Schools of Thought:
An Analysis of Interest Groups Influential in Population Policy

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Abstract
This analysis, written in 1993, explores the relationships among competing schools of thought in the international population policy arena. It offers the following observations: (1) Five interest groups are influential: the population-concerned community, a market-oriented group, people focusing on equitable distribution of resources, women's advocates, and the Vatican; (2) Only one of the five groups wants to draw attention to population growth; the other four all have other priorities and prefer to reduce attention to demography, seeing attention to population growth as interfering with their priorities; (3) Any attempt to base policy on identified common ground in this situation would result in asymmetry, turning policy attention away from population growth.

Editor's note (1998): This paper was written in 1993, in the months following the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, as the Cairo conference was being defined and its preparatory meetings were beginning. The paper identifies five competing schools of thought that were then shaping population policy on an international level. It suggested that of the five influential groups, or schools, only one of them wanted to draw attention to population growth, and the other four schools all exhibited some discomfort with this subject, seeing it as interfering with their priorities. Because so much has happened in the population field since this was written, particularly related to the Cairo conference and its influences on policies around the world, this 1993 paper is being published now as an historical piece. The reader is invited to judge whether or not its observations still represent accurately the configuration, or core positions, of the main schools of thought on population today.

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THE POPULATION POLICY ARENA

Contemporary policy debates reveal conflicting interests and beliefs about population. While some people seek to increase attention to population growth, which they perceive as harmful to the environment or hindering development, four other influential groups, communities, or schools of thought, attempt to reduce attention to population growth. The debate is an important one: it sets policy, it influences budgets, and ultimately it may determine the future of the planet.
Population is a contentious policy subject. There are persistent disagreements about both the effects of population growth and the causes of fertility decline. Population is a sensitive subject because it is about life and death, cultural values, religion, political power, distribution of wealth, and sex. There is much confusion in population discussions (Campbell, 1992). People commonly mix the questions, "Is population growth a problem?" and "What reduces fertility?" Further, people confuse the concepts "necessary" and "sufficient." For example, some groups believe that the population-concerned community thinks reducing fertility is sufficient to save the environment or improve social systems, rather than necessary but not sufficient, which is actually the case.

To add complexity, at least four basic ethical questions are central but usually unexamined. They are about (1) responsibility to present versus future generations, (2) individual versus community rights and benefits, (3) average versus total quality of life, and (4) the distribution of resources and opportunity. For example, the much debated concept of carrying capacity depends on specifying what level of consumption is required for an "adequate" life, and that issue involves all of these ethical questions.

Many people have difficulty in seeing population as an important concern. This is partly because it is hard to demonstrate causality in a complex system. For any given change in the environment or human conditions, plausible explanations are likely to overlap, and there is plenty of evidence to back up everyone's claims. For example, it is difficult to connect population growth and forest depletion when someone has persuasive evidence that land use policies and practices are more to blame than the number of people on the land.

A clear view of causal connections is important to policymakers, who are responsible for allocating common resources. Lawrence Summers (1991), speaking as chief economist of the World Bank, noted the difficulties of planning in this area when the causal relationships concerning population growth and environmental degradation, causes of migration, links between population growth and inequality in the wage structure, and the fiscal implications of population growth are all unclear. Peter Haas (1992) points out that in these situations of uncertainty, policymakers turn to experts for advice. In the case of population policy, given the differing perspectives on the subject, at least five groups claiming relevant expertise are providing advice. Each has a different set of answers.

To help understand this situation, this paper uses negotiation analysis, which is a practical tool in conflict resolution. It can be applied to many situations ranging from international relations to labor disputes. It seeks to provide a clearer understanding of disputes by clarifying competing groups' positions, including their shared beliefs and policy projects. It focuses on the zone of possible agreement, with sensitivity to changes in this zone during negotiations, and it promotes awareness of attempts to change the rules of the game in order to alter this zone (Sebenius, 1992 a;b).

This negotiation analysis starts by setting out the primary interests of each school, the issues for each school with regard to the subject of current dispute, which is population, and their chosen policy actions with respect to population. It also looks closely at the beliefs of each school, which are the facts it accepts as truth; and it looks at the set of population-related issues that are absent from each school's literature and speeches-relevant subjects that each group has ignored, overlooked, or simply not addressed.
IDENTIFYING THE SCHOOLS OF THOUGHT

The five schools of thought share three characteristics:

1. Each school seeks to be influential in the shaping of international population policy in the 1990's.

2. Each can be seen as a single unit because it holds an identifiable, consistent set of beliefs and general goals. Groups, or schools of thought, can be subdivided, but looking at their internally common positions helps us to see who the main groups are, and what the important contrasts are between them.

