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Changing the world or reacting to a changed world?

*The global politics of population after
the International Conference
on Population and Development*

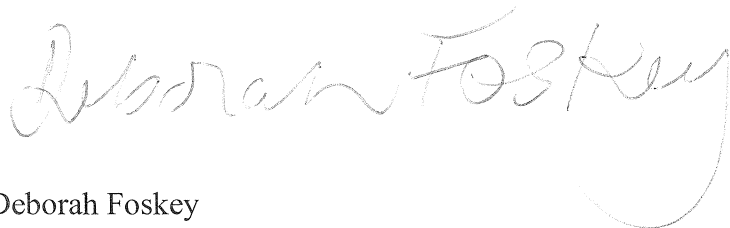
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March 2003

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy of the Australian National University

Statement

This thesis is the result of my own work except where otherwise indicated

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Deborah Foskey". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Deborah Foskey

March 2003



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No-one has benefited from this thesis as much as I did. Its writing has expanded me in many unforeseen ways; one of the most difficult things I have ever done, it is also one of the most rewarding. In writing it, I remembered my mother, for whom such opportunities never arose, and my son, who died in 1986, meaning that his potential future will forever remain a mystery.

Deb Foskey, 2003

Abstract

This thesis explores the global politics of population and reproduction since 1994, when the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) was held in Cairo. The thesis is presented within the disciplinary framework of International Relations in the understanding that debates about population and reproduction are intensely political. The central question is “Did the ICPD change the world, and if not, why not?” based upon the statement made by Nafis Sadik who, in 1994, was the Executive Director of UNFPA. Sadik’s statement reflected the views of many in the international women’s health movement, which played a major role in setting the agenda for the ICPD, as the thesis outlines.

The thesis is organised in six chapters, analysing the micro and macro aspects of ICPD’s Programme of Action (POA). It explores the transformative aspects of ICPD which are found in its micro agenda of women’s empowerment, reproductive rights and reproductive health. The key concepts are explored and debates about them within the broad and diverse feminist movement, as well as with the conservative opponents, are analysed in the thesis.

The macro context necessary for the achievement of the POA’s micro agenda was inadequately considered by the major players at ICPD and, hence, poorly covered in the POA. Development was given little attention, and the already weak concept of sustainable development was further compromised by its contextualisation within a framework of economic growth. Consequently, the thesis concludes, the transformative micro agenda was given no support by this part of the POA. The thesis tracks developments in global political economy which were occurring alongside the UN conferences of the 1990s. It focuses particularly on the World Bank, which is a major player in global population politics. Indonesia provides a case study of the impacts of global economic trends on reproductive health in a country with a population program which in 1994 was viewed as a model for other developing countries.

The macro context is also determined by approaches to population in environmental discourses since the framework of sustainable development in which population was placed in 1994 combined environmental and economic objectives. Neo-Malthusian views have provided the ‘common sense’ approach to population, particularly within Northern environmental organisations, and key documents are trawled to discern whether these views have been modified within some environmental and population organisations.

The thesis concludes by considering the contribution that the ICPD has made to population and broader debates and by assessing the contribution that topics related to population and reproduction can make to the discipline of International Relations. Throughout the thesis, the writings of Southern feminists are sought wherever possible, and the impacts of population and health policies on poor women are the main focus. As the people on the receiving end of population policies, the success of the conference is best measured by improvements in their health and their greater access to the conditions which enable them to exercise their reproductive and other human rights.

Abbreviations and acronyms

APPC	Asia Pacific Population Conference (2002)
ARROW	Asia-Pacific Resource and Research Centre for Women
AUSAID	Australian Agency for International Development
AWID	Association for Women's Rights in Development
BADEPAL	Indonesian Environmental Impact Management Agency
BKKBN	Badan Koordinasi Keluarga Berencana Nasional - National Family Planning Coordination Board (NFPCB) of Indonesia
CCMC	Communications Consortium Media Center
CEDAW Women	Committee for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CEDPA	Center for Development and Population Activities
Cepia	A Brazilian feminist organisation which has adopted the name of a local flower, Cepia
COPE	Campaign on Population and the Environment
CPS	Contraceptive Prevalence Survey
CSD	Commission on Sustainable Development
CWPE	Committee on Women, Population and the Environment
DALYs	Disability Adjusted Life Years
DAWN	Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era
DHS	Demographic and health surveys
DTT	Demographic Transition Theory
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Commission (of the UN)
ESCAP	Economic and Social Commission of Asia and the Pacific
EU	European Union
FINRRAGE	Feminist International Network for Reproductive Rights and Against Genetic Engineering
FIRE	Feminist International Radio Endeavour
G77	Group of seventy-seven countries

GA	General Assembly (see UNGA, below)
GAD	Gender and Development
GATS	General Agreement on Trade in Services
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GPE	Global Political Economy
HERA	Health, Empowerment, Rights and Accountability (a feminist NGO)
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1976)
ICPD	International Conference on Population and Development (1994)
IGTN	International Gender and Trade Network
IIASA	International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IPAC	Women's International Policy Action Committee
IPE	International Political Economy
IPPF	International Planned Parenthood Federation
IR	International Relations (the discipline)
IRRRAG	International Reproductive Rights Research Action Group
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature
IUD	Intra-uterine device
IUSSP	International Union for the Scientific Study of Population
IWHC	International Women's Health Coalition
IWTC	International Women's Tribune Center
KAP	Knowledge/Attitude/Practice (surveys)
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
NIEO	New International Economic Order
OBOS	Our Bodies, Ourselves (Boston Women's Health Book Collective 1985)

OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
POA	Programme of Action (of ICPD)
PAI	Population Action International
PKK	Applied Family Welfare Program (Indonesia)
PPFA	Planned Parenthood Federation of America
REAL	Realistic, Equal, Active for Life (women)
SEWA	Self Employed Women's Association (Bangladesh)
STD	Sexually transmitted disease
SWAps	Sector Wide Approaches (to health planning)
TRIMS	Trade-related investment measures
TRIPS	Trade-related intellectual property rights
UBINIG	Policy Research of Development Alternative
UN	United Nations
UNCED	United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (1992)
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
UNPD	United Nations Population Division
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WCP	World Conference on Population, held in Bucharest 1974
WCED	World Commission on Environment and Development (reported 1987)
WCW	Fourth World Conference on Women, held by the UN in Beijing in 1995
WEDO	Women's Environment and Development Organisation
WEN	Women and Environment Network
WFS	World Fertility Survey
WGNRR	Women's Global Network for Reproductive Rights
WICEJ	Women's International Coalition for Economic Justice,

WID	Women in Development
WIDE	Network Women in Development Europe
WPPA	World Population Plan of Action - outcome of WCP 1974
WSF	World Social Forum
WSSD	World Summit on Sustainable Development (2002)
WTO	World Trade Organisation
WWF	World Wildlife Fund

Chronology of Events

- 1944 Bretton Woods Conference establishes World Bank, International Monetary Fund and General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
- 1945 Adoption of UN Charter
- 1946 United Nations Population Commission established to provide accurate demographic statistics
- 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted
- 1952 First explicitly anti-natal program adopted India
- 1962 United Nations Resolution on Population Growth and Economic Development
- 1965 United States established Office of Population within USAID
- 1966 Political and Economic Covenants adopted by United Nations
- 1967 World Leaders Declaration on Population
- 1968 International Conference on Human Rights adopts Proclamation of Tehran
- Papal encyclical (*Humanae Vitae*) reaffirms Catholic Church's opposition to artificial birth control
- World Bank begins financing family planning programs
- 1969 United Nations Population Fund established
- 1972 The United Nations Conference on the Environment, Stockholm
- Club of Rome's Limits to Growth published (Meadows & Meadows 1972)
- 1973 Roe v Wade: United States Supreme Court decision asserting the legality of abortion
- 1974 UN Conference on Population is held in Bucharest
- 1975 First World Conference on Women, Mexico City, beginning Decade for Women
- 1977 Amsterdam meeting of 'radical/autonomous' feminists
- Paris meeting of left-aligned and socialist feminists
- Term 'reproductive rights' introduced in USA by Campaign for Abortion Rights and against Sterilisation Abuse
- 1978 International Campaign for Abortion Rights launched in London
- UNFPA publishes first annual State of World Population report
- World Bank publishes first annual World Development Report

- 1979 The Women's Convention - Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women - is adopted by the UN
- International Campaign for Abortion Rights becomes Women's Global Network for Reproductive Rights
- Latin American and Caribbean Women's Health Network formed
- International Network of Women Living Under Muslim Laws formed
- China adopts One Child Policy
- 1980 Second World Conference on Women is held in Copenhagen
- Ronald Reagan elected as President of United States
- 1981 Women's Convention enters into force
- International Women and Health meeting in Geneva
- United States Centre for Disease Control recognises AIDS
- 1984 Fourth International Women and Health Meeting, Amsterdam, with theme: *Population Control - No. Women Decide*; language of reproductive rights becomes international
- UN Conference on Population is held in Mexico City
- United States imposes Global gag rule (Mexico City policy)
- 1985 Third World Conference on Women is held in Nairobi
- 1986 Declaration on the Right to Development adopted by United Nations General Assembly
- Uruguay Round begins
- 1987 International Women's Health Movement meeting in Costa Rica
- 1988 George Bush elected President of United States
- 1991 Creating Common Ground Meeting between women's health advocates and scientists, Geneva
- 1991 Global Assembly of Women and the Environment (4 - 8 November) and the World Women's Congress for a Healthy Planet (8 - 12 November) in Miami
- 1992 United Nations Conference on the Environment and Development (UNCED, the Earth Summit, Rio Conference) is held at Rio de Janeiro in June
- Bill Clinton is elected as President of United States
- 1993 World Conference on Human Rights is held in Vienna
- Publication of World Bank report, Investing in Health

- Global gag rule withdrawn by President Clinton
- 1994 International Conference on Women's Health is held at Rio de Janeiro, January 24-28
- International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD, the Cairo Conference) held in Cairo, September
- 1995 World Trade Organisation established in January
- World Summit for Social Development (WSSD, Social Summit) is held in Copenhagen, March
- Fourth World Conference on Women (Women's Conference, Beijing Conference) is held in June in Beijing
- 1996 Clinton re-elected to Presidency of United States; Republicans dominate Senate
- 1999 The Hague NGO Forum for ICPD + 5, 8-12 February
- UNGA meeting on ICPD + 5, June 30-July 2
- November, Clinton capitulates to Republican demands for global gag rule legislation in return for back payment of \$1 billion in UN dues
- Clinton exercises Presidential ability to waive Global gag rule legislation
- 2000 Beijing + 5 review
- Election of George W. Bush as President of United States
- 2001 President Bush reinstates Global Gag Rule
- First World Social Forum held in Porto Alegre, Brazil, January
- 2002 Second World Social Forum held in Porto Alegre, Brazil, January
- Special Session of UNGA on Children, May 8-10
- Preparatory meeting for WSSD, Bali, May 27-June 7
- Bush Administration withdraws funding for UNFPA, July
- World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, September
- Asia and Pacific Population Conference, Bangkok, December 11-17
- United States election results in United States Congress dominated by Republicans
- 2003 Third World Social Forum held in Porto Alegre, Brazil, January
- UNPD releases the 2002 revised population projections, February

Glossary of terms¹

Birth control	practices employed by couples that permit sexual intercourse with reduced likelihood of conception and birth (Haupt and Kane 1998)
Birth rate	the number of live births per 1000 population in a given year (Haupt and Kane 1998)
DALYs	(Disability Adjusted Life Years) a time-based indicator of health outcome which measures of burden of disease in population by combining 'Years of Life Lost' (YLLs) and 'Years Lived with Disability' (YLDs) (Anderson 2002)
Death rate	the number of deaths per 1000 population in a given year (Haupt and Kane 1998)
Demographic momentum	see population momentum
Demographic transition	the historical shift of birth and death rates from high to low levels in a population. The decline of mortality usually precedes the decline in fertility, thus resulting in rapid population growth during the transition period. (Haupt and Kane 1998)
Fertility	the reproductive performance of an individual, couple, or population (Haupt and Kane 1998)
Fertility rate	the number of live births per 1000 women in a given year (Haupt and Kane 1998)
Global Gag rule	foreign family planning agencies may not receive U.S. assistance if they provide abortion services, including counseling or referrals on abortion, or lobby to make or keep abortion legal in their own country (Planned Parenthood Association of America undated)
Household	one or more persons occupying a housing unit (Haupt and Kane 1998)
Malthusian	belief that population growth is the primary cause of societal and human problems
Maternal mortality	"The death of a woman while pregnant or within 42 days of termination of pregnancy, irrespective of the duration and the site of the pregnancy, from any cause related to

¹ Where sources are not stated, definitions are derived from my own understanding of the concept concerned.

or aggravated by the pregnancy or its management, but not from accidental or incidental causes.” (*International Classification of Diseases*, 10th Revision, World Health Organization, Geneva, 1992)

Maternal mortality ratio	the number of women who die as a result of pregnancy and childbirth complications per 100,000 live births in a given year (Haupt and Kane 1998, 59)
Mexico City policy	see Global Gag rule
Morbidity	the incidence and prevalence of disease and illness in a population (Arafat and Allen 1995, 366)
Neo-Malthusian	an advocate of restricting population growth through the use of birth control (Haupt and Kane 1998, 60)
Population	all the persons living in a specific geographic area at a specific point in time (Murdoch and Ellis 1991, 11)
Population control	addresses the relationship between fertility, mortality and migration, most commonly used to refer to efforts to slow population growth through actions to lower fertility (Haupt and Kane 1998)
Population growth rate	can be zero or negative; measured by adding the natural increase (excess of births over deaths) to net immigration (excess of those arriving over those departing) (Peterson & Peterson 1986, 695)
Population momentum	the tendency for population growth to continue beyond the time that replacement-level fertility has been reached because of a relatively high concentration of people in the child bearing ages (Arafat and Allen 1995, 367)
Population Policy	explicit or implicit measures instituted by a government to influence population size, growth, distribution or composition (Haupt and Kane 1998)
Population Projection	Computation of future changes in population numbers, given certain assumptions about future trends in the rates of fertility, mortality and migration (Arafat and Allen 1995, 367)
Proximate variable	secondary, as compared to primary or ‘ultimate’ cause of, an event or process
Quality of care	an approach to family planning service provision which reflects a reproductive health approach
Replacement level fertility	the level of fertility at which an individual or couple has only enough children to replace themselves in the

population (Haupt and Kane 1998, 62; Petersen and Petertsen 1986, 772)

Revisionism the assumption that the impact of demographic trends on the economy are 'neutral'

Sex ratio number of males per 100 females in a population (Haupt and Kane 1998, 62)

Unmet need in its narrowest sense, the desire of married women currently not using contraception for access to family planning services (Demography); reproductive health feminists include all women of reproductive age group who wish to control their fertility (Dixon-Mueller & Germain 1992). Other feminists broaden the concept to include need for reproductive rights and health and the enabling conditions to achieve them (Abzug 1991).

Changing the world or reacting to a changed world? The global politics of population and reproduction after the International Conference on Population and Development

Acknowledgements	i
Abstract	ii
Abbreviations and acronyms.....	iii
Chronology of Events	vii
Glossary of terms	x
Chapter one — Introduction: locating the reproductive body in international politics.....	1
1.1 Overview.....	1
1.2 Thesis outline.....	4
1.3 The ‘population problem’	7
1.3.1 The ‘population problem’ in International Relations	8
1.3.2 The ‘population problem’ in global politics.....	9
1.3.3 The neglect of reproduction in International Relations.....	12
1.4 Bringing reproduction into International Relations	20
Chapter two — The micro agenda I: Changing population paradigms	25
2.1 Overview.....	25
2.2 Population statistics.....	26
2.3 Malthusianism and neo-Malthusianism	29
2.4 The global politics of population: 1974 to 1984	33
2.5 The global political context of ICPD.....	37
2.6 First steps toward the ‘quantum leap’	41
2.6.1 Population and Reproduction at Rio.....	42
2.6.2 Seeking common ground.....	48
2.7 ICPD’s micro agenda	51
2.7.1 Reproductive rights in the POA	52
2.7.2 Reproductive health in the POA.....	56
2.8 The ICPD’s limited view of ‘population’	59
2.8.1. Abortion as a key reproductive right	59
2.8.2 The reproductive rights of adolescents.....	62
2.8.3 Migration	64
2.8.4 Ageing populations/low fertility rates in the North.....	66
2.8.5 Morbidity and mortality	67
2.9 Conclusion	69
Chapter three The micro agenda II: Contesting the reproductive body....	71
3.1 Overview.....	71
3.2 Empowerment and power	71

3.2.1 Empowerment in development and population debates	72
3.2.2 'Empowerment' in the POA	79
3.3 Reproductive rights	80
3.3.1 Redefining reproductive rights	80
3.3.2 Reproductive rights in the POA.....	88
3.4 Reproductive health	90
3.4.1 Reproductive health at ICPD	90
3.5 Contested concepts: the pre-ICPD statements	97
3.5.1 'Empowerment' in feminist statements	102
3.5.2 Feminist debates over 'reproductive rights' and 'reproductive health'	104
3.6 The moral right fights back.....	106
3.6.1 The moral right at ICPD	106
3.6.2 The moral right at Cairo + 5 and Beijing + 5	110
3.6.3 A larger agenda?	112
3.7 Conclusion: the micro agenda needs a macro context.....	118
Chapter four The macro-context I: The reproductive body in the global political economy.....	121
4.1 Overview	121
4.2 Population and the economic orthodoxy.....	124
4.3 The micro, macro and meso in economics.....	127
4.4 Globalising the political economy	129
4.4.1 Sexual and reproductive health in the context of health sector reform	135
4.4.2 Human rights: a challenge to global economic structures?	138
4.5 The World Bank in the global political economy.....	142
4.5.1 The World Bank in International Population Politics.....	143
4.5.2 The World Bank's notion of empowerment	148
4.5.3 The Bank's population policies in practice	153
4.5.4 The Bank and women's human rights	156
4.5.5 Women's reproductive labour in 'engendered' development'	161
4.6 Economic crisis, gendered impacts in Indonesia	164
4.6.1 The economic collapse and women's interests.....	174
4.7 Conclusion	178
Chapter five The macro context II: The political ecology of population and reproduction.....	181
5.1 Overview	181
5.2 Population in environmental debates	182
5.2.1 Malthusian approaches	183
5.2.2 Neo-Malthusian approaches	185
5.2.3 Consumption's 'ecological footprint'	194
5.2.4 Ecofeminist approaches	197
5.2.5 Feminist political ecology approaches.....	202
5.3 Population and reproduction in sustainable development	206
5.3.1 The <i>problematique</i> of population in sustainable development.....	208
5.3.2 The <i>problematique</i> of reproduction in sustainable development	211

5.3.3 Sustainable development and population at ICPD	214
5.4 UNFPA State of World Population reports	221
5.5 ‘Our global challenge’: the six billionth child.....	227
5.6 Population and reproductive politics at the World Summit on Sustainable Development	232
5.7 Conclusion	239
Chapter six Closing the gaps: Reproduction and population in the new century	249
6.1 Overview.....	241
6.2 Did the ICPD change the world?	242
6.3 The gaps	244
6.4 And the bodies keep falling through... ..	247
6.5 Transversal politics	248
6.6 The future of UN conferences.....	251
Bibliography.....	255

Chapter one Introduction: locating the reproductive body in international politics

Whether the negotiations succeed or fail, the Conference will be a success.
(European delegate arriving in Cairo for ICPD; cited in Lassonde 1997, 14)

1.1 Overview

This thesis is about the international politics of population and reproduction since the 1994 International Conference on Population (ICPD). It focuses on the ICPD's Programme of Action (POA), which was widely regarded as a 'quantum leap' in approaches to population. The processes surrounding the POA and its implementation bring into sharp focus the key tensions and struggles - theoretical, discursive and practical - around population and reproduction. It is with these processes and their outcomes that this thesis is centrally concerned.

Couched in diplomatic language, the POA was greeted by some as a solution to 'population problems' and a key instrument for improving women's lives. This second, transformative, aspect is outlined in Chapter IV of the POA, which focuses on the achievement of women's empowerment and autonomy and in Chapter VII, which focuses on reproductive rights and health. Together, they outline a new approach to population issues based on acknowledging women's right to determine their sexual and reproductive lives.

This outcome, I argue, signaled the potential for a shift away from the dominant Malthusian and neo-Malthusian *macro-politics of population* to a new approach based on the *micro-politics of reproduction*. Nafis Sadik, Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations organisation which organised the ICPD, declared in her closing speech: "[t]his POA has the potential to change the world ... in our field it represents a quantum leap to a higher state of energy" (UNFPA 1994a, 1). While it is unclear what Sadik meant by "a higher state of energy", her statement indicates that she expected that the conference would result in broad international support for the POA.

Nearly a decade later, much of that potential remains unfulfilled. What has happened to that promise of greater empowerment and freedom for women? While there have been improvements in some developing countries, such as a broader definition and better

delivery of reproductive health services, the conditions for most women have slipped backwards. The high hopes of 1994 have not been realised and the 'quantum leap' has frozen in mid-air. Why?

I argue that the answer to this central question is to be found in three basic and related reasons. The first is that the radical agenda of women's empowerment and reproductive rights was contested by powerful forces prior to, and with growing strength, since, the ICPD. Second, the POA's radical elements are framed by a broader agenda that is not committed to the structural changes necessary to enable women to fully realise those rights. Third, developed countries have not honoured their commitment to provide the resources necessary to meet the POA's objectives and many developing countries are either unwilling or unable to implement the program.

The global politics of reproduction are as important to this thesis as population because the ICPD deviated from the frameworks of earlier population conferences by foregrounding the reproductive processes which are the basis of any demographic change. Entering population discourses via reproduction reveals a different terrain to that offered by a macro approach to population issues. Different actors and struggles are highlighted and alternative viewpoints on old contests are aired. As Ginsburg and Rapp point out, "reproduction simultaneously encompasses the impact of the international community of development agencies and local metaphors of childbirth. ... Clearly, questions of culture, politics, and biology are impossible to disentangle around the topic of reproduction, as they often involve transnational processes that link local and global interests" (Ginsburg and Rapp 1995, 2). Importantly for the purposes of this thesis, focusing on reproduction reveals women to be central to debates about population, which have previously measured their fertility, but given little attention to their agency.

A related aim of this thesis is to argue that the issues of population and reproduction are highly relevant to the discipline of International Relations. This is based on the understanding that human reproduction - where it happens, who does it, and the extent and means of control exercised by individuals, states and other institutions - involve "transnational" processes, as Ginsburg and Rapp point out. While population has long been a factor in issues of power and security, contests related to reproduction have moved from domestic and national arenas to international fora. The ICPD and the processes surrounding it brought these issues together and provided the language for

subsequent debates. While the event and its implications for global politics have been analysed in other disciplines, it has not yet been brought into International Relations.² Where studies in International Relations have considered the ICPD, they have tended to use it as a case study in the politics of social movements (Clark *et al* 1998; Hodgson 1998). My project is to apply a critical feminist lens to the global politics of population and reproduction revealed by the processes of the ICPD and subsequent events to determine the answer to the central question of the thesis: why didn't the ICPD change the world?

The text of the ICPD POA is marked by language - human rights, political transparency, partnership with civil society - which links it to the global political discourses of the 1990s (Lassonde 1997, 14). Since this thesis is a study of global politics and surveys the work of global actors, International Relations is likely to provide an appropriate methodology. In section 1.4, I assess the themes of International Relations' major schools and conclude that a combination of the existing approaches of Liberal Institutionalism, critical feminist theory, International Political Economy provides a suitable framework for the thesis. To this framework, I have added an adaptation of the emerging approach of transversalism (Yuval-Davis 1997), which recognises that women, particularly poor women, are located at the intersection of multiple political, economic, social and environmental processes, making it particularly useful to this study.

Despite its primary location in the discipline of International Relations, this thesis draws on material from a wide range of disciplines. Many anthropologists, demographers, development theorists, ecologists and economists work on issues related to population and reproduction. Their contributions have assisted me in making crucial connections between the micro topic of reproduction and the macro topics of economic, development and the environment.

² Much has been written about ICPD in the discipline of Demography (Finkle & McIntosh 1996; Hodgson & Watkins 1997; Lassonde 1997; Van de Kaa 1995; Westoff 1995), by activists and researchers in the international women's health movement (Berer 2000a, 2000b; Petchesky 1995a and 1995b and 1998) and by activists and researchers in the area of women and development (Harcourt 1997; Sen 1994b and 1995a).

This thesis draws on material available in the public domain. Using a critical feminist lens, and focusing on the politics surrounding their production, as well as the political implications of their content, I (re)examine relevant United Nations (UN) and World Bank documents, women's statements and feminist analyses and reports produced by expert committees and governments. I also scrutinise the commentaries produced by participants and observers of ICPD and later events; these include supporters and opponents of reproductive rights and those who take a Malthusian or neo-Malthusian approach to population.³ This extensive exploration provides the tools for answering the question, Why didn't Cairo change the world? It also indicates potential directions open to those working towards the transformations offered by the ICPD POA for women's lives.

1.2 Thesis outline

This thesis is presented in six chapters. Following this outline, in the remainder of Chapter one I explore the 'population problem' and indicate the political nature of debates around the topic. This is followed by an examination of the ways that population and reproduction are considered in the major schools of International Relations. Finally, I draw together the most useful approaches that the discipline offers for this thesis.

Chapter two, Changing population paradigms, begins the analysis of the micro agenda of the ICPD. It examines the events and processes which led to the change in focus from population to reproductive rights. First, I review the population statistics provided by the UN in the early 1990s, since these provided the basis for interpretations of the 'population problem' at Cairo. I also consider current statistics and projections, which provide a vantage point from which the ICPD's concerns can be re-examined. Second, I establish the way that the concepts of Malthusianism and neo-Malthusianism are used in this thesis, since they shaped the dominant approaches to population issues prior to the ICPD and remain influential in the global politics of population. Third, I locate the

³ In this thesis, I use the terms 'populationists' and 'population establishment' to refer to individuals and organisations which focus on reducing population growth. Their activities include lobbying governments and other institutions to introduce policies and programs to reduce fertility, organising such programs themselves, raising money for such activities and conducting research and public campaigns to reinforce their aims (Green 1999). Some organisations mentioned in this thesis are Population Action International, the Audubon Society and, in Australia, Sustainable Population Australia.

ICPD in the series of international UN conferences on population and establish the global political context of the ICPD. Fourth, I outline the processes initiated by feminist organisations after the United Nations Conference on the Environment and Development (UNCED) to change the ICPD's focus from a populationist to a reproductive rights and health focus. Fifth, I chart the evolution of reproductive rights in UN documents through earlier population and human rights conferences. Sixth, I examine the POA's Chapter four, Gender Equality, Equity and Empowerment of Women, and Chapter seven, Reproductive Rights and Health, to determine the basis for Sadik's claim that they hold the potential to 'change the world'. Finally, I identify areas which were neglected by the POA, since the topic of 'population' is broader than the focus on fertility which dominated the conference.

Chapter three, Contesting the reproductive body, deepens the analysis of POA's key micro-concepts of reproductive rights, reproductive health and women's empowerment and considers the contests over them. I examine the debates between feminist activists and scholars to ascertain the fault-lines within and between them. I then track the progress of the ICPD's key concepts, using the markers of the World Conference on Women (WCW) in 1995 and the five year reviews of ICPD and the WCW to determine whether the momentum of the POA was sustained. The growing strength of the moral right is examined here, using material prepared by 'right-to-life' organisations at the five year reviews of ICPD + 5 and Beijing + 5.⁴ Finally, I extrapolate from recent events to determine the micro politics of reproductive rights and health a decade after the ICPD.

Chapter four, The reproductive body in the global political economy, begins the exploration of the connections and contradictions between the micro aspirations of the feminist agenda for reproductive rights and health on the one hand and trends at the macro level of the global political economy on the other. First, I examine the relationship between population and economic policy. Second, I explain the macro,

⁴ I use the term 'moral right' to describe the various groups and individuals who oppose progress in women's rights, especially their reproductive rights, oppose the granting of sexual rights and actively campaign against homosexuality, forms of the family which deviate from the heterosexual, male headed legalised union and abortion. Other terms suggest religious connotations, and I wish to stress the political nature of these stances; in this thesis, I counterpose the impact of the moral right on women with the impact of the 'economic right' (neoliberal economists and their advocates).

meso and micro spheres of economic policy and their relevance to population and reproductive issues. Third, I track the major trends in global political economy since the 1990s. Fourth, I argue that the 'rights-based approach to development' (which incorporates the 'right to development') is a useful concept for feminist campaigns for women's empowerment and the enabling conditions for reproductive rights and health. Fifth, I undertake a detailed analysis of the World Bank's role in population programs, since the Bank plays a key role both in funding and shaping population programs and in bringing developing countries into the global political economy. Finally, I present Indonesia as a case study of the influence of macroeconomic trends on population and reproductive health programs, because it is frequently heralded for its success in lowering fertility.

Chapter five, The political ecology of population and reproduction, extends the analysis of the macro context of the ICPD micro agenda by examining the framing of relationships between population, reproduction and development in discourses of sustainable development and the environment. First, I examine four approaches to relationships between population, reproduction and the environment and consider the political implications of these views. Second, I critically examine the concept of sustainable development to determine the way that population and reproduction are conceptualised within it. I follow this with a critical examination of Chapter III of the POA, which considers environmental and population issues within the context of sustainable development. Third, to track the population establishment's approach to population and the environment since ICPD, I analyse the UNFPA's State of World Population reports since 1992. Fourth, I consider the Day of Six Billion campaign of 1999 since it provides a snapshot of the dilemmas faced by population organisations and reproductive health advocates at the time of the ICPD+5 review. I conclude by assessing the place of gender, population and reproductive issues at the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in 2002 and consider what this means for future feminist organising on reproductive rights and health.

