Bioethical Analysis Worksheet Scenario

Chang and Fang Yin are a married couple living in China. They have decided to have a child and Fang Yin is at a stage in her pregnancy where the sex of the child can be determined. China is one of the most heavily populated countries in the world, and as a result the “One Child Policy” was put in place by the Chinese government. The policy was to ensure that China, a country that has historically been prone to severe famine and flooding, would be able to feed it’s people. The rapid population growth that occurred after the Communist Party came to power had put a strain on the government’s efforts to help it’s people. So in an attempt to combat the widespread poverty and improve the overall quality of life, the “One Child Policy” was gradually adopted. Chinese families overwhelmingly prefer male children to female children and as a result, female infanticide has increased. Also many people criticize the fact that abortions are often forced on women who are visibly pregnant with their second child. This often includes very late term abortions and there have been reports of mass sterilizations in rural areas as well. Fang Yin is under a lot of pressure from her husband and his family to have a boy to carry on the family name. They have told her that if she finds out the sex of her baby and it is a female, then she should take the proper steps to terminate the pregnancy and the family will even pay the cost of this. Fang Yin doesn’t care what sex the child is, she just wants a healthy baby. The issue is whether or not to determine the sex of the child while in the womb.

**Context -**

What is the bioethical issue or decision at hand ?

Who must make the decision(s) related to this issue?

What factual information is relevant to issue and those making decisions?

**Stakeholders -**

Who are the stakeholders in this situation?

What values are apparent for each stakeholder involved?

What immediate priorities are apparent for each stakeholder?

**Alternatives and Tradeoffs**

What, if any, are the alternative courses of action in this situation?

How would each stakeholder be affected by any or all of the alternatives?

**Solution**

What solution(s) would you propose to resolve this issue?

How would you convince each stakeholder that this is the best choice?

# China's One Child Policy

## One Child Policy in China Designed to Limit Population Growth



By [Matt Rosenberg](http://geography.about.com/mbiopage.htm), About.com

*Oct 7 2007*

China has proclaimed that it will continue its one child policy, which limits couples to having one child, through the 2006-2010 five year planning period.

China's one child policy was established by Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping in 1979 to limit communist China's population growth. Although designated a "temporary measure," it continues a quarter-century after its establishment. The policy limits couples to one child. Fines, pressures to abort a pregnancy, and even forced sterilization accompanied second or subsequent pregnancies.

It is not an all-encompassing rule because it has always been restricted to ethnic Han Chinese living in urban areas. Citizens living in rural areas and minorities living in China are not subject to the law. However, the rule has been estimated to have reduced population growth in the country of 1.3 billion by as much as 300 million people over its first twenty years.

This rule has caused a disdain for female infants; abortion, neglect, abandonment, and even infanticide have been known to occur to female infants. The result of such Draconian family planning has resulted in the disparate ratio of 114 males for every 100 females among babies from birth through children four years of age. Normally, 105 males are naturally born for every 100 females.

Now that millions of sibling-less people in China are now young adults in or nearing their child-bearing years, a special provision allows millions of couples to have two children legally. If a couple is composed of two people without siblings, then they may have two children of their own, thus preventing too dramatic of a population decrease.

Although IUDs, sterilization, and abortion (legal in China) are China's most popular forms of birth control, over the past few years, China has provided more education and support for alternative birth control methods.

Statistically, China's [total fertility rate](http://geography.about.com/od/populationgeography/a/fertilityrate.htm)1 (the number of births per woman) is 1.7, much higher than slowly-declining Germany at 1.4 but lower than the U.S. at 2.1 (2.1 births per woman is the replacement level of fertility, representing a stable population, exclusive of migration).

China's eleventh Five-Year Plan Period is from 2006 to 2010. Minister of the State Commission of Population and Family Planning Zhang Weiqing confirmed in early 2006 that China's one child policy is consistent with the nation's plan for population growth and would continue indefinitely. He denied rumors that the policy become less stringent to permit a second child.

In 2007, there were [reports](http://geography.about.com/b/a/257848.htm)2 that in the southwestern Guangxi Autonomous Region of China, officials were forcing pregnant women without permission to give birth to have abortions and levying steep fines on families violating the law. As a result, riots broke out and some may have been killed, including population control officials.