3. Each represents the single-minded positions held with supreme confidence by their more vocal proponents.

In the population field, the difficulties in establishing irrefutable causal relationships means that the role of the belief systems of the differing groups is important. Each group attempts to demonstrate that its own perspective is the correct one, and each produces evidence backing up its claims. Charles Lindblom (1990) points out that in a complex social system, where people cannot know everything, they must operate on sets of selected beliefs. He demonstrates the importance of converging beliefs in the formation of social or purposive groups. Clearly there exist many persons less single-minded and with less confidence in these positions, who soften the debate and who represent more than one school of thought, but the single-minded proponents of a single perspective or school enjoy disproportionate influence. Individuals who recognize problems in these single positions tend not to be active in these disputes, for, as Peter Haas has pointed out, "If confronted with anomalies that undermined their causal beliefs, they would withdraw from the policy debate" (Haas, 1992). Sebenius explains that people in a group think alike when they recognize that agreeing is of greater value than any alternatives (Sebenius, 1992b). Thus a common front, even if it conceals some real differences, is presented by the group in the effort to influence public policy.

The Population-Concerned Community (POP)

The population community has generally stood as the group promoting attention to world population growth as a problem. It has been a target of criticism by the remaining four groups in this analysis. Leading this coalition are nonprofit organizations focused on the perceived perils of the current and projected rates of population growth in developing countries that can least afford to absorb the growth. These include, for example, Population Action International, the Population Institute, Population Communications International, Zero Population Growth, and the Sierra Club's population program. POP is concerned not with population size ten years from now, but fifty, one hundred, and even two hundred years out. For this school of thought, too many people lead to environmental decline, harmful effects on human welfare and economic development efforts, reduced natural resources, loss of biodiversity, and future strife in competition for scarce resources and opportunities.

POP has four chosen policy actions. The first is ample and well designed family planning programs, generally seen as necessary, but not sufficient to stabilize population growth. A second policy action is women's access to education, health care, and the means to economic participation (jobs, property, credit), both as an instrument leading to lower fertility and as a means of better family health and reduced incidence of poverty. Third is more equitable distribution of wealth and resources in order to reduce poverty, given the close connection
between poverty and high fertility. And fourth, POP feels it is important to draw attention to population growth. Making family planning universally accessible is widely seen within POP as the one change rapidly achievable on a large scale, while the first two policy actions are seen as highly desirable, and benefits in their own right, but much harder to implement.

This group believes that unless birth rates are reduced quickly, technology will be unable to solve the problems of feeding future levels of population and compensating for loss of natural resources. POP points to a large unmet demand for family planning, and that the provision of these services will be a relatively efficient as well as humane means to speed population stabilization. There is a considerable literature in POP expressing the opinion that only voluntary systems, as opposed to coercive systems of family planning, are appropriate.

POP typically overlooks some important issues that are central to some of the other schools of thought in this analysis. For example, it never addresses a related problem of concern to economists, how resources and wealth can be redistributed without reducing overall wealth of a society. In its advocacy it tends to ignore the problem of how to improve badly managed family planning systems that do not serve women as well as they should.

The Market Preference Community (MKT)

Many economists join American business conservatives in a school of thought that population growth does not hinder economic and social development. This belief served as a component of U.S. policy on population developed during the Reagan administration (Crane & Finkle 1987). It contains an economic philosophy consistent with the Reagan and Bush administrations' emphasis on the desirability of markets with minimal regulatory constraints. It is not unusual in public policy for differing objectives to underlie a commonly supported policy, and in the case of the MKT viewpoint, the economic rationale also helps to support some pro-life positions on the subjects of family planning and abortion services.

Visible adherents to this philosophy include authors Julian Simon and Ben Wattenberg, television host Louis Rukeyser of public television's Wall Street Week, Malcolm S. (Steve) Forbes, Jr. of Forbes magazine, the editorial writers of the Wall Street Journal, many economists, and the White House under Reagan and Bush. (1) Julian Simon has presented a broad theory (1981, 1992) that more people produce more goods and more wealth. Market pricing mechanisms take care of potential scarcity of nonrenewable resources, rendering these resources effectively infinite rather than finite under actual market conditions, when resource substitutions are taken into account. Given the increasing wealth of Europe and the United States during their respective population growth periods, it is believed that the population growth contributed to that wealth.

MKT is not characterized by coordinated policy activity on population, but it strives to maintain laissez-faire market systems including free markets, less dependence on subsidies, lower taxes, and government policies that encourage economic growth. The chosen policy action is of a negative character: it is inappropriate to provide government-sponsored family planning programs, disrupt current property ownership arrangements or interfere with free market systems as a means of dealing with high human fertility. The MKT group believes technology will solve resource scarcity problems in the future, including food scarcity, and market systems benefit society by creating wealth, thus providing the best solutions to social problems.

There are many subjects that this school of thought does not address, including finite limits of the biological environments, inequities between rich and poor, or inequities for women. There tends to be no mention of macro-level population figures in the long term. There is little attention to
poverty in developing countries, or to how resources, products or opportunities should be distributed where there is not enough money to pay for what is needed.