Chapter six, Closing the gaps: Reproduction and population in the new century, concludes the thesis. It brings together the key findings of the thesis in a succinct assessment of why ICPD's agenda has not (yet) changed the world. I argue that the POA has changed the way that many organisations discuss population issues, although Malthusian and neoMalthusian views of population and environmental relationships

persist in some institutions and organisations and in the public mind. ICPD's micro agenda of reproductive rights and health, no matter how transformative, is insufficient, by itself, to change the world, especially in the directions that feminist and progressive supporters are working to achieve. I suggest some ways forward identified by Southern and other feminists.

1.3 The 'population problem'

In the debates and struggles around it, the term 'population' is rarely neutral. As Barbara Duden (1992, 146) points out, its meaning reflects ideological agendas.

In ordinary English the term 'population' evokes images of an explosion, mainly of uneducated Third World people, in countries that cannot repay the International Relations debts. Population also evokes the notion of pressure which pushes people beyond their borders. ... Population evokes anger at irresponsible procreation, insufficient funding for birth control programmes, and against the Catholic Church for opposing contraception and abortion. Feminists stress that population will remain a problem as long as its origin is not seen, namely the exclusion of women from the development process. As for ecologists, they connect population with the 'carrying capacity' of the planet. Generally, use of the term increasingly triggers alarm, symbolized in its most common composite, 'over-population'. (Duden 1992, 146)

The way that 'the problem' is defined is of crucial importance, since each of these interpretations suggests the pursuit of very different policy directions.

Experts do battle with each other, not merely to establish the 'truth' - which in Foucault's view cannot be discovered in any case - but over whose definition of the problem will prevail. A particular definition of a problem tends to privilege a set of solutions, and the choice of solutions in turn determines who will set social norms, and who will control the flow of resources that society commits to solving the problem. Since the battle for truth is in fact a battle for power, the victory of one expertise over another rarely alters the hierarchical relationship between the bureaucracy and its clients, though it will determine which set of experts gains or loses. (Jacquette and Staudt 1988, 222)

Two versions of the population problem dominate contemporary discussions on population, each derived from the same sets of figures. The first, articulated by Duden, asserts that the problem is *too many* people, excess fertility, especially in some developing countries. The second asserts that the problem is *too few* people, because fertility is falling below replacement levels, especially in most developed countries.

The ICPD's view of the 'population problem' as excess fertility and its solution of increasing women's access to their reproductive rights set the terms for a 'battle for power' over the next decade over what constitutes 'the truth' and who controls it in

global population debates. This contest continues to dominate the international politics of population and reproduction. The consequences of these debates, and the global context in which they occur, provide the terrain which I explore in this thesis to answer its central question: why didn't the ICPD PA change the world?

1.3.1 The 'population problem' in International Relations

The foregoing discussion indicates that global population debates are a fertile territory for students of international politics. For many years, United States leaders regarded world population growth as the second greatest threat after nuclear war (Donaldson 1990, *ix*). Yet the number of studies on population in mainstream International Relations is insignificant compared to those on the topic of nuclear and other kinds of war. Global population politics may be a difficult area for International Relations students because it involves players at the 'high' and 'low' levels of politics, and encompasses both 'soft' and 'hard' concerns. It also connects the 'public' and the 'private' which may make it difficult for International Relations scholars to see population and reproductive politics as any business of theirs.⁵

To bring sexuality and politics together is a radical move largely because of the degree to which the latter as constructed in the *public* sense veils the former by containing it within the *private*. To bring sexuality and international politics together is an even more radical step because of the extent to which international politics is framed as the *highest* form of politics. (Youngs 2000, 23, italics in original)

Including 'reproduction' in International Relations transgresses the discipline's traditional boundaries by highlighting the private lives and messy sexual and reproductive bodies of women. These have generally been invisible to theorists with a militaristic view of 'security'. Consequently, in the next sub-section of the thesis I outline the relevance of population and reproduction, first, in global politics and second, to the main schools of International Relations, and assess how scholars have dealt with them. Finally, a framework for analysis is adapted on the basis of this discussion.

⁵ Many critical and feminist writers in International Relations and IPE maintain that even traditional topics embraced by these disciplines bridge the private-public divide; see Youngs 2000 (and other authors within this volume) and feminist International Relations writers cited in this chapter.

1.3.2 The 'population problem' in global politics

Population has concerned governments since the 1648 Peace of Westphalia gave birth to the state system. While territory provides the geographic basis of a state, a 'nation' consists of people. Governing the nation-state requires an apparatus to count, manage and shape the citizenry. As Foucault points out, who is born and who gives birth are concerns of the public sphere, 'biopolitics' conducted at the national level. "Governments perceived that they were not dealing simply with subjects, or even with a 'people,' but with a 'population,' with its specific phenomena and its peculiar variables: birth and death rates, life expectancy, fertility, state of health, frequency of illnesses, patterns of diet and habitation" (Foucault 1990, 25). The delineation of one 'population' from another is intrinsic to the nation-state system, wherein boundaries, symbolic and real, separate 'us' from 'them'. Teitelbaum and Winter (1985, 17) point out that "perceptions of threats to nation, class, or race" are often "expressed in demographic terms". Yuval-Davis (1997) adds the dimension of gender to these discussions by highlighting the role of women in reproducing the nation.⁶

Halliday (1994, 148) observes that concern about birth rates has brought the state into citizens' private lives and many Northern states feel justified in entering the private lives of the citizens of Southern states. Due to its position as a 'superpower' in global politics after the Second World War, the United States was, able to set the terms for a crusade against 'overpopulation' in poor countries of the South. It set up an Office of Population in USAID in ** and, in 1969, supported the establishment of the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA), now known as the United Nations Population Fund. The United States National Security Study Memorandum, produced in the same year as the 1974 UN World Conference on Population, aimed "for the world to achieve a replacement level of fertility (a two-child family on the average) by the year 2000" (United States National Security Council 1974). Ten years later at the 1984 Mexico City Conference on Population, President Ronald Reagan was more amenable to the demands of the influential 'Right to Life' lobby which was gathering influence in his country. The United States Agency for International Development's (USAID) funding to the largest international non-government family planning organisation, the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF), ceased because it

⁶ See also Delaney 1995 and Jayawardena 1986 for further examples of the gendered nation.

was seen to support China's one-child policy and to promote abortion. As the main source of finance for fertility reduction programs in developing countries, the withdrawal of United States funds had deep impacts on the global population establishment.⁷ In this, as in military and economic matters, the United States is a 'hyperpower'. Its advocates for population control dominate the competing neo-Malthusian agenda, arguing for "a balanced and effective foreign assistance program aimed at moderating high fertility rates in the developing world" (Teitelbaum 1992, 63). Like their so-called 'pro-life' opponents, they assert their country's right to intervene in the world's bedrooms as well as its battlefields.

The striking and geopolitically significant contrasts between the youthful and growing populations of many countries in the South and the ageing, low-fertility societies of all Northern countries except the United States, inform much foreign policy and influence the direction of development assistance. UNPD's 2002 Population Revision predicted continuing population decline in the North, unless vigorous immigration policies are adopted and suggested that it will be several decades before the population of many developing countries stabilises. UNPD (2000) pointed out that many countries with high fertility rates are beset by conflict, high levels of infectious diseases including HIV/AIDS, and have difficulties providing the most basic services.⁸ UNPD expects eight countries to account for half of the world's population in 2050; in descending order according to expected population increment, they are India, Pakistan, Nigeria, United States, China, Bangladesh, Ethiopia and the Democratic Republic of Congo. The United States is expected to contribute four per cent of world population growth, equal to Pakistan. According to the UNPD's medium projection, in 2050 the 'less developed' regions will have 7.7 billion people compared with 1.22 billion people in 'more developed' regions (UNPD 2003a).⁹

The population dominance of the South is seen by United States-based security analysts as a major threat; De Sherbenin suggests reasons for this concern. First, in countries with 'stagnant' economies, rapid growth of the labour force exacerbates

⁷ See Schindlmayr 1999

⁸ The UNPD lists Afghanistan, Mali, Niger and Ethiopia among these.

⁹ The UNPD calculates three levels of projection, high, medium and low, based on different assumptions about fertility rates. See Chapter two.

unemployment, leading to increased migration from poor to richer countries. Second, rapid population growth leads to instability in poor countries without adequate social welfare. Third, this adversely affects communities through displacement of family members and increases in rural to urban migration. Finally, population growth in poor countries threatens the western values of human rights, democracy and free market economies and increases the distance between populations and their governments in South and North (De Sherbenin 1995, 26).

The security risks are of particular concern to the United States, where strategists have for several decades monitored population trends in other countries. The United States National Intelligence Council (2001) identifies 'demographics' as the first of seven major drivers and trends shaping the world of 2015. Their report predicted that population trends will cause productive workers of low income countries to seek entry to wealthy countries experiencing the impact of declining fertility rates on their work force. Commenting on the report, Cincotta remarks that it is age structure, not population growth *per se*, which makes high fertility societies volatile. "For example, insurgency movements have been extremely successful in recruiting warriors in societies (such as those in the Middle East and in West Africa) that are awash in young, unemployed, and discontented males" (Cincotta 2001, 65). This accords with Mesquida & Wiener's (2001) 'male age composition hypothesis' that a country's potential for violent conflict is determined by the size of the young male age cohort.¹⁰

These concerns have led the United States security establishment to consistently push for the 'stabilisation' of population in the South.

Stabilizing population growth is vital to U.S. interests ... Not only will early stabilization of the world's population promote environmentally sustainable economic development in other countries, but it will benefit the U.S. by improving trade opportunities and mitigating future global crises. (US Department of State's Strategic Plan of 1997, cited in Lasher 1998).

The preoccupation of the world's major power, the United States, with global population trends makes it a central topic for students of International Relations. Aside from the security concerns of United States strategists, many aspects of demography are of interest to International Relations scholars. Halliday asserts that "the issue of

¹⁰ Mesquida and Wiener find positive correlations in Rwanda, Kosovo, the 1968 Paris student uprisings, the 1972 Sri Lankan insurgency, World War 1 Germany, Napoleonic France and Northern Ireland.

demography is perhaps the most important single challenge facing the contemporary world ... As much as any other contemporary issue, it embodies concerns of state power, moral diversity and transnational consequence” (Halliday 1996, 322). The demographer, Geoffrey McNicoll, argues that “as the world’s demographic giants gain in economic strength and influence ... the demographic relativities of the future will differ from today’s in the certain further diminution of the West - and more generally, the North - giving still greater cause for a new world order” (McNicoll 1999, 435). While some schools of International Relations make explicit mention of population issues, they give little consideration to the processes which bring that population into existence, as discussed below.

1.3.3 The neglect of reproduction in International Relations

In this section, I consider the approaches of the dominant schools of International Relations to population and reproduction. It is argued that, while some International Relations theorists consider population to be an issue germane to their discipline, they give little attention to reproduction, for reasons cited below. I argue that viewing global issues through the prism of reproduction both requires and produces a radical change in the approaches of mainstream International Relations.

Governments have generally taken a pronatalist approach to domestic security concerns.

In human history, demographic growth has for such a long time been considered as a means of acquiring territories and extending economic and political power, between as well as within populations, that many, and in particular those who want to acquire more power, or want to propagate their ideology, or feel themselves threatened by the demographic power of neighbours or rivals, are unable to think in terms of stationary demographic levels. (Cliquet and Thienpont 1996, 149)

This approach is reflected in the realist school of International Relations, which focuses on the interaction between states as key actors within the international system. Such relationships are assumed to be, by nature, conflict-ridden, as each state seeks to maximise its power within an ‘anarchic’ international system. In this perspective, population growth strengthens the productive capacity and military strength of the state. According to realists, governments are entitled to call upon ‘the national interest’ as their authority to influence birth rates within, and beyond, their borders.

Neo-realist approaches to International Relations go further than realism by focusing on systems and structures (Keohane 1986). Because neo-realists understand 'security' as more than a military concept, they consider aspects of population other than size in their evaluations of national strength. Health and education are thus seen as policy tools to strengthen the state's ability to compete economically as well as militarily.

Neo-realism's broader view of security offers scope to address environmental problems. The neo-Malthusian views of some ecologists and others concerned about 'over-population' have been taken up by International Relations think-tanks and brought into International Relations debates.¹¹ These institutions tend to focus on populations in developing countries. During the Cold War, the fear that poor people would succumb to the claims and promises of 'communist' leaders prompted the United States to advocate and fund fertility reduction programs.¹²

Since 1989, there has been rising concern about connections between environmental problems and security.¹³ This is fuelled by alarm among non-government organisations (NGOs) and the wider public, particularly in the North, about such problems as climate change, the thinning ozone layer, loss of biological diversity, soil and water degradation and air and water pollution. Some neo-realist International Relations theorists connect environmental problems directly to population growth. Thomas Homer-Dixon (1995, 1997) blames much sub- and inter- state violence as well as displacement of people on population pressure squeezing local environments. Ecologist Norman Myers (1995, 1996) asserts that conflict and political instability are inevitable outcomes of the environmental pressures caused by population growth. These authors tend to suggest that population is the primary cause of environmental and social problems and isolate it from other key variables such as the distribution of wealth and power and levels and styles of development.

¹¹ The Woodrow Wilson Center's Environment and Security Project reports on research in this area (see WWICS 1996-98) and Toronto University auspiced a project titled Environment, Population and Security between 1994 and 1996, directed by Thomas Homer-Dixon (see Peace and Conflict Studies Program 1997).

¹² See Piotrow 1973 and Donaldson 1990.

¹³ See De Senarclens 1994, Mathews 1989, 1995; for a critique of this approach, see Deudney 1995.

Neo-Malthusian imagery highlights the security implications of the 'population problem'. The editors of *Atlantic Monthly* promoted Robert Kaplan's article *The Coming Anarchy* with the warning that "scarcity, crime, overpopulation, tribalism and disease are rapidly spoiling the social fabric of our planet" (Kaplan 1994, 44). Eberstadt also used alarmist language in his claim that the decline of white populations in developed states and rapid population growth in the developing world will upset "the international political order and the balance of world power" (Eberstadt 1991, 116).

The population and economic-growth trends described could create an international environment even more menacing to the security prospects of the Western alliance than was the Cold War for the past generation. Even without the rise of new blocs or alignments, one can envisage a fractious, contentious and inhumane social order: liberal precepts could have steadily less impact on international action and belief in human rights could prove a progressively weaker restraint on the exercise of force. (Eberstadt 1991, 129)

Fearing that the values he attributes to the United States - respect for individual rights and private property, adherence to rule of law, affirmation of the propriety of limited government and a belief in the universal relevance of these principles - were not shared by the world's most populous states, Eberstadt could "easily envision a world more unreceptive, and ultimately more threatening, to the interests of the United States and its allies" (Eberstadt 1991, 129). Kennedy similarly asks whether "'Western values' - a liberal social culture, human rights, religious tolerance, democracy, market forces - will maintain their prevailing position in a world overwhelmingly peopled by societies which did not experience the rational scientific and liberal assumptions of the Enlightenment". He suggests that "the results are likely to be painful for the richest one-sixth of the earth's population that now enjoys a disproportionate five-sixths of its wealth" (Kennedy 1993, 46). Huntington is more specific. He (1993, 1996a and 1996b) suggests that population size and cultural difference in countries which embrace the religions of Islam and Confucianism are an explosive mix which threatens world security. Like Mesquida and Wiener, he sees large numbers of unemployed Muslim males between fifteen and thirty as a source of instability and violence.

While realist United States security strategists worry about population growth in other states, they regard their own population - the United States is third in the UNPD's list of the world's most populous countries - as an asset (Nowak 1998). Eberstadt notes that, according to the UNPD's medium projection, by 2050 the United States will have a larger population than the European Union, indicating that "[t]o the extent that population matters in international affairs, America's demographic prospects would

seem to support – or even enhance – U.S. global influence in the years ahead” (Eberstadt 2001). Only in the United States, then, is population growth not a problem – to the United States. Lasher’s 1998 article about United States population policy since the ICPD is misleading because it ignores domestic circumstances and is concerned only with the United States’ population policy for Southern states, where it is focused on the reduction of fertility.

Realists’ and neo-realists’ tendency to see ‘population’ in isolation from other factors and focus on its impact on security issues takes little account of levels of development and wealth, income distribution and access to political power. This macro approach excludes many players in population politics and ignores the micro level of reproductive politics altogether. The lack of attention to reproduction in mainstream International Relations reflects a more general gender-blindness. In neo-realist studies, women are invisible despite the important role that they play in ‘reproducing the nation-state’, as Nira Yuval-Davis (1997) has pointed out. Neo-realists treat the nation-state as though it was always-already there, overlooking the fact that it must be constantly reproduced, in actual and symbolic terms. Their lack of attention to reproduction, in both its narrow and broader senses, makes neo-realism too narrow a perspective to adopt as a framework for this thesis.

Liberal institutionalism has a much broader agenda. It builds on interdependence theory, which sees the increasing interconnectedness of states through trade and other processes of globalisation as leading to greater security in the medium to long term. Liberal institutionalism encompasses a broad range of global concerns including issues considered in this thesis: development, human rights and the environment. Population and reproductive issues transect all these areas.

Liberal Institutionalists focus on identifying the appropriate organisations and devising rules to address population issues.¹⁴ These include state-based family planning organisations and international financial institutions like the World Bank and UNFPA. Their focus on the growing importance of human rights as an area of international politics can embrace the reproductive rights discussed at the ICPD (IPPF 1996). Male

¹⁴ See Crane 1994 for an essay on the adaptation of international population institutions to the changing world order.

scholars have tended to leave the area of women's human rights to feminist scholars, particularly those working in International Law, who locate women's rights firmly in international rights discourses (Charlesworth *et al* 1991; Charlesworth and Chinkin 2000; Cook 1995).

The UN has played an important role in global population politics since the 1950s, organising international meetings of states, scientists and interested organisations on the topic. These conferences provide liberal institutionalists with a snapshot for observing the politics of population and reproduction.

In the field of social policy UN conferences have become an institutionalized part of International Relations. As a means of policy formation, global conferences serve an important function in permitting the expression of views that might not otherwise be aired, and in widening the circle of decisionmakers. (McIntosh and Finkle 1995, 251)

The Liberal Institutional approach, with its focus on institutions, cannot encompass the increasing participation of non-government organisations (NGOs) in UN conferences. Many important actors are excluded on the assumption that if the institutions are right the problem will be solved. Getting the institutions 'right' relies upon correctly defining 'the problem' which is contested by many organisations with a stake in population politics. While the failure to implement the ICPD POA indicates that key institutions are unable or unwilling to embrace its micro-agenda, it also suggests that there are powerful actors operating outside institutional structures. These include social movements such as the moral right and the trans-national pharmaceutical companies which produce contraceptives. Also neglected in liberal institutionalism's macro perspective are the women whose bodies are the tools of population policies.

Because, at one level, the ICPD was an instance of liberal institutionalism at work, liberal institutionalist approaches to population issues contribute to the methodology used in this thesis. But considering reproduction in the global politics of population requires a perspective able to incorporate non-state and non-institutional actors. Richard Falk (1997) has coined the term 'globalisation-from-below' to describe the processes by which a wide range of actors attempt to influence global governance. This perspective assists in explaining the alliances and contests between the international women's movement for health and human rights, the environment movement and populationists and the 'right-to-life' movement at Cairo.

What has been impressive has been the creative tactics used by transnational participating groups, denied formal access because of their lack of statist credentials, yet exerting a considerable impact upon the agenda and substantive outcomes of inter-governmental activities, and at the same time, strengthening transnational links. Starting with the Rio Conference ... there has been a flow of gatherings that acknowledged to varying degrees the emergent role of globalisation-from-below. (Falk 1997, 23)

Falk suggests that these efforts to influence global politics through the international conferences of the 1990s are beginners' attempts at 'global democracy'. Non-governmental actors use flexible strategies in their efforts to influence the agendas of states and institutions. "Just as globalisation-from-above tends toward homogeneity and unity, so globalisation-from-below tends toward heterogeneity and diversity, even tension and contradiction" (Falk 1997, 24). These were characteristics of the Common Ground alliance formed in the lead-up to ICPD (Dodgson 1998; Hodgson and Watkins 1997).¹⁵

'Civil society', a key notion in discourses of transnationalism, is highly contested.¹⁶ Cox describes 'civil society' as "the realm of autonomous group action distinct from both corporate power and the state". He extends Falk's 'globalisation-from-below' approach to distinguish a 'bottom-up' view of civil society. This is where "those who are disadvantaged by globalization of the world economy can mount their protests and seek alternatives" (Cox 1999, 10). By contrast, in the 'top-down' view, states and corporate interests use civil society as an "agency for stabilizing the social and political *status quo*" by co-opting non-government organisations (NGOs) with contracts, subsidies and access to high-level meetings. Cox emphasises that "the basic conflicts between rich and poor, the powerful and powerless, are reproduced within the sphere of voluntary organisations, whether trade unions or the new social movements" (Cox 1999, 11). This is an important insight for debates around population and reproduction, particularly when the subject is poor women, the most disadvantaged and least-heard group of stakeholders. *Who* says *what* about them, and *why*, is important and this applies to the diverse range of feminist and other activists who claim to speak on their behalf. As Morris-Suzuki put it:

¹⁵ See Chapter two.

¹⁶ Civil society organisations encompass more than NGOs, and include Chambers of Commerce and other business and professional organisations, according to the Commission on Global Governance (1995, 32).

The fact that social movements are 'non-governmental' or that they operate multiversally does not guarantee that they will work in favour of the marginalized and disadvantaged. Their motive can equally well be to guard established preserves of power and privilege from those who demand to share them; their energies may be mobilized by governments or state agencies ... to prop up existing structures of power. (Morris-Suzuki 2000, 84)

Clark *et al* (1998) use the term 'transnationalism' to describe the 'globalisation-from-below' processes of international social movements, making the point that this interaction involves geographically diverse non-state actors. Global population and reproductive issues offer a wide field of study for scholars with a transnationalist perspective, since the social movements which work in this area include neo-Malthusians, advocates for women's reproductive health and rights and their morally conservative opponents. There have been a number of feminist studies of the conferences of the 1990s from a transnationalist perspective.¹⁷

The transnational perspective is useful in developing a framework for this thesis, because it gives voice to the broad social movements excluded by mainstream International Relations schools. In so doing, it allows the micro-politics of reproduction to illuminate the macro-politics of population. While it offers important insights, its focus on social movements makes it an insufficient framework for the study of the politics of population and reproduction since it fails to offer a critique of the broader framework in which they operate. This requires analysis, in order to locate patterns which lead to poverty for some while others prosper. Studies in International Political Economy (IPE), which highlight the intersection of politics and economics at state and international levels, offer an understanding of the broad trends which enrich some states while others remain poor. There are a number of approaches to IPE, from the liberal to the Marxist (Gilpin 1984), but they cannot, individually or collectively, adequately explain why the neoliberal Washington consensus of the 1980s and 1990s has not solved the political, social and economic problems which constrain poor women's reproductive decision-making. This is because most IPE approaches, like other International Relations schools, are blind to informal economic transactions and to social reproduction, particularly their gendered nature.

This gender-blindness has been pointed out by Whitworth (1994a), Krause (1996), Sassen (1996, 1998, 2000), Steans (1999) and Waylen (1998) who are involved in the

¹⁷ See, for instance, Otto 1996; Johnson & Turnbull 1995; Niedell 1998.

project of rewriting IPE to make women and gender relations visible. This thesis takes a broad approach to the transactions which make up the global economy, and uses the broader term *Global Political Economy* (GPE) to include the broad range of transactions involved in the production of life, the maintenance of families and communities and personal relationships. GPE can incorporate the micro-politics of reproduction as well as the macro-politics of population in its analyses, since it is open to a broad range of issues relating to population and reproduction.¹⁸ The global political economy impacts upon women's reproductive bodies and lives directly through the services and products they use, and indirectly, through the agency of international institutions, private foundations and corporations which fund those services and through the responses of states to economic and political pressures originating from outside their borders. Economic globalisation has deep impacts on the lives of poor women of the South, through the involvement of the World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF) and other global institutions in national economies and through the erosion of states' capacity and commitment provide publicly-funded services to the poor. Furthermore, the contraceptive and other industries which service women and men's sexual and reproductive bodies are highly profitable areas and the subject of global debates. The politics of pharmaceutical treatments for HIV/AIDS are contested in the World Trade Organisation while Viagra is included among subsidised medicines in some states.¹⁹ There is a growing trade in babies, generally from the South to the North, and the trafficking of girls and women for prostitution and entertainment is now the third largest illicit trade after arms and drugs. Thus, there is a global political economy of reproduction and a global political economy of population.

Its ability to include a gender perspective makes GPE useful for investigating the global politics of population, because it shares with critical theory several key characteristics which Zalewski identifies. First, there is the recognition that there is more to "the construction of international politics than what appears to be on the surface". Second, critical theory incorporates the understanding that there are more participants in international politics than politicians, International Relations theorists and foreign

¹⁸ Whitworth (1994b) has studied the International Planned Parenthood Federation from a GPE perspective.

¹⁹ See Silverstein 1999.

policy specialists. Third, it allows consideration of a wider range of issues than are covered in mainstream International Relations. It recognises that “the choice of substantive issues to study in international politics is not the result of ‘natural selection’ or ‘neutral judgement’ but is a reflection of specific interests” (Zalewski 1996, 348-350). Cox identifies the need for a broadening and deepening of International Relations because of the changing nature and growing complexity of international politics.

[c]hanging practice has ... generated confusion as to the nature of the actors involved ... extended the range of stakes ... introduced a greater diversity of goals pursued, and produced a greater complexity in the modes of interaction and the institutions within which action takes place. (Cox 1986, 204-5)

All analyses of national or international politics study flows of power. Limiting the topics and players studied leads to shallow analyses. Greater inclusiveness, especially by bringing in issues hitherto ignored or relegated to the margins, sheds new light on old topics and extends the range of participants: “[t]his effort is likely to reveal that there is much more power and many more forms of power in operation in International Relations than is conventionally assumed” (Enloe 1996, 2000).

A feminist GPE approach is adopted in this thesis because it reveals the micro-politics of reproduction which underlie debates about population. A study of international population politics is incomplete without the voices of women who are the objects of population policy. The transformative aspects of the ICPD’s POA came about through the agency of a broader range of actors than participated in earlier international population conferences. The efforts of these players, who were primarily women, brought into relief the micro-politics of reproduction which had remained hidden at earlier UN population conferences.²⁰

1.4 Bringing reproduction into International Relations

Reproduction remains an unexplored area of study within the discipline of International Relations. A preoccupation with state and institutional power and military security has led to a limited focus on population size rather than on the reproductive processes by which people are produced. In studies of population, however, the micro is as important

²⁰ DAWN has observed that, unless women are involved in any political fora, gender issues are unlikely to be raised (see Sen and Correa 1999). This is explored in Chapter two of this thesis.

as the macro: who is born (or not), and who gives birth (or does not), and their ability to do so in safe environments, matters as much as population numbers.

While the Penguin Dictionary of International Relations has a section on population, reproduction doesn't get a mention (Evans & Newnham 1998). I argue that omitting reproduction leads to the failure to account for many of the most important human activities, which involve political interactions at levels from the personal to the global. Bringing reproduction into discourses of International Relations makes the living bodies of women and children visible; when the focus is on population, they disappear. Feminist critics have pointed out that the absence of bodies impoverishes International Relations discourses and restricts the story told (Pettman 1996). In macro discourses, men are hyper-visible, since they dominate this domain.²¹ It is crucial to bring the micro and macro arenas together, since treating them as separate spheres not only makes women invisible, it also exacerbates their struggles, as they must negotiate both spheres.

There has to emerge a holistic perspective which would try to grapple with the macro-reality without negating the effects of the micro-reality. This has been at the crux of women's struggle - trying to link the individual's micro-reality with the wider reality of society without ignoring, negating or demeaning either of them. (Manorama & Shah 1996, 38)

Francisco highlights the failings of "single-focused analyses, such as those giving primacy to economics or to the public realm, [which] have traditionally invisibilised the reproductive sphere where much of women's work and concerns are found" (1999). The sexual and reproductive lives of women are shaped by the political, social and economic context in which they live. Reproduction is a political act, a reflection of the degree of the empowerment of women. Further, giving birth has political and economic ramifications. For instance, in some countries, only mothers and their infant children have access to health services. In some societies, females are aborted, or allowed to die in infancy because whether the foetus or infant is male or female has long term consequences for the child and its family (Sen 1990). Some births result from rape in war and civil conflict, with long-reaching ramifications for the lives of women and children, their communities and for the state/s involved. Asylum seekers and illegal

²¹ Only some men are represented at these levels of course, and poor men of particular ethnicities, ages and other factors deemed undesirable in the particular cultural milieu are as absent as poor women.

workers cannot claim the citizen's right of state-sponsored health, education or other services. Finally, in some societies, motherhood is the only means by which women can gain citizen status and the right to be a political player in their communities.

The task for this thesis then is to establish a framework capable of encompassing global population and reproductive politics. Each of the International Relations schools described above provides a specific frame for issues pertinent to debates on population and reproduction, highlighting certain aspects, backgrounding others or excluding them altogether. For this thesis, I require a framework capable of sustaining a gendered analysis and revealing actors usually absent from the grand narratives of International Relations. Although no single approach offers such a framework, together, Liberal institutionalism, global political economy and transnationalism reveal many of the complex factors which shape the international politics of population and reproduction. They are not sufficient, however, to construct the 'holistic perspective' required for this thesis.

Most International Relations scholars who broach the topic of reproduction are feminists who, due to their choice of subject, remain at the margins of the discipline despite some male theorists' understanding that the discipline is enriched by feminist critiques (Halliday 1994, 1996; George 1994). A number of feminists are engaged in critical theory which has roots in Marxist and post-modern thought (Linklater 1996). Critical theory broadens the range of issues deemed relevant to International Relations and gives entry to the politics of 'every day', making audible the voices of people generally excluded from the International Relations community and recognising the importance of acts which are currently invisible, such as reproduction.

