

Chapter 4 Families and households

Topic 7 Families and social policy

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Activity: Media

China's one-child policy

Learning objectives

At the end of this activity you should be able to:

- Identify key features of China's one-child policy.
- Analyse the impact of this policy on family life in China.
- Evaluate the strengths and limitations of the policy for Chinese society and for individual family members.

China's controversial one-child policy has stemmed population growth – but at what cost? From forced abortions to heavy fines, many have suffered.

A. Watch the clip and answer the questions that follow:

<http://www.journeyman.tv/18984/short-films/one-child-policy.html>

1. What is the significance of the boy born at the beginning of the film?
2. By what year would China's population have reached 1.3 billion if the policy had not been in place?
3. What happened to couples who had more than one child according to Liu Shuling (the woman living in rural China)?
4. Why does Liu Shuling say that families need boys?
5. How long did it take for China's population to double after 1949?
6. Why was this a problem for China?
7. What problems are there for only children in China?
8. Why are wealthy families now considering having additional children?
9. Other than a reduction in population growth what has been a key strength of the one-child policy?
10. What punishments were there for not abiding by the policy?
11. What has been the effect on the gender make-up of China's population? Why is this the case?
12. What might be the impact of the change in gender composition of the population?

B. Summarise the problems of China's attempt to control family size.