

(1a) Outline the 4 distinct phases and characteristics of the One Child Policy. Account for the evolution of the One Child Policy.When China first launched OCP in 1979

- ✓ All couples have no more than one child
- ✓ Couples need to apply for official approval before conceiving a child
- ✓ Compliance encouraged using rewards and disincentives
- ✓ Incentives given to stop after one child include educational opportunities, healthcare services, provision of housing and aid in employment
- ✓ Such measures projected to hold overall population size to 1.2b by 2000

Phase 1 of OCP

- ✓ Govt maintained ambitious goals to achieve objective
- ✓ Incentives and penalties encouraged women to undergo sterilization after first birth
- ✓ Harsh measures enforced including forcing abortion and sterilisation of second-time pregnant women
- ✓ Contraceptives widely available; usage strictly enforced (80%< females have access to such contraceptives)

**However after several years, policies were relaxed, probably due to external disagreements (human rights issues i.e. abortion & infanticide and strong resistance faced by citizens)*

Phase 2 of OCP

- ✓ Officials encouraged to adopt policy to local circumstances and avoid heavy-handed enforcement methods
- ✓ Regulations made more realistic and thus easier to enforce, allowing greater cooperation from citizens
- ✓ In response to resistance, families in rural areas allowed to have 2nd child if local quotas could be met or if 1st child is female
- ✓ In 1985, population goal changed from “no more” than 1.2b to “about” 1.2b, reflecting softening stance of gov

**However in late 1980s, data indicated that TFR levels still unacceptably high, thus policies had to be tightened again*

Phase 3 of OCP

- ✓ Local efforts strengthened with changes in incentives & disincentives
- ✓ Family planning was organized and introduced to allow meeting of goals

**Finally in 1993, director of State Family Planning Commission declared fertility under control again, mooting shift away from stringent measures while adhering to previous birth planning goals*

Phase 4 of OCP

- ✓ More client-centred services introduced: more case-by-case considerations allowed
- ✓ Emphasis of citizens' rights
- ✓ However Chinese citizens were still obliged to strictly limit children born

(1b) Outline and evaluate the short-term and long-term consequences of the One Child Policy.

Note: "Short-term" consequences are only comparatively short-term, even such effects require at least months / years to be evident. Classification of consequences depends on definition of short-term and long-term.

Short-term Consequences

- ✓ Dramatic fertility decline (smaller family size, lower birth rates, lower TFR)
 - TFR decreased from ~6 to 1.7 in 1 – 2 decades
 - BR decreased from 45 per 1000 to ~20 per 1000
- ✓ Imbalance in sex ratio for babies, highest in the world. @
 - Millions of "missing girls" due to under-reporting by family & officials, female infanticide, abandoned females and sex-selective abortions
 - Preference of sons result of social and economic roles of males in Chinese society (patriarchal & male-centred)
- ✓ Emergence of Little Emperor / Empress syndrome, where only child is well-treated / spoiled @
 - Only child becomes focus of couple, couple's ambitions & money all channelled into only child's education, well-being & comfort

@ Such consequences also have a bearing on long-term consequences, or can also be seen as long-term depending on length of time defined

Negative Long-term Consequences

- ✓ Tip in dependency ratio (especially old dependents)
 - Fewer youth supporting country's growing elderly population, youth will feel strain on their shoulders
 - "4-2-1": 1 child takes care of 2 parents and 4 grandparents
 - Chinese society idolizes filial piety: families (especially children) should provide for elderly family members
 - As only children, married couple have to take responsibility for both husband's and wife's parents
 - Increasing life expectancy also means having to spend more years caring for their elderly parents
 - With smaller families & more mobile population, govt has to provide more care for elderly in future
- ✓ Family / Societal experiences changed
 - Growing up without any aunts / uncles / siblings → different family life (detrimental?)
 - Traditional values on large extended families no longer applicable with shrinking family size
- ✓ Prominence of Little Emperor / Empress syndrome may affect economy / society as they have to take on much tougher challenges in life despite being spoiled as children. He / She would have to support 6 aged people at home!
- ✓ Gender ratio imbalance as families want son more to continue family name and female babies allowed to die after birth (e.g. through deliberate neglect)
 - More unmarried men, or not enough women, which could encourage men to marry foreign brides or not marry at all
 - Social instability could also result

Positive Long-term Consequences

- ✓ Rationale of OCP attained, since doomsday scenario of population crunch will be unlikely to occur as population numbers have been suppressed below the danger levels
 - Without OCP: social, political & economic instability?
- ✓ Reduces strain on environment, as there will be less people vying for resources like water, land, air, money etc.

Evaluation

- ✓ Comparison to India: OCP necessary evil, if not population-resource balance will be severely tipped. (Increased population → Increased strain on resources --> lower capital for investment & development etc.) China might be facing India's demographic problems today had OCP not been enforced strictly.

(2a) Assess the effectiveness of the One Child Policy in reducing birth rates in China.Introduction [Good!]

- ✓ China's OCP was launched in 1979, and it required couples to have only one child to keep population numbers in control
- ✓ It changed over four distinct phases, and though TFR / BR had reduced overall, it produced its own problems
- ✓ Overall though, the OCP was rather effective

(Alternatively, evaluate based on aspects: economic, social etc.)

Effective (Refer to Q1a)

- ✓ Couples can have no more than one child, and have to apply for official approval before conceiving a child → compliance resulted in rewards, violations resulted in fines and loss of privileges
- ✓ Use of contraceptives and sterilization encouraged
- ✓ Rural families allowed to have second child if local quotas could be met to mollify overall resistance and allow policy to succeed in certain areas
- ✓ Successful in reducing population: most couples have one child only

Not effective

- ✓ Resistance from public, especially rural areas, people see children (sons) as vital to family and necessary for economic and social survival → have more children
- ✓ People find ways to circumvent policies by hiding children / female infants from authority (second child or more), moving to areas where they are unknown to have children, not using contraceptives
- ✓ However policy has not been openly resisted and violations are uncommon
 - Citizens feel they should not speak up against state policy or collective acceptance

Socioeconomic Factors

- ✓ Fertility / BR falling much faster in urban than rural areas

- ✓ Higher level of education & literacy → middle-class lifestyle (SoL improves), pursuit of material wants → want later marriages, fewer children (or stay single)
- ✓ However, OCP's strengths and effectiveness may have overwhelmed the effects of these factors, such that BR after 1980s are no longer affected
- ✓ Even though significant decrease in BR, its effects on total population in China not significant enough since large percentage of population is already in the fertile age
- ✓ Hence, OCP is effective to large extent