[W]e must locate the people of international politics in their places of action, which are apt to be far less heroic and insufficiently abstract to qualify for usual attention in the field. Such places are lower than 'low' politics, being households, factories, farms, remote rural areas, and international immigration posts in lesser as well as great power settings. To suggest bringing such people into International Relations is earthshaking for a field that admits only official decision-makers, soldiers, statesmen, terrorists, kings, and the occasional 'crazed' religious group to the fold. (Sylvester 1996, 264)

Critical International Relations theorists reveal actors who would otherwise be left out of global politics (Enloe 1996; Pettman 1992; Zalewski & Enloe 1995) while feminist International Relations theorists describe a different reality from that uncovered by patriarchal theorists (Peterson and True 1998, 23). Stancich suggests three ways feminists have engendered International Relations. First, they have made women

visible as actors and victims (Pettman 1996; Enloe 1989, 1993); second, by deconstructing International Relations theory, they have revealed the gender bias of the discipline (Tickner 1992); and, third, they are developing a feminist theory of International Relations (Sylvester 1994; Zalewski 1996) (Stancich 1998, 128-9). All are major projects requiring a multi-disciplinary approach extending beyond the traditional concerns of International Relations: security and state power. Sylvester (1994, 213) characterises the feminist International Relations scholar as “ontologically homeless”, required to understand and utilise the epistemologies of a wide range of disciplines and able to produce feminist knowledge without tying herself down to preconceived ideas of what/who women are. This describes the ‘eclectic’ feminist approach I bring to this thesis.

A critical feminist approach assists in re-appraising the mass of material produced before, during and since ICPD. Post-modern scepticism about ‘grand theories’ of population and development and the environment allows the articulation of different explanations of ‘the problem’ and reveals the micro-politics of reproduction. The Marxist-inspired critical approach provides a frame through which to view the macro-politics of the global political economy of population and reproduction, revealing the crucial contribution of reproductive work.

I bring to bear one more feminist perspective on the subject matter of this thesis. The adoption of a ‘transversal’ approach recognises that engendering global population and reproductive politics is only part of the story. Transversalism is ‘cross-cutting’. Yuval-Davis (1997) adopted the term to describe a theoretical framework which recognises that women are differentially affected by policies which govern the biological and cultural reproduction of the nation. This perspective avoids the dangers of reducing women to their reproductive bodies and assuming more commonality on that basis than is warranted, since women, like all people, are located according to class, race and other factors. Transversalism provides, for this thesis, the understanding that feminist interests require the achievement of objectives shared by other movements. It also points to the power of women working together on issues they share through the ownership of reproductive bodies despite differences in their “identities as members of national, ethnic and racial collectivities as well as specific class, sexuality and life cycle positionings” (Yuval-Davis 1997, 38).

Women are not just individuals, nor are they just agents of their collectivities. 'Reproductive rights' campaigns should take account of the multiplexity and multi-dimensionality of identities within contemporary society, without losing sight of the differential power dimension of different collectivities and groupings within it. (Yuval-Davis 1997, 38)

Transversalism acknowledges diverse political actions, from silent resistance within personal relationships to community advocacy and includes, as political actors, women who are unable or uninterested in attending UN conferences. Transversal approaches recognise diverse ways that women and other movements organise. Many organisations operate outside the public purview, because its members are confined to their homes or political activism is dangerous. Electronic communication technologies allow many of these women to organise politically. *Women Living Under Muslim Laws* relies upon networking as a major organising strategy, as Shaheed describes.

[N]etworks ... provide a vehicle for individuals and organizations to share information, analyses and strategies without trying either to homogenize the diversity of those they link or to control their autonomy in matters of political or personal choices. (Shaheed 1995, 305)

I use all these approaches - liberal institutionalism, transnationalism, global political economy, critical feminism and transversalism - in this thesis. The feminist political ecology approach I outline in Chapter five is complementary to these approaches, and is particularly useful in deciphering the political implications of attitudes to population-environment relationships. I wish, here, to insert two caveats on this work. First, while its subject matter concerns poor Southern women, I am myself a 'Northern' scholar living in a comfortable city in a country which makes it possible for social welfare 'mums' like myself to work and study.²² Many of my sources are also Northern scholars and activists. To provide balance, I have sought the perspectives of Southern participants and analysts wherever they are available. Finally, I warn the reader that men's reproductive bodies are largely absent from this study of the politics of population and reproduction. I do not deny the significant role that men play in reproductive processes but writing them into debates and discourses on population and reproduction is not the project of this thesis, which is to locate the reproductive bodies of women in the contemporary global politics of population and reproduction.

²² 'Northern' because Australia is actually in the geographical south.

Chapter two The micro agenda I: Changing population paradigms

We should not ... consider Cairo as a brief meeting that took place in Egypt in September 1994; rather, it should be regarded as a process that began at some unidentifiable date prior to the conference when various actors began thinking and discussing how the conference could benefit their interests or, in other cases, how to prevent the conference from damaging their interests. [T]he conference process does not end with the adjournment of the meeting but continues for years thereafter as groups and governments struggle to accommodate - or at times ignore - Cairo's POA. The impetus for much of the political, bureaucratic and diplomatic maneuvering (*sic*) post Cairo is the formidable challenge of influencing signatories to the document to comply with its recommendations. (Finkle 2002, 1)

2.1 Overview

This chapter explores how language with the potential to 'change the world' came to be central to the ICPD's POA. Changes in approaches to population issues from the dominant paradigm, or approach, do not occur without contest and conflict, and this process was no exception. Kuhn, in his seminal work on paradigm change in science, described paradigms as constellations of views shared by a group of people, constituted as a community by the sharing of those views. They not only "provide scientists with a map but also some of the direction essential for map-making. ... Therefore, when paradigms change, there are usually significant shifts in the criteria determining the legitimacy both of problems and of proposed solutions" (Kuhn 1970, 108). Consequently, the first task of Chapter two is to investigate the established orthodoxy of macro-politics of population and micro-politics of reproduction prior to the early 1990s, to investigate the nature and extent of the 'paradigm change' offered by the POA. This requires, first, an examination of the UNPD's 1992 projections which provided the data for the ICPD process, and the UNPD's most recent revisions of those projections, which enable us to evaluate the ICPD's interpretation of the 1992 projections with the benefit of hindsight. As noted in Chapter one, statistics are interpreted according to the ideology of the analyst, so a detailed analysis of the Malthusian and neo-Malthusian views that predominated amongst governments, international institutions, the population establishment and many Northern NGOs prior to 1994 follows. A review of the 1974 and 1984 UN conferences on population provide a historical understanding of the way that 'population' and 'reproduction' have been viewed in the international community over recent decades.

Chapter two then surveys the global political context of ICPD since this was influential on the conference's outcomes. The NGO campaign, which successfully influenced the conference's outcomes is investigated in some detail. Although the title of the ICPD suggests that the conference was about the broad issues related to population and development, it focused primarily on one aspect of population, fertility, and its treatment of development issues was cursory. Consequently, the demographic issues given less attention are identified and some reasons for this neglect by the POA's drafters and the Common Ground alliance, and the obstacles faced at the Conference to the reproductive rights agenda, are examined.

2.2 Population statistics

Debates about population generally rely upon statistics and projections about future population size. The United Nations Population Division (UNPD) produces the statistics which provide the basis for UNFPA reports, and which demographers interpret and organisations use in public campaigns. The ICPD was informed by the UNPD's 1992 data which anticipated a high projection of 12.5 billion people globally by 2050, a medium projection of 9.8 billion and a low projection of 7.8 billion (UN 1994). Each projection is based upon different assumptions about fertility. By 2002, these projections have been significantly modified to 10.6, 8.9 and 7.4 billion respectively.²³

Most demographers consider the most probable scenario to be UNPD's medium level projection of an increase to around nine billion in 2050, with most of this occurring within low income countries (Bongaarts and Bulatao 2000). On present trends, world population will stabilise at this peak and then begin to decline. Increases in mortality from unforeseen events such as epidemics and natural and human-induced disasters are likely to result in a lower peak reached at an earlier date.

The UNPD figures indicate that the number of children borne by women worldwide has decreased from an average of around six in the 1950s to below three today. In all Western countries except the United States, birth rates have fallen below the replacement level of 2.1, with little likelihood of a reversal in this pattern. From alarm

²³ While arrived at somewhat differently, these figures concur with the median figures forecasted by IIASA (Lutz 2003).

at the high rate of population growth, the UNPD is now concerned that population ageing is occurring at unprecedented levels “with major consequences and implications for all facets of human life” (UNPD 2000, XXVIII).

Despite declining fertility rates, total world population will continue to rise for at least twenty-five years, due to the ‘demographic momentum’ of people born in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. The billion young people (mostly in the South) currently reaching child-bearing age form the largest ever cohort of potential parents; even if each woman were to have only one child, it will take a couple of generations for population to stabilise and then decline. Consequently, any attempt to prevent further population increases would require population control policies more draconian than China’s contentious one-child policy which even the Chinese government acknowledges, transgresses human rights.²⁴

The estimation of future population figures is not an exact science. Assumptions made about future birth and mortality rates can be invalidated by unforeseen events. There are, however, a number of assumptions built into the UNPD’s predictions which militate against the accuracy of its projections. Mortality rates, for instance, were expected to follow the patterns of earlier years. The 2002 projections were a major departure from this practice, breaking “new ground in terms of the assumptions made on future human fertility and the impact of the HIV/AIDS epidemic”.

With respect to HIV/AIDS, the 2002 Revision anticipates a more serious and prolonged impact of the epidemic in the most affected countries than in previous revisions. The impact of the disease is explicitly modeled for 53 countries, up from the 45 considered in the 2000 Revision. The dynamics of the epidemic, as estimated by the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), are assumed to remain unchanged until 2010. Thereafter, prevalence levels are assumed to decline in a manner consistent with modifications of behaviour that reduce the rates of recruitment into the high risk groups as well as the chances of infection among those engaging in high risk behaviour. The resulting HIV prevalence levels remain relatively high until 2010 and then decline, but are still substantial by mid-century. (UNPD 2003b)

Lutz (2003) suggested that, prior to the release of these figures, the UN projections under-estimate the impact of HIV/AIDS in Africa. Even the UNPD’s assumptions in

²⁴ Although acknowledging that the one-child policy transgresses individual human rights, the Chinese government claims that this is over-riden by future Chinese generations’ right to a future better life.

the 2002 projections may be over-optimistic, since they do not take into account the spread of HIV/AIDS into new countries and the inability or unwillingness of governments and the international community to provide the resources and information required to treat and stem the spread of the disease.

The second significant aspect of the 2002 projections is the confirmation that “future fertility levels in the majority of developing countries are likely to fall below 2.1 children per woman, the level needed to ensure the long-term replacement of the population at some point in the twenty-first century” (UNPD 2003a, v). Elsewhere, it predicts that fertility in the less developed regions will reach replacement level of 2.1 children per woman by 2030-2035 (UNPD 2003a, viii). Life expectancy everywhere is expected to keep rising until 2050, from a current average of sixty-three years to seventy-three years in low income countries, from seventy-five to eighty-two in high income countries, and in the forty-eight poorest countries it is expected to rise from fifty to sixty-seven years.²⁵ The UN, however, may under-estimate the impact of migration flows in its population projections for regions. Finally, in devising projections, the UN assumes that all countries within given regions are following the same trajectory (Lutz 2003).

Despite these problems, the UNPD’s statistics and trends provide the data used by most commentators, although they interpret them differently according to their location and perspective. Some, anticipating the period when global population begins to decline, fear a ‘birth dearth’ (Eberstadt 1998, 2001; Wattenberg 1999, 1999). They see reduced fertility, not population growth, as the ‘population problem’, adopting the UNPD’s low projections as a more accurate description of population trends.²⁶ Commentators taking this view predict that the resulting structural effects on national and global populations, especially in developed countries, will have deleterious economic impacts.

Most neo-Malthusian organisations accept that world population will stabilise by mid-century. They emphasise, however, the growth which will occur in total world population until that point, claiming that the seventy-seven million people born

²⁵ All information in this section is taken from the World Population Prospects, the 2002 Revision (UNPD 2003a)

²⁶ Wattenberg and Eberstadt are fellows at the conservative American Enterprise Institute, which eschews evidence on climate change and promotes the Washington consensus.

annually place unsustainable pressure on natural resources and national economies. They focus on the least developed countries where fertility rates will remain high for some time to come. Although many organisations adopted the language of reproductive rights both before and after the ICPD (Hodgson & Watkins 1997), some organisations still emphasise carrying capacity and catastrophe.²⁷ This alarmism hints at underlying ideologies and political agendas, directed to gaining funding and other support for population control advocacy and intervention.

2.3 Malthusianism and neo-Malthusianism

The ‘common-sense’ approach to population issues has Malthusian roots.²⁸ Malthusian and neo-Malthusian views are often used interchangeably in authoritative texts by scientists and ecologists, in the media and in the conversations of ‘non-expert’ people. Consequently, it is essential that the terms, used frequently in this thesis, are unpacked because, while they share the same roots, they signify different approaches to women’s reproductive lives, and consequently, are relevant to this exploration of why the ICPD failed to ‘change the world’.

Malthusianism arose from debates at the end of the eighteenth century between early socialists and conservatives. Social reformers William Godwin and the Marquis de Condorcet argued that governments should seek to reduce human misery by reforming institutions and abolishing private property, measures which, they believed, would ensure the infinite progression of human beings. To contest their arguments, Thomas Malthus published a series of essays between 1798 and the 1820s in which he developed his ‘principle of population’.

The power of population is indefinitely greater than the power in the earth to produce subsistence for man.

Population, when unchecked, increases in a geometrical ratio. Subsistence increases only in an arithmetical ratio. ...

²⁷ See, for instance, Population Action International 1998

²⁸ I use the term ‘common sense’ to describe the prevailing public consensus on population, rather than to describe expert opinion. It correlates with Kuhn’s term, ‘normal’ in relation to the consensus of opinion on a topic, but extends it beyond the scientific.

This natural inequality of the two powers of population, and of production in the earth, and that great law of our nature which must constantly keep their effects equal, form the great difficulty that to me appears insurmountable in the way to the perfectibility of society. All other arguments are of slight and subordinate consideration in comparison of this. I see no way by which man can escape from the weight of this law which pervades all animated nature. No fancied equality, no agrarian regulations in their utmost extent, could remove the pressure of it even for a single century. And it appears, therefore, to be decisive against the possible existence of a society, all the members of which, should live in ease, happiness, and comparative leisure; and feel no anxiety about providing the means of subsistence for themselves and families. (Malthus 1798, 9-10)

Malthusian approaches to population are based on the assumption that population growth will always outstrip the earth's ability to provide. Malthus used 'population growth' to argue against social reforms intended to improve the lives of the poor (Furedi 1997; Ross 1998). Welfare programs, he argued, harm the propertied classes and intensify impoverishment, since they encourage the poor to breed. In their poverty, he saw the solution to the problem posed by their numbers, as the following passage demonstrates.

Notwithstanding then, the institution of the poor laws in England, I think it will be allowed, that considering the state of the lower classes altogether, both in the towns and in the country, the distresses which they suffer from the want of proper and sufficient food, from hard labour and from unwholesome habitations, must operate as a constant check to incipient population.

To these great checks to population in all long occupied countries, which I have called the preventive and the positive checks, may be added, vicious customs with respect to women, great cities, unwholesome manufactures, luxury, pestilence, and war.

All these checks may be fairly resolved into misery and vice. (Malthus 1798, 38)

Malthus, who held office in the Church of England, maintained that "divine authority" ordained that "the poor should never cease from among them".²⁹

It has appeared that a society constituted according to Mr Godwin's system must, from the inevitable laws of our nature, degenerate into a class of proprietors, and a class of labourers; and that the substitution of benevolence for self-love, as the moving principle of society, instead of producing the happy effects that might be expected from so fair a name, would cause the same pressure of want to be felt by the whole of society, which is now felt by only a part. ...

It has appeared that from the principle of population, more will always be in want than can be adequately supplied. The surplus of the rich man might be

²⁹ Malthus is quoting from Deuteronomy Chapter XV, verse two.

sufficient for three, but four will be desirous to obtain it. He cannot make this selection of three out of the four, without conferring a great favour on those that are the object of his choice. These persons must consider themselves as under a great obligation to him, and as dependent upon him for his support. (Malthus 1798, 101-103)

Malthus was no advocate of universal human rights, asserting that “a right which in the nature of things cannot be adequately gratified, may terminate in disappointment, irritation, and aggravated poverty” (Malthus 1806, 9). He asserted that welfare policies would perpetuate a vicious cycle of poverty by increasing fertility, leading to surplus labour, resulting in reduced wages and unemployment. His arguments were influential in the framing of the Poor Laws of 1834, which forced poor people into workhouses or low-paid factory jobs (Gordon 1990, 75).

As noted earlier, ‘Malthusian’ and ‘neo-Malthusian’ are often used interchangeably in the popular and some academic literature on population (see, for instance, Bandarage 1997, Furedi 1997). In this thesis ‘Malthusianism’ refers to approaches which assume that poverty is the natural outcome of the fertility of the poor and that any efforts to improve their situation will exacerbate their hardship as they will react by having more children. Malthusians argue that welfare should be available only in the most extreme cases, and “[t]he fare should be hard, and those that were able obliged to work” (Malthus 1798, 37). Where provided, it should not be at the cost of the wealthy classes. This approach endorses the principles basic to capitalism and neoliberal economic approaches (Furedi 1997; Ross 1998). In Malthus’ times, women were not recognised as political, social or economic actors; accordingly, the Malthusian framework includes no gender analysis.

Neo-Malthusianism differs from Malthusianism, primarily because, unlike Malthus who opposed any contraceptive method apart from sexual abstinence, neo-Malthusians agree that over-population causes poverty but believe that population control through long term contraceptive methods and sterilisation provides an effective solution.³⁰ Marxists were suspicious that zealous campaigning for family planning by nineteenth

³⁰ Ross (1998, 64) traces the use of the term ‘neo-Malthusian’ back to the mid nineteenth century when a vice-president of the European Malthusian League first used the term, but since the society’s aim was to spread the word on Malthus’ ‘Law of Population’ without modification, I don’t believe that, from the vantage point of 2002, it can be classified as ‘neo-Malthusian’ as the term is now understood. The distinction is worth preserving.

century working class activists made “birth control ... a kind of substitute for class organization” (Foster 1998, 10).

Extreme neo-Malthusians argue that the scale of impact from the ‘population explosion’ justifies enforced sterilisation and abortion. They attribute diverse problems to population pressure including threats to peace and security, poverty, famine and hunger, refugee and migration flows, economic crisis, natural resource depletion and pollution, threats to biodiversity, climate change and other environmental problems.³¹ More recently, liberal neo-Malthusians have begun to support women’s reproductive rights in their campaigns to reduce fertility. David Suzuki and Paul Ehrlich, for instance, argue that empowering women and improving their status will reduce birth rates.³² Bandarage is distrustful of these attitudes, accusing neo-Malthusians who adopt the language of “unmet need” and “ability to choose” as attempting to disguise a “fragmented, top-down, homogenous approach” to population control (Bandarage 1997, 103).

Malthusian and neo-Malthusian approaches have been a major influence on global discourses and public opinion on population. Although the ICPD made demographers and family planners uncomfortable about using Malthus as a rationale for their work (McNicoll 1998, 311), Malthusian and neo-Malthusian approaches play important indirect roles in economic and environmental policy making, as explored later in the thesis.

There is, in short, nothing more ideologically powerful for capitalist interests to have at hand than unconstrained technological optimism and doctrines of progress ineluctably coupled to a doom-saying Malthusianism that can be conveniently blamed when as they invariably do, things go wrong. (Harvey 1996, 149)

Furthermore, as Harvey shows, Malthusianism and neo-Malthusianism are useful tools in diverting attention from the underlying causes of economic, social and environmental problems and restrict the transformative efforts of those who campaign for changes at the deeper systemic level. If the ICPD had challenged these approaches, it would have helped to set the rhetorical terms for the changes needed to benefit those

³¹ See Berelson 1969.

³² See Chapter five for a detailed analysis of Ehrlich’s approach.

who are the victims of an economic order which furthers capitalist interests at their expense. To establish whether this occurred, the global politics of population prior to the ICPD are surveyed in the next section.

2.4 The global politics of population: 1974 to 1984

Changes in the “demographic agenda” are closely related to wider concerns (Furedi 1997, 28). Population has been discussed at the international level for several decades. A study of the UN Population conferences of 1974 and 1984 offers insights into the relationship between the conferences’ outcomes and the debates of their times (Finkle and McIntosh 1994; Furedi 1997; Singh 1998). Each conference provided a forum for the dominant contemporary debates and set a program for the ensuing decade.

They are ... international conclaves of policy expression, where undertakings of good faith are made by all, and statements are made and resolutions drafted which together give a comprehensive picture of how the world’s thinking has evolved on an issue. (Catley-Carson 2000, 11803)

As noted in chapter one, individual states have historically taken a pro-natalist approach to their own populations for purposes of ‘nation building’ and to increase military strength, which until recent times, depended largely on manpower (Grebenik 1989). Western leaders became concerned about the growth of poor states’ population in the 1960s and, in recent decades, some leaders of low income countries have adopted policies to reduce fertility as a solution to their broader economic and social problems. These policies are often tied to the desire to emulate western development models; for instance, Chinese national ‘experts’ modelled the ‘one-child policy’, commenced in the late 1970s, on western discourses of modernity which Chinese leaders believed would lead their country to prosperity and international power (Greenhalgh 2002). Other states were encouraged by international financial institutions and bilateral donors to introduce population programs to assist in meeting economic objectives.³³ Finkle confirms that

³³ States which have received extensive financial and expert support for population programs include India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Thailand, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, South and Central America and a number of African states. Prior to the end of the Cold War, resources for these programs were plentiful.

the use of Malthusian and neo-Malthusian terms like ‘overpopulation’ is not confined to Northerners.³⁴

A point that is often neglected is that ‘overpopulation’ was attractive to both industrial societies as well as to developing countries as an explanation for the poverty of much of the Third World. It was much easier to attribute ‘underdevelopment’ to excessive population than to confront social and economic inequality, culture, religion, female subordination, or other plausible contributing factors. In the same spirit that western industrial nations found population control an appealing remedy for Third World poverty - for population control did not demand radical changes in the social and economic structure - scholars, intellectuals, and political leaders in developing countries also embraced population control as it did not require them to question fundamental attitudes and beliefs of their society. (Finkle 2000, 11796)

Family planning programs are remarkably similar, regardless of cultural and political contexts. The similarity of the “machine model of implementation” indicates that, rather than evolving from existing health programs, methods of implementation were imposed by Northern states (Warwick 1982, 40).

The 1974 World Conference on Population (WCP) in Bucharest provided a forum for developing countries to protest against the West’s preoccupation with population, while they attributed their problems to underdevelopment. The Bucharest conference was held when many in the North were panicking about population growth following the publication of The Population Bomb (Ehrlich 1968), the The Limits to Growth (Meadows & Meadows 1972) and increasing recognition of the global nature of environmental problems, signalled at Stockholm two years earlier. The WCP’s outcomes were strongly influenced by the UN General Assembly’s (UNGA) earlier adoption of the Declaration and POA for a New International Economic Order (NIEO), the successful outcome of a concerted effort by a united G77. The NIEO called for trade preferences and technology transfer to low income countries, commodity price stabilisation, a restructured international monetary system, debt relief, increased development assistance and greater regulation of multinational corporations and foreign investment (Finkle & Crane 1975, 93). The call for population ‘stabilisation’ and targets for fertility reduction in the draft World Population Plan of Action (WPPA) pointed strongly to United States influence because ‘population’ was seen as an “American cause” (Finkle & Crane 1975, 108). Countries in support of the NIEO,

³⁴ See also Caldwell 1998, for a discussion of the influence of Malthus on population and development policy in India.

however, combined to oppose the influence of the United States delegation, enabling them to make development the keystone of the Plan of Action.³⁵

The Bucharest Conference on Population was, in its way and for its time, as much of a paradigm shift as the ICPD, since it insisted that 'population' be considered in the context of development, despite the United States delegation's attempts to separate the issues. This was reflected in the statement that "[a] population policy may have a certain success if it constitutes an integral part of socioeconomic development; its contribution to the solution of world development problems is hence only partial" (WPPA 1974, cited by Hartmann 1987, 109). Bucharest moved the understanding of global population issues beyond the neo-Malthusian preoccupations of the United States at that time and indicated the power wielded by developing countries working together. Finkle and Crane (1975, 109) note, however, that although low income countries were strident in their demands for economic justice in a "feudal" global system they were nonetheless concerned about their population growth rates, patterns of migration and urbanisation and the age structure of their societies.

Consequently, ten years later at the Mexico City Conference, a greater number of countries - including China, many sub-Saharan African countries, Algeria and Brazil - which at Bucharest had been focused on economic issues, were prepared to prioritise population. Although the 1984 conference was not intended to produce a new WPPA, it signalled a paradigm shift in the global politics of population. The Conference became a forum for two policy perspectives which the Reagan administration brought to the United States: advocacy of neoliberal economic policies at the global level and opposition to abortion-related activities (Finkle & Crane 1985, 9).

The official policy statement presented by the US delegation to the conference asserted that "The relationship between population growth and economic development is not necessarily a negative one" and that "governmental control of economies" or "economic statism" had caused population growth in developing countries to change from an "asset" to a "peril". While recognizing that "in some cases, immediate population pressures might require short-term efforts to ameliorate them", the statement went on to conclude: "...population control programs alone cannot substitute for the economic reforms that put a society on the road toward growth and, as an aftereffect, toward slower population increase as well." The statement clearly indicated that the economic

³⁵ 'The insistence of the Indian delegation that "development is the best contraceptive" has become the hallmark of this conference' (Demeny 1985, 100).

reforms advocated by the delegation were those consistent with a market economy. (Finkle & Crane 1985, 11)

This approach was an explicit rejection of President Carter's Global 2000 report (Barney 1981) which predicted a global population crisis exacerbating impending environmental disasters. It also contradicted the World Bank's World Development Report of 1984, which called for stronger policies to reduce population growth. The United States argued that population 'problems' were an effect rather than a cause of poverty. However, by endorsing a market-driven approach and insisting on a greater role for the private sector, the United States approach reiterated the analysis of advocates like Bauer (1981) and Simon (1981). Bauer used phrases like "the grail of equality" and "Western guilt" to berate the dependency theorists and development economists whose ideas provided the economic framework for the NIEO.³⁶ He described development economics as "intellectually corrupt", calling for the shrinking of government activities in developing countries and rejecting development aid from North to South. Bauer saw the solution to underdevelopment as the further integration of national economies into the world economy. His analysis informed the Reagan administration's revisionist script for Bucharest: "[r]apid population growth has not been an obstacle to sustained economic advance either in the Third World or in the West" (Bauer 1981, 43).³⁷ His insistence that aid from rich to poor countries should be reduced and his rejection of redistributive taxes within countries echoes Malthus' approach to the poor and indicates his contribution to the macroeconomic policies which underlie the contemporary global political economy.

The outcomes of the 1984 UN population conference resulted from political processes which had been underway since 1974. The religious right's influence in the United States was projected to the international level. In the run-up to the United States Presidential election, the Reagan government acceded to requests from the religious right for a 'pro-life' stance and representation at Mexico City. As a result, the United States delegation backed the Vatican in the introduction of language which insured that abortion "in no case should be promoted as a method of family planning" (Finkle &

³⁶These are among the chapter titles of his 1981 monograph, Equality, the Third World and Economic Delusion.

³⁷ See Chapter four for an explanation of revisionism.

Crane 1985, 13) and introduced the policy which became known as the Mexico City policy, or Global Gag Rule. This was a major blow to the population establishment which hoped for a renewed commitment to financial support for population activities.

Women played a greater role at Mexico City than at Bucharest following their participation in two earlier world conferences on women in 1975 and 1980. Nafis Sadik, then Assistant Executive Director of UNFPA, organised an *ad hoc* Women's Caucus consisting of women at the head of national family planning organisations in India and Zimbabwe and the minister in charge of family planning in Pakistan. Their efforts resulted in the addition of a separate chapter devoted to women's rights in the revised WPPA (Singh 1998, 20).

Apart from the new additions of references to population and environment connections and the chapter on women, most of the 1974 WPPA survived the Mexico City conference.³⁸ Like ICPD, the 1974 and 1984 conferences reveal the influential role of the United States government in the global politics of population. The White House incumbents are important not just to Americans but to all governments and social movements and institutions concerned with population and reproductive rights. Both conferences signalled a shift in the paradigm by which the international community officially viewed population issues. However, neither deviated from a macro-approach to population, or took a gendered view of reproductive rights and reproductive health. It was not until 1994 that the micro-politics of reproduction came to the fore, nudging aside debates about the macro-politics of development and economic growth which had characterised earlier UN conferences. This focus constituted what Sadik described as the paradigm shift of ICPD.

2.5 The global political context of ICPD

The preceding discussion argues that earlier population conferences reflect their global political context. Similarly, the ICPD was a product of its times. Although it was the first UN population conference to have 'Development' in its title, the focus of the 1994 conference was 'population' and 'reproduction', and minimal attention was given to 'development'. Its organisers made strong claims for the conference.

The International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) ... has earned a place in history as one of the most significant global conferences ever. It radically transformed the views and perceptions of thousands of policy makers and programme managers on how population policies and programmes should be formulated in future - moving away from top-down approaches and pre-planned demographic goals to those that would seek to respond to the needs of 'couples and individuals'. (Singh 1998, 1)

If the Cairo Conference presented a paradigm change, it was by moving its focus from the macropolitics of development and economic growth to the micropolitics of individual rights and reproductive health. Catley-Carson's generalisation about population conferences more accurately describes ICPD than earlier conferences.

Population conferences as international policy making occasions therefore provide highly visible venues for intense debate about sensitive reproductive health issues of safe abortion, genital cutting, violence against women, and services for adolescents. (Catley-Carson 2000, 11803)

Why did issues tied to women's bodies and lives, of little interest earlier, achieve such centrality in 1994? The demographer Nathan Keyfitz provides a partial answer.

