the population growth giving them the authority to violate women's reproductive rights.

Midwives

Women's bodies were not the only tools of implementation of the policy; women were also being used to enforce the policy. Along with local leadership, the midwives and physicians were the ones performing the abortions and sterilizations on women. In Mao's Great Leap Forward he standardized midwives around the country making them the primary provider of reproduction services especially in rural areas (Babiarz et al. 2015). Once the One Child policy was created it was the midwives who were used as tools of the policy and these women. According to Nanfu Wang and her documentary exposing the One Child policies implementation, midwives were forced by the local government to travel around the region and sterilize women.

It was in Huaru Yuan interview, Nanfu's midwife where she reveals that, although she has no idea of how many babies she has delivered, she knows she has performed 50,000-60,000 abortions and sterilizations in the 20 years the local government had mandated it. She counted out of guilt saying people would bring her up to 20 women in a day to be sterilized (Wang 2019). It was not her choice to sterilize women and abort wanted fetuses but under the policy, the government forced her to spend a large portion of her life harming women. The actions the government forced her into doing is a trauma she has to carry with her. This is one person who performed 50,000-60,000 abortions and sterilizations, many of which were against the wishes of the women, and she indicates this was happening around China.

Assuming this is true, then midwives and doctors who had to execute the orders of the government are also victims of this policy and the way it was implemented. Forcing a person who goes into this profession to bring life into the world and make them take away life and commit crimes against women is horrifying and creates permanent emotional damage to these midwives. Like the women who lose their ability to choose what happens with their body, these midwives lose their ability to make the right choice and instead are forced to carry out the government's demands. These people now carry the guilt for every wanted fetus they abort and every woman they sterilized, even though they did not make the choice to do that.

When a policy relies on the forced labor of the midwives to then carry out forced sterilizations and abortions to slow down population growth then the government who

created it is culpable for all the ethical violations. These are violations against the clear victims, the women being forced or coerced into being sterilized or aborting their pregnancy; and the hidden victims who were people who were forced to go against their values and carry out the demands of the local and national government.

“I Had No Choice”

What echos in all the unethical practices that occurred during the One Child policy, the familial burden, sex selective burden, sterilization, forced abortion, infant abandonment, and the later corrupt adoption system is that people would say “I had no choice.” The reality is that in such a restrictive and strict population control policy is that though it was effective, and China was able to slow down their growth exponentially, it resulted in inhumane implications and fostered a cultural environment for people to commit atrocities in order to survive under the limitations of both the policy and the previously set culture. People felt like they had no choice because in Chinese society and family dynamics it is critical to have a son both to carry on the family name but also to ensure that you are cared for physically and financially in their old age meaning it is critical for survival. People also felt like they had no choice because local governments and agencies had pressure to meet certain numbers set by the national government or they won't get funding. Funding that is necessary since in a communist political system the government controls everything including access to food, healthcare, and education. Once again a community had to do whatever necessary

to hit those standards in order for the entire community to receive the services necessary for survival.

Under this policy, there were limited options for people and it was impossible to get all people to follow this policy with the added limitation of society and culture. The reason it was impossible is that though one child per family policy would decrease the growth of a population it was an oversimplification of human reproduction and the mechanisms necessary to ensure that people only had one child. It was an oversimplification because in order for a policy like this to work it needed to be able to have widespread control of women's bodies and the ability to eliminate gender discrimination including its role in the family dynamic and job market.

The national government's power and pressure placed on the local government to embody the One Child policy without considering the repercussions of needing to control women's biology and the power of social structures within the family. The pressures to get the quotas given to communities by the national government put people in impossible situations and lead to the policy's greatest violations. In conclusion, though the government did not directly enact these implementations of the policy it created the pressure resulting in these unethical repercussions of the policy. The government also did not punish or address these practices even though they must have been aware of how communities were meeting their numbers.

There is no excuse for what has happened in China and all of the people who have committed the previously mentioned ethical violations but that is where lies the

fatal flaw in population control. Even in a culture that prioritizes the good of the collective, people still have individualized needs and in this case, it made people commit inexcusable ethical violations. The people of China were put in a position where they felt like they had no choice, it makes us understand why it happened but it does not excuse them from their ethical violations and the actions that happened under this policy is the responsibility of both the people involved and the Chinese government who created the impossible predicament.

Regardless of who committed the ethical violations, the Chinese government is responsible for all ethical violations illustrated throughout this paper. This is because the policy was too simple in its conception where social and cultural factors were not taken into consideration resulting in the methods of implementation and adherence of the policy being cruel. In conclusion, the One Child Policy is an example of a compulsory power that greatly harmed the people of China.

IV. Conclusion

Population control can not be done ethically without also addressing sexism, racism, and the care of the elderly and child population.

The One Child policy technically was a success, it reduced the population growth of China. However, in the process, it sacrificed the health of their demographics and the human rights of their people. China and its population policy reveal that when controlling a population and people's reproduction rate, even with the best intentions has unintended consequences. In the case of China, the mission was to simply limit people to one child in order to avoid resource depletion and economic ruin. It was an ideal case study because it was a policy that was created by its own government and was the most strict form of a population policy that was widely applied to a large population. China and its collective society and the authoritative government still had to face cultural barriers and limitations to its ability to get people to follow the policy resulting in ethical violations against the people of China and the creation of new demographic issues.

The One Child Policy as a case study indicates that there is no ethical way to limit the reproduction of the human population and reduce population growth without addressing sexism, elderly care, and family dynamics. The first issue with population control policies is that it artificially slows down the growth of the population and results in unhealthy demographics as shown through the aging population and the

gender imbalance. The Chinese government was not prepared to care for an aging population when there was not a large enough replacement rate in the workplace leading the economic family burden. It also created a gender imbalance because China did not address its the systematic sexism that resulted in sex selective abortion and worse.

There was also an issue with the implementation and plethora of human rights violations. This includes the reproductive justice issue of using women's bodies and services as a tool for the implementation of the policy. As well as a corrupt system of enforcement, adoption, and individual practices of the policy as outlined throughout this thesis. When a policy's enforcement leads to large scale ethical violations against its population, women, and children regardless of its intentions is a moral wrong.

China's One Child policy is an example of the potential consequences of population control when the policy created was too simple. The reason there are major ethical violations and damage to the health of China's demographics is because China and the One Child policy did not address the social complexities of family, gender barriers, and the social security of the people. This is what led to the corruption and problematic implementation of the policy. As a result, though the major ethical violations were being committed by the local government China and its nationally population control policy is culpable for the ethical violations of the policy, therefore, the failure of the policy being a good example of what a population policy ought to be.

With there being complex cultural and social systems to navigate in population control China's One Child policy indicates that even with the most ideal intentions and the situation there will still be ethical violations and humanity and its current governing systems is not capable of ethically creating and enforcing a population policy.

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