The Distribution Community (DST)

This is the school of thought that successfully blocked the population subject from central consideration in the environmentally focused UNCED, including the Earth Summit of 1992 in Rio de Janeiro. (2) In that two-year United Nations process, representatives of developing countries voiced resistance to focusing on population growth, preferring to focus on consumption patterns of industrialized countries and international distributional inequities. The population subject was put on the agenda only when the North, and in particular the United States, ultimately agreed to include consumption issues as well. Population later became a leverage item in an effort by the Group of 77 (G-77) (3) to obtain from the industrialized countries the funding required to institute technologies consistent with sustainable development in place of cheaper, less sustainable means to progress. This connection was clarified during a press conference by Ambassador Jamsheed Marker, during PrepCom IV, March 11, 1992 at the United Nations. Ambassador Marker, who represents Pakistan in the United Nations and chaired the meetings of the Group of 77, was asked when that bloc would be ready "move" on population. His reply: "The G-77 will be ready to move on population when the North is ready to move on finances." (4)

DST has no mutually exclusive position vis-à-vis the other groups in this analysis, for its fundamental positions are central also to the fourth and fifth groups (WIN, VTC) to be described below. Elements of the DST position are supported by POP as well. Further, DST is situation-dependent: while resisting attention to population in the Earth Summit process, most developing country leaders express concern about population factors in relation to development, environmental problems, human welfare, educational systems, and urbanization. Some countries have mentioned problems associated with having a high percentage young people in their populations, and the governments' inability to expand services to keep pace with the growth as these young people mature. One the whole DST has greater comfort expressing population concerns on an internal basis than in the context of international agreements with the industrialized North.

DST's more vocal representatives sometimes communicate considerable anger about population control, which they feel is being imposed by the North and they point out that the consumption patterns of the Northern countries are far more to blame for environmental problems than the birth rates of the South. One target of this anger has been the concern of United States government officials about the implications of developing countries' population growth for U.S. security interests (Cesar, 1991) and some DST spokespersons have stereotyped those concerned about population growth as being motivated by other than humanitarian interests (Hong, 1991; Akhter, 1991, Mkangi, 1991). Beyond criticism aimed at POP (referred to pejoratively as the population controllers) is a body of literature and argument about the harmful effects of past and present colonial practices on the environment, biological diversity, and the ability of people to maintain livelihoods (Shiva, 1989; 1990). The development programs of the World Bank and other western institutions, including multinational companies, are described as distinctly harmful. For example, it is shown that the introduction of large scale monoculture (cash crop production), where it has replaced diversified subsistence agriculture, has reduced environmental quality and also caused the loss of independence and personal dignity for large numbers of people.

The central concern of DST is the persistent poverty of developing countries, and a sense that the people of the South are being blamed for contributing to global environmental decline when others are more to blame. The chosen policy action is generally a more just allocation of
resources, and this includes not only direct assistance but also trade arrangements less preferential to the North and more responsive to the needs of the South, including favorable commodity pricing.

Not addressed by DST in its literature are macro-level population projections, and the medium-to-long range future in developing countries with regard to population growth and its possible effects on resources, development, or the environment. While focusing on inequities between the North and the South, DST does not usually draw attention to inequities within developing countries, although there have been a few exceptions to this.

The Women's Initiatives Community (WIN)

During the two-week Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in June, 1992, discussions in the Women's Tent at the concurrently held Global Forum spelled out the positions of coordinated activists on women's opportunities and rights. Some of the scheduled speeches and discussions were focused on population issues. The stand of WIN on population is largely consistent with that of the DST group, with the addition of concerns about the disadvantageous position of women in developing countries. The specific concern that distinguishes WIN from DST is that, at any economic level, women are always a notch below the men in terms of means, opportunities and rights, and accordingly bear more of the suffering than the men (Sen & Grown, 1987). The focus on poverty is central.

WIN disapproves of the focus of population control advocates (again, like the more vocal DST spokespersons, using a pejorative label) on demographic growth and high fertility, and uniformly rejects the concept that environmental decline is caused by population growth. As Peggy Antrobus, general coordinator of DAWN, explained at Rio, fundamentally inequitable economic systems that exploit resources and humans are seen instead as detrimental to environmental preservation. (5) Structural adjustment policies instituted in response to the third world debt crisis of the 1980s are described as having exacerbated the poverty and inequity, with their requirements for reduced consumption and increased emphasis on exports (Antrobus, 1992). It is feared that focusing on population growth as a cause of environmental decline will draw attention away from these issues.

The central interests of WIN are the rights and opportunities long overdue to women of the developing world. These include access to high-quality health services, education, credit, property, and full participation in the political process.

The issues at stake for WIN in the population policy arena are 1) the concept of blaming women's fertility for environmental decline, when Northern consumption patterns and other aspects of destructive and inequitable economic systems are at fault (World Women's Congress, 1992; the Committee on Women, 1992); and 2) the harmful consequences of promoting and providing family planning in developing countries for purposes of reducing fertility. WIN points to instances of abuse of, or insensitivity to, women in demographically driven family planning programs (Women's Tent tapes, 1992), which are sometimes described as abusive family planning systems. These birth control service programs instituted in the presence of fertility reduction targets are said to be characterized by forced sterilizations, pills without proper supervision and follow-up, Norplant insertions without removal on demand, and general absence of contraceptive choices for women. In addition, WIN deplores contraceptive trials in developing countries to test birth control means not yet approved in Europe or the United States (Hartmann, 1992).
An important version of WIN thinking was presented in Rio by Gita Sen (1992a). After providing her clear analysis of the models of current discourse on development, Sen challenged those who focus on population growth, its consequences, and family planning:

In our analysis we try to give central importance to the perspective of poor women. ...We define the population issue as the right to determine and to make reproductive decisions in the context of fulfilling secure livelihoods, basic needs and political participation. And those three are not negotiable. Economic growth and ecological sustainability are important but they must be such as to secure livelihoods, to promote basic needs, to allow for political participation, and to allow for women's reproductive rights (Sen, 1992).