Cairo was a genuine 'happening', not a mere bureaucratic routine. It was news on the media and news in the bazaars in a way that few such international meetings have been. Because it came at the same time as many other smaller incidents in the awakening of women, the time was ripe for it; it fitted into the historic moment. (Keyfitz 1995, 90)

A number of factors contributed to that "historic moment". First, ICPD was the first UN population conference to be held in the post-Cold War period. East-West tensions had underlain earlier conferences, but, as McIntosh and Finkle (1995) point out, government leaders went to Cairo with a new willingness to work together. The collapse of the Soviet Union altered the geopolitical landscape, and there was optimism for a more cooperative global future. The signing of the Palestinian and Israeli peace agreement averted conflict over another issue which had derailed earlier international meetings.

The demise of the Soviet Union had another important impact. For the first time, the reproductive lives of women in Russia and other countries of the former Soviet Union became visible. Their need for an expanded range of family planning services was evident since induced abortion had been the primary fertility control method available to them. This issue preoccupied Western European governments and NGOs at the

³⁸ See Demeny 1985 for a comparative view of the 1974 and 1984 conferences.

European and North American regional conference in March 1993 as much as the need for family planning services in developing countries.

A second factor was the increasingly diverse economic status of developing countries, which had united in the campaign for a NIEO in 1974. By 1994, they lacked the common economic objectives which had helped them to overcome religious and political differences at earlier conferences. Many countries had adopted fertility reduction strategies and were enforcing them with varying levels of commitment and coercion. While religious and other differences were expressed through discussion about demographic and reproductive issues they also provided a smokescreen for some countries' poor progress in equitable social and economic development.

Third, as with earlier conferences, the ideological approach of the United States government was a crucial factor. Democrat President, Bill Clinton, had been elected in 1992; his administration reversed the Mexico City policy and promised to reinstate funding to IPPF and UNFPA in the next funding cycle. The appointment of Timothy Wirth as Under Secretary for Global Affairs was welcomed by the population establishment, since he had earlier voiced personal concern about population and sustainable development. At the beginning of the ICPD process, Wirth's views were neo-Malthusian. After persistent lobbying by feminist organisations, he was prepared to support a reproductive rights and health approach. The United States State Department, which had drafted the country's position for earlier conferences, was concerned about the security aspects of population growth - the macro perspective. Wirth worked with USAID, which was involved at the micro-level in the delivery of family planning, to develop a different approach for the United States position for ICPD. The friendship which developed between Nafis Sadik and Timothy Wirth at the European and North American Regional Conference "was extremely helpful to the ICPD Secretariat" (Singh 1998, 37). Although Wirth consulted a wide range of stakeholders, he was particularly accessible to women's organisations, and there was little consultation with "the community of demographers and other academic social scientists who have provided

the theoretical and analytical underpinnings of US international population policy for nearly thirty years” (McIntosh and Finkle 1995, 242).³⁹

Fourth, the timing of ICPD, two years after UNCED and a year after the Vienna Conference on Human Rights and months before the World Summit on Social Development and the World Conference on Women, was especially opportune for a gender perspective to emerge. UNCED revealed the minefield of neo-Malthusian approaches to population; Vienna, for the first time, explicitly recognised that “the human rights of women and the girl child are an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of universal human rights” (UN 1993, cited in Otto 1995, 10). Representation of the global women’s movement expanded with each conference. Although different constituencies were involved, according to each conference’s theme, coordinating groups like the Women, Environment and Development Organisation (WEDO), the International Women’s Tribune Center (IWTC) and DAWN (Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era) provided networking and communication between NGOs. The Beijing conference brought together many constituencies and concerns and built on the earlier conference documents.⁴⁰

Fifth, NGOs were positioned to play an unprecedented role in the global politics of population and reproduction. The UN increasingly welcomed NGOs at world conferences and, after initial reluctance, UNFPA welcomed the support of the family planning and international women’s health movements (Chen 1995). There were more organisations working on issues related to population, development and the environment, either separately or together than at any earlier population conference and, through the Women’s Caucus, they were well-organised. Many NGOs received government funding from UN agencies, foundations and other multilateral agencies to participate in the ICPD and related meetings. More significantly, a number of country delegations included leaders of the international women’s health movement (Chen 1995). Sadik saw this as crucial to the achievement of the paradigm shift.

³⁹ Singh (1998, 104) suggests that population specialists were present in their usual numbers, but outnumbered by government officials, diplomats and policy makers and the high participation of NGOs.

⁴⁰ See Gujit 1997 for a cross comparison of UNCED and WCW documents. She concludes that “[n]either document represents a comprehensive conceptual understanding of the key issues, nor is there a consistent approach for institutionalising a gendered environmental awareness”.

And I got quite a lot of money from donors for the participation of NGOs, provided they were members of the government delegation. The governments said, “okay the money is coming so let’s put this person on.” But the governments didn’t realize that that person would be so influential in the decision making. You have to have the NGOs - you have to have a person at the negotiating table to be able to influence things that happen at the UN. (Sadik in CEDPA 2000)

UNFPA invited sympathetic NGOs to participate in the ICPD process at many stages, and to make comments on the Draft Final Document which was presented to PrepCom III. WEDO’s comments in particular were judged to be “extremely useful to the Conference Secretariat in preparing the final draft” (Singh 1998, 132).

Finally, locating ICPD in Cairo helped to dissipate Islamist opposition to reproductive rights, although the choice was made through elimination rather than as a first choice and the alliance of Islamists with the Holy See was not foreseen at the early planning stages.⁴¹ The Egyptian Government wanted a successful conference to maintain its prestige. As the Holy See gathered support for its conservative approach to women’s rights among Islamist leaders, Egypt secured endorsement of the conference from more moderate Muslim leaders. As a result, only four Islamist countries carried out their threats to boycott the conference. As host government, Egypt also provided a voice for the G77, whose former leader, Algeria, had been weakened by domestic conflict.

This section has briefly outlined the global political context of the ICPD, indicating that it provided an environment conducive to those organisations bent on steering the POA towards a rights-based approach. The next section outlines the activities, campaigns and strategies of key players in the population establishment and women’s health movements which produced the ‘quantum leap’ which Sadik believes characterised the POA.

2.6 First steps toward the ‘quantum leap’

The objectives of the population establishment and the international women’s health movement were often in conflict, because the first focused on fertility reduction and

⁴¹ In this thesis, I use the term ‘Islamist’ to refer to Islamic views which are variously referred to as fundamentalist, revivalist or traditionalist. This follows El-Hadi’s (1996) use of the term, which she says, “describe[s] positions and tendencies which may include a wide variety of interpretations differing between regions and countries but which are united by the fact that their constituents describe them as being Islamic”.

family planning and the second regarded voluntary family planning as just one component of comprehensive reproductive health programs. Yet some of their interests converged in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Each movement was deeply affected by the United States' Mexico City policy, and it made sense to increase their political clout by organising together. The 'Common Ground' process is described in detail by Hodgson & Watkins (1997) who ask whether the feminist health movement was coopted by the population establishment in the run-up to ICPD. Conversely, a number of demographers suspect that the population establishment wrongly joined the focus on reproductive rights (see Caldwell 1996; Cassen 1994; Cleland 1996; Cliquet & Thienpont 1995; Eberstadt 1995; Van de Kaa 1995; Westoff 1995). The following discussion explores these questions in detail.

2.6.1 Population and Reproduction at Rio

UN conferences not only provide a platform for influencing governments, they also provide a forum for social movements and lobby groups to secure public support for their campaigns and activities. UNCED provided the population establishment with the opportunity to link population and environment issues. UNFPA's State of World Population reports of the late 1980s and early 1990s highlighted the neo-Malthusian theme of environmental catastrophe caused by unchecked population growth.⁴² In 1990, North American population and environment organisations - the Audubon Society, Planned Parenthood Federation of America (PPFA), Population Action International (PAI) and the Sierra Club - set up the Campaign on Population and the Environment (COPE) to influence UNCED's approach to population. This alliance excluded the feminist health movement and COPE's campaign material gave scant attention to reproductive rights and health. COPE adopted the neo-Malthusian objective of increasing awareness of "the link between population growth, environmental degradation and the resulting human suffering, and to translate this into public policy" (Hartmann 1995, 146, citing Mazur from her 1992 Population and the Environment: A grantmaker's guide).⁴³ It produced a regular magazine-style publication titled People and the Planet which was sponsored by Planned Parenthood of America (PPFA), UNFPA, and the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and the International Union for the

⁴² See Chapter five for an in-depth exploration of these documents.

⁴³ For an example of the kind of material produced, see Engelman and Koontz 1992.

Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and supported by other population and environment groups. Sadik and population and environment professionals used this forum to link population, human development and environment.

COPE worked hard to have population included in Agenda 21. Since UNCED's organisers saw the ICPD as the appropriate forum to discuss it, population was not identified as a critical cause of environmental degradation at UNCED's 1990 agenda-setting meeting (Rowlands 1994). Agenda 21 recommended measures to make consumption more sustainable and noted a 'synergistic relationship' between demographic trends and sustainable development. It recognised the critical role of women in population and environment programs and in achieving sustainable development.

This was not enough for the population establishment. "Looked at coldly and objectively, the language of Agenda 21 on population was a big disappointment - at least to those who came to Rio hoping that here at last, after so many years of passionate, often anguished debate, an international consensus, both practical and political, would at last be achieved" (Johnson 1994, 216). Neo-Malthusian language did not feature strongly in the UNCED documents, due largely to feminists' opposition to COPE's linking of population with environmental degradation. To oppose the inclusion of any neo-Malthusian content in Agenda 21, reproductive rights activists were prepared to form a temporary alliance with the Holy See and other members of the moral right.

UNCED revealed that women do not approach population, development and environment issues with one voice. Nevertheless, many feminists believe that gender issues are integral to environmental issues and are therefore concerned at the lack of a gender perspective among most environmental bureaucrats, institutions and NGOs. Observing this in the lead-up to UNCED, two feminist organisations were formed to critique and influence the conference's outcomes. The first and most visible was WEDO, which took a coordinating role at UN conferences to maximise the ability of feminist NGOs to pressure governments to adopt policies to advance the cause of women (Chen 1995; Higer 1999). The second was the Committee on Women, Population and the Environment (CWPE), created in 1991 to respond to the "incipient alliances being forged between environmental organizations, population control

advocates and uncritical feminist organizations” (Silliman 1999, x). CWPE was “determined to keep a space open within the transnational women’s movement for an alternative dialogue that was not tied to strategic public-policy objectives or conference politics” (Silliman 1999, xi). CWPE’s members include academics and activists from the North and the South, including Betsy Hartmann, who has written critically about population control and Joni Seager who highlights connections between militarism, environmental destruction, patriarchy and gender.⁴⁴ CWPE produced a statement prior to UNCED which was endorsed by over 300 individuals and organisations around the world (Silliman 1999, xi).⁴⁵

CWPE, intent on tackling the neo-Malthusian legacy of the writings of Ehrlich, Hardin and others who focused on population and environment connections at the expense of women’s rights, chose to work outside formal conference structures. Other feminists decided to use the processes set up by conference organisers and work inside organisations to increase gender-awareness. Since women were noticeably absent from the top positions of the major Northern environment groups and environmental institutions, feminists in these organisations saw UNCED as an occasion to highlight their concerns. They were assisted in this by WEDO, which was in an advantageous position to influence the UNCED agenda, as its Director, Bella Abzug, was senior adviser to the General-Secretary of the Earth Summit, Maurice Strong. As an insider, she was able to advise and assist with feminist strategies. Two key focal points were provided by the global women’s conferences held in Miami in November 1991. The first, organised by the Women’s International Policy Action Committee (IPAC) and WEDO, was the Global Assembly of Women and the Environment (4 - 8 November); the second was the World Women’s Congress for a Healthy Planet, (8 - 12 November). The Global Assembly was organised by Joan Martin-Brown and Waafas Ofofu-Amaah and supported by UN agencies, European and the United States governments and by many NGOs, trade unions and women’s environment and development global networks. Designed to demonstrate women’s ability to engage in environmental management, it was the culmination of several regional assemblies attended by Latin American and Caribbean, European, North American, Asia-Pacific and African

⁴⁴ See Hartmann (1987; 1994; 1995; 1998a; 1998b; 1999; 2000) and Seager (1993; 1999).

⁴⁵ CWPE’s position is discussed in more detail in Chapter five of this thesis.

women. The Global Assembly focused on projects from over seventy nations which were “repeatable, affordable, sustainable and visible”, leading to the development of regional strategies and action plans (Martin-Brown and Oforu-Amaah 1992). The stories were documented and became part of the conference proceedings, distributed to the 1500 women from eighty-three countries who attended.

The Congress adopted the format of a tribunal where keynote speakers presented testimonies which explored environmental degradation in the context of broader issues: poverty, development, militarism, resource allocation, climate change and energy use and human rights issues. It was an NGO initiative, organised by a committee of fifty-four women from thirty-one countries⁴⁶; WEDO provided organising and secretariat services and Bella Abzug shared the chair with Yolanda Kakabadse, UNCED’s NGO liaison officer (WEDO 1991a). Recurring themes at the tribunals and workshops revolved around “the structural economic exploitation of developing nations by the First World, militarism, and the participation - or lack of it - by women in decision making” (Evatt 1992, 4).⁴⁷ Over-consumption and population growth were identified as causes of environmental degradation but the latter was attributed to lack of access to reproductive rights.

The judges identified both wasteful overconsumption in the developed world and rapid population growth, as part of the problem. The Action Agenda and the judges (*sic*) declaration both stressed the importance of implementing the right of women to decide freely on the numbers and spacing of children. It is impossible to exclude the questions of numbers from issues related to levels of consumption. (Evatt 1992, 5)

Women from the South used the Tribunal to educate Northern women about “the connection between the free market and environmental abuse” (IPS/WEDO 1991, 2). In her testimony, DAWN coordinator Peggy Antrobus emphasised the “continued heavy dominance of Western industrialized nations and transnational corporations in the world economic system” (IPS/WEDO 1991, 1). Like many Southern women activists, she was concerned that Northern feminists often failed to link global economic issues and environmental problems.

⁴⁶ The Congress’ convenor was IPAC - Women’s International Policy Action Committee (WEDO 1991).

⁴⁷ Evatt, an Australian woman, was a member of the Tribunal of five women judges, which included three judges from the South.

The Preamble of the major document to emerge from the Congress, Women's Action Agenda 21, linked harm to women, development and environment with damaging economic policies.⁴⁸ Described as “one of the most comprehensive and radical documents on sustainable development” (Braidotti *et al* 1994, 162), it strongly opposed “the re-emergence of topdown demographically-driven population policies and programs that are deeply disrespectful of the basic human rights of women as guaranteed in [the Women's Convention]” (World Women's Congress 1991, 5). Like CWPE's statement, Women's Action Agenda 21 saw the impact of women's reproductive activities as minor by comparison with the devastating impacts of militarism and economic systems on the environment.⁴⁹

The Miami gatherings linked the oppression of women and nature. Women's responsibility to ‘heal the planet’ was the focus of much of the literature. The Women's Environmental Network document stated: “[t]hat women should take the lead in such a global movement is a natural expression of the intrinsic relationship between women and the environment” (WEN undated). WEDO solicited new members with the words in bold print “Its time for women to Mother Earth” beneath a photograph of the earth taken from Apollo XI (WEDO 1991b). Ecofeminist ideas were attractive to many Southern women, as an expression of the links that they experience at the material level. This was especially evident in the writings of spokespeople for indigenous and rural women who relied upon agriculture and foraging for subsistence.⁵⁰

At UNCED, women's reproductive (‘natural’) activities provided a useful mechanism to connect the different concerns of Northern and Southern women as “shar[ing] a common vision of a healthy planet” (Abzug 1991). Abzug's welcoming speech politicised the links between women and nature by advising women that they were “more than global housekeepers” and should be involved at every stage of planning processes and in national delegations. She stressed that “the political empowerment of

⁴⁸ ‘As caring women, we speak on behalf of ... the millions of women who experience daily the violence of environmental degradation, poverty and exploitation of their work and their bodies. As long as Nature and women are abused by a so-called “free market” ideology and wrong concepts of “economic growth”, there can be no environmental security’ (World Women's Congress 1991, 1).

⁴⁹ See Iyer 1998, Seager 1998 and Vertegaal 1989 for analyses of the environmental impacts of military activities.

⁵⁰ See Chapter five for an expanded discussion of women/nature approaches.

women may well provide the missing part of the equation that is needed to restore the health of our planet”.

The Miami conferences put women’s issues on the agenda at UNCED. Feminists from environment, development and women’s organisations attended Rio in unprecedented numbers where the women’s tent, Planeta Femea, provided an opportunity to develop strategies for Cairo. The Statement on Population, Environment and Development: Call for a New Approach was negotiated at the Global Forum. Its first sentence announced that “[w]omen’s empowerment to control their lives is the foundation for all action linking population, environment and development” (Johnson 1995, 137), auguring the centrality of women’s empowerment as an organising principle for feminists’ campaigns for the ICPD.

The success of the process inaugurated for UNCED, of holding regional assemblies of women, followed by global meetings to devise strategies and make consensus statements, legitimising the women’s caucus at the conference with strong grass roots support, provided a model for feminist organising for ICPD. The population establishment could not fail to see the visibility that women had developed through these processes, and the election of the Clinton government in the United States would enhance their influence. Further, it was evident that UNFPA was already talking to WEDO and other feminist organisations and there was a real danger that the neo-Malthusian approach of most population lobbyists would be marginalised.

UNCED failed where Cairo must not ... The International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo in 1994 is our last real chance, before of (*sic*) the end of this century, to bring together in a consensus the voices of our planets (*sic*) leaders. This time there will be no choice but to discuss the population crisis and the hard decisions that must be made globally. (Population Institute 1993 cited by Richter & Keyzers 1994)

The outcomes of the Rio conference indicated that neo-Malthusianism might not gain the support to bring in the funds necessary for UNFPA’s work; another approach was required. Following UNCED, Catherine Pierce, who then managed the women in development section of UNFPA, proposed that her organisation drop “controlling population growth” from its goals and make “improvement of women’s reproductive health” its primary objective (Harkavy 1995, 194). In December 1993, Sadik told UNGA that the draft POA would focus on the rights of individuals, freedom of choice, the needs and empowerment of women and the sexual health and family planning needs

of youth and adolescents. This incorporated the agenda of the international women's health movement and the family planning establishment, which was keen to deliver services to the oncoming generation of prospective parents.

2.6.2 Seeking common ground

After UNCED, the COPE alliance disbanded and many populationists and environmentalists joined feminist organisations in the Common Ground campaign. This alliance was instigated by members of the international women's health movement who had established links with population organisations during their career paths (Harkavy 1997; Hodgson & Watkins 1997). The International Women's Health Coalition (IWHC) emerged from the National Women's Health Coalition (United States) which formed with funding from the Population Crisis Committee in 1980. In the late 1980s, it adopted an international focus under the leadership of Joan Dunlop and Adrienne Germain, each of whom had worked with organisations focused on population issues.⁵¹ Their extensive contacts in the population establishment ensured IWHC's funding and facilitated communication between the two movements.

The common ground shared by feminist health organisations and the population establishment was facilitated by the concept of 'unmet need'. This term refers to the proportion of married women who indicate that they want to defer conception or cease childbearing, but who are currently not using modern methods of contraception (Westoff 1988). Unmet need is estimated from Knowledge/Attitudes/ Practice (KAP) surveys, World Fertility Surveys (WFS), Contraceptive Prevalence Surveys (CPS) and Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS), and extrapolated over a wider population to justify the 'diffusion' of contraceptives. Although these surveys have been criticised for aligning contraceptive use with fertility decline and ignoring traditional methods of avoiding pregnancies, (Sloan 1983) they provide useful data to assert that there is a high rate of unmet need. Sinding, Ross and Rosenfield (1992), Sinding (1993) and Merrick (1993) claim that satisfying unmet need would meet most countries' demographic targets.

⁵¹ Dunlop had been John D. Rockefeller's 'population aide' and is attributed by Harkavy with writing the speech that announced his conversion to the developmentalist approach at the Bucharest Population Conference. Germain had worked at both the Population Council and the Ford Foundation.

A very significant demographic impact would result from family planning and reproductive health programme efforts that attempted no more than to satisfy the stated reproductive wishes of the women of the developing world. The analysis strongly suggests that such an approach would equal or exceed what could be accomplished by achieving stated demographic targets of most countries. (Sinding 1993, 33)

Prior to its adoption by the international women's health movement, the concept of 'unmet need' was primarily used by demographers and family planners focused on diffusion of contraceptives, the 'supply' end of the population establishment. Some demographers focused on the demand side, suggesting that efforts to improve development would increase demand for family planning services.

In sum, reducing fertility is best seen as a broad problem of improving economic and social conditions, especially for women: raising their levels of education, their economic position, their (and their children's) health, and their role and status in society. That is a task more difficult, but with more promise, than manipulating contraceptive supply. (Pritchett 1994, 42)

Pritchett's suggestion that the 'unmet demand' is for the benefits of development provided a bridge between feminist aims and demographers' and populationists' objective of extending family planning programs. Members of the international women's health movement saw the narrow definition of 'unmet need' as an obstacle to introducing a reproductive rights and health approach to demographic programs; they wanted the definition broadened. In the run-up to the ICPD, international women's health advocates Dixon-Mueller and Adrienne Germain, who was vice-president of IWHC, suggested redesigning DHS surveys to discern the need for family planning services among unmarried as well as married women (Dixon-Mueller and Germain 1992).⁵²

In an attempt to broaden the ICPD's approach, Abzug further widened 'unmet need' to include all women's unmet needs.

So, what shall we emphasize in Cairo? First, we must collectively address the challenge of how to meet the real unmet demand of billions of people for simple human dignity and basic human rights. How do we meet the unmet demand and need by the female half of our population for power over their lives, for control over their bodies, for physical and emotional security, for education and economic independence that enables the realization of one's human potential? And how do we meet the unmet consumption demand and

⁵² Robey, Ross & Bushen (1996) have also argued that the unmet need of unmarried women must be considered.

need for food, for shelter, for education, for jobs, for health care? (Abzug 1994, at PrepCom III, cited in Hodgson & Watkins 1997, 499)

Expanding the concept of 'unmet need' to incorporate a broad transformative agenda, encompasses the enabling conditions which Petchesky (1995) believes that women need to exercise their reproductive rights. In any case, the international feminist health movement adopted the Dixon-Mueller/Germain definition for which they sought and obtained endorsement from the population establishment.

The broadened definition of unmet need was linked with another concept from the family planning and health movements, 'quality of care'. Judith Bruce (1990) listed the essential ingredients of a quality of care approach to family planning as choice among methods, information on technical competence, client-provider relations, continuity of use and a broad constellation of services. Like 'unmet need', the concept of 'quality of care' provided an entry point for the women's health movement to work with those in the population establishment who believed that family planning programs answer women's reproductive health needs as well as achieving population objectives. As the term was used in the family planning literature, 'quality of care' was too narrow for women's health advocates who wanted to see family planning services expanded to cover all sexual and reproductive health needs. They feared that the population establishment's interest was limited to the supply of contraception and legalised abortion (Germain *et al* 1994, 35). A study of survey and anthropological data by Bongaarts and Bruce (1995) shows that lack of access to family planning services is not the only reason that women do not use contraceptives. They found that lack of knowledge, fear of side effects and social and familial disapproval are also deciding factors. Bongaarts and Bruce recommended that services be made more responsive to the social situation of clients, target men as well as women and incorporate an understanding of the power, as well as the health, factors involved in using family planning services.

Thus, populationists, feminist health activists and the family planning movement in the Common Ground alliance connected the concept of unmet need with a quality of care approach to craft a comprehensive reproductive health focus for the ICPD. It was a winning combination since it pleased liberal neo-Malthusians and those governments which supported a rights-based approach to population programs.

Mr Biegman, Ambassador for Netherlands at UN, commented that the concept of 'unmet need' that was introduced into the discussions on reproductive

health, reproductive rights and the empowerment of women was probably the most significant factor in the successful completion of the negotiations on these themes. (Singh 1998,161-2)

The cross-over between personnel in the United States-led feminist health movement and population organisations, the focus on unmet needs and quality of care in service delivery and the HIV/AIDS epidemic provided the ingredients for the 'Common Ground' agenda between environmentalists, populationists and key segments of the feminist health movement. United States-based NGOs were crucial to the process; not only did they build a bridge between the population establishment, reproductive rights and health activists, they gained the support of key Southern women's groups (Correa 1994). While, as Hodgson and Watkins point out, this was an uneasy basis for an alliance, it was strengthened by the opposition of the Vatican and its supporters at ICPD. Events proved it to be the right approach for gaining broad support for putting reproductive rights on the agenda of a population conference.

2.7 ICPD's micro agenda

At ICPD, for the first time, a document endorsed by most of the world's governments agreed that population objectives could be achieved by increasing women's power to determine their reproductive lives through the exercise of their reproductive rights and access to quality reproductive health services. Liberal neo-Malthusians supported these concepts because they believed that women with reproductive autonomy would have fewer children. Having reached this basic agreement, the other new concept brought to a document at a population conference, women's empowerment, was seen as uncontroversial since, as presented in the POA, it would assist in the achievement of their main objective, reduced population growth.

Chapter IV 4.1 of the POA states that "[t]he empowerment and autonomy of women and the improvement of their political, social, economic and health status is a highly important end in itself" but continues by relating women's empowerment, access to reproductive rights and health services to the achievement of sustainable development and reduced fertility. In Chapter five, I interrogate the assumed relationship between sustainable development and reduced fertility. Here I chart the evolution of the concept of reproductive rights in UN documents, consider the concept of reproductive health and interrogate the role that 'empowerment' plays in the POA to discern whether the

inclusion of these concepts did signal progress towards women's reproductive autonomy, a condition with the power to 'change the world'.

2.7.1 Reproductive rights in the POA

The formulation of reproductive rights was an incremental process which began in the 1960s and extended beyond the ICPD to Beijing, where women's greater stake in biological reproduction was for the first time explicitly acknowledged. The concept of 'reproductive rights' was first articulated within human rights discourses rather than in the context of health or population debates. The 1968 Conference on Human Rights in Tehran established the human right to govern reproductive processes.

Parents have a basic human right to determine freely and responsibly the number and spacing of their children, and a right to adequate education and information in this respect. (UN 1968)

This statement steered an uncontroversial path by using the vague concept of 'parents'. Since a parent is anyone who has children, the statement is tautological. The 1974 World Conference on Population added nothing to the definition (Johnson 1994). The 1984 Mexico City conference extended the right in its additions to the WPPA.

Governments should, as a matter of urgency, make universally available information, education and the means to assist couples and individuals to achieve their desired number of children.

Governments are urged to ensure that all couples and individuals have a basic right to decide freely and responsibly the number and spacing of their children and to have the information, education and the means to do so. (Recommendations 25 and 30 of the Mexico City Plan of Action, Johnson 1994, 182)

Granting reproductive rights to 'couples and individuals' acknowledged that reproduction can occur outside marriage and thus was opposed by the Holy See. However, the Mexico City articulation was limited by its failure to address *whose* rights should prevail when there was conflict within couples and between individuals.

Feminist human rights activists were successful in gaining a statement from the 1993 UN Conference on Human Rights in Vienna that the entire suite of human rights is applicable to women. The final document states that "the human rights of women and the girl-child are an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of universal rights". In their campaigns prior to the Vienna conference, feminist human rights activists focused on violence against women since "issues of gender-based violence ... illustrate best how traditional human rights concepts and practice are gender-biased and exclude a

large spectrum of women's experience or abuse" (Bunch *et al* 1999, 95). The campaign for reproductive rights benefited from progress made in Vienna, but was focused on the ICPD.

The Cairo conference deserves recognition as the first attempt to define reproductive rights. Nonetheless, despite success in engendering human rights at Vienna, the ICPD POA puts aside the contentious question of *who* in a heterosexual couple has a greater claim to reproductive rights, which are inherently unequal, since women bear the greater physical burden of reproduction.

[R]eproductive rights embrace certain human rights that are already recognized in national laws, international human rights documents and other consensus documents. These rights rest on the recognition of the basic right of all couples and individuals to decide freely and responsibly the number, spacing and timing of their children and to have the information and means to do so, and the right to attain the highest standard of sexual and reproductive health. It also includes their right to make decisions concerning reproduction free of discrimination, coercion and violence, as expressed in human rights documents. In the exercise of this right, they should take into account the needs of their living and future children and their responsibilities towards the community. The promotion of the responsible exercise of these rights for all people should be the fundamental basis for government- and community-supported policies and programmes in the area of reproductive health, including family planning. (UN 1994, 7.3 - excerpt)

The subsequent statement adds a gender dimension, but does not make reproductive rights specifically women's rights.

As part of their commitment, full attention should be given to the promotion of mutually respectful and equitable gender relations and particularly to meeting the educational and service needs of adolescents to enable them to deal in a positive and responsible way with their sexuality. (UN 1994, 7.3 - excerpt)

Conference declarations are 'soft law,' meaning that they are "non-legally binding instruments that nevertheless create expectations about future action" (Charlesworth & Chinkin 2000, 66). There is no internationally constituted body to hold states to their agreement on the recommendations of the POA or the Beijing Platform for Action. More binding is the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (the Women's Convention), the major international treaty protecting the rights of women over their sexuality and fertility, adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1981.⁵³ The Convention is framed in terms of enabling women to achieve equality with

⁵³ The Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women is referred to in writings on women's human rights as both the Women's Convention and CEDAW. In this thesis I refer to it as the

men, indicating that it has the same limitations as the POA. In its original form, Article 16 (1) (e) of the Women's Convention recommends that women be allowed "[t]he same rights [as men] to decide freely and responsibly on the number and spacing of their children and to have access to the information, education and means to enable them to exercise these rights" (UNHCHR 1981). At its 1994 meeting, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) adopted a general recommendation on equality in marriage and family relations which clarified 16 (1) (e) and extended women's right to decide their reproductive lives.

