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## Section One: Case and Normative Statement.

According to Population Matters (2019), the current population on earth is utilising more natural resources than the earth can supply the population with. With every addition to our population adding to this problem, reducing the population of the human race would be the first and most important step to make life on earth sustainable. With the current size of the population, the demand for renewable resources is so incredibly immense that we use them at almost two times the speed that the earth can regenerate them. Population Matters (2019) states that if the current population continues increasing as it has been, three times the earth's resources and seventy percent more food would be needed to keep our population sustained in 2050. This is unless changes are made to ensure that the rise in population is halted.

Some experts were previously of the opinion that resources could be stretched by finding ways to be more efficient in production processes, and therefore using less of the resources needed to create a product. A recent MIT News Office study led by Jennifer Chu (2017) however, unfortunately shows this to be untrue.

With the majority of the world's population located in the eastern half of the earth and China being the most populous country in the world, the one child policy was introduced in the early 80's (Pletcher, 2015). The purpose of the policy was to reduce most households to be of one child only and decrease the overall population. The policy stayed in effect for over 35 years until it was abolished at the start of 2016, and was enforced in different ways. These methods included making contraceptives easily accessible, giving participants money, ensuring better work for people conforming to the policy, punishing those that do not, and even going as far as forcing women to abort their unborn children or getting a tubal ligation. According to Pletcher (2015) the one child policy was successful in their intention of a declining birth rate. The declining birth rate ensured a receding population in China.

Normative statement:	"All countries on earth should introduce the one child policy to combat overpopulation"
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## Section Two: Arguments in Support of Normative Statement.

Many would say that restricting the number of children one is allowed to have is a limitation of human rights. If we look at Liberalism, and specifically the Harm Principle, we could say the one child policy is the ethical choice. Since this principle states that the rights of the individual can be rightfully limited in order to prevent harm to the other individuals in society. As the effects of extreme overpopulation in the future are predicted to cause considerable food shortages, and therefore famine, the right of the people to bare children could ethically be limited to prevent this from happening.

In his social contract Jean-Jacques Rousseau's General Will states that the general will of a society is more important than the will of the individual. When we look at the tragedy of the commons and the general will an analogy is used to illustrate the competition for finite recourses. Common land is the property of the people, not any individual, and can be used freely by anyone. Farmers would bring their cows onto the land to graze. Each farmer individually would make more money if they had more cows, however if too many cows graze there will be no grass left. With no grass left, none of the farmers can let their cows graze. Therefore Jean-Jacques Rousseau claims that even though it is in the interest of the individual to have more cows, it is in the interest of society to not have too many cows each, and the latter is more important. The tragedy of the commons and the general will could be

applied when it comes to Earth's finite resources and having children. Even though it might be in the individual's interest to have more children, it is in society's best interest to not have too many children each, and the latter is more important.

### Section Three: Arguments Against Normative Statement.

According to the theory of Ethical Egoism we should try to maximize our own happiness and the things we do to further our merely egotistical goals are completely sound and ethical. Whatever action creates the best outcome for the individual is therefore the most rational one. This means that if having more than one child will result in more happiness for the parents, this is the action that must be taken according to Ethical Egoism.

Pletcher (2015) stated that multiple results not previously intended were generated by implementing the one child policy in China. Firstly, having sons being favoured over having daughters, families often opted to have female foetuses removed for a chance to birth a male offspring. This in turn caused a surplus of males in society with not enough women to wed.

Secondly, the one child policy caused an aging society in a culture where children often take care of the elderly. With fewer children born, the elderly in China no longer had the support system on their offspring to fall back on like the previous generation had.

The aging society caused by the one child policy will mean that by the year 2050, a third of China's inhabitants will be made up of elderly people above 60 years of age, states Kuo (2019).

Thirdly, Pletcher (2015) states the one child policy caused a great number of undocumented inhabitants. Being born as a second child meant being concealed from the government, which later resulted in difficulty receiving an education or getting a job.

The principle of double effect states that these unforeseen consequences do not make the initial action unethical, even if these unintended effects can be seen as such. To see the unwanted consequences of the action as justified if the following three conditions apply; first the action itself must be wrong, second the bad consequences must be unintended and third the bad consequence must not be out of proportion when compared to the intended good consequence. Therefore, according to the principle of double effect we can state that if the bad consequences of having a disrupted balance in gender, aging population and undocumented citizens do not outweigh the initial good consequence of preventing famine, water shortages and extinction of species, the one child policy in itself is not unethical.

### Section Four: Personal Conclusions and Recommendations.

As we can see in the arguments in support of the normative statement, multiple ethical theories encourage sacrificing personal pleasure or freedoms to ensure the common good of the people. Even though there are plenty of arguments to be made against the one child policy, ethically these do not change the validity of the normative statement.

When we look at Kant's categorical imperative we see that Kant states there is no grey area in morality and feelings should not be taken into consideration. This is an absolute duty, according to Kant. If we were to see the normative statement as a Maxim, it could be universalised as a rational standard.

Therefore, it would be reasonable to conclude that the normative statement is ethically sound.

## Literature

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