Since a definition, by definition, not only describes but also sets limits, Sen suggests that the population issue is seen as appropriately limited to these concerns. (6)

The chosen policy actions for this group in terms of population policy include the provision of comprehensive health systems and equal opportunities, education and rights for women, including full participation in the political process, and equal access to property and credit. Also among the policy actions is the preference that talk about population growth concerns and macro-level population data should be limited, because such talk leads, it is repeatedly said, to the insensitive or abusive family planning programs. This limitation is consistent with Sen's definition of the population issue.

WIN almost universally wants access to safe abortion, but it is split on positions concerning family planning. In general, the WIN leaders want access to family planning services as part of comprehensive health services, but some members of the group dislike high-technology means of contraception, including hormonal contraceptives such as pills and Norplant. A few of the speakers in the Women's Tent objected to all modern means of birth control, seen as disrespectful and injurious to women's bodies.

A key belief expressed repeatedly through the Global Forum speeches was that population growth is not important, although it should be noted that there is not within WIN a consensus on that opinion (e.g., Antrobus, 1992). Several proofs were offered that population growth is not a problem. This was done each time with an inverted syllogism, as follows: The population control community was reported to have said that in order to have improved health systems, education, etc. (speaking variously of Brazil or developing countries) women would need to reduce their fertility. The fertility level did drop, but the health systems did not improve, demonstrating that population growth is not significant (Women's Tent tapes, 1992). (7)

Another important belief within WIN is that the POP community is at best insensitive, and at worst exploitive. POP is not generally seen by WIN as driven by humanitarian motives. Some members of WIN have exhibited a belief that POP's concern about population growth is based primarily on neocolonial interests and a desire to maintain the high consumption lifestyles of the North. More uniformly, the group holds the position that attention to population growth macro-level data is conducive to inappropriate, inhumane approaches to fertility reduction, and that it is best therefore to reduce discussion of the macro-level population concerns. The communication of this chosen policy action appears to have created a sense of political incorrectness about the subject of population growth problems in honor of disadvantaged women. This has resulted in a growing silence on population growth since the Earth Summit, notably in two NGO meetings in preparation for the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development on January 8,1993 (New York) and March 5,1993 (Washington).
Subjects not generally discussed by WIN are the following: data (or, the current absence of solid data) to support the anecdotal reports of abuse in family planning systems; macro-level figures on population growth; the implications of fertility patterns beyond year 2000; the current unmet demand or need for family planning in many developing countries; the possibility of coercion of women implicit in the arrangements of some traditional cultures, including fertility decisions made for women by members of their husband's families; the implications for currently popular community-based distribution systems for family planning if family planning is to be provided only within full service health care programs; and, differences in time frames between benefits of family planning and benefits from efforts to effect fundamental change in property arrangements and rights in the developing world.

The Vatican (VTC)

As mentioned earlier, the status of the Vatican in the United Nations is that of Permanent Observer State, the same as the UN status of Switzerland. Delegates of these Permanent Observer States are seated with those from member countries, and they are welcome to speak and debate when their interests are at stake. The Vatican's representatives (from the Holy See Mission to the U.N.) have spoken up when the family planning subject is on the table. In the UNCED process the Holy See became active during the fourth PrepCom in New York, March 1992.

Even after perusal of a large volume of Vatican literature, it is difficult for this author, lacking the benefit of professional training as a Church scholar, to discern the central interest of the Vatican. It might variously be said to be the dignity of the human person in accordance with the teachings of the Church. Or, it could be maintenance of Church hegemony over its extended parish for proper interpretation of God's will. The sheer breadth of Vatican literature makes it difficult for a scholar outside the system to pin down a central objective.

For the Vatican, the issue at stake in the population policy arena is the use of methods of family planning not approved by the Church, including the position of contraception in international policy agreements. During PrepCom IV in March 1992, the Holy See delegates objected in plenary session to language referring to family planning and contraception and those terms were accordingly removed from the agreements in Agenda 21, the 800-page action document agreed upon at the Earth Summit. In an undated, two-page document issued from Rome following PrepCom IV and prior to the Earth Summit (Holy See, 1992), the Vatican responded to accusations that the Church had removed from UNCED documents reference to population.

The Holy See has not attempted to eliminate any wording relating to population, but only to improve it, reaffirming respect for liberty and for the conscience of the human person, defending the poorest of the poor from the unjust supposition, that due almost to the very fact of their very existence and that they are numerous, that they are the cause rather than the victims of their underdevelopment and of ecological degradation. (Holy See, 1992)

Implicit in this statement is a belief that contraception is an unwelcome addition to the lives of poor people, possibly coercive and unjust in the implications of its provision.