The responsibilities that women have to bear and raise children affect their right of access to education, employment and other activities related to their personal development. They also impose inequitable burdens of work on women. The number and spacing of children have a similar impact on women's lives and also affect their physical and mental health, as well as that of their children. For these reasons, women are entitled to decide on the number and spacing of their children.

Some reports disclose coercive practices which have serious consequences for women, such as forced pregnancies, abortions or sterilization. Decisions to have children or not, while preferably made in consultation with spouse or partner, must not nevertheless be limited by spouse, parent, partner or Government. (cited by Cook 1994, 31)

This is an important advance on the language of equality used by the Women's Convention; to talk in terms of "the same rights" is inappropriate since the biological and social roles of men and women are inherently unequal.⁵⁴ Yet, while the 'hard law' of the Women's Convention is, in theory, enforceable, in practice, the mechanisms for monitoring and enforcing the Convention's implementation are inefficient and ineffective. States which have ratified the Women's Convention are required to report on their enforcement. Where they do not comply with the reporting requirement or their reports are found to be inadequate, the only option available to CEDAW is 'constructive dialogue'. Furthermore, independent and well-resourced women's NGOs are needed to inform CEDAW of inaccuracies and omissions in government reports, and such NGOs are scarce in countries where women's rights are denied. Although the Optional Protocol which gives women's organisations standing is now supported by sufficient countries to gain international standing, it has not been ratified by many

Women's Convention, and the Committee for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women as CEDAW.

⁵⁴ The preamble to CEDAW promotes a pronatalist view of women, emphasising the social significance of maternity and the role of women in procreation.

countries, including Australia. The United States has not yet ratified the original Convention.

Nonetheless, as Charlesworth (1996) concludes, human rights law, whether ‘soft’ or ‘hard’, allows women to articulate their demands in a language which has salience in global discourses. It was in this knowledge that women organised at the 1995 Beijing Women’s Conference to consolidate themes they had pursued in the conferences of the early 1990s. This led to an expansion of reproductive rights and the first inclusion of sexual rights in an international document endorsed by states. The Platform for Action explicitly addressed women’s biological and social role in reproduction and acknowledged its connection with sexuality.

The human rights of women include their right to have control over and decide freely and responsibly on matters relating to their sexuality, including sexual and reproductive health, free of coercion, discrimination and violence. Equal relationships between women and men in matters of sexual relations and reproduction, including full respect for the integrity of the person, require mutual respect, consent and shared responsibility for sexual behaviour and its consequences. (UN 1995, Para 96)

Gone is reference to ‘the couple’ with its problematic assumption that men and women are equal within it. Women’s rights *as women* in reproductive decision-making are asserted. For the first time, the connection between reproduction and sexuality is spelled out (Miller 2000). Following this strong statement, however, with a sentence which subordinates women’s human rights within ‘equal relationships between women and men’ dilutes its potential for women’s empowerment and sexual and reproductive autonomy.⁵⁵ In asserting equality with men, women’s distinct role as biological and social reproducers is ignored.

From the foregoing discussion, it is evident that the ICPD’s concept of reproductive rights was an incremental advance rather than a paradigm shift. In part, this was due to opposition to the draft definition from conservative forces at Cairo. However, the ICPD definition provided the basis on which the Beijing Conference could build, and the ICPD provided an occasion for CEDAW to clarify the Women’s Convention’s understanding of women’s entitlement in decision-making on reproductive matters. In Chapter three, I expand the argument that the concept of ‘reproductive rights’ is limited

⁵⁵ See Otto (1996, 16) for a critique of the Beijing Platform’s formulation of reproductive rights.

but suggest that the existence of an international human rights framework is nonetheless useful for advancing women's reproductive autonomy.

2.7.2 Reproductive health in the POA

'Reproductive health' would seem to be a less controversial term than 'reproductive rights', and thus unproblematical to populationists, family planners and women's health advocates. It is defined in the ICPD POA and correlated with widely accepted rights such as access to health services and information.

Reproductive health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity, in all matters relating to the reproductive system and to its functions and processes. Reproductive health therefore implies that people are able to have a satisfying and safe sex life and that they have the capability to reproduce and the freedom to decide if, when and how often to do so. Implicit in this last condition are the right of men and women to be informed and to have access to safe, effective, affordable and acceptable methods of family planning of their choice, as well as other methods of their choice for regulation of fertility which are not against the law, and the right of access to appropriate health-care services that will enable women to go safely through pregnancy and childbirth and provide couples with the best chance of having a healthy infant.

In line with the above definition of reproductive health, reproductive health care is defined as the constellation of methods, techniques and services that contribute to reproductive health and well-being by preventing and solving reproductive health problems. It also includes sexual health, the purpose of which is the enhancement of life and personal relations, and not merely counselling and care related to reproduction and sexually transmitted diseases. (UN 1994, 7.2)

The organisers of the ICPD decided to frame abortion within a reproductive health framework rather than as a reproductive right, hoping to diffuse opposition. As a result, the seemingly benign term of reproductive health was highly contested at Cairo. The Vatican and conservative governments entered reservations to the ICPD's definition of reproductive health on the grounds that it "would seem to assert that abortion services belong within primary health care as a method of choice" (cited in Johnson 1995, 203). That these organisations and individuals were unhappy with the conference's outcomes was unsurprising; they had been dissatisfied with the outcomes of earlier UN Population conferences. The disquiet of demographers was less predictable.

While they do not deny women access to the full range of reproductive health services, a number of demographers and populationists have taken issue with ICPD's focus on reproductive health programs, which they see as competing for declining family planning funds. Demographer Jack Caldwell disapproved of the 'micro' approach, with

its emphasis on the individual, rejection of numerical targets and lack of concern about the impacts of population growth. He argued that the inclusion of health, educational and employment objectives makes population policies unworkable. He believed that conference participants had underrated the difficulties of maintaining financial and political support for population programs in Northern electorates, arguing for “an emphasis on government leadership in convincing the population that they will be better off with smaller families” (Caldwell 1996, 72). Harkavy expressed the concerns of the population establishment.

If population concerns were to become just one of several elements of women’s reproductive health, I fear that Third World ministries of finance, which typically give low priority to women’s health - the rhetoric of Cairo notwithstanding - are not likely to allocate the magnitude of funds needed to achieve a stable world population of 7.27 billion by 2015, or 8.5 billion by 2025. I fear too, that the reproductive health movement, if it succeeds in driving out demographic concerns in funding agencies, will further dampen the momentum of the population movement. (Harkavy 1997, 200)

Caldwell’s and Harkavy’s concerns that funding for reproductive health programs might be difficult to find were prescient, as discussed in Chapter four. However, family planning and straightforward population control programs are just as strapped for cash. At the time of ICPD the rights and health discourses seemed appropriate, and feminists were hopeful that the funding trends evident in the early 1990s would continue. Generous funding organisations like the Ford and Macarthur Foundations and the Population Institute had begun to turn away from population programs towards a focus on reproductive health prior to ICPD, and the ICPD focus reflects this (Harkavy 1997).

Dissent over whether reproductive health should be the primary goal of population programs highlights the fracture lines of the Common Ground alliance. Harkavy believes that the ICPD revealed the faultlines in the population movement, which he characterises as being torn between two intellectual and political forces. The first is the international women’s health movement goal of improving women’s reproductive health. While empowerment, human rights, education and women’s independence are likely to lead to lower fertility, “these objectives are pursued for the sake of women’s well-being, not as a means of reducing population growth” (Harkavy 1997, 198). The second force is the neo-Malthusian population movement which aims “to enhance economic development and to enhance family welfare through family planning. ... The long-standing concern for economic development merges with environmental considerations under the banner of ‘sustainable development,’ for which containment

of population growth is a *sine qua non*" (Harkavy 1997, 198). For this group, reproductive health is the means to the end of fertility reduction, while for the international women's health movement, family planning is just one ingredient of comprehensive reproductive health services.

The tension between the two streams in the Common Ground alliance was evident in the run-up to Cairo. In 1993, Wirth revealed his membership of the demographic camp by announcing the Clinton Administration's intention to "aggressively re-enter the population battle to try to level off the world's population" (Harkavy 1997, 198). A year later, he was emphasising the need for high quality family planning and reproductive health services, access to safe abortion and the need to enhance the status of women. Harkavy, a self-declared populationist, experienced the successes proclaimed by Sadik at the ICPD as a defeat.

More significant than the abortion debate was the victory of the forces of women's empowerment at Cairo. Stabilization of population growth was to be achieved through enhanced reproductive health care and by enabling women to have the right and means to decide the number of children they will have and when they will have them. (Harkavy 1997, 200)

Nonetheless, he feels partly compensated by the inclusion in the POA of the objective of stabilising population growth. While discussion and arguments revolved around reproductive rights and health, neo-Malthusianism was quietly endorsed in the POA, where it appeared as a component of sustainable development in the Preamble.

Intensified efforts are needed in the coming 5, 10 and 20 years, in a range of population and development activities, bearing in mind the crucial contribution that early stabilization of the world population would make towards the achievement of sustainable development. (UN 1994, 1.11)

The objective also appears twice in Chapter III on sustainable development, and twice in Chapter VI on reproductive rights, health and family planning. Singh claims that the ICPD went further than any previous conference in its focus on stabilisation of world population.

By putting forward the case for rapid demographic transition and eventual stabilization of the world population, Cairo goes much further than Bucharest and Mexico in dealing with issues related to population growth. (Singh 1998, 85)

Clearly, neo-Malthusianism objectives underlie the ICPD's reproductive rights approach. Reproductive rights and reproductive health were endorsed by neo-Malthusians because they made their agenda more acceptable in a decade when the

main themes were human rights, women's empowerment and sustainable development. The neo-Malthusian approach has proved to be resilient, since it is embedded in the dominant international political economy as Chapter four of the thesis explores.

2.8 The ICPD's limited view of 'population'

While the POA's focus on the micro issues of reproductive rights and reproductive health was seen by many observers as a change in approach to population issues, its approach to the macro issues of global political economy and development had been set at UNCED. The POA endorsed a model of sustainable development based on 'sustained economic growth' which would stifle the changes it endorsed in its micro agenda. Furthermore, its focus on population growth and fertility obscured a number of demographic issues which were already coming to the fore in global population politics in the 1990s.⁵⁶ In this section I discuss the issues which were given little detailed attention by those who drafted the POA and by the Common Ground alliance and other NGOs.

2.8.1. Abortion as a key reproductive right

The focus of the conference on population growth and its emphasis on reproductive rights and health led to a preoccupation with family planning services and information. Within this framework, it is difficult to avoid the topic of induced abortion. Indeed, the legalisation of abortion and provision of safe services is a key objective of the international women's health movement. Nonetheless, due to opposition from the Holy See and a number of governments, the draft POA went to Cairo with every reference to the topic bracketed, and many days were spent discussing the issue. In this section, I consider the final text decided by the conference, to assess whether the final wording of the POA reflected, after all, an endorsement of this key reproductive right.

⁵⁶ Population growth does not depend on fertility (number of births) alone; it is also influenced by increased longevity of those already alive. However, as at the ICPD, conversations about population growth usually focus on fertility, which locates 'the problem' in countries with high fertility rates, even though life expectation may be low. The longer lives of most of the population in high income countries is rarely given equivalent attention, although fewer affluent people consuming goods and impacting on the environment have proportionately greater impact than a larger number of poor people who live shorter lives. This issue is explored in more detail in Chapter five of the thesis, but little is to be found in demographic or other literatures on this topic.

Despite the central role of abortion in western women's campaigns for reproductive rights, the final POA does not propose its legalisation. Its high rate of occurrence is acknowledged: "[a]t present, approximately ninety per cent of the countries of the world, representing ninety-six per cent of the world population, have policies that permit abortion under varying legal conditions to save the life of a woman. However, a significant proportion of the abortions carried out are self-induced or otherwise unsafe, leading to a large fraction of maternal deaths or to permanent injury to the women involved" (UN 1994, 8.19). ICPD's main message on abortion is that governments should do everything they can to reduce the need for it.

In no case should abortion be promoted as a method of family planning. All Governments and relevant intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations are urged to strengthen their commitment to women's health, to deal with the health impact of unsafe abortion as a major public health concern and to reduce the recourse to abortion through expanded and improved family-planning services. Prevention of unwanted pregnancies must always be given the highest priority and every attempt should be made to eliminate the need for abortion. (UN 1994 8.25)

Elsewhere in the POA, recommendations about abortion include the following: ensuring that where it is legal, it is safe; providing quality services to deal with post-abortion complications; and counselling to prevent repeat abortions. The widespread practice of aborting female fetuses in societies where sons are preferred is discouraged by urging "investments in the girl child's health, nutrition and education, from infancy through adolescence"(UN 1994, 4.15). Since, in the former Soviet Union, women had few options besides abortion, Eastern European governments are asked to "give higher priority to reproductive health services, including a comprehensive range of contraceptive means, and ... [to] address their current reliance on abortion for fertility regulation by meeting the need of women in those countries for better information and more choices on an urgent basis" (UN 1994, 7.12). Adolescents' sexual and reproductive health issues are listed as "unwanted pregnancy, unsafe abortion and sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS" (UN 1994, 7.44 -a).

This language is far weaker than feminists wanted. It was obvious by the time of the Third PrepCom, held in New York in April 1994, that the combined forces of the moral right posed a formidable challenge to the international women's health movement's plans to use the ICPD in its campaign to improve women's access to safe abortion. Abortion is an iconic issue for the moral right, which invokes 'foetal rights' against women's right to terminate a pregnancy. Placing abortion in a reproductive health

context rather than a rights framework, made reproductive health a more controversial issue than reproductive rights.

Norwegian Prime Minister, Gro Harlem Brundtland, tackled the issue head-on.

Sometimes religion is a major obstacle. This happens when family planning is made a moral issue. But morality cannot only be a question of controlling sexuality and protecting unborn life. Morality is also a question of giving individuals the opportunity of choice, of suppressing coercion of all kinds and abolishing the criminalization of individual tragedy. Morality becomes hypocrisy if it means accepting mothers' suffering or dying in connection with unwanted pregnancies and illegal abortions, and unwanted children living in misery. ... A conference of this status and importance should not accept attempts to distort facts or neglect the agony to millions of women who are risking their lives and health. I simply refuse to believe that the stalemate reached over this crucial question will be allowed to block a serious and forward-looking outcome of the Cairo conference - hopefully based on full consensus and adopted in good faith. (Brundtland, opening statement, cited in Johnson 1995, 90)

The influence of the moral right on the United States Government came to an end with the election of Clinton. No longer able to rely upon the United States government to push its agenda globally, the Holy See (sometimes referred to as the Vatican in this thesis), a Non-member State Permanent Observer at the UN, actively sought and gained the support of Islamist leaders. The combined electoral strength held by Islamist and 'pro-life' Catholics and supporters in the United States was an effective weapon in moderating the United States delegation's approach to abortion at Cairo. The statement produced by the American Muslim Council and the Archbishop of Baltimore four days before the ICPD provides a succinct summary of the moral right's agenda. It states that the alliance was based on abhorrence of abortion and 'false individualism', the desire to restrict the concept of 'family' to husband and wife and offspring, and opposition to providing information and reproductive health services to adolescents. Underlying these 'values' is the desire to retain the *status quo* of their religions' approaches to women. "The particular gifts of women as teachers of the faith, bestowers of values, imparters of wisdom, leaders of projects and officeholders have sustained our two traditions from their origins" (Cheema & Keeler 1995, 195). The reproductive labour of women is claimed as the property of religious institutions; its requisition for other agendas, including women's own, is seen as a material as well as a symbolic threat.

The religious alliance stalled discussion at Cairo for nearly a week, provided the media with a conflict to report and caused the United States delegation to backtrack on its

approach to abortion.⁵⁷ Vice President Al Gore announced that he would amend his country's position statement document to remove reference to women's right to abortion. Timothy Wirth discarded the term "abortion rights" in favour of "access to the full range of reproductive health care services" (Stanley 1995, 83).

Allowing an observer delegation to take centre-stage at a conference for states may have been politically strategic for the United States and other Northern states.⁵⁸ With the focus on conflict over reproductive rights, the failure of northern states and international financial institutions to assist in the alleviation of poverty in the South was sidelined, as Stafford (1994) points out.

Rather than letting the Pope offer himself up as a sacrificial lamb at Cairo, there is a substantial body of opinion which says that he is being used as a stool pigeon by western governments whose tiny - and shrinking - aid budgets fail to tackle the real cause of population growth in Africa, namely poverty. And he has become the punchbag for western consumers reluctant to accept that their desire for mahogany toilet seats has a much more profound impact on the Brazilian rain forests than the Catholic family in the slums of Rio with six children. (Stafford 1994)

Despite compromise by the proponents of legal safe abortion, the language which emerged was too strong for governments with morally conservative views and the Holy See, who entered reservations on every reference to reproductive health in the POA. Despite the intense frustration of pro-choice delegates and NGOs during the week-long assault of the moral right, there was no rolling back of the legality of abortion except for the insistence that it be made safe. This was a better outcome than might be gained from a shallow reading of newspaper headlines and indicates the relative strength of the international women's health movement and the population establishment.⁵⁹

2.8.2 The reproductive rights of adolescents

The moral right also waged a strong attack at the ICPD against the extension of information and services to assist young people to determine their sexual and reproductive lives. The Common Ground alliance campaigned strongly on these issues. It was a particular concern of the population establishment since as Secretary General

⁵⁷ See Neidell 1998 for an analysis of coverage of ICPD in the New York Times.

⁵⁸ See Copelon and Petchesky 1994, 348 for a similar view.

⁵⁹ See, for instance, Canberra Times 8.9.1994: For many women, it looks like a hijack (AP 1994).

of IPPF, Halfdan Mahler, pointed out, the reproductive activities of the 500 million young people between the ages of fifteen and nineteen worldwide will provide the population momentum to keep global population growing for another fifty years. This cohort experiences a high incidence of sexually transmitted diseases, pregnancies, abortions and high maternal mortality rate, including HIV/AIDS. Although many governments wanted the POA to propose specific government actions targeted at young people, the Holy See and a small number of governments opposed this on the grounds that it threatened the authority of parents.

Nonetheless, after 'women', 'adolescents', 'youth', the 'girl child' and 'children' are the groups most often mentioned in the POA. In particular, it acknowledges adolescents' vulnerability to sexually transmitted diseases and girls' lack of power in sexual relationships. The broad needs of youth are recognised in a number of sections.

Countries should take effective steps to address the neglect, as well as all types of exploitation and abuse, of children, adolescents and youth, such as abduction, rape and incest, pornography, trafficking, abandonment and prostitution. In particular, countries should take appropriate action to eliminate sexual abuse of children both within and outside their borders. (UN 1994, 6.9)

Gender is taken into account in most of the sections on adolescents. Girls and boys are understood to have distinct needs. The improvement of educational opportunities, particularly for girls, is strongly recommended.

Young people are not considered in international conventions: adolescents are excluded from the full range of human rights law, except as subjects of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Adolescents' voices do not inform the POA as women's voices do. There was no expert roundtable on adolescents prior to ICPD, as there was on women. Nonetheless, the draft language of the POA asserted young people's right to a degree of bodily autonomy. This concept was dogmatically opposed by the Holy See delegates, who opposed the intervention by the State in this aspect of the parent-child relationship. This situation reflects the lack of voice given to young people at international fora, and their reliance upon others to promote their needs and rights.⁶⁰ The moral right considers parental control of adolescents' sexual and reproductive lives as a marker of family values, as it considers denying women access to abortion to be a marker in its

⁶⁰ This was recognised in the year of ICPD + 5 and a young people's conference was held prior to The Hague Forum in 1999.

opposition to women's rights. It has intensified its fight against sexual and reproductive rights for adolescents at every forum since 1994, indicating its lack of understanding of the lives of young people in many countries of the world.

2.8.3 Migration

Migration is a demographic issue of increasing relevance since the movement of people parallels the movement of investment and trade in goods and services across the globalised world.⁶¹ The topic was addressed in two chapters in the ICPD POA: Chapter IX, Population Distribution, Urbanization and Internal Migration and Chapter X, International Migration. Chapter IX focuses on rural to urban migration "although rural-rural and urban-urban migration are in fact the dominant forms of spatial mobility in many countries". The Programme presents all the reasons for increasing urbanisation - loss of resources for subsistence, local conflict, as well as positive aspects of seeking education and employment - in a positive light as an inevitable aspect of the development process: "[t]he process of urbanization is an intrinsic dimension of economic and social development and, in consequence, both developed and developing countries are going through the process of shifting from predominantly rural to predominantly urban societies" (UN 1994, 9.1). Development-related migration is described as a "rational and dynamic effort to seek new opportunities in life". Negative factors are recognised: "migration is also prompted by push factors, such as inequitable allocation of development resources, adoption of inappropriate technologies and lack of access to available land" (UN 1994, 9.1) but they are lost in the assumption that development inevitably increases urbanisation.

A section of Chapter IX is devoted to internal displacement. "Because there is no single definition of internally displaced persons, estimates of their number vary, as do the causes of their migration" (UN 1994, 9.19). Governments are urged to provide "adequate protection and assistance to persons displaced within their country, particularly women, children and the elderly, who are the most vulnerable, and to find solutions to the root causes of their displacement in view of preventing it and, when appropriate, to facilitate return or resettlement". They are also requested "to put an end to all forms of forced migration, including 'ethnic cleansing'" (9.20). These are

⁶¹ See Castles 1999.

sensitive topics for governments of countries with high numbers of displaced people; they gave internal migration little attention, despite recognition that internal displacement is the precursor to “outflows of refugees and externally displaced persons” (UN 1994, 9.19).

Chapter X addresses international migration, which was a contentious issue between North and South. Discussion focused on bracketed text relating to the rights of minorities and indigenous people, the right of family reunification and the human rights of documented and undocumented migrants. Compromise text was found for all issues except family reunification, where disagreement focused on the definition of ‘family’ and the rights of migrants to bring family members into their country of work. The International Convention on the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, adopted by the UN’s General Assembly in 1990, had not gained sufficient numbers for implementation. Oil-producing Middle Eastern countries which host millions of expatriate workers joined western governments in opposing language endorsing the right to family reunification, which they feared might extend to cousins and in-laws. The Conference accepted compromise text which called on governments to recognize “the vital importance of family reunification and promote its unification into their national legislation ... [for] families of documented migrants” (UN 1994, 10.12). The recommendation that a global conference on international migration and development be held at a later date has not yet been implemented.

The POA stresses the growing urgency of refugee-related issues, noting that in the eight years up to 1993 the number of people seeking asylum outside their home countries had doubled to 19 million. Paragraph 10.15 recognises “the right of every nation State to decide who can enter and stay in its territory and under what conditions” but predicts that the number of undocumented migrants will rise. Governments of origin are urged to reduce the causes of displacement and receiving countries are requested to ensure the safety of asylum seekers and provide “adequate accommodation, education, health services, including family planning, and other necessary social services” (10.25) and “access to a fair hearing and ... the expeditious processing of asylum requests, ensuring that guidelines and procedures for the determination of refugee status are sensitive to the particular situation of women” (10.27). The vulnerability and needs of girls and women refugees and asylum seekers are recognised: “[a]ll necessary measures should be taken to ensure the physical

protection of refugees - in particular, that of refugee women and refugee children - especially against exploitation, abuse and all forms of violence” (10.24).

The Common Ground alliance did not address migration-related issues, although the topic preoccupies the population establishment and environmental movements in the United States (Hartman 2000). In developed countries, immigration is now the major means of compensating for low fertility rates, but it is a demographic issue too politically sensitive to address at conferences on population to date. The displacement of people due to inequitable development, intra-state and interstate conflict and ecological devastation is likely to be a source of tension within and between countries for the foreseeable future, but, unlike low fertility and ageing (UNPD 2000), it has not been given an international forum. Migration has complex roots and is unlikely to be reduced by stabilising population growth in countries with high numbers of emigrants or by increasing women’s empowerment and access to reproductive rights. The POA’s proposals ignore global political and economic factors which render such measures ineffectual, as Chapter four of the thesis explores.

2.8.4 Ageing populations/low fertility rates in the North

At the end of the twentieth century, the governments of developed countries are becoming increasingly concerned about their declining fertility rates. These trends were evident in 1994, yet the ICPD POA focuses on high, rather than low, fertility rates. Nonetheless, the POA acknowledges that “fundamental changes in the age structure of the population of most societies” are occurring. The ageing of populations is considered “both an opportunity and a challenge to all societies” (6.16). The Programme emphasises increasing the self-reliance of elderly people, and strengthening “formal and informal support systems and safety nets” for them (6.20). The elderly are represented as a vulnerable group, requiring the support of family members and governments.

There is no recommendation to empower elderly people; women’s empowerment, it is implied, is to end at menopause. While it is recognised that women will constitute the greater proportion of the aged population in any country, there is no acknowledgement of their role as care-givers and their own needs for care. Consequently, there are no proposals for reducing their workload or increasing support for them. Indeed, their

skills and experience are to be available to society: their reproductive work, in the broad sense, is to continue.

Although old age removes women (but not men) from the reproductive age group, their needs for reproductive health services are not diminished; indeed, poor women who live beyond the reproductive years are likely to need special attention, regardless of how many children they have borne. Further, while elderly women's reproductive lives may be over, their sexual lives may continue. The neglect of their sexual rights indicates a blindness among the conference organisers and NGOs to issues related to the real lives of the elderly. Clearly, this was a group which, like the young, was not adequately consulted.

The focus of feminists on reproductive rights and reproductive health limited the attention that they, like the POA, paid to women outside childbearing age. Much of the population establishment, as noted earlier, prefers to focus on population momentum and persistent high fertility in some countries rather than acknowledge that fertility is declining in much of the world. A decade later, the aged constitute a new 'problem' for the governments of developed, and an increasing number of developing, countries.⁶² Sections of the demographic community have taken up this issue as a topic of study, but as Lutz (2003) notes they occupy different research communities to the high fertility experts.⁶³

2.8.5 Morbidity and mortality

In contrast to its focus on fertility, the ICPD gave little attention to mortality. It was not a contentious issue, although Chapter VIII, Health, Morbidity and Mortality, notes that the targets to reduce mortality set by the World Population Plan of Action have not been met. "There remain entire national populations and sizeable population groups

⁶² In some countries, discrimination against aged women is blatant. Here is an example from Japan: "Ishihara Shintaro, the Governor of Tokyo, made the following comment in November 2001 in a weekly women's magazine with a circulation of more than 300,000: 'He [translator's note: a Tokyo University professor whom Ishihara is misquoting] says it's both wasteful and sinful for women to live beyond menopause, because while men can father children into their 80s or 90s, women lose their reproductive powers after menopause, yet even so they go on living until the age of Kin-san and Gin-san [translator's note: famous Japanese women over 100 years old]. He says such useless human beings are extremely harmful to the whole planet. I really think he's on to something here, although I can't say such things myself in my capacity as a politician (laughter)'" (Motoyama 2003).

⁶³ See McDonald 2000, 2002.

within many countries that are still subject to very high rates of morbidity and mortality. Differences linked to socio-economic status or ethnicity are often substantial” (UN 1994, 8.1).

While the Conference recognised that structural adjustment programs contribute to high mortality and morbidity rates, it was accepted that they are essential for “sustained economic growth”.

Moreover, large segments of many populations continue to lack access to clean water and sanitation facilities, are forced to live in congested conditions and lack adequate nutrition. Large numbers of people remain at continued risk of infectious, parasitic and water-borne diseases, such as tuberculosis, malaria and schistosomiasis. ... The impact of reductions in expenditures for health and other social services which have taken place in many countries as a result of public-sector retrenchment, misallocation of available health resources, structural adjustment and the transition to market economies has pre-empted significant changes in lifestyles, livelihoods and consumption patterns and is also a factor in increasing morbidity and mortality. Although economic reforms are essential to sustained economic growth, it is equally essential that the design and implementation of structural adjustment programmes incorporate the social dimension. (UN 1994, 8.1)

While the POA acknowledges that there are macroeconomic constraints on health policy, all its recommendations are aimed at governments. It is paradoxical, in the context of structural adjustment programs, to ask governments to “reform ... the health sector and health policy, including the rational allocation of resources ... in order to achieve the stated objectives” or to proclaim that “[a]ll Governments should examine ways to maximize the cost-effectiveness of health programmes in order to achieve increased life expectancy, reduce morbidity and mortality and ensure access to basic health-care services for all people” (8.11).

The POA points out that girls are disproportionately represented among deaths in infancy and early childhood but does not challenge the entrenched attitudes which value girls and women less than boys and men in this chapter. The POA sets a number of targets for governments (UN 1994, 8.16) but fails to acknowledge that, with declining expenditures on public health, these are unlikely to be achieved. The development context of maternal and infant mortality is not explored; for instance, there are no recommendations to address the lack of basic sanitation and clean reliable water supplies, improvements which dramatically improved the health of western populations.

HIV/AIDS is addressed in the chapter on health. By 1994 the disease's impact on the developing world was evident, and the POA's prediction of 30 million people infected by 2000 proved to be accurate. The POA emphasises socio-economic factors and proposes that information about prevention and condoms be made widely available. The international community is asked to provide the resources to enable the UN to deliver integrated programs.

While the POA acknowledges that women are highly vulnerable to the disease, there is little attempt to address the power imbalances many women confront in their sexual relationships with men. There is a fleeting reference in the first objective: "to increase awareness of the disastrous consequences of HIV infection and AIDS and associated fatal diseases, at the individual, community and national levels, and of the ways of preventing it; to address the social, economic, gender and racial inequities that increase vulnerability to the disease" (UN 1994, 8.29 - a). HIV/AIDS, like unintended pregnancy, links sexuality and reproduction, a topic previous conferences on population avoided. If ever there was a case for women's empowerment, HIV/AIDS provides it.

If you want to save Africa, you must save the African woman first. It is they who care for the young, the old, the sick and dying. It is they who nurture social networks that help societies share burdens. (Annan at Summit of Franco-African leaders, cited in Agence France 2003)

It also provides a powerful basis for the feminist health movement to insist that governments introduce strategies to alter the power relationships between men and women. HIV/AIDS was not, however, a major focus of the Common Ground campaign or the lobbying of the international women's health movement.

