

# China: one child policy

[Family](#), [Abortion](#)



The world today consists of almost 6.9 billion people. China itself, serves host to more than 1.2 billion people. This astronomical figure is more than 17% of the entire world population. For centuries China has stood as a leading civilization, outpacing the rest of the world in the arts and sciences. On the other hand, over the last decade, it has also plummeted economically. A big factor for this massive downfall is its overpopulation within the country. Due to this exponential increase in population, the Chinese government has installed a "one-child policy". The one-child policy solved the overpopulation issue in China, but it also introduced a variety of other problems to the country. In the early 1900's, China's population was about 420 million. In the past century years, it had grown to 1.2 billion, an increase of almost 800 million people in a 100 years. (Hays) Having this many people in one area means that there is a lot of people to feed, clothe, and house. The population has put a large amount of tension on its limited resources. A quarter of China's land is either desert, or infertile land, therefore no crops can be grown on the land. Also, it means that people won't want to live on it because they wouldn't be able to support themselves due to the poor soil. This issue leads to tremendous amounts of population density in the cities. The Chinese government realized that something had to be put in place, otherwise they would never again be able to prosper as a country. They decided to set up a plan to reduce the population growth. It was called "China's one-child policy". This policy limits a Chinese family to having only one child. Originally, the Chinese government created this policy in order to minimize the extreme famine that infested the country, but they soon realized that it would also help them succeed economically due to the fact

that their overpopulation often held them back. (Fitzpatrick) The Chinese government refers to it as the family planning policy. " It officially restricts married, urban couples to having only one child, although they do allow exemptions for several cases including; rural couples, ethnic minorities, and parents without any siblings themselves. " (Rosenberg) A spokesperson of the Committee on the One-Child Policy has said that approximately 35. 9% of China's population is currently under the one-child restriction. (Nie) The policy was introduced in 1978 and initially applied to first-born children in the year of 1978. The main purpose for this policy was to alleviate social, economic, and environmental problems in China. Along with reducing the population growth, the policy also helps society in other ways. The citizens' savings rate has increased since the one-child policy was introduced. The average Chinese household now uses fewer resources, both in terms of time and money, which gives many Chinese people more money in the long run. The economy is much more stable, and the poverty rates have decreased. (Rosenberg) Although it has succeeded in relieving the economic stresses on the country, it has also brought to rise some significant problems. The policy has resulted in an increase in forced abortions, female infanticide, and unreported female births. The reason for this is that in China, male children are very important to the people because they pass on the family name. If a family can only bear one child, and that child happens to be female, there is a high chance that the baby will either be aborted, killed, or given up for adoption. Sexism in China has always been an issue, and now it has become even more of an issue. Males were completely dominant in China. They did most of the work and were the head of the household. And now with this new

policy, there will be far more males than females living in China in the future. Yes, the one-child policy will attempt to significantly reduce the population growth rate, but it might lower it to a point where reproduction occurs very rarely. If male dominance continues, the ratios between males and females will continue to widen. The Chinese take their cultural beliefs very seriously and will do anything to keep their ancestors happy. The fact of carrying the family name on to their next generation should not determine whether a child should live or die. The bottom line is that girls in China receive far less attention and resources than boys and are deemed inferior in society.

(Fitzpatrick) A lot of people found it easy to hide their children. Many people had more than one child and did not let the government know. The biggest problem coming from this was the children that were not registered did not receive any medical benefits. It was as if they never did exist. They call this group of unregistered children the "black population". The "black population" makes it very difficult for the government to keep records of the country's population. (Hays) These children are not allowed to go to school, and later will have difficulty getting permission to marry, to move, and for other life choices requiring the government's permission. It's as if the children are there in reality, but they do not get treated like a regular Chinese citizen. (Watts) Another serious problem that comes to the surface as a result of the one child policy is the "four-two-one" problem. This is the idea that because of the policy, there will be four grandparents to every two parents to every one child. In essence, a single child will have only two parents and four grandparents within their immediate family. As time progresses, there will be an overwhelming number of elderly people in

comparison to younger people. This leaves the older generations with increased chances of dependency on retirement funds or charity in order to receive support. (Nie) Even though the policy was under some harsh criticism, in the long run, it has been fairly successful thus far. It has greatly reduced population growth, especially in the cities. In 1970 the average woman in China had almost six children. Now an average woman has about two. “ The most dramatic changes took place between 1970 and 1980 when the birthrate dropped from 44 per 1, 000 to 18 per 1, 000. Demographers have suggested that the ideal birthrate rate for China is 16. 7 per 1, 000, which translates to 1. 7 children per family. ” (Hays) Some Chinese officials have said that the one-child policy has prevented 300 million births since it was created. 300 million the equivalent of the population of Europe. This massive reduction of population has improved living conditions, help bring people out of poverty, and increase China’s economic growth. (Nie) A survey by the National Family Planning Commission in China stated in that women would like to have more than one child. The research showed that more than 70% of women would like to have two or more babies. A lot of mothers think its very likely that only-children suffer from loneliness. The survey also expressed that 83% of women wanted a son and a daughter. The numbers don't lie. Families in China if given the opportunity would like to have more than one child, especially if the first child is a female. In 17 provinces in China, rural couples are allowed to have a second child if their first is a girl. In the wealthy southern provinces of Guangdong and Hainan, couples are allowed two children regardless of the sex of the first. Minority groups such as Miao, Mongols, and Tibetans are generally allowed to have three children

if their first two are girls. Urban and inner-city couples are generally restricted to one child. Government officials softened the policy in rural areas where children are needed in the fields, also due to the high rates infanticide which appears as a result of the preference for boys. (Hays) With the policy being implemented, there has been an unusual rise in the population of successful females. Young women are becoming increasingly common in Chinese cities. Never have so many females been in college or graduate school, and never has the male/female ratio been so balanced. Experts say the explanation for this is: Economic growth, government spending on education and, the one-child policy. In 1978, women made up only 24% of the student population at Chinese colleges and universities. By 2009, nearly half of China college students were women. Women are now given a fair and equal chance to develop in society. As a result of the one-child policy, many single-child families are made of two parents and one daughter. Parents have had the ability to spend more on their daughters' education and social life. In the past, girls were taught how to marry and be good housewives. Now, girls are doing the same things and boys, thus the equality between the two is much more prevalent. (Hays) The one child policy will have affected the population of China greatly, especially the structure. Not only will there will be a lot more elderly people, there will also be a decline in the number of girls because of the preference for boys. Today, China continues to grow as a country. The one child policy has brought so many problems, that one needs to wonder if it was actually a good idea in the first place. Yes, it has temporarily lowered the population growth rate, but it has also brought into the picture many other issues. Although a decreased population will

drastically improve the economy and society in China, one needs to think if it is morally the right thing to do. Should the Chinese government continue to intervene on child births, or should people be given their freedom and let nature run its course? Works Cited Fitzpatrick, Laura. " China's One-Child Policy." Time World. TIME Magazine, 2009. Web. 20 Nov 2011. . Hays, Jeffrey. " One-Child Policy in China." Facts and Details. N. p., 2011. Web. 27 Nov 2011. . Nie, Weiliang. " China's one-child policy - success or failure?." . BBC News, 2010. Web. 25 Nov 2011. . Rosenberg, Matt. China. About. com, 2011. Web. 22 Nov 2011. . Watts, Jonathan. " China's one-child policy means benefits for parents — if they follow the rules." Global Development. TheGuardian, 2011. Web. 26 Nov 2011. .