It is not well known that Pope John Paul II has spoken out several times on population growth in the developing world. But his words about population rarely stray far, or for long, from the always-present respect for human life as a consideration above resource constraints or other disadvantages that might result from persistent population growth.
The demographic challenge, like all human challenges, is ambivalent, and we have to redouble our concentration on the best efforts of human solidarity and collective creativity so as to convert population growth into a formidable potential for economic, social, cultural and spiritual development (Pope John Paul II, 1987).

Nevertheless, the Papal awareness of environmental problems, difficulties in terms of biodiversity, and rapid urbanization in the developing world is clear (Pope John Paul II, 1987; 1988; 1989), as is the Pope's awareness of the significance of population growth itself: "One cannot deny the existence, especially in the Southern Hemisphere, of a demographic problem which creates difficulties for development" (1988b). At the opening session of the Earth Summit, the statement by Archbishop Renato R. Martino, head of the Holy See delegation to UNCED, included the words, "The position of the Holy See regarding procreation is frequently misinterpreted. The Catholic Church does not propose procreation at any cost" (Martino, 1992). These were new words for the Vatican, and raised some hopes and a great deal of curiosity at Rio about a possibility of policy change within the Church with regard to contraception.

The position of the Church on population has two principal components. The first is that social ills, including the skewed distribution of wealth between North and South, produce the poverty that exacerbates this high fertility. This is basically the position of DST. Pope John Paul II has specified numerous components of the inequitable situations, including trade issues and commodity pricing problems (1987). Rectification of the uneven distribution of economic opportunity constitutes a chosen policy action of the Vatican. The second chosen policy action for the Church is that the dignity of the human person must be respected. This language is normally used as a reference to the impropriety of using contraception other than the approved abstinence-based rhythm methods.

Subjects generally not addressed by the Vatican are the macro-level data describing global population projections, unmet demand for family planning, and any possibility of reduced, rather than enhanced, dignity of persons seeking but unable to obtain efficient means to control their own fertility. It appears that the Vatican is, for the time being, in a difficult position on this front. It is faced with a widely disobedient member population, but has not yet indicated that it is time to bend official policy on contraception. The Vatican's official policy reflects neither the advice of many Catholic theologians nor the needs of the laity, and it has clearly limited the Church's range of response to global demographic problems that it has publicly recognized.

DISCUSSION

Table 1 summarizes the positions held by each of the five schools of thought: its primary interest, its key issues with respect to population, and its chosen policy actions. Table 2 looks beneath these positions, comparing the five groups’ consistent beliefs and the subjects that each group ignores, overlooks, or simply fails to address. With the comprehensive positions of the five groups viewed as a whole, it will now be possible to identify points of similarity and difference among the groups, and to make new observations about the configuration of those relationships.

(In the publication, the three tables are inserted here. Please see tables at end of this file.)

Two Missing Schools

While both environmental and development interests are incorporated into some of these positions, readers may wonder why they are not identified as schools of thought. Environmentalists are not listed as a school of thought in this analysis because they are split on
the subject of population, some belonging in the POP category, and the rest sounding more like DST. A development model has not been listed as a separate category or school of thought because it has been, in effect, subdivided into four separate schools of thought. There are variations of the development model within MKT, DST, WIN and VTC, and even POP contains some elements of it.

Asymmetry

The asymmetrical configuration of the five influential schools may be the most significant characteristic of the population policy arena revealed by this negotiation analysis, as demonstrated in Table 3. It is based on the following two observations:

- In the population policy arena, only one school of thought has population as a central concern. The four remaining groups have other principal interests, and each of them has exhibited a preference for reducing attention to population growth.

- The primary interests of WIN and DST are identical to individual chosen policy actions of POP.

The implications of these relationships in combination will be explored below.

Focusing on the Current Dialogue

Each of the groups reviewed in this analysis has played a role in population policy formulation. The market preference coalition (MKT) important in United States international policy between 1980 and 1992, was silent and uninfluential during UNCED, but deserves to be explored and understood because it represents a large and important segment of economic thinking. The Vatican (VTC) has been included in this study because of its active role in international population policy during UNCED. The Church's abiding interest in reproductive issues ensures its continued participation in this policy arena in the foreseeable future. DST, the school of thought focused principally on worldwide conditions of poverty and inequity in the distribution of wealth and opportunities, is important for three reasons: its independent role in population policy development during UNCED, its role as a key component of the thinking of WIN and VTC, and its place among the specific policy concerns of the population community.

The most active dialogue between the June 1992 Earth Summit and the spring of 1993 have taken place between the population community (POP) and the women's initiatives community (WIN), and it is on this relationship that the remainder of this discussion will be focused. There has clearly been an attempt to find and agree upon the common ground shared by these groups. However, the effects of asymmetry on this effort has important implications for policy. This discussion will continue with a focus on the single search for common ground between WIN and POP.

The Search for Common Ground

In a productive dispute resolution process, common ground can serve a useful purpose, opening doors to further agreement, provided groups seeking it are not limiting themselves or others to that single patch of ground. In this case, however, there have been indications that such limitation has been one of the objectives of WIN. Under the condition of asymmetry, any agreement to redefine population policy within the shared area of common ground would limit POP to its one chosen policy action identical to the objective of WIN. Table 3 demonstrates that the common
ground between the two groups, or schools, is the one policy action chosen by POP that specifically benefits women, while it is the primary interest of WIN.