2.9 Conclusion

The seven issues listed above are major omissions from a document about population. Already evident as global concerns in 1994, it could be expected that a conference concerned with demographic trends would have dealt with the range of issues likely to become major concerns in the twenty years the POA was expected to cover. These exclusions point to one of the major difficulties of the POA and a reason why it was not able to 'change the world'. At the ICPD, 'population' as 'demography' was actually about fertility. 'Population' as 'people' was about women's reproducing bodies. This theme is explored further in Chapter five.

Indeed, the ICPD POA is really two documents; the first, more transformative document presents a micro agenda while the second presents a macro agenda modelled on the neoliberal global political economy. The micro agenda focuses on the problem of fertility, to be solved through women's empowerment, reproductive rights and reproductive health, but ignores a wide range of issues which impact on women in their reproductive years as well as every other section of the population. The macro agenda, as I argue in Chapters four and five, fails to propose changes in the economic and political conditions to allow even this narrow objective to be achieved.

Feminists paid for the reproductive rights and health focus of the POA with the neo-Malthusian sub-text which underlies it and the population establishment paid for the population stabilisation objective by accepting a broadening of reproductive health services beyond family planning. Clarity with regard to the key concepts of reproductive rights, reproductive health and women's empowerment as they might operate in the wider global context was never reached. In Chapter three of the thesis, I explore these debates to assess whether these terms are durable enough to overcome the increasing opposition that they face from the moral right in the contemporary global political environment.

Chapter three The micro agenda II: Contesting the reproductive body

When I encountered the phrase “reproductive rights/freedom” in English for the first time, my attempt at its Japanese translation was “my body is my own.” I believe that it is the very first step to living a decent life, to know that no one else can control or rule my body. (Yumiko Ohashi 2001)

“Don’t you think,” the Pontiff interjected, “that the irresponsible behaviour of men is caused by women?” (Pope John Paul II to Nafis Sadik 1994 reported by Moorhead 1996)

3.1 Overview

Chapter three critically examines the three concepts - empowerment, reproductive rights and reproductive health - that are central to the POA and its transformative potential. I do this by exploring debates about the concepts through the writings and statements prepared by feminists in the run-up to the ICPD to develop a critique. While feminists have differences about the concepts, particularly reproductive rights, the moral right is firmly opposed to both reproductive rights and reproductive health. Consequently, at the ICPD, the World Conference on Women and their five year reviews, the nuanced discussions of feminists were abandoned in the need to defend the ICPD and Beijing language against an increasingly well-organised and influential morally conservative lobby of states and NGOs led by the Vatican.

The influence of moral conservatives In the United States and the UN has been steadily growing and offers the most visible impediment to the ICPD POA’s ability to ‘change the world’. As Chapter three shows by a detailed description of the activities of the moral right at ICPD + 5 and Beijing + 5, their main aim is to make sure that this does not happen. Although they have so far not succeeded in forcing a retreat from the Cairo and Beijing language, they have certainly prevented it going forward. Consequently, Chapter three concludes by reassessing the status of women’s reproductive bodies in global politics at the turn of the century and the usefulness of a rights framework to achieve the quantum leap needed to improve it.

3.2 Empowerment and power

As noted in Chapter one, ‘population’ in the International Relations discipline is directly related to balance of power debates. Power is seen to lie with governments and

other global actors, which in recent decades has been broadened to include multilateral institutions and organisations, financial institutions and corporations. The demographic reality that eighty per cent of global population is situated in the South suggests the potential for a major shift in power from the North, where mainstream Western foreign policy advisers believe it is appropriately placed. Participants in debates about population have shared this understanding of power and directed their campaigns accordingly.

Foregrounding reproductive politics in debates about population, however, makes visible an unfamiliar location of power: the reproductive decision-making of women. In the South, women's reproductive acts are blamed for the problem of 'too many' people; in the North, their failure to reproduce is seen as the cause of the 'birth dearth'. Women, South and North, act within social, political and economic constraints and might make different reproductive decisions if these were transformed. Conversely, if women had the power to determine their reproductive lives, the impacts would be felt at economic, social and political levels. For these reasons, 'women's empowerment' has particular resonance in population and reproductive politics, and its centrality to the ICPD POA could have signalled significant progress for Southern feminists' campaigns. In section 3.2, I explore this potential and the obstacles to its achievement, both of which are signalled within the Cairo document.

3.2.1 Empowerment in development and population debates

The concept of 'empowerment' emerged in alternative development discourses in the 1980s, and was first specifically applied to women in the international domain at the Nairobi Women's Conference in 1985. Southern women have made women's empowerment an objective and method of development (Sen and Grown 1985). The term is used frequently in discourses about development but, as in the POA, it is usually associated with other objectives.

By contrast, instrumentalist forms of advocacy which combine the argument for gender equality/women's empowerment with demonstrations of a broad set of desirable multiplier effects offer policy makers the possibility of achieving familiar and approved goals, albeit by unfamiliar means. (Kabeer 1999, 436)

The partitioning of the potentially transformative process of empowerment in the policy documents of institutions like the World Bank takes it far from the objectives of DAWN and other feminist organisations.

While the rhetoric of ‘empowerment’ now abounds nearly everywhere among development specialists and was incorporated into the language of the ICPD POA (thanks to feminist initiatives), its meanings in mainstream contexts have usually been diluted to become indistinguishable from ‘raising women’s status’ through piecemeal reforms. (Petchesky 2000c, 22)

Stripped of its transformative potential, the word ‘empowerment’ loses value for feminist and development campaigners. The concept, however, cannot be discarded, since it is the only one of the three Cairo micro concepts which explicitly refers to ‘power’. A reorganisation of the power relationships in which women are enmeshed is essential for the achievement of the other important concepts: reproductive rights and reproductive health.

The use of ‘empowerment’ as a transformative concept can be traced to Freire’s ‘conscientization’ approach to education. The root of ‘empowerment’ is revolutionary struggle.

The central problem is this: How can the oppressed ... participate in developing the pedagogy of their liberation? Only as they discover themselves to be ‘hosts’ of the oppressor can they contribute to the midwifery of their liberating pedagogy. ... Liberation is thus a childbirth, and a painful one. ... [T]he solution of the contradiction is born in the labour which brings this new man into the world: no longer oppressor or oppressed, but man in the process of achieving freedom. (Freire 1972, 25)

This extract is interesting for three reasons. First, it indicates that ‘empowerment’ is a process of political change involving the overturning of existing power structures. This indicates how far the term ‘empowerment’ has moved from its original meaning of ‘liberation’. Second, the objective of “the pedagogy of the oppressed” is freedom, a broad term which Freire does not define, but which, twenty-seven years later, Amartya Sen states to be the aim of development (A. Sen 1999).⁶⁴ The processes Freire is describing are ‘political’: “the oppressed, in order to become free ... need a theory of action” (Freire 1972, 150). Finally, while this passage is rich in reproductive imagery, Freire’s book is written about ‘man’, indicating a lack of gender consciousness in early ‘conscientization’ activities. Feminist educators brought gender into the process and worked with women to build collective alternative visions where women named and challenged oppressive behaviours, developing strategies to confront and change them in households, communities and states.

⁶⁴ See Chapter four for an exploration of this theme.

As 'concientization' operates through dialogue, feminists argue that women's empowerment is best achieved through participation in groups, especially in organisations run by, with and for women (Sen and Grown 1985, 13). Many of these organisations are small and operate at the local level, where they are invisible to most students of international politics. Some larger organisations, like India's Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA) and the Grameen Bank of Bangladesh, are cited as examples of development approaches which empower women. Naila Kabeer (1994) notes that these organisations do not express the transformative potential of early feminist conceptions of empowerment because they did not emerge from the efforts of poor women, but were established by others on their behalf. Reliance on funds from other agencies constrains their ability to act politically and to challenge class and gender hierarchies. Further, the need for financial accountability limits their ability to take empowerment to the ultimate goal of enabling the disempowered to act "collectively in their own practical and strategic interests" (Kabeer 1994, 250).

Like liberation, 'empowerment' is "an objective and a result, a process and an impact" (Griffen 1999, 3). Batliwala (1994) provides a definition which DAWN and other feminist organisations endorse.

Empowerment is thus both a process and the result of that process. Empowerment is manifested as a redistribution of power, whether between nations, classes, castes, races, genders, or individuals. The goals of women's empowerment are to challenge patriarchal ideology (male domination and women's subordination); to transform the structures and institutions that reinforce and perpetuate gender discrimination and social inequality (the family, caste, class, religion, educational processes and institutions, the media, health practices and systems, laws and civil codes, political processes, development models and government institutions); and to enable poor women to gain access to, and control of, both material and informational resources. (Batliwala 1994, 130)

These are broad aims. Grass roots women usually have more specific objectives; the Senegalese group TOSTAN links literacy to life skills; after completing their training, members were successful in having female genital mutilation banned in their village (Senegalese researchers 1998). The North Sumatra Peasant Women set up their Union to force designers of agricultural programs to notice them (Core group of North Sumatra Peasant Union 1999). Women established the neighbourhood kitchens in Lima to feed people affected by the poverty which followed structural adjustment programs in the 1980s; these kitchens now form the hub of the women's movement (Lind 1997). Panda's work in Orissa in India shows that local self-help groups, working together,

can broaden their vision from that of “frog in the well” to analysing government policies which affect them negatively and advocating for pro-poor and pro-people policies and actions (Panda 2000).

These examples suggest that women’s empowerment programs work best when devised by women in response to the needs they identify. They should provide women with independent incomes and reduce their workload or, at least, not increase it.⁶⁵ The dispersed forms of power employed by the marginalised are often not visible to Northern NGOS and development institutions, which may identify other needs and strategies to respond to them which exacerbate the problems they failed to identify. Such projects are likely to be greeted with resistance through non-compliance, subversion, deliberate miscomprehension and a multitude of other forms available to the oppressed and disbanded when the implementing agency departs (Townsend *et al* 1999, 34).⁶⁶

As noted earlier, ‘empowerment’ has become a jargon word in development discourses, where it loses much of its transformative potential. It remains closest to Batliwala’s definition in Gender and Development (GAD) approaches. GAD evolved from Women in Development (WID) approaches as feminists within and outside development institutions observed that the small projects typical of WID approaches failed to challenge embedded structures which perpetuate women’s oppression. As Kabeer (1994, 65) observes, “a focus solely on women tended to imply that the problem - and hence the solution - could be confined to women”.

When we all talk about the change happening or what needs to happen, one has to consider several factors. Empowering women is just not enough, it is rather incomplete, because the men haven’t been taught, how to deal with the “empowered woman”. They won’t know what it was, if one bit them on the leg. (shamila shaligram 2000, punctuation etc in original)

Although many mainstream institutions have adopted the rhetoric of GAD, most use a combination of ‘welfare’ and ‘efficiency’ approaches to women in development. The welfare approach regards women primarily as child-bearers and domestic workers in

⁶⁵ There is a growing literature documenting examples of women’s activism to increase empowerment at the local level; for a sample, see articles in Basu 1995 and Dean 1998.

⁶⁶ See Foucault for an extended discussion of this form of power (1980).

their households, and favours projects which increase their skills in these reproductive functions. Interventions are directed to women in their social role as mothers, through maternity and infant welfare programs.⁶⁷ The 'efficiency' approach sees women as economic agents and supports programs to increase their earning power but tends to ignore their domestic and community responsibilities.

The World Bank has adopted the language of empowerment, although its economic orientation favours an efficiency approach to women. As the Bank uses the term, 'empowerment' is a catch-all term for the characteristics of the 'modernised' woman: educated, employed in the market economy, involved in credit schemes, setting up small enterprises and delaying marriage and childbirth while ensuring that existing children are well-nourished and educated. Women's empowerment, when used in this sense, is harnessed to the achievement of broader social, political and economic objectives, with impacts on women's lives a secondary consideration.

In GAD approaches, 'empowerment' begins with women's identification of their needs and participation in designing programs to answer them. The process is an educative one. DAWN believes that it is important to build "into any project for women's empowerment at community level an awareness of how their country's macroeconomic policy framework impacts on their daily lives and how this in turn is influenced by global trends. The methodologies for doing this must draw on those of feminist consciousness-raising, Freirian conscientization, and other methods of popular education and popular theatre" (Antrobus 1998, 75).

As articulated by Southern feminists, 'empowerment' describes an emancipatory process which challenges entrenched global structures. It is unlikely that a document which advocated this approach would be endorsed by many governments. As noted above, the POA's Chapter IV takes a cautious approach to empowerment, suggesting that it is good for women and for development; the addition of the adjective 'sustainable' suggests that the environment will benefit as well. But what sort of empowerment is this? The applied economic 'empowerment' approach - which usually

⁶⁷ Kabeer (1994, 85) used the term 'welfarism' to distinguish between 'welfare', which is a desirable aim of human activity and "the stigmatizing relations associated with the public provision of welfare goods, especially to the poor".

means the commodification of women's labour - has uneven impacts on women.⁶⁸ Carr, Chen and Jhabvala, examining women's economic empowerment in South Asia, observe that it is impossible to generalise about "what is good for women" since their lives vary from place to place. They conclude that "empowerment has to be understood in terms of concrete everyday experiences" (1996, 213). Economic growth, as measured by Gross Domestic Product (GDP), counts only women's formal work, ignoring the many hours spent in reproductive labour which underpins much so-called productive work (Waring 1988). Projects which increase already heavy work loads do not empower women in the medium to long term.

Embedding women's empowerment in 'sustainable development' without problematising development limits the concept and strips it of transformative potential. It indicates that the POA's understanding of 'empowerment' has been developed without the full participation of Southern women. Goetz (1994) points out that the perspectives of developing world women are frequently overlooked in policy development, although western feminists may be consulted.⁶⁹ This is one explanation of the persistence of welfare and efficiency approaches, since they reflect many western women's understanding of Southern women's needs. The other is the dominance of liberal feminist approaches to women's empowerment, which focus on increasing women's equality with men. In the equality approach, access to fertility control and childcare is seen as important to reduce imbalances between men's and women's social roles and to free women to participate in the economic and political spheres. The notion of 'choice' – whether or not to have children and with whom, and between types of contraception and providers – is central to liberal feminist attitudes to reproduction. The liberal feminist approach is favoured by western governments and international financial institutions because it does not challenge dominant economic models or upset class hierarchies as socialist feminism does.⁷⁰ Nor does it aim to overturn patriarchy, as radical feminism does.⁷¹

⁶⁸ See Chapter four of this thesis for a development of this argument.

⁶⁹ See Mueller 1986 for a similar argument.

⁷⁰ See Eisenstein 1979 for an explanation of socialist feminism.

⁷¹ See Rowland and Klein 1996 for an explanation and history of radical feminism.

Although the 'empowerment' of the POA does not destabilise conceptions of economy and development, its centrality profoundly alters the terms of population and reproduction discourses. ICPD's POA tells countries that they "should act to empower women and should take steps to eliminate inequalities between men and women as soon as possible" (UN 1994, 4.4). A number of measures are listed which, if implemented, would enable women not only to take control of their reproductive lives, but also to participate fully in every sphere of life.

These interventions require broad social transformation as well as deep changes in gender relationships at the micro-level of the household, to avoid making women's juggling act with maternal, matrimonial, domestic, and community roles more burdensome.⁷² They also require change at the formal political level: democratic electoral systems which invite women's participation and the support of educated, politically-aware feminists and progressive men in parliaments. Accountable, active governments which work for women require well-resourced, active and independent women's organisations to tell them what women need and to make sure that they provide it. These organisations need skills and resources to work globally to strengthen and utilise the framework of human rights and international law, and to monitor compliance with international conventions.

Reproductive rights and health provide a topic with rich potential for a 'conscientization' approach for women's empowerment. Shapiro, one of the authors of the famous Our Bodies, Ourselves (OBOS) manual for Northern American women (Boston Women's Health Collective 1985), worked with Latin American women to produce a version of the text that answered their needs.⁷³

In applying a social developmental approach to the cultural adaptation of OBOS, the work of Paolo Freire and colleagues in participatory education was especially useful. Based on critical theory and cultural studies, participatory pedagogy emphasizes that learning begins with the student's knowledge of her world derived from direct personal experience. Effective teaching transmits knowledge through collaborative processes of mutually respectful dialogue, highlighting ethical dimensions of relationships and communities, consciousness of social injustice, and shared action toward personal and social change. Such a conceptual framework, which was consistent with the narrative

⁷² See Folbre 1983, 1988.

⁷³ Similar projects have been conducted in many countries; see for instance Farah 1991.

and political strategies embodied in OBOS, helped shape key decisions in the adaptation of [the Latin American version]. (Shapiro 2000)

This example indicates the potential of reproductive health programs to be a means of empowering women, not just by liberating them from unwanted pregnancies and poor health, but by involving them in the design and delivery of material and programs which answer their needs. This discussion indicates that ‘empowered’ women’s NGOs play an essential role at the grass roots level, where government interventions often fail to reach, and in pressuring governments and other institutions to create the conditions which will further enhance women’s empowerment.

Empowerment in the ‘liberatory’ sense in which DAWN, Batliwala and Townsend use the term challenges power structures at every level, from the neighbourhood to the global. This was not what the governments who supported the ICPD POA had in mind. They were more interested in the assumption that women’s empowerment results in the “long-term success of population programmes” (UN 1994, 4.1) which, in the theme of the POA, means reduced fertility. Does this imply that a government with pronatal demographic objectives should introduce policies which disempower women? McDonald’s work (2000, 2002) on low fertility societies suggests that women’s empowerment and gender equality are essential to solving this ‘problem’ as well. Nonetheless, empowerment is a nebulous concept in debates about population and reproduction without the enhancement of the other micro-concepts highlighted by the POA, reproductive rights and health.

3.2.2 ‘Empowerment’ in the POA

The empowerment and autonomy of women and the improvement of their political, social, economic and health status is a highly important end in itself. In addition, it is essential for the achievement of sustainable development. (UN 1994, 4.1)

The first sentence of the fourth chapter of the ICPD POA encapsulates the overall aim of the broad international feminist movement. The ICPD provided the opportunity for significant progress towards that aim, by expanding international understanding of women’s reproductive rights and reproductive health through the vehicle of a flagship international conference on population and development. Had the first sentence been allowed to stand alone as the overarching principle of the chapter, it would have signalled a paradigm shift towards women’s right to determine the conditions and content of their own lives. The international community of states was not asked,

however, to endorse women's empowerment for its own sake; the concept was diluted by its connection to objectives connected to the economic and political agendas incorporated in the term 'sustainable development' (see Chapter five of this thesis). Consequently, this two-sentence excerpt captures the potential and disappointments of the ICPD POA for feminist global campaigns.

The lack of debate about 'empowerment' as a key concept in the POA indicates broad in-principle support for the term. The lack of contest is not surprising since its plasticity suits a variety of aims. At the micro level, defined as "personal power" (Antrobus 1989, 189, 203), it can be directly linked to reproductive decision making and personal reproductive health. Or, as Renate Klein asserts, in the parlance of populationists, personal empowerment may mean little more than choice between harmful contraceptives (see below). Attempts to calibrate women's empowerment throughout the decade, suggest that, in any terms, government's commitment to achieving it is primarily rhetorical (UNIFEM 2000).⁷⁴ Empowering women would lead to a fundamental transformation in the relations of power. This was not an outcome sought by the governments and institutions which agreed upon the ICPD's POA.

3.3 Reproductive rights

'Reproductive rights' is, on first appearance, a straight-forward concept with direct relevance to ICPD's program. The concept emerged from United States feminists' campaigns to make abortion legal in the 1970s and was adopted by the fourth International Women and Health Meeting in Amsterdam, 1984, as "adequate to the movement's political goals in relation to the betterment of women's reproductive lives across the world" (Correa 1997, 108). Even so, 'reproductive rights' is contested among feminists and strongly opposed by the moral right. In this sub-section, I outline the evolution of reproductive rights from a campaign slogan to a comprehensive statement integrating Southern feminists' concerns about the context of rights.

3.3.1 Redefining reproductive rights

The concept of reproductive rights, which has been a central plank of women's health and rights campaigns for several decades, has evolved from a focus on abortion rights

⁷⁴ Measurement of women's empowerment is, at best, an approximate venture (see Kabeer 1999)

to a broad definition which captures the entire agenda of the international women's health movement. The ICPD played an important catalysing role in the evolution of the concept. Two key texts in the process of redefining reproductive rights are examined here: the first (Correa and Petchesky 1994) was produced prior to ICPD in a collection which developed an intellectual framework for the international women's health movement agenda (Sen, Germain and Chen 1994). The second (Copelon and Petchesky 1995) appeared after ICPD in a collection of articles linking women's human rights with women's needs (Schuler 1995).⁷⁵ Below, I consider 'reproductive rights' through a reading of these and other feminists' writings, to present a picture of a concept which has evolved to answer criticisms and gain wide support, but which, nevertheless, has not been implemented by many governments which endorsed it at the ICPD. Despite the hard work of Petchesky and other authors to pin the concept down, critics from the right and the left cling to their own interpretation of reproductive rights and favour a definition which they can reject, as suits their own aims.

Petchesky has been working with the concept of reproductive rights since its earliest formulation. In early writings (1980, 1984) she considered the term to be inadequate and used the term 'reproductive freedom' to incorporate what she later refined as 'enabling conditions' (Petchesky 1995). She listed a number of problems with the 'rights' framework for achieving the transformative ends of the feminist movement. First, 'rights' is an individualistic concept, "inherently static and abstracted from social relations" (Petchesky 1980, 670). Reproduction, by contrast, is simultaneously social and individual, "operating at the core of social life, as well as within and upon women's bodies" (Petchesky 1984, 2). Further, the language of rights does not challenge the conditions which create the need for their articulation. "Rights are by definition claims staked within a given order of things. They are demands for access for oneself, or for 'no admittance' to others; but they do not challenge the social structure, the social relations of production and reproduction" (Petchesky 1984, 7). Second, Petchesky was concerned that making reproductive rights women-specific would reinforce the widely held view that reproductive activity is the special province of women. "[I]t is not inevitable that women, and not men, should bear the main consequences of unintended

⁷⁵ These articles built on earlier work of these authors and many other writers on the topic. See Dixon-Mueller 1993, Freeman and Isaacs 1993, and a large body of work by Petchesky, Correa and Sen.

pregnancy and thus that their sexual and reproductive expression be limited by it” (Petchesky 1980, 667). While conceding that the language of ‘rights’ has polemic power, she did not in 1984 see it as useful in a revolutionary program.

[T]he critical issue for feminists is not so much the content of women’s choices, or even the “right to choose”, as it is the social and material conditions under which choices are made. The “right to choose” means little when women are powerless. (Petchesky 1984, 11)

Here, Petchesky is grappling with a definition of reproductive rights which reflects a liberal feminist perspective. In the equality focus of liberal feminism, reproductive rights are seen as essential to the project of gaining equality with men because pregnancy, childbirth and child-rearing impede women’s ability to participate in economic and political spheres.⁷⁶ The ‘choice’ focus of reproductive rights indicated liberal feminist ownership of the term, yet socialist and radical feminists also fought hard for women’s right to abortion and against sterilisation campaigns in the United States. A North American feminist who campaigned for abortion after the Roe v. Wade case, Faye Wattleton, then president of PPFA, explained the campaign’s decision to focus on choice.

Americans aren’t stupid. They believed that in some cases [abortion] was necessary but morally wrong, but they did not want the government to make this decision. If we focused on the issue of whether abortion was moral or not, we forced people to come down on the side that it was immoral, and that was dangerous. The position that would appeal to most people was: We were really talking about a choice. (Wattleton in Munday 1999)

A focus on ‘choice’ ignores the social context of women’s reproductive lives and is too limited for socialist feminists. The desire to integrate a “revolutionary feminist and socialist politics” requires action on two fronts: women’s control over their own bodies and changes in the social relations of reproduction (Petchesky 1980 678). To achieve these aims, “reproductive freedom requires a perspective that is both Marxist and feminist” (Petchesky 1980 663).

Petchesky is not the only feminist who found the term ‘reproductive freedom’ useful. The concept was used by Pine and Law as they, like Correa and Petchesky, tried to formulate one concept which would encompass reproductive rights and the ability to exercise them.

⁷⁶ See Otto 1995 for a persuasive critique of the limitations of the equality framework of human rights.

A feminist concept of reproductive freedom has three components. The first is a formal recognition that the woman, rather than the state, has the right to make decisions that affect her reproduction (a principle of freedom from state control). The second requires state even-handedness with respect to reproductive choices (a principle of government neutrality). The third and most expansive component demands a social context that affirmatively supports and enhances human freedom to make reproductive choices (a principle of reproductive liberty. (Pine and Law 1993)

Athey, a United States feminist of colour, favours the term 'reproductive freedom' because it acknowledges the constraints that a woman's position in society - determined by race, class, age and marital status, as well as gender - places on her ability to choose. "[T]his sort of autonomy or decisionmaking ('a woman's right to decide') means little without some measure of control over the options at one's disposal, without the power to exercise control over the (legal, medical, market) systems in which the purportedly autonomous body exists" (Athey 1997, 20).⁷⁷

Radical as well as socialist feminists are concerned that reproductive rights separate women from the social, political and economic context in which they live their reproductive lives. Klein (1994; 1995), Shiva (1994) and Akhter (1996a) define reproductive rights as 'reproductive choice', which they claim can be reduced to choice between different contraceptive methods or providers, well-suited to the language of the market-place.

Northern feminists' contests over 'reproductive rights' involve Southern feminists, since moving the campaign to the global sphere changes the location of the reproductive bodies which are its focus. Klein (1994, 1995), Raymond (1993), Dumble (1994), Spivak (1994) and Mies and Shiva (1993) claim that Southern feminists support the radical feminist approach to reproductive rights. They base their critique on the writings of one Southern woman, Farida Akhter.⁷⁸ Akhter rejects reproductive rights because "discourses are produced in a definite socio-historical condition and are signs

⁷⁷ Athey (1997, 20) considers 'reproductive freedom' in the context of women of colour in the United States and concludes that for that for those communities, it "means communities of colour and women of all races must achieve not only access to 'technology' but also control of its applications and input and participation into research and design."

⁷⁸ See Akhter 1996 for a compilation of articles about population policies and reproduction written since 1981.

of the consciousness (*sic*) of that society” (Akhter 1996, 53).⁷⁹ For women of the South, she asserts, the first struggle is for a democratic society wherein women and men are free; reproductive rights is too narrow a category, and confines women to the sphere of reproduction.

Akhter sees it as a small jump from the sale of labour in the capitalist system to the sale of “our reproductive factory”. Reproductive rights, she asserts, are not confined to women’s decision to avert or stop pregnancies; as a logical consequence, they must extend to surrogate motherhood and in-vitro fertilisation (Akhter 1996, 54). This is a vexatious point which Correa and Pechesky do not address in their broad redefinition of the term.

Akhter’s critique of reproductive rights relies upon an essentialist notion of women; she considers the call for reproductive rights to be “absurd” because “women (*sic*) is *naturally* in command over her body. She is *by nature* in possession of herself” (Akhter 1996, 55, emphasis mine). Akhter characterises the western feminist focus on reproductive rights as ‘bourgeois individualism’ that fails to challenge the limits that patriarchy sets on women’s social sphere. Furthermore, she suggests, focusing on reproductive rights leaves the sphere of political and economic reform to men. Consequently, she dismisses reproductive rights as a western concept of limited usefulness to poor Southern women who face more pressing political questions “of achieving democracy in their own country” (Akhter 1996, 54-55).

Shiva (1994) was similarly critical of the international women’s health movement’s aim to make reproductive rights a dominant theme at ICPD. She defines the concept narrowly as ‘pro-choice’.

‘Pro-choice’ language reduces the larger issue of well-being of women to reproduction, and then it reduces reproduction to abortion. This reductionism has emerged from the peculiar history of reproductive politics of the United States. (Shiva 1994)

Lingam similarly argues that discussion on reproductive rights is of limited use to Southern, particularly Indian, women, first, because it reinforces the view that reproductive activity is the “special, biologically destined province of women” and

⁷⁹ Akhter refers throughout this article to ‘reproductive right’ in the singular, but in later articles, she uses the plural form of the word; for consistency, I use the plural form except in direct citations.

second, because a choice-oriented approach implicitly approves of gender biased sex selection. Further, in a choice approach to reproductive rights, new contraceptives, no matter how harmful, are, by definition, beneficial because they increase choices. She concludes by arguing that “[t]he notion of reproductive rights will have concrete meaning for women only when political, social and economic rights are ensured and exercised effectively” (Lingam 1995).

Other Southern feminists present different views. Ravindran’s work in India convinced her that “women cannot address social issues and become successful ‘social change agents’ without dealing with the lack of control we experience over our bodies and our lives” (Ravindran 1997, 21). Ravindran reports that many of her colleagues consider the concept of reproductive rights to be “suspect”. She, however, hopes for “the continuation of the synergistic relationship between my association with the international women’s health movement and work within the grassroots women’s organisation” (Ravindran 1997, 23).

Rozario (1998) argues that Akhter and FINRRAGE (Feminist International Network for Reproductive Rights and Against Genetic Engineering) do not speak for “most poor rural Bangladeshi women with three or more children [who] are desperate to have access to contraceptives so that they do not have any more children” (Rozario 1998, 6). Kabeer (1994) refutes FINRRAGE’s radical feminist assumption that all women are victims of men’s sexual control. She believes that, in telling poor women that their problem is their powerlessness to reject men’s sexual desires, rather than access to safe contraception (Kabeer 1994, 201), Akhter was ignoring their expressed needs. As Rozario observes, while social transformation may bring about a situation in which women no longer need contraception, this is of little use to women whose unplanned children are dying for lack of food.

