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From the SelectedWorks of Kip Klingman

Spring April 16, 2012

Ethical dilemma of foreign aid and China's one-child policy

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Available at: https://works.bepress.com/kip_klingman/1/
**Introduction**

We are here today to discuss whether to provide or not to provide funds for a group in China, which provides family health clinics in the most poverty-stricken regions in China. They have provided a business plan, which they say, will allow them to be self-sufficient within 3-5 years. The funds requested from World Health and Wealth (WHW) if made available will help this group save lives due to lack of money to purchase basic medicines. This is the reason for this group coming to WHW for financial assistance. Giving the group funds will undoubtedly save lives.

**Facts**

The clinics in China provide free family health services in large cities and small villages. The services provided are postnatal care for newborns, immunizations to protect against yellow fever, polio, and influenza for children. The clinics also assist Aids patients by providing less expensive medicines. The clinics have been recognized by not only the United Nations (U.N.) but also by the Chinese Government and by nonprofit organizations for their humanitarian efforts. Children are dying due to lack of medicine. China has a one-child family policy. The group will use the funds to set-up abortion services. Group will become self-sufficient within 3-5 years by adding abortion services and charging more for the higher quality abortion services.

**Ethical issues to consider as they relate to WHW**

In 1979, China enacted its one-child family policy due to its increased population of 1.27 billion in 2000 (Hesketh, Ph.D., Lu, M.D., & Zhu, 2005). The one-child family policy has taken a most precarious turn. Human Trafficking and most notably child trafficking and “gendercide” have come to the forefront on China’s one-child policy.
On December 7, 2011, more than 600 people were arrested in more than 10 provinces in China for child trafficking as a result 178 children were rescued (Agence France-Presse, 2011). The one-child policy that China’s government had yielded to has led to the increase of child trafficking throughout China. Couples want a male child so badly that they are willing to pay for them. Females are also sold to traffickers for use as sex-slaves.

Reggie Littlejohn, founder and president of Women’s Rights Without Frontiers¹, told the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission² that China's one-child policy "causes more violence against women and girls than any other official policy on Earth (Parker, 2009).” She further stated that women who does not have a “birth permit” nor has a baby outside of the one-child family plan are forced into an abortion no matter how far along she may be.

The one-child policy has additional problems. As such is the culture in many countries, so too does China have a preference to males. The preference for males in China is the same as any other country in that families want to keep the bloodline flowing, thus preserving the lineage. Moreover, some families are purported using “gendercide” the killing of a child based upon its gender in order to get a male heir (Tso, 2011). The female child is discarded as if she were trash and left to die. Furthermore, it is customary for the male child to take care of the aging parents. In 2009, men outnumber women by 37 million (Parker, 2009). In addition, more than 500 women per day commit suicide due to consequences directly related to the one-child policy (Parker, 2009).

¹ http://www.womensrightswithoutfrontiers.org/
² http://tlhrchouse.gov/
In America since Roe v. Wade, there the debate over abortion rages on. The proposed Oklahoma Personhood Act has fueled debate over when does life begin (Baynes, 2012). The Oklahoma Personhood Act if implemented will confirm legally that life begins at conception, thus giving the fetus rights as a person. Therefore, killing a fetus would be murder. There have been other states to propose a “personhood” law including Mississippi and Virginia, Yet, Missouri was the only state to adopt a “personhood” law.

Possible Alternatives

The clinics can forego their ideas about providing abortion services. This is highly unlikely due to this was their reason for coming to WHW in the first place.

Alternatively, WHW could assist the clinic by specifically stating that the money is not to be used for any abortion related service. This would be difficult to oversee if not impossible to manage.

WHW could send the clinics the medications directly to the clinics. However, this would also provide support for the abortion side of the clinic.

Who is affected?

Many people are affected by WHW’s decision. In China, the poor are especially affected by WHW’s decision as to whether or not to provide funds to support the clinics. Moreover, donors including organizations and individuals are affected by the decision WHW makes. We must ask, “What do our donors want WHW to do with the money that they gave?” “Do they want to support China’s one-child policy, which includes coercion and the killing of babies?”
Ethical Standards Approach

Utilitarian Approach:
The Chinese government utilized the utilitarian approach when it came to its one-child family policy. They believed by limiting family size would benefit all of China, thereby benefiting the majority of people in China at the expense of having larger families. This approach seems justifiable if one looks at the picture for the masses only. However, when one looks at individual ‘rights’ one can see that it is not fair to the individual families, nor the women who do not want to abort their babies.

Rights Approach:
Under the rights approach, women in China ought to have the “right” to abort or the “right” not to abort.

Fairness or Justice Approach:
In regards to the Fairness or Justice Approach, while it is true that the Chinese Government is trying to be judicially equal in the treatment of its citizens it in it treatment of its citizens where WHW disagrees unequivocally.

Common Good Approach:
On the surface, this may sound the same as the Common Good Approach. However, after delving deeper into its adverse effects in denying freedom of choice for Chinas’ families this action lacks compassion for even the most vulnerable.
Virtue Approach:

Looking at the entirety of China’s one-child policy and the effects of its people how could WHW be intertwined with such political discourse. The virtuousness of WHW would be questioned. WHW would look as if it supported China’s government in how it enforces its immoral population control policy. The Virtue Approach does not allow any type of aid that could look as if WHW were promoting China’s one-child policy and the government’s enforcement thereof.

Consequences, Duty, Justice, or Rights

The consequence of promoting the family clinics is that they will in turn use WHW’s assistance in their effort to provide a “clean upscale clinic” to middle-income earners abortion services. WHW has a duty to assist when it is within the scope of its vision to do so. Does it make judicial since to assist the clinics knowing that WHW will in fact be contributing to the abortion rate in order to save others’ lives? It does not make since for WHW to contribute to the propagation of abortion even though others may be helped.

Objection to analysis

Is it not justifiable to help the ones that we can help?

Rebuttal

Just because there is no win-win situation in regards to China’s human rights violations that does not forgo WHW from doing the “right thing.”
Does analysis live up to personal beliefs?

The analysis of the actions that I have suggested for WHW falls directly in line with my personal moral and ethical beliefs. I do not think that I could suggest that a company do something that I believed was in direct contrast to my ethical and moral beliefs.

Would you be comfortable in the public knowing of decision?

I would be comfortable from a virtuous point, knowing that I suggested what I thought was best for WHW from research and weighing consequences of aiding or not aiding the Chinese family clinic.

Conclusion

Due to the way in which the Chinese government inflicts human travesties towards it people, WHW is unable to commit any resources at this time to the family clinics. The only way that WHW could consider aiding the project would be if the Chinese government would rescind its one-child family policy as it is enforced today.
References