There would be little disagreement in the population community that all of the advancements desired by WIN for women are highly desirable and long overdue, and also that implementation soon would be best. But it is clear that to drop the other aspects of population policy while waiting for these changes to take place worldwide would be a drastic policy change and a peculiar sacrifice for POP.

One of the common situations found in negotiation analysis is the attempt to change the zone of acceptable agreement (Sebenius, 1992a;b). This effort is typically undertaken by one negotiating party without full understanding of the other. To limit agreement to the common ground between WIN and POP in this asymmetrical policy arena in effect would alter the zone of agreement on population policy, by narrowing that zone to only a portion of the chosen policy actions of the population community.

**Blocking Coalitions, or a Single Blocking Coalition**

In the language of negotiation analysis, the four groups preferring to reduce attention to the policy subject central to the analysis (MKT, DST, WIN, and VTC) can be seen as blocking coalitions (Sebenius, 1991a). They can also be seen, inasmuch as they share this preference, as a single, tacit, de facto blocking coalition, with no self-conscious coordination or strategy. As such, it is a coalition of strange bedfellows, given the conflicting objectives of MKT, WIN and VTC.

**The Concept of Asymmetry in General Terms**

In summary, a policy situation is asymmetrical when two conditions are present: a) only one of the competing groups has the subject of the policy area as its central interest, and b) that group has a chosen policy action identical to the primary interest of another active group. Under these circumstances, limiting solutions to the common ground between two such groups (Table 3) is difficult to justify, because it addresses only one policy action of the only group whose primary interest is the subject of the policy area, while it satisfies the primary interest of the second group, which is a different subject. The second group serves as a blocking coalition. Such limitation constitutes an imposed shift of the perceived zone of agreement.

**Two Approaches to Resolution**

Sebenius (199a) speaks of the difference between creating value and claiming value in negotiations. This is similar to the distinction between integrative and distributive bargaining (Raiffa, 1982). If distributive reasoning (claiming value) is employed, the zone of agreement in this asymmetrical policy situation would be reduced to a narrow piece of the POP objectives, for population policy would be viewed as a zero-sum situation in which each interest group may gain only at the expense of the other. If integrative reasoning (creating value) is employed, wherein the groups are open concerning their respective needs and priorities, and an analytic guide is used to view the underlying bases for joint gains, resolution can be stretched beyond the narrow common ground and groups might benefit from each other's insights without limiting the objectives of either. Population policy formulation would in this case be viewed as a positive-sum situation, wherein the involved groups could all benefit.
Incomplete Information

There appear to be several areas in the population policy discussions where not all parties have been fully informed. For example, one of the difficulties found in the chosen policy actions of WIN concerns the anticipated time frame to achieve the desired aims. The implementation of some objectives would require radical transformation of property systems in the developing world. This may be just and deserved, but it will not happen quickly, particularly in traditional societies with long-established constraints on changing legal gender relations. POP members know that to depend on these changes as a prerequisite for fertility reduction may result in a serious a setback in terms of time, a setback of perhaps decades. The discrepancy between projected time frames of the two groups' sets of chosen policy actions must be examined.

Another area in need of examination is the extent of abuse incurred, in contrast to benefits, by attention to population growth problems. While some demographically driven family planning problems, according to WIN, contain characteristics not sensitive to women's needs, this situation must be measured quantitatively against the absence of family planning services if resources were not mobilized to provide them, as is currently the case in some countries and regions. The current dearth of solid data on inappropriate or inadequate practice in family planning systems makes difficult any such comparisons.

Such data could also be used to mobilize attention and resources required to right the wrongs in the system.

A third area inadequately documented is the relationship between population growth and environmental decline. WIN typically asserts that no such relationship exists. It is difficult to counter such assertions, given the scant supply of solid data available in this interdisciplinary subject.

Alternate Points of Intervention

The chosen policy action of WIN concerning reducing attention to population growth issues is reportedly for the purpose of reducing tendencies to set fertility reduction targets, which lead, according to WIN, to family planning services insensitive to women's needs. This preference for reducing attention to population growth appears to be based on an assumption that this is the only intervention available, the only way to protect the women who are exposed to undesirable aspects of family planning programs. It may be productive to see this option, the reduced attention to population growth, as only one of at least three options available. This option does have one advantage: it has appeared achievable, in view of recent success this direction. The transmitted sense of political incorrectness of the population growth subject in support of and respect for disadvantaged women has worked remarkably well.

The two other available intervention points would have fewer far-reaching, detrimental effects on the population community's efforts. The first of these would be a cessation of target-setting in favor of responding to all unmet demand for family planning (Sinding, 1993). The second would be the closer monitoring of family planning services to ensure that they do not harm women in any way, do offer a wider range of contraceptive choices, and are more sensitive to women's needs.