FINRRAGE and UBINIG (Policy Research of Development Alternative) are reluctant to acknowledge that Southern women, like many Northern women, willingly participate in (hetero)sexual activity and seek the right to enjoy it without the anxieties of unplanned pregnancy and STDs.⁸⁰ Three young Indian feminists stake their claims to

⁸⁰ UBINIG is the acronym for Policy Research of Development Alternative, a privately-run research centre in Bangladesh, which also undertakes activities in sustainable agriculture, such as storing and exchanging seeds. Akhter is the main spokesperson.

birth control methods to enable them to enjoy an active sex life without fear of pregnancy.

We, as women ourselves and as users of birth control methods have to clearly state loudly and clearly that if we want any contraception it is in order to have some measure of control over our lives. We want it so that we can be free to express ourselves sexually. We need it so that we and our children are not forced upon each other. We have been using it so that our full potential as human beings can be nurtured, so that we are not completely circumscribed by our capacity to procreate. (Chayanika, Swatija and Kamaxi 1990, cited in Kabeer 1994, 202)

UBINIG's failure to incorporate the views of feminist health workers in Bangladesh who, while attempting to provide appropriate health care and family planning services, also oppose abusive population control methods, indicates that it has not taken into account the views of all Southern women. Rozario claims that the macro focus of FINRRAGE and UBINIG on global population politics blinds them to "localised structural and cultural problems ... unwittingly contributing to their causes" by strengthening traditionalist and essentialist views of women (Rozario 1998, 12). Their critique of the international women's health movement's approach at ICPD suggests that much of their campaign is directed at other feminists; their decision to remain outside formal processes and the broader international women's health movement locates them at the margins of global population politics.

At moments, FINRRAGE and UBINIG's abhorrence for many modern contraceptives has taken them disquietingly close to right wing opponents of women's reproductive rights. Akhter and Australian members of FINRRAGE advised the religious right's most outspoken Australian parliamentary spokesman, Senator Brian Harradine, in his campaign to block the use of Australian aid funds for contraception (Robinson 1995). Harradine was able to say that he had consulted with feminists, angering numerous Australian women who have long been working for reproductive rights locally and in Australia's aid program, but whose advice was discounted in this instance.⁸¹

Despite its limitations and the validity of Southern feminists' concerns, notwithstanding the foregoing critique of Akhter, the concept of reproductive rights has achieved

⁸¹ Dumble who wrote critically about feminist's reproductive rights campaign for the ICPD and praised Harradine and his wife for attending the NGO forum at Cairo and speaking with feminists (see Dumble 1994a) reassessed her attitude five years later. "Reading the below again, how naïve that I failed to recognise the right to life agenda behind Brian and Marian Harradine's interest in feminist resistance to population control eugenics back in 1994???" (Dumble 1999a).

legitimacy through its embeddedness in the internationally accepted human rights framework. 'Reproductive rights' has a place in existing international discourse, whereas 'reproductive freedom' evokes the early women's liberation focus eschewed by mainstream Northern feminism, with its public liberal feminist face (Mundy 1999).

Consequently, it was politically strategic for the international women's health movement to adopt and adapt a reproductive rights approach to ICPD.

Whatever its inherent weaknesses, the polemical power of rights language as an expression of aspirations for justice across widely different cultures and political and economic conditions cannot easily be dismissed. (Correa and Petchesky 1994, 110)

Correa and Petchesky reconstruct the concept of reproductive rights so that it "both specifies gender, class, cultural and other differences and recognizes social needs" (Correa and Petchesky 1994, 107). They include sexual rights as a necessary precondition for reproductive rights.

We define the terrain of reproductive and sexual rights in the terms of power and resources: power to make informed decisions about one's own fertility, childbirth, child rearing, gynecologic health, and sexual activity; and resources to carry out such decisions safely and effectively. This terrain necessarily involves some notion of 'bodily integrity' or 'control over one's own body'. However, it also involves one's relationships to one's children, sexual partners, family members, community caregivers, and society at large; in other words, the body exists in a socially mediated universe. (Correa and Petchesky 1994, 107)

Correa and Petchesky stress that their definition of reproductive rights is the result of collaboration between Northern and Southern feminists. Correa, a Brazilian feminist who has been active in reproductive health campaigns in her own country, writes on the topic for DAWN (Correa 1994). As Akhter's writings suggest, many Southern feminists believe that feminist campaigns around reproduction should address, in a broadened agenda, the social needs that erode sexual and reproductive choice for most poor women.

Our principal point is that sexual and reproductive (or any other) rights, understood as private "liberties" or "choices," are meaningless, especially for the poorest and most disenfranchised, without enabling conditions through which they can be realized. (Correa and Petchesky 1994, 107)

Their success in having a broadened definition of reproductive rights incorporated in the POA is assessed in the following sub-section.

3.3.2 Reproductive rights in the POA

[R]eproductive rights embrace certain human rights that are already recognized in national laws, international human rights documents and other consensus documents. These rights rest on the recognition of the basic right of all couples and individuals to decide freely and responsibly the number, spacing and timing of their children and to have the information and means to do so, and the right to attain the highest standard of sexual and reproductive health. It also includes their right to make decisions concerning reproduction free of discrimination, coercion and violence, as expressed in human rights documents. (UN 1994, 7.3)

Reproductive rights have a central place in the POA. In centralising the concept, the ICPD contextualised it within already established global agreements on human rights, as noted in Chapter two of this thesis. Anticipating opposition from the Vatican and conservative governments, feminists and reproductive rights advocates mined human rights instruments and produced detailed schedules of articles to illustrate that reproductive rights are already accepted in human rights law and therefore, were not up for negotiation at ICPD (Women's NGO Caucus 1994).⁸²

In response to the claims of the Vatican that there is no precedent for the affirmation of this Conference of the rights, and particularly the rights of women, to bodily integrity, reproductive decision-making, and access to the full range of information and services to effectuate their decisions and protect their health, this fact sheet compiles the most basic international statements to date recognizing these rights. It makes clear that the positions taken by the Vatican would turn the clock back more than 25 years. (Women's NGO Caucus, ICPD 1994)

Feminists saw the Cairo conference as part of their campaign to transform the agenda and take women from objects to subjects of population and development programs (Copelon and Petchesky 1995). In this, they were successful and the explicit application of the human rights framework to reproductive health concerns goes far beyond early formulations. While Copelon and Petchesky were critical of the ICPD's neglect of development and its failure to adopt the enlarged formulation of reproductive rights, they were confident that the human rights framework provides a basis for challenging abuses of women as objects of population programs.

The human rights framework provides concepts and strategies - formal and informal - that women can shape in light of diverse needs and contexts to challenge abuses, promote positive programs and, at the most fundamental level, empower women in their daily lives. (Copelon and Petchesky 1995, 356)

⁸² See Dixon-Mueller 1993; Cook 1994; Boland, Rao and Zeidenstein 1994; Women's NGO Caucus 1994.

Human rights are a process, not an end point (Evans 2001; Copelon and Petchesky 1995). International events like ICPD provide focal points which accelerate that evolution; this view is confirmed by the genealogy of reproductive rights prepared by the Women's NGO Caucus (1994). Copelon and Petchesky are enthusiastic about the Conference's contribution to embedding reproductive rights campaigns in the human rights framework.

The Cairo program is ... an important and potentially transformative step in a new direction [and] illustrates that new language, while insufficient in itself, is a critical step toward political and social change. (Copelon and Petchesky 1995, 366)

However, the 'enabling conditions' which Correa, Petchesky and Copelon saw as essential to the achievement of reproductive rights were not offered to conference delegates, since the POA's drafters narrowed the concept to reproductive autonomy and choice. Nor, as Chapters four and five of this thesis argue, were the social conditions of reproduction addressed in the POA's chapter on development and economic growth where they seem logically to belong. Petchesky (1995, 2000) identifies this as the major failing of ICPD and, in this thesis, I assert that it is a major reason why ICPD has not, and is unlikely to, change the world.

The lack of attention to enabling conditions at the ICPD raises the question as to whether 'reproductive rights' is the appropriate location for feminist campaigns to demand a transformative development agenda. Despite the efforts of DAWN and other activists, the moral right has successfully reduced the notion of reproductive rights to abortion and persuaded many governments that on these grounds it should be rejected (see below). The lack of consensus among feminists about the meaning, usefulness and cultural specificity of reproductive rights make it a contentious rallying point although, paradoxically, the opposition of the moral right has increased support for the concept, not only among feminist health activists but among the population establishment.

In Chapter four, I consider Amartya Sen's view of 'development as freedom', and explore the potential of a rights-based framework for articulating a notion of development which answers the needs of people and advances all their rights. Acceptance and implementation of the right to development will assist in establishing the enabling conditions for women to exercise their reproductive rights. The language of rights applied to development is widely accepted among development NGOs and

Southern governments. It is based on the economic, social and cultural rights to which all members of the UN have acceded, rhetorically at least. Assertion of these rights takes the onus for development failures from population growth and places it firmly on the need for policies to alter consumption, production and distributive practices in the North and among Southern elites, challenging Malthusian approaches. I return to this discussion later in this thesis.

'Reproductive rights' is an evolving concept, as this survey indicates. Through inclusion in the ICPD POA and the WCW's Platform for Action, it now has a secure place in international discourses. As it has been defined at UN conferences, it is related closely to women's reproductive bodies, and ignores the enabling conditions crucial to women's ability to practice these rights. One of the reproductive rights stressed at Cairo was the right to reproductive health which is explored in the next section.

3.4 Reproductive health

The demand for reproductive health has similar roots to the demand for reproductive rights. On the one hand, it is a response to demographically driven population programs which provide contraception but fail to warn women of side effects and ignore their reproductive tract infections and sexually transmitted diseases. On the other hand, the need for a reproductive health approach arises from the failure of broad health programs to cater for women's specific health needs. While feminists have differing priorities in reproductive health campaigns, most agree that reproductive health - usually associated with sexual health - is a holistic approach which responds to women's needs, not donors' requirements.

3.4.1 Reproductive health at ICPD

The organisations in and outside the Common Ground campaign agreed on a reproductive health focus for different reasons. Feminist health activists saw the ICPD as an opportunity to make family planning services more responsive to women's needs. Family planners saw a reproductive health approach as a means of distancing their services from population control. Population controllers saw it as providing opportunities to introduce programs where none had previously existed.

The 'quality of care' framework developed by Judith Bruce (1990) asserts the necessity for a reproductive health approach and articulates its components. The case is

convincing. More than half a million women die of pregnancy and childbirth related causes annually; over one-fifth of these deaths are due to unsafe abortions. Morbidity rates are many times higher.⁸³ A further million deaths a year through HIV/AIDs and an unknown number due to other STDs make a reproductive health approach imperative.

Clearly, reproductive health is a central reproductive right.⁸⁴ Karen Newman of IPPF argues that “[w]ithin a human rights context, reproductive rights result when you apply existing human rights to reproductive health” (Panos 1998). The concept of reproductive health has been refined by years of discussion within the international women’s health movement and organisations like the World Health Organisation (WHO) and UNFPA, resulting in the definition adopted by the ICPD.

Reproductive health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity, in all matters relating to the reproductive system and to its functions and processes. Reproductive health therefore implies that people are able to have a satisfying and safe sex life and that they have the capability to reproduce and the freedom to decide if, when and how often to do so. Implicit in this last condition are the right of men and women to be informed and to have access to safe, effective, affordable and acceptable methods of family planning of their choice, as well as other methods of their choice for regulation of fertility which are not against the law, and the right of access to appropriate health-care services that will enable women to go safely through pregnancy and childbirth and provide couples with the best chance of having a healthy infant. (UN 1994, 7.3)

Although this is a comprehensive description of reproductive health which incorporates issues related to sexuality for the first time, it is micro in its focus. Recommendations relate to the provision of adequate services and information for individuals and couples, without contextualising them in the ability and willingness of states to provide them and the impact of global economic trends upon states’ health budgets and priorities. The definition relies upon a number of assumptions held by some in the international health movement and family planning community. They include the following: the medical model is the appropriate approach to reproductive health issues; the reproductive body is female; women outside the reproductive years require fewer

⁸³ Aitken and Reichenbach (1994, 179) estimate that 25 million women suffer poor health after unsafe abortions, 35 million suffer ill-effects from obstetric factors and 58 million suffer anemia during and after pregnancy.

⁸⁴ See Bustelo 1995; Rahman and Pine 1995.

services; reproductive health can be treated in isolation from physical and mental health; the infertility of poor women is not a problem; and reproductive health can be achieved without attention to broader social, economic and environmental contexts. How valid are these assumptions?

The role of medicalised procedures in reproductive health services is highly contested. While Southern feminists highlight the need for more skilled health professionals and access to obstetricians for difficult births, many Northern women's health campaigns have fought for the de-medicalisation of childbirth and increased women's control over reproductive health services (Coney 1997; Norsigian 1997). Some feminists accuse the Northern dominated international women's health movement of supporting the introduction of biomedical technologies in the South and lacking interest in exploring "existing indigenous technologies such as those of traditional birth attendants" (Bolton *et al* 1989, 69). Zurayk, Younis and Khattab (1994) suggest that women gain little benefit from increases in the number of medical professionals in reproductive health services if doctors have no time to talk to patients and, more usefully, listen to them. Moreover, medical attention is directed to the treatment of disease in isolation from overall health conditions and economic and family circumstances. The medicalised approach has not improved women's reproductive health in rural Egypt: "no significant difference exists in the prevalence of disease among those who consulted and did not consult a physician" (Zurayk *et al* 1994, 431). Conditions prevalent among poor women, such as urinary tract disorders and anaemia, are neglected. Nonetheless, Petchesky (1997) suggests that 'traditional practices' are not always helpful or harmless.

Medical and traditional health systems each have much to offer women. Manorama and Shah, activists in India's women's health movement, suggest a synergy of approaches. They believe that assisting women to understand their reproductive bodies is a necessary first step in reproductive health programs. "Women are learning and teaching ways of recognising their fertile days through close observation of their bodies, an exercise which all of us have found very empowering." Education and sharing experience, based on the Freirian model, are at the basis of their work with women: "[l]istening to our bodies, listening to our own experiences and considering women to be rational human beings" (Manorama and Shah 1996, 37).

In summing up studies in seven developing countries, Petchesky and Judd (1998) conclude that “it is not a lack of will or access to methods of contraception that keeps women from preventing unwanted pregnancies successfully, but the lack of methods that meet their *social* as well as biological needs *as they define them*” (Petchesky 1998b, 300). In all seven countries, women expressed dissatisfaction with the quality, inaccessibility and high cost of hospital and clinic services. “[T]he demeaning and inhumane treatment respondents in all the countries received from health professionals” was cited as the major barrier to access (Petchesky 1998b, 314). Poor women are more likely to avoid services than to protest about clinical abuses. The solution is not to remove reproductive health services from a medical context, but to train providers “to develop understanding of their patients’ perspectives, from the standpoint of gender, age, sexual orientation, ethnicity and culture” (Petchesky 1998b, 321).

From the above, it is clear that the concept of empowerment needs to be brought to the delivery of reproductive health services, whether they are based on traditional or medicalised procedures. Women want to be treated as whole people, not just as reproductive bodies, and they require a range of information and services which meet their needs. The concept of quality of care partly satisfies these needs and involving representative women in their design links them to the communities they serve. The statement, *Women’s Voices*, prepared by feminists in the lead-up to ICPD, recognised this, and ICPD’s POA reiterated the need for women to participate in the design of reproductive health services.

The second assumption is that reproductive health is solely a women’s issue, unrelated to gender needs. Although the ICPD POA speaks of ‘people’ and ‘men and women’ in its definition of reproductive health, in every country, family planning programs focus on women as contraceptive acceptors with little attention to their sexual partners and reproductive health programs focus on women. This reinforces the perception that women are responsible for the population crisis (Humble 1992).

The reason that men are invisible is that gender-blindness pervades the research context which informs the development of reproductive health services. Most demographic studies on fertility assume that women control reproductive decision-making, as Watkins has shown in her study of the journal, Demography.

If all we knew about women was what we read in the articles on fertility, marriage, and the family, we would conclude that women are primarily producers of children and of child services; that they produce with little assistance from men; that they are socially isolated from relatives and friends; and that their commitment to the production of children and child services is expected to be rather fragile. We would learn even less about men. (Watkins 1993, 553)

Two problems arise from the failure of reproductive health programs to incorporate gender concerns. The first is that women's contraceptive use is constrained by their sexual partners, particularly if they are married to them.⁸⁵ The Women's Studies Project of Family Planning Health International found that husbands play a critical role in women's use of family planning and reproductive health services, and their opposition to their partners' use of contraception is often expressed as domestic violence (WSP 1998). This suggests that family planning/reproductive health programs should not treat women in isolation, and further, that they should actively work to increase public awareness of women's rights and the family and social benefits of healthy women. The second concern is that women bear the burden of the health effects of contraceptive use, sterilisations and vulnerability to sexually transmitted diseases where condoms are not freely available, or men avoid their use. While women always need access to safe contraceptives, efforts are required to increase men's responsibility for their reproductive health and for pregnancy and disease avoidance. Although the ICPD made recommendations to this effect, powerful barriers exist in many societies where masculinity and virility are aligned with potency. Politically, it is easier to target women, although this may lead to the neglect of men's needs. Gender relations shape the delivery of reproductive health services but gender blindness makes men's decisive role in women's and men's reproductive health invisible.

The gender bias in population and reproductive health programs is often seen to be justified by the fact that women become pregnant. This perception, however, masks the power relations at the most intimate level which shape women's reproductive lives. The gendered environment which shapes sexual relationships impedes men's and women's ability to live fulfilled lives. The ICPD POA suggests many interventions to increase men's greater responsibility in sexual relationships and childrearing, improve their

⁸⁵ See Watkins *et al* 1997 for evidence that women do not always act as demographers perceive.

access to health services and to increase equality in their relationships with women. Governments, however, have been slow to implement these recommendations.⁸⁶

The third assumption which shapes reproductive health programs is that programs are rightfully directed to women in their fertile years. This reflects the primary focus of reproductive health programs on fertility reduction. The POA recognises the neglect of older women in reproductive health programs. Even so, the ICPD itself neglected older women, as was noted in Chapter two of this thesis. Zurayk *et al* (1994, 435) found that in Egypt “the prevalence of most gynaecological and related conditions tend (*sic*) to rise with age so that women most needing attention and advice are the older women, some of them past reproduction”. Broadening reproductive health services is likely to bring great benefits to these women who are unlikely to attend narrowly focused family planning centres.

The neglect of older women in reproductive health programs reflects the family planning focus of existing reproductive health programs. The ICPD’s neglect reflects its strong focus on fertility. With demographic projections indicating that we are heading towards a greater proportion of elderly people in the South as well as the North, this is an issue which cannot be avoided at future population conferences.

Fourth, a danger in presenting reproductive health as a separate category is that other aspects of women’s health may be neglected. Separating reproductive health from the broad context of physical and mental health reflects the tendency of demographers and development officials to see women as ‘wombs on legs’.⁸⁷ Possessing “bodies that could be impregnated” presents very real anxieties and health concerns for girls and women (Ravindran 1997, 21), due as much to measures taken by authorities to prevent pregnancy as to pregnancy itself. The Indian reproductive health movement developed in opposition to the ‘population control’ approach of the Indian government. Feminists often couch reproductive health campaigns in broader demands for education, housing,

⁸⁶ See the case study of Indonesia in Chapter four for an example of government reluctance to involve men in family planning programs.

⁸⁷ I first heard this term when working on a Women in Development review for AusAID in 1990, in reference to the tendency of women’s aid programs to treat women as “wombs on legs”.

general health and nutrition, since class and gender issues underlie poor reproductive health (Guzman 1997).

That the POA focused on reproductive health is no surprise, given the conference's subject matter and UNFPA's terms of reference. But this preoccupation with women as reproductive bodies is shared by many organisations and institutions with broad economic and development objectives. Girls and women do have special needs, but viewing women primarily as fertile or pregnant bodies skews policy and funding decisions and may lead to the neglect of other health needs, particularly in poor countries. This tendency is revealed in World Bank programs, examined in detail in the next chapter.

The fifth assumption, that excess fertility is poor women's major reproductive health problem, reflects a Northern perspective. By contrast, infertility can be disastrous for poor women since the production of children is often the primary measure of their status. In many societies, the failure to produce children, especially sons, leads to ostracism, harassment, rejection and domestic violence (Humble 1995; Jejeebhoy 1997). A number of studies identify the incidence and consequences, which often include infertility, of untreated STDs, poor nutrition and complications from unassisted deliveries (Germain, Nowrojee and Pyne 1994; Garcia-Moreno and Claro 1994; Aitken and Reichenbach 1994). Poor women's infertility is around three per cent in developing countries and may be as high as seven per cent in India (Jejeebhoy 1997, 477). The Northern women's health movement and hence, the international women's health movement, has historically focused on the right to choose not to reproduce rather than on defending women's right to reproduce. Similarly, while the ICPD POA refers to the need to include infertility as a condition to be targeted by comprehensive reproductive health services, it is seen as a problem of the individual, while fertility is couched as a global problem, requiring international resources.

Finally, the POA reflects reproductive health activists' focus on the micro-components of a reproductive health program and gives little attention to the broader social, economic and environmental determinants of health. A number of feminists have drawn attention to the need to link the micro agenda of reproductive rights and health to the macro context of political economy. Petchesky sums it up: "the unbridled market (capitalism) is dangerous to women's bodies" (Petchesky 1997, 27). The macro context of reproductive health and rights is explored in Chapter four of this thesis.

Healthy bodies, reproductive and otherwise, are a good investment for any society, as well as a human right. This would seem to be an uncontroversial topic, but reproductive health was highly contested at Cairo, because the organisers decided that it would be less controversial to name abortion as a health rather than a rights issue. Indeed, a decade later, reproductive health is one of the most contentious of non-military global issues, as section 3.6 of this chapter shows.

3.5 Contested concepts: the pre-ICPD statements

A study of the statements produced by different parts of the international women's health movement in the run-up to the ICPD provides insight into some of the fault-lines within the feminist movement over the key concepts of the POA. While many within the movement would have preferred women to endorse one statement, diversity in attitudes to the ICPD and population policies made this impossible. Indeed, the term 'movement' suggests a coherence absent from the diverse individuals and organisations active on population and reproduction issues. The International Women's Health Coalition (IWHC), for instance, which began its life in the United States, has over 2000 individuals and group members in Southern countries (Garcia-Mareno and Claro 1994). While feminists agree that access to quality health care services and respect for reproductive rights is fundamental, and that this objective should not be subordinated to demographic objectives, there are debates over the meaning of reproductive rights and the extent to which the movement should work with the population establishment (Smyth 1998). These differences are clearly evident in statements produced by women's meetings prior to ICPD.

Women's Voices 1994: Women's Declaration on Population Policies was the major campaigning tool adopted by most groups in the international women's health movement. Created at a meeting convened by the IWHC, it received the greatest number of endorsements. The twenty-four women who participated in the drafting worked in development, health and rights in Asia, Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean, the United States and Western Europe.⁸⁸ Women's Voices was distributed

⁸⁸ Among the drafters were Peggy Antrobus, coordinator of DAWN; Marge Berer, now editor of Reproductive Health Matters, a journal established in 1993 as a forum for feminist debates and positions and evidence-based scholarship on reproductive and sexual health and rights. Sonia Correa, of the National Feminist Health and Reproductive Rights Network in Brazil, member of DAWN, and author of

by population control and family planning advocates and reproductive rights and health activists. It was used to lobby governments and mobilise public support, gathering over two and a half thousand signatures from individuals and groups from more than 110 countries prior to the Conference. Although feminist development activists wanted a statement encompassing macro as well as micro concerns, the Declaration retained a pragmatic, rights-based approach. More than any other statement prepared in the run-up to ICPD, its major demands are reflected in the ICPD POA.

Many feminists were critical of the statement's endorsement of population policies and the attempt to harness them to a reproductive rights and health agenda. Some felt that it did not adequately address the concerns of Southern women or highlight the development context of reproduction (Sen & Barroso 1996). The international women's health movement wanted Southern feminists' support at the ICPD's Third PrepCom, which would determine the document that would go to Cairo. Consequently, IWHC sought and received funding from the Ford Foundation to hold a conference in Rio de Janeiro in January 1994. With local co-organisers, Citizenship, Studies, Information, Action (CEPIA), IWHC brought together 215 women from seventy-nine countries to "search for and identify common ground and universalities in women's perspectives on reproductive health and justice, while recognizing and respecting the diversity that exists in the women's movement" (IWHC 1994b). IWHC had two aims for the Rio conference: to develop tools and strategies to influence the ICPD process and to strengthen the women's health movement to be a major political actor beyond 1994. Rio was chosen as a venue, not only because the organising committee wanted the conference to be in the South, but because it provided a model, since the Brazilian women's health movement had successfully worked with the national government to set up a forward-looking reproductive health program, countering the powerful influence of the Catholic Church (Garcia-Mareno and Claro 1994, 49-50).

Population and Reproductive Rights: Feminist Perspectives from the South (1994); Joan Dunlop and Adrienne Germain of IWHC; Marie Aimee Helie-Lucas of Women Living Under Muslim Laws International Solidarity Network; Noeleen Heyzer (now Executive Director of UNIFEM) of the Asia and Pacific Development Centre in Kuala Lumpur; Sandra Kabir of Bangladesh Women's Health Coalition; Loes Keyzers of Women's Global Network for Reproductive Rights (WGNRR); Rosalind Petchesky of Reproductive Rights Education Project and International Reproductive Rights Research Action Group (IRRRAG); representatives from Catholics for a Free Choice; and representatives of African, Philippine and Caribbean and Latin American health groups.

The Rio conference was an exercise in Freirian methods of empowerment (Higer 1999). The Rio Declaration which emerged from the process differed from Women's Voices in a number of respects. The Rio document put the macro agenda up-front, setting women's reproductive rights in the context of international political economy and making strong links between the 'micro' and the 'macro'. By so doing, it presented a socialist feminist perspective on reproduction and development. The Malthusian assertion that population growth causes poverty and the neo-Malthusian view that population pressure is the primary cause of environmental degradation were repudiated. The approach which was adopted reflects a political ecology formulation which I consider more fully in Chapter five: "[i]nequitable development models and strategies constitute the underlying basis of growing poverty and marginalization of women, environmental degradation, growing numbers of migrants and refugees, and the rise of fundamentalism everywhere" (IWHC 1994c).

The Rio Statement explicitly addresses the concerns of women of the South. Consensus was reached on a number of matters skirted by Women's Voices including: strongly linking reproductive health and rights and development; stressing the need for equitable development models that do not discriminate against poor women; asserting the right to safe, legal abortion as an intrinsic element of women's health and human rights; recognising the political aims underlying religious fundamentalism; redirecting military expenditures to social services; ending all forms of violence against, and exploitation of, women and children; and holding governments, donors and NGOs accountable to the women they serve. The World Bank and USAID's tendency to tie development assistance and structural adjustment programs to population control was condemned. "For women these problems (and their presumed solutions through economic programs for structural adjustment that promote export production at the expense of local needs) have particularly severe consequences" (IWHC 1994c).

The Rio Statement incorporated a number of points made at regional meetings organised by DAWN in the Pacific, Asia, Latin America, the Caribbean and Africa. Funded by the Macarthur Foundation, UNIFEM and the Jesse Smith Noyes Foundation, DAWN undertook to discover what Southern women wanted from the ICPD process. The Declaration of the Reproductive Health and Justice International Conference (the Rio Declaration discussed above) and the book, Population and Reproductive Rights: Feminist Perspectives from the South (Correa 1994), were the

visible outcomes of this process, but equally important was the provision of a platform for Southern women who otherwise lacked a voice in the ICPD process. However, as the ICPD drew near and right wing religious voices narrowly focused on abortion grew louder, reproductive rights and health advocates recognised that they would have to divert their efforts from expanding the reproductive health and rights agenda into defending the language of the draft POA. Thus the Rio Declaration's impact on the ICPD was minimal, by comparison with Women's Voices.

Consequently, as DAWN coordinator Peggy Antrobus said in her commentary on the statement produced by the workshop process.

In our address to the second day of PrepCom III, we focused on women's rights, because ... the dichotomisation which dominates events like the Cairo Conference on Population and Development means there is no chance to challenge development models. ... We remain concerned that the actual services delivered might not improve very much in the future despite this lip service. This is why the issues of accountability and empowerment are so crucial. (Antrobus 1994, 55-56)

The Rio Statement did not endorse or reject population policies *per se*, but made it clear which aspects of such policies were unacceptable.

The participants strongly voiced their opposition to population policies intended to control the fertility of women and that do not address their basic right to a secure livelihood, freedom from poverty and oppression; or don't respect their rights to free, informed choice or to adequate health care; that whether such policies are pro- or anti- natalist, they are often coercive, treat women as objects, not subjects, and that in the context of such policies, low fertility does not result in alleviation of poverty. In fact, a number of the participants opposed population policies as being inherently coercive. There was unanimous opposition to designing fertility control measures or population policies specifically targeted at Southern countries, indigenous peoples, or marginalized groups within both Southern and Northern countries, whether by race, class, ethnicity, religion or other basis. (IWHC 1994b)

Despite this attempt to represent the perspectives of those who opposed them with a strong critique of population policies, some women at Rio were not happy with this compromise. The Declaration proposed by some participants stated "We reject population policies" (IWHC 1994e). Another statement, Indigenous Women and Population Policies, asked women at Rio to understand that "indigenous women cannot isolate our struggle from a set of collective demands related to territory and language; to philosophic ideologies and cultural expressions" (IWHC 1994d).

Women's Voices and the Rio Statement reflect liberal and socialist feminist approaches to reproduction (see Smyth 1998 and Tong 1992 for an analysis of feminist approaches

to reproduction). Radical feminists produced a statement to reflect their approach at an international symposium organised by UBINIG, with support from FINRRAGE, at Comilla in Bangladesh in December 1993. The Declaration of People's Perspectives on "Population" Symposium, which was endorsed by sixty-one women from twenty-three countries, is described by its proponents as a "feminist critique of the logic of domination that underlies population control policies" (UBINIG 1996, 519).

