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A Comparative Analysis of Policy Impacts on Family Structure: Post-Soviet Estonia vs. China's One-Child Policy Era

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Abstract

Family change, shaped by historical, policy, and socioeconomic shifts, is a multifaceted phenomenon that simultaneously presents challenges and opportunities. The traditional family framework, centred on parents and children, serves as the fundamental unit for maintaining kinship bonds and undertaking social functions.

In modern society, due to the diverse impacts of external factors such as policies, cultural concepts and the development of productive forces, the traditional family framework has inevitably been continuously impacted and reshaped. In this dynamic process of change, the role positioning and interactional relationships, inevitably undergo adjustment and reconstruction.

This paper examines family transformation through two distinct contexts: Estonia's post-Soviet family evolution (marked by de-traditionalization and shifting parental roles) and China's experience under the one-child policy (a state-led demographic intervention). By examining these cases through the aspects of "de-traditionalization," and "gender role reconstruction" within the family, this paper argues that family change is a dynamic process with both risks and transformative growth potential, depending on how societies, institutions, and individuals adapt to new norms, and how they safeguard the emotional needs, developmental opportunities, and sense of belonging of every individual amid such shift.

Keywords: Social Policy, Family Change, Parental Roles