Separating the Issues

Given the many elements of the discussion not addressed by the five groups in this analysis (see
Table 2, bottom row), it would appear advantageous to disaggregate the population-related issues raised (and also those not addressed) by all of the involved groups into their component parts, for separate discussion. Population growth, family planning, women's opportunities and rights, health care, distributional systems, poverty, consumption, the dignity of the human person per Church requirements – all could be addressed separately. This has been suggested by Sebenius (1992a), as "unbundling" of negotiating points, to seek new directions toward agreement. It was a technique used productively during workshops held pursuant to the Vienna Convention of 1985, in preparing the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer (Benedick, 1991). In the population policy case, additional categories might be constructed for the relationships between pairs of issue components: population and consumption, family planning programs and women's reproductive rights, and other relevant combinations. When discussions are complete it could then be decided which of the elements belong in a population policy and which would more appropriately be pursued in other arenas of policy development. The issues could then be reaggregated for approval as a comprehensive package.

Choosing the Policy Arena

A fundamental question that might be raised in light of the asymmetry in the population arena is whether all of the concerns raised recently by WIN in the population policy context in fact belong within population policy. An arena well suited to many of the aims of WIN is that of human rights policy. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted and proclaimed by General Assembly Resolution 217 A(III) on December 10, 1948, already contains many of the rights sought by WIN that have yet to be applied in practice to women in many parts of the world. These include protection against discrimination and equal protection of the law, the right to own property alone or with others, universal and equal suffrage, equal pay for equal work, and the right to education. The right to "a standard of living adequate for health and well-being" (United Nations, 1948) does not quite say adequate health care, but can be seen as opening the door to this benefit.

Plans are currently under way to put women's rights on the human rights agenda at the World Conference on Human Rights to be held in June, 1993 in Vienna, the first world conference on this subject in 25 years. There are some indications that the planned initiatives on behalf of women will focus on violence, arrest and incarceration, particularly in countries where laws treat men and women differently. It may be that the many other protections and opportunities written into the 1948 document, mentioned above, can be reintroduced as well in terms of women's long overdue rights, forty-five years after they were promised. If this were to happen, it could be extremely difficult at this point for male delegates to deny that the female half of the world's population is finally entitled to this broad set of benefits and rights.

Recommendations

In summary, this research suggests that there is a structural case for:

- declining requests to limit the population subject to WIN objectives;
- proposing an alternate intervention point in support of WIN's concerns about insensitive family planning programs;
- taking an inclusive or integrative approach to population policy, with WIN and DST concerns incorporated into the process;
- disaggregating the component issues for discussion, including the many issues variously
not considered by the different groups (bottom row of the table), treating some linked pairs of issues as discussion topics in addition to single issues, and then re-aggregating the issues found to be relevant for package approval; and

- viewing most of the WIN objectives as appropriate subjects for human rights policy, and viewing a number of WIN objectives either instrumental to population concerns or responsive to WIN concerns about family planning programs as appropriate components of population policy.

CONCLUSION

It is hoped that this exercise in negotiation analysis will increase understanding of the principal groups involved in population policy development and the relationships among them, and help to move forward the current dialogues in the field. In addition, the newly introduced concept of asymmetry may be useful in the analysis of other complex policy disputes between policy subject proponents and certain types of blocking coalitions. It is further hoped also that future research by others will identify more policy arenas characterized by this asymmetry.

Comments on this paper are welcome, including observations on the selection of the five interest groups, specific corrections or opinions on the five identified sets of interests, issues, chosen policy actions, beliefs and subjects not addressed, and views on the notion of asymmetry and its implications for seeking common ground in attempts at resolving disputes.

NOTES

1. The White House was espousing this view in October 1991 (White House press release, 1991), well after the start of the two year UNCED process, in which U.S. representatives argued for inclusion of population concerns in the discussions and agreements of that conference. This example of policy inconsistency provides a good reason to analyze schools of thought not in terms of formal organizations and agencies but, as suggested by Sabatier (1988), as advocacy coalitions independent of formal structures.

2. UNCED was the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, the formal name for the two-year conference culminating in the Earth Summit at Rio de Janeiro in 1992.

3. The Group of 77 is the large bloc of developing countries, currently 129 in number that coordinates on many policy approaches. During UNCED the G-77 met frequently and behind closed doors.

4. Press conference was attended by author.

5. DAWN is the acronym for the international project Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era.

6. The word "definition" comes from the Latin definite, to limit, define; in turn from de (from) and finire (to set a limit to, bound), and finis (boundary).

7. The necessary/sufficient confusion referred to earlier in this paper is, within the academic study of symbolic logic, identical with the characteristics of an inverted syllogism.

8. The concept of asymmetry being introduced in this paper is a new contribution to both negotiation analysis theory and public policy.

REFERENCES


Table 1: The Interests, Issues and Chosen Policy Actions of the Influential Schools of Thought

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School of Thought</th>
<th>POP</th>
<th>MKT</th>
<th>DST</th>
<th>WIN</th>
<th>VTC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Primary interests</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Reducing persistent poverty in developing countries, and gaining for their citizens access to opportunities and wealth. More equitable distribution between North and South.</td>
<td>Ending women's persistent poverty and dependence; obtaining for women access to education, opportunities, credit, property rights, and good health care services.</td>
<td>(Possibly) Promoting the dignity and welfare of humans and ways consistent with the teachings of the Church.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Issues with respect to population</strong></td>
<td>Reducing population growth</td>
<td>Maintaining or creating relatively unrestrained market systems</td>
<td>U.S. government is supporting efforts to stabilize other countries' populations when such aid is unnecessary (problem is not real) and inappropriate.</td>
<td>The North is focusing on the population growth of the South when they should: (1) realize that Northern consumption harms the environment more, and (2) share resources and opportunities of the South.</td>
<td>A focus on population stabilization unjustly blames poor women for environmental decline and harms women via insensitive family planning systems; emphasis of population policy should be women's health and welfare.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chosen policy actions</strong></td>
<td>1. Ample and well-designed family planning (FP) services; meet unmet demand for FP. 2. Opportunities for women: education, income, health credit, property rights. 3. Reduce poverty through improved distribution of wealth and opportunity. 4. Increase attention to population growth.</td>
<td>1. Reduce attention to population growth. 2. Focus instead on promoting freer market systems and good government that lets market efficiency direct production and distribution.</td>
<td>1. Reduce attention to population growth. 2. Focus instead on distribution needs of developing countries in terms of appropriately designed aid, fair commodity pricing for raw materials, shared opportunities.</td>
<td>1. Build population policy women's needs in terms of comprehensive health care, opportunities, rights, access to education, credit, property, political representation. 2. Reduce attention to population growth.</td>
<td>1. Do not promote contraception. 2. Note that population growth is a problem, but control attention to fertility matters in favor of addressing the poverty of developing countries. 3. Devise more equitable distribution and opportunities to alleviate poverty.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2: Beliefs Underlying the Influential Schools of Thought, and Subjects Not Included

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School of Thought</th>
<th>POP</th>
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<th>DST</th>
<th>WIN</th>
<th>VTC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beliefs</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. The present rate of population growth is harmful to human welfare, environment, and development.</td>
<td>1. Population growth is beneficial or at least a neutral factor in development.</td>
<td>1. Population growth is not the cause of environment decline; Northern consumption does the damage.</td>
<td>1. Women’s fertility is being blamed for environmental decline, and unjustly.</td>
<td>Social ills, including distribution problems between North and South, produce the poverty that exacerbates high fertility.</td>
<td>1. Population growth is not the cause of environment decline; Northern consumption does the damage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Technology cannot resolve all shortages in the future.</td>
<td>2. Technology and market system pricing will resolve shortages in the future.</td>
<td>2. Northern control of distribution systems and markets exacerbate Southern poverty.</td>
<td>2. Drawing attention to population macro-level data or growth concerns leads to family planning systems harmful to women.</td>
<td>2. Contraception can be a coercive, unjust, and unwelcome addition to the lives of poor people.</td>
<td>2. Market systems create wealth and foster efficient distribution.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. There is a large unmet demand for FP, worldwide.</td>
<td>3. Market systems create wealth and foster efficient distribution.</td>
<td>3. Economic gains reduce fertility.</td>
<td>3. Economic gains reduce fertility.</td>
<td>3. Giving women rights, health, opportunities and economic security will reduce fertility.</td>
<td>4. FP is necessary for fertility reduction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subjects not included</td>
<td>Market and distribution specifics: policy and economic mechanisms for achieving more equitable distribution of wealth and opportunity; trade policy implications for poverty; commodity pricing; colonial development considerations.</td>
<td>Environmental decline, including biodiversity issues: equity issues between rich and poor, and for women. Distribution issues. Relationships between Third World poverty and cash crops in lieu of subsistence agriculture. Macro-level population data, particularly in connection with future.</td>
<td>Macro-level population data, particularly in relation to future generations and resources, developing and environment.</td>
<td>Time frame required to implement chosen policy action; macro-level population data beyond year 2000; current scale of unmet demand for FP; the possibility of implicit coercion of women in traditional cultures; possible loss of popular CBD/FP systems under chosen policy actions; data on problems in current FP systems.</td>
<td>Macro-level population data, particularly in connection with future implications; unmet demand for FP; a possibility of a reduced, rather enhanced, dignity of persons seeking but unable to obtain efficient means to control their own fertility, consulting implicit coercion in absence of family planning.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3: Assymetry in the International Population Policy Area: The common ground between WIN and POP is one part of POP's chosen policy actions and the primary interest of WIN. Drawing attention to population growth is not in the common ground.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School of Thought</th>
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<th>WIN</th>
<th>VTC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary interests</td>
<td>Reducing population growth</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issues with respect to population</td>
<td>Continued rapid population growth in many developing countries damages the environment in those countries, puts pressure on resources, and hinders improvement of human welfare</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ending women's persistent poverty and dependence; obtaining for women access to education, opportunities, credit, property rights, and good health care services.</td>
<td>Arrow indicates the common ground</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Chosen policy actions | 1. Ample and well designed family planning (FP) services; meet unmet demand for FP.   
2. Opportunities for women: education, income, health credit, property rights.   
3. Reduce poverty through improved distribution of wealth and opportunity.   
4. Increase attention to population growth. |     |     | 1. Build population policy women's needs in terms of comprehensive health care, opportunities, rights, access to education, credit, property, political representation.   
2. Reduce attention to population growth. |     |     |