The Comilla Declaration rejected population policies altogether and accused major donors of "attempting to set the agenda for Women's Movements and organizations by co-opting their language and individual women to legitimize population-control policies" (UBINIG 1996, 520).

Population-control programmes were devised in the early 1950s in the name of 'poverty eradication' and containment of communism. Today they are used, supposedly, to curb environmental destruction and to ensure "sustainable growth". In fact, however, over all the years these programmes have subjected women in the south to a whole range of coercive technologies and methods which have often ruined their health and their lives.

The population establishment attempts to hide these horrors by cloaking them in words hijacked from the Women's Liberation Movement, and thus try to convey the message that they fall within an ethic of care and human rights; and that they expand "reproductive choice", especially for women. (UBINIG 1996, 520)

The Comilla Declaration is a sustained attack on neoliberalism, neocolonialism, reproductive technologies and long-acting contraceptives. It presents a picture of poor women of the South as the disempowered victims of USAID, the Population Council, the Rockefeller and Ford Foundations, UNFPA and pharmaceutical companies. The ICPD is seen as an event which will "pave the way for more population control policies in the coming decade, based on the false assumption that population growth threatens the survival of the planet" (UBINIG 1996, 524). Even so, the Comilla Declaration supports most of the objectives of the broader women's health movement.

Women's basic needs of food, education, health, work, social and political participation, a life free of violence and oppression should be addressed on their own merit. Meeting women's needs should be delinked from population policy including those expressed as apparent humanitarian concerns for women. Women should have access to safe contraception and legal abortion under broader health care. (UBINIG 1996, 524)

One further statement was produced prior to the ICPD to present the perspective of feminists whose primary aim was to repudiate Malthusian and neo-Malthusian approaches to population. The statement was produced by a new coalition of feminists

from the environmental and reproductive health movements, the Committee on Women, Population and the Environment (CWPE), who were troubled by the proliferation of statements which focused on population size and growth as the primary cause of environmental degradation.

[B]laming global environmental degradation on population growth helps to lay the groundwork for the re-emergence and intensification of top-down, demographically driven population policies and programs that are deeply disrespectful of women, particularly women of color and their children. (CWPE 1999, xx)

Although this statement was produced to contribute to discussions around UNCED, it is mentioned here because the activists involved have remained engaged in discussions around reproductive rights and health and provide a critique of environmental and women's health organisations actions since the ICPD. CWPE's statement articulates a feminist political ecology approach to discussions about population which is examined further in Chapter five of the thesis.

Women's Voices and the Rio Statement signalled that their authors were prepared to work with governments and organisations in the transformation of population and development policies to achieve feminist objectives. Their aims are transformative, but their approach is reformist. CWPE and UBINIG/FINRRAGE elected to stay outside formal processes in order to avoid cooption (Klein 1994, 1995; Silliman 1999). This approach signalled the potential for future conflict, but at the time of the ICPD, the broader international women's health movement accepted the differences in approach.

While some segments of the movement recognize that women must put forward their agendas in forms that will be persuasive to governments, donors, and international agencies, some are more confrontational (Comilla Declaration 1993). For the most part, such diversity is a source of strength as the various groups and networks work in complementary ways to bring about changes. (Garcia-Moreno and Claro 1994, 55)

3.5.1 'Empowerment' in feminist statements

Since 'empowerment' is a key objective of feminist campaigns and a key point in the ICPD POA, it could be expected to feature strongly in feminist campaigns in the run-up to the conference. In fact, it was stressed as a key aim in only one of the statements prepared for ICPD. This reflects different objectives and growing cynicism about the concept's usefulness among women's organisations, despite their commitment to increasing women's power.

Women's Voices is a prescriptive document, written as a guide to policy-makers. It commences with a statement of principles, outlines the minimum program requirements and specific actions necessary to “ensure women’s reproductive health and their fundamental right to decide whether, when and how many children to have. Such commitment will also ensure just, humane and effective development and population policies that will attract a broad base of political support” (concluding sentences of Women's Voices, Sen *et al* 1994, 34). The appeal to government delegations is transparent; Women's Voices is a pragmatic document designed to attract the widest possible support. It focused on micro issues and avoided explicit critique of macro-economic trends. Consequently, it was able to gain the support of liberal neo-Malthusians and their organisations and others who would not endorse a critique of neoliberal economic policies (Petchesky 2000c).

The authors of Women's Voices signalled their intention to work within the framework of population policies and adopted the assumption that women’s empowerment assists in fertility reduction to argue that population policies are more likely to succeed if they empower women. It is unclear what the writers encompass in ‘population policy’; nor do we gain an understanding of how they envisage ‘empowerment’.

We call for a fundamental revision in the design, structure and implementation of population policies, to foster the empowerment and well-being of all women. Women’s empowerment is legitimate and critically important in its own right, not merely as a means to address population issues. (Preamble, Women’s Declaration on Population Policies, Sen, Germain & Chen 1994, 32)

The Declaration suggests that population and development strategies will enhance the empowerment of women if their participation is sought at all levels of decision-making and their organisations are resourced to perform a central role in achieving the reproductive rights and health agenda. If these recommendations were enacted, population policy frameworks in many countries would be greatly altered.

The empowerment of poor women is central to the Rio statement. Like Women's Voices, it advocates policies which empower women through “democratic people centered and participatory processes” (point five) and “strengthen[ing] women’s participation and empowerment in political and policy-making processes and institutions with the goal of achieving gender balance in all such processes and institutions” (point eight). The Rio Declaration recognised that women’s empowerment

requires change at all levels, from the personal to the international, to eliminate underlying inequities in gender relationships (IWHC 1994c).

Southern feminists had a great deal invested in the inclusion of women's empowerment in the POA. As they conceptualised it, women's empowerment requires structural change at the global level. The centrality of 'empowerment' to Gender and Development policies and within DAWN's favoured development model gave the concept transformative and practical potential which was given less priority by groups that focused on reproductive rights and health. While the Northern-based international women's health movement wanted to centralise women's reproductive rights and reproductive health in the POA, DAWN and other Southern feminist groups wanted to challenge existing development models and economic policies.

Clearly, Southern feminists support the new consensus emerging from preparations for Cairo. But women's empowerment and reproductive self-determination will not be fully achieved if global development policies remain unchallenged. Global inequalities in resource distribution and shrinking investments in social programmes have characterized 'development' in recent decades ... Throughout the South, these trends aggravate existing gender inequalities, further impoverishing women. ...

In DAWN's view, transforming the population field in order effectively to apply the reproductive health and rights framework is conditioned upon a virtual revolution in prevailing gender systems and development models. Along with their commitment to human rights, women's bodily integrity and reproductive self-determination, reproduction-related policies must be conceived and implemented as part of a renewed human development paradigm that fosters democratic institutions and, most importantly, equitable economic policies. (Correa 1994, 8-9)

The Comilla Declaration's authors, concerned about cooption of feminist concepts such as reproductive rights and empowerment by the population establishment, avoided using both terms in their Declaration. It is not the process of empowerment that FINRRAGE, UBINIG and the other groups reject; it is the coopted concept that emerges from the World Bank's documents. Women's 'empowerment' has too often compensated for gaps in social services caused by structural adjustment programs.

3.5.2 Feminist debates over 'reproductive rights' and 'reproductive health'

The concept of 'reproductive rights' provided grounds for significant disagreement among feminists in the run-up to the ICPD. The statements took divergent approaches, reflecting ideological differences and degrees of distrust of the concept. The diverse

approaches to this concept reflect sites of conflict in the international women's health movement.

Reproductive rights were the central focus of Women's Voices, which defined sexual and reproductive rights in Fundamental Ethical Principles two, three and six.

2. Women have the right to determine when, whether, why, with whom, and how to express their sexuality. Population policies must be based on the principle of respect for the sexual and bodily integrity of girls and women. ...

3. Women have the individual right and the social responsibility to decide whether, how, and when to have a child and how many to have; no woman can be compelled to bear a child or be prevented from doing so against her will. All women, regardless of age, marital status, or other social conditions have a right to information and services necessary to exercise the reproductive rights and responsibilities. ...

6. The fundamental sexual and reproductive rights of women cannot be subordinated, against a woman's will, to the interests of partners, family members, ethnic groups, religious institutions, health providers, researchers, policy makers, the state or any other actors. (IWHC 1994a)

This definition lacks the breadth of Correa and Petchesky's definition, since it is focused on reproductive autonomy. By contrast, the Rio document adopted the four ethical principles Correa and Petchesky considered as essential to the exercise of reproductive and sexual rights: bodily integrity; treating women as 'persons'; equality in relations among women and between women and men; and respect for diversity of values, culture, religion, sexual orientation and medical condition.

The Comilla Declaration made no reference to reproductive rights but demanded "respect for the integrity of women's bodies" (UBINIG 1996, 520). FINRRAGE member Renate Klein (1995) interpreted the population establishment's support for 'reproductive rights' as a trade-off for the endorsement of the international women's health movement at the ICPD. A concept endorsed by neo-Malthusians was not acceptable to FINRRAGE and UBINIG.

The statements were in general agreement on reproductive health. All agreed that access to abortion is a key component of reproductive health and rights. Reproductive health, however, became the most contested of the three terms at Cairo and has remained so since, as the following discussion indicates.

3.6 The moral right fights back

The five-year reviews of the Population and Women's conferences in 1999 and 2000 provide snapshots of the global politics of reproduction after ICPD. While differences within the feminist movement are significant, and still debated, the opposition of the moral right to the international women's health movement's program of reproductive health and rights is far more threatening. In this section, I examine media coverage, material prepared by members of the international women's health movement and reports and electronic mail bulletins from right wing organisations and individuals attending the reviews to assess their main concerns and the threat they pose to efforts to increase women's access to their human rights.

The strongest "political obstacle" to the implementation of the micro agenda of the ICPD agenda is the considerable influence of the moral right over governments, judiciaries and popular opinion in many countries (Petchesky 1998b, 5). Increasingly, these organisations are directly targeting UN conferences and meetings. These forces build their campaigns on entrenched attitudes and gender inequalities. DAWN's study for ICPD+5 found that religious groups had inordinate influence on reproductive rights and health policy in West Africa, Latin America and the Philippines (Correa 2000, 4). Thus, they deserve serious attention from defenders of human rights generally, and women's human rights in particular.

3.6.1 The 'moral right at ICPD

In Chapter two, I briefly outlined the campaign of moral conservatives at the ICPD. There, two major world religions, Catholicism and Islam, converged to oppose any advance in women's rights and publicly stole the agenda, according to newspaper headlines around the world (AP 1994). While the fight was, on the surface, about women's right to determine their sexual and reproductive lives, there was an underlying agenda of bolstering right wing influence over states and international organisations, as subsequent events indicate.

The term 'fundamentalist' is often used to describe right wing religious movements which oppose women's control over their reproductive lives.

The term is currently used to describe a range of movements and tendencies in all regions of the world which aim to impose what they define as tradition - whether religious, national, cultural or ethnic - on societies ... The 'fundamentalism' of these politically-motivated ideologies is that their

adherents seek to raise them above the political on the basis of divine sanction or by appealing to supreme authorities, moral codes or philosophies that cannot be questioned. (Berer & Ravindran 1996, 7)

Women are critical in the formulation of fundamentalist identities. They mark group boundaries and produce group differences ... [and] are seen as the cultural carriers of the collectivity (D.R. Kaufman in Berer and Ravindran 1996, 8).

In this thesis, I avoid using the term 'fundamentalism' because it obscures the diversity of players who are united by opposition to abortion.⁸⁹ Nonetheless, in the mid-1990s, the term had salience for many feminists, especially those who experienced first-hand their oppositional tactics at Cairo and Beijing (see *Women Against Fundamentalism* 1995).

At the ICPD, the Vatican led the campaign to oppose the inclusion of language which it believed endorsed abortion. In the process, it stalled the conference for several days and limited the gains possible for women. Feminists were forced to focus on lobbying governments to oppose language aimed at reducing access to abortion instead of expanding international support for a broadened definition of reproductive rights and health.

The Cairo conference provided the Pope and his representatives with a pulpit to broadcast Catholic teachings on reproductive matters to a global congregation. The spiritual authority of the Church's hierarchy was thus translated into political power, reminding Catholics worldwide of the Church's prescriptions for women's sexual and reproductive behaviour and their 'proper' roles within families. Governments were reminded of the power of the moral right within their constituencies and Southern women were warned of the consequences of extending 'western feminist' values in their own societies.

The Vatican's campaign was most intense in the five months between the release of the draft POA and the close of the ICPD. Publicly, it began with the meeting of Pope John Paul II with Nafis Sadik to put "this misled project back on track" (cited in Neale 1998, 109). Sadik reported that "the comments made by the Pope mostly focused on the definition of the family and the role of women in the context of moral and natural laws,

⁸⁹ See Klatch 1994 for a description of women of the 'new right' in the United States who see themselves as 'pro-family' rather than 'anti-abortion'.

and not so much on abortion” (Singh 1998, 50). Pope John Paul II accused the POA’s drafters of ignoring marriage “as if it were something in the past. An institution as natural, universal and fundamental as the family cannot be manipulated without causing serious damage to the fabric and stability of society” (cited in Johnson 1995, 67). After the meeting, the Pope publicly released his Message to ICPD.

In defence of the living person, the Church stands opposed to the imposition of limits on family size, and to the promotion of methods of limiting births which separate the unitive and procreative dimensions of marital intercourse, which are contrary to the moral law inscribed in the human heart, or which constitute an assault on the sacredness of life. ... Abortion, which destroys existing human life, is a heinous evil, and it is never an acceptable method of family planning, as was recognised by consensus at the Mexico City United Nations Conference on Population. (Pope Jean Paul II, extract cited by Johnson 1995, 67)

Pope John Paul II followed his statement with a letter to heads of state, pointing out the failings he perceived in the draft POA and instructing state ambassadors to the Holy City on the Church’s approach to population policy. Immediately after PrepCom III, John Paul II beatified two women, setting them on the path to sainthood. These “models of Christian perfection” provided Catholic women with examples of how the Pope wanted them to behave (Danguilan 1997).⁹⁰

In June 1994, Pope John Paul II and Islamic leaders produced a joint statement “to attack the ‘dangers’ facing society: secularism, consumerism and individualism [and] the individualistic approach toward life” of the ICPD POA (Hebblethwaite 1994). Hebblethwaite suggests that this ‘holy alliance’ has been on the papal agenda since the collapse of communism. “After communism, the next beast to be slain was ‘liberalism’, understood as individuals inventing their own morality” (Hebblethwaite 1994).

The Vatican’s short term objectives were explicit. Clinton’s reversal of the Mexico City policy was a major setback for the moral right, and United States Church functionaries used political and moral arguments to persuade the government delegation not to support the reproductive rights and health focus of the POA. Church leaders told their congregations that the United States delegation’s support for women’s reproductive

⁹⁰ The women set on the path to sainthood were martyrs to the Pope’s idea of women’s reproductive roles. Gianni Beretta was an Italian pediatrician who, during the pregnancy of her fourth child, found that she was suffering from uterine cancer. She died in 1962 after refusing an abortion which might have saved her life. The other woman was Elisabetta Canori Mora, a Roman who died 1825, after remaining in marriage to an abusive partner who finally abandoned her and her children (Danguilan 1997, 43).

rights was an endorsement of abortion. With mid-term elections in 1994 and a Presidential election two years after ICPD, political arguments had impact. A month before the ICPD, the United States Secretary of State, Timothy Wirth, attempted to clarify an earlier statement in which he had declared support for “access to safe, legal and voluntary abortion [as] a fundamental right of all women. We were talking about access and other people thought it was a capital ‘R’, a universal human right ... It was a matter of just sort of not understanding what kind of perception there would be of that language” (cited in Johnson 1995, 83). The United States administration wanted the support of the feminist lobby, but it was reluctant to alienate the vociferous opponents of abortion.

Some feminists have noted the paradox that a small group of celibate, aged men living their lives in communal isolation seeks control over the lives of millions of women (Neale 1998, 2000; Manning 1999).⁹¹ As head of the Vatican City and the Holy See and supreme spiritual authority of the diffuse and diverse Catholic Church, the Pope’s political power “defines, assigns, confines the faithful through doctrines and practices which act to discipline, punish, regulate and control” (Neale 1998, 104). The Church’s hierarchy attempts to discipline Catholic congregations through encyclicals and pastoral practices and its clerics police individuals through the confession-penitence regime. At state level the church works to have papal pronouncements enshrined in policy formulation.

That many Catholics have rejected the Vatican’s idea of women’s reproductive destiny is indicated by the below replacement birth rates of many countries where Catholicism is the dominant religion (Italy, Spain, France, Canada, Ireland and much of Central and South America). Frances Kissling (1994), president of Catholics for a Free Choice, suggests that the Vatican is becoming actively involved in international debates about family planning to counter these trends. O’Brien describes the Church’s opposition to women’s reproductive rights and health as integral to its project to halt the advance of post-enlightenment ideas since “there was no field of morals that was more significant than that of human sexuality and reproduction” (O’Brien 1995, 13).

⁹¹ Ironically, leading Catholic male spokespeople refer to the Church as ‘she’, the ‘Mother Church’. For instance: “They [details of Bucharest conference PA] are not acceptable in what concerns contraceptives,

In the Third World, birth and fertility rates among Catholics remain satisfactory from a papal point of view. ... The Pope knows that the figures reflect lack of information about, and access to, methods of contraception, rather than obedience to papal encyclicals. John Paul II, however, is prepared to settle for denial of information and access, if he cannot get obedience. To secure such denial has been the basis of Vatican policy in the field of sexual and reproductive ethics at every relevant international conference in the second half of this century. (O'Brien 1995, 15)

The ICPD provided a major milestone in this project, as a world forum dedicated to issues central to the Church and its supporting organisations. Islamist governments' willingness to separate themselves from the broader G77 in support of its historical enemy indicates that the desire to oppose the westernisation of values which accompanies globalisation, symbolised for them by "western feminism" over-rode longstanding enmity (Correa 2002). Events since 1994 indicate the fruitful nature of this alliance as a strategy to perpetuate patriarchal forms of the family and oppose the extension of women's and adolescents' rights.

3.6.2 The moral right at Cairo + 5 and Beijing + 5

The moral right demonstrated at the five year reviews of ICPD and WCW that it has learned how to exploit UN procedures to obstruct reproductive rights advocacy. Both the Beijing and Cairo reviews were held in New York, which made it easy for the United States-based international women's health movement and the moral right to attend in large numbers. While progress at the official ICPD+5 meetings was blocked by a group of conservative Catholic and Muslim states, including Libya, Senegal, Qatar, Morocco, the Sudan, Argentina and Nicaragua, pro-rights NGO meetings were disturbed by rowdy representatives of a small number of conservative NGOs. The United States and Australia, which in 1994 had supported reproductive rights, included representatives of the moral right on their delegations, leading to contests over reproductive rights within as well as between delegations. Conflict within delegations prompted some governments to reconsider including NGO delegates on future official delegations (Beaton 1999).

Harassment of youth and feminist delegates at ICPD+5 accelerated at the Beijing review where North American members of the moral right attended in greater numbers.

in regard to which the Catholic Church has already made *her* position clear..." Monsignor Henri de Reidmatten, leader of Holy See delegation to Bucharest, cited by Johnson 1994, 118, italics mine.

The United States Catholic Family and Human Rights Institute actively canvassed for right wing attendees with this invitation in a 'Friday fax'.

Five years ago radical feminists met in Beijing at the Fourth World Conference on women. Try as they might, they could not keep out pro-family forces. They will try again to keep us out, but they will fail here too. ... It was at Beijing that radical feminists attempted to make abortion an international human right.
...

At the new meeting all this will come up again. Moreover, they are taking direct aim at the traditional family. ... The stakes are incredibly high heading into this final preparatory committee meeting in New York, March 6 through March 17 ... Radical feminists will be everywhere. EVERYWHERE. They are already holding meetings all over the world.

We must rise to this challenge! You personally are needed in New York, even if you have never done this before.

We will accredit you.

We will train you.

We will give you assignments in many different areas, like directly lobbying diplomats.

This will be the experience of a lifetime.

You will work alongside Catholics, Evangelicals, Jews, Muslim, Mormons. We are the children of Abraham arising to fight for faith and family. ...

We need 300 people. ...

P.P.S. We especially want young people. They are needed to counter the radical youth that our opponents pay to come here.

Ruse 1999

Ruse claimed in another 'Friday Fax' that the moral right instigated disagreement on "sexual reproduction and the family" which caused the final preparatory committee meeting to "ground nearly to a halt" (2000a). Obstruction was not restricted to meetings. Feminists and youth delegates claimed that 'pro-lifers' noted the names of people with progressive views, spread false information, stalked them to their hotels, rang them up and intimidated individual delegates by gathering around them and obstructing their movement. Eileen Pittaway, Australian feminist observer at the PrepCom for Beijing + 5, felt that the girdle-swinging 'monks' of REAL (Realistic, Equal, Active for Life) women were not interested in the contents of the Platform for Action, but attended in large numbers to impede the "radical women who want to kill babies" (Pittaway 2000).

The moral right's intention to thwart feminists who represented 500 organisations, compared to the hundreds of right wing delegates who represented a handful of organisations, is confirmed by the statement of Peter Smith, chief UN lobbyist for International Right to Life Federation.

[T]his just shows that we on the pro-life side have been effective in our lobbying on behalf of life and the family. The other side believes the UN is their own private playground. They have never wanted us here and will do practically anything to keep us out, including using lies and physical intimidation. (Smith in Ruse 2000b)

'Pro-life' organisations claimed victory at ICPD + 5 and Beijing + 5 while reproductive rights advocates saw the ICPD + 5 outcomes as "largely progressive and forward-looking" due to the "relentless efforts" of feminist NGOs (Otto 1999, 11; Singh 1999). At Beijing + 5, however, hopes for setting targets and benchmarks for the achievement of the Platform for Action were soon dropped by feminist organisations who saw that their main task was to defend the Beijing text against renegotiation.

3.6.3 A larger agenda?

The moral right challenge to feminist objectives must be taken seriously. But is there a larger agenda than opposition to abortion, adolescents' sexuality and non-traditional, non-heterosexual forms of the family? And whose purposes are served by campaigns against women's and young people's rights? In the light of the adoption of the moral right's campaign goals by the world's most powerful government in the early twenty-first century, this question is of interest to International Relations scholars.

Is the moral right worried about foetuses, children or women? Nowhere in the material prepared by the moral right is there a serious critique of the goals of the international women's health movement or an attempt to engage with rights discourses. Feminist goals are dismissed as radical, western-oriented, anti-family, but not addressed. Stephen Mosher of the Population Research Institute provides a typical misinterpretation of the feminist agenda.

[T]he population control lobby that stormed the 1994 Cairo International Conference on Population and Development has three major global objectives:

To manipulate women into having fewer children than they want.

To convince women and adolescent girls into believing that their fertility threatens the sustainability of the world's resources.

To promote the sterility of homosexual relationships as “ecologically responsible.”

These population control “objectives” ... dovetail neatly with the three major objectives of the feminist rights agenda:

To ensure that access to abortion is a basic human right.

To “liberate” adolescent sexuality from parental supervision by “educating” adolescents in their “new” human rights to abortion without parental notification.

To assign the same rights and privileges to homosexual relationships as to traditional marriages and the founding of the family. (Population Research Institute 1999)

The newsletter of REAL women of Canada outlines its concerns about the feminist agenda and the UN’s role. The re-definition of key feminist concepts is a major tool used to ‘educate’ non-English speaking government delegates, taking advantage of confusion about terms which have no equivalent in many languages.

The easiest way for the more powerful nations to diminish the strength of these growing countries has been to destroy the very aspects that the UN was mandated to protect: sovereignty, family and cultural/religious heritage. One might wonder how importing seemingly benign, in fact “progressive” Western philosophies could lead to this mass destruction. The strategy is, in fact brilliant. By masking the ideas as part of the Universal Declaration for Human Rights, the Western nations have engineered a silent coup of the traditional family.

Through importing Western feminist views and by spreading the politically correct message of *rights* free from *responsibilities*, these more powerful countries are disrupting the delicate cultural checks and balances of the developing countries. This is done through the acceptance of euphemisms such as “**gender equity**” (furthering the feminist agenda by mandating women to work outside the home and demoralizing stay-at-home moms), “**reproductive rights**” (abortion and contraception access to anyone over 10 years of age ...without parental consent) and “**families**” instead of the family so that “alternate” family forms will be recognized [homosexual families]. ...

What is the role of pro-family NGOs at the UN? I would suggest three things. First, there are other like-minded countries that simply cannot afford to send a large contingent of delegates to the UN conferences. These delegates feel very alone and are fearful of the more dominant countries who sometimes resort to threats and ultimatums to make them sign on to treaties. One of the positive roles that we can have is simply through support and encouragement. Second, many of the countries that would speak out on these issues are unaware of what they are signing on to because of the nuances in our language. By having pro-family delegates present to translate the implied meaning of some of this language, we can help those countries to be aware of the necessary changes that are needed. Third, we are responsible to keep the delegates from our own countries accountable. Many times the delegates from Canada are perceived as some of the most radical. It is the responsibility of pro-family NGOs to ensure that these delegates know that they are being watched and that what they do and say will be reported back home. (Brown 2000, bolding in original)

Like other NGOs of the moral right, REAL Women's lens on the UN focuses only on the micro-politics of reproduction, with little interest in the economic, security and political functions of the UN. Member countries are of interest only to the extent that they may further the 'pro-life, pro-family' agenda; their broader concerns are of no interest.

Right wing campaigns affect more than women's reproductive lives. In low income countries the moral right agenda can seriously affect the ability of women and children to survive. Molyneux's work on social capital reveals that in South and Central American countries where political and religious leaders promote conservative moral agendas, women's participation in waged labour is blamed for a number of social ills.

Women's responsibilities to the family and community are held up against the 'selfish individualism' that drives them to seek self-fulfilment in work. Yet the securing of income by women is the single most powerful factor in alleviating family poverty and children's malnutrition. It is also crucial in enabling women to escape violence at the hands of husbands and other male kin. (Molyneux 2002, 184)

As Molyneux points out, while women's unpaid work is seen to contribute to social capital, their paid work is not. Similarly, their voluntary work in organisations which provide for the material needs of two-parent families and their communities is praised while their support for female-headed households, protecting women and girls against violence and advocacy for reproductive rights is condemned by the 'pro-family' lobby. The well-being of women and children is of less concern than the survival of the 'traditional' family, as the survival of the foetus is of more concern than the well-being of children already-born. A survey examining the relationship between states' abortion laws and their spending on at-risk children in the United States found that: HERE

states with strong antiabortion laws provide less funding per child for foster care, stipends for parents who adopt children with special needs, and payments for poor children with dependent children than do states with strong abortion rights laws. ... "To put it simply, pro-life states make it difficult for women to have abortions but they do not help these women provide for the children once born," [researcher] Schroedel said. (Claiborne 1999)

This link suggests that concern for children, living or 'unborn', is not at the basis of the campaign against abortion; rather, it is opposition to women moving out of the place they are assigned in a narrow, patriarchal conception of society.

Does the moral right want to destabilise the feminist movement's 'cosy' relationship with the UN? The literature reviewed above indicates that conservatives felt that the UN had been coopted by the feminist agenda and that they were helping to correct the balance. Feminists were concerned that right wing groups' disruptive activities at Beijing + 5 were aimed "to get themselves and the legitimate organizations kicked out of these proceedings" (Joan Grant-Cummings, head of Canada's National Action Committee for the Status of Women, cited in Waldie 2000). Gaining accreditation at UN meetings has become increasingly difficult since 1995 (Deen 1999) and the behaviour of the more rambunctious members of the moral right affected all NGOs since, of course, the UN could not discriminate amongst organisations, once accredited.

Is the main aim of the moral right to gain the ear of the United States? Most Christian right organisations are based in the United States or have strong links with groups there. It makes sense that they would target this country, where approaches to women's rights have a global reach. Although its influence was reduced through the Clinton era, the moral right has enjoyed good support from successive United States administrations.⁹² In recent years, anti-abortion spokespeople have been appointed to key positions on United States delegations to UN conferences where their views are presented as official United States positions.

To represent this country to the world, Bush has replaced career diplomats with career ideologues: John Klink, a former chief negotiator for the Vatican, has been on nearly every US delegation to a UN meeting, joined by Jeanne Head of the National Right to Life Committee, Janice Crouse of Concerned Women for America ... and others from the "pro-family" lobby.

Block 2003

The moral right's influence on the United States was partially responsible for the exclusion from the UN's Millennium Development Goals of ICPD's central goal: "to make accessible through the primary health care system, reproductive health to all individuals of appropriate ages as soon as possible and no later than the year 2015" (Girard 2000, 68). This omission matters, since the Millennium Goals provide framework for contemporary international discussions on development objectives and the few targets by which governments' efforts for development can be assessed.

⁹² See Goldberg 2002 for an account of the impact of the Population Research Institute upon United States policy towards the UN and the funding of family planning programs overseas.

United States funding to UNFPA was an early casualty of right wing influence on the United States Administration. Invoking the 'global gag', the United States administration withdrew \$US34 from UNFPA's funding in July 2002, 12.5% of the organisation's annual budget, creating a real danger that UNFPA will be reduced to a "boutique" fund (Pierce 2002). In her response to the United States decision, the Executive Director of UNFPA reminded the United States Government of its support for the ICPD Programme eight years earlier.

The [UNFPA] programme adheres strictly to the voluntary, human rights-based approach to reproductive health and family planning stipulated by the 1994 Cairo International Conference on Population and Development and unanimously adopted by the United Nations General Assembly. The abolition of birth quotas and family planning acceptor targets in the 32 countries was a condition of UNFPA assistance. ...

In today's complex world, population, family planning, women's empowerment and HIV prevention are issues that deserve more attention and funding, not less. (Obaid 2002)

The Bush Administration's decision confirms that the moral right's strongest power is its influence on governments with the power to stall international meetings, as the United States did in Bangkok in December 2002, and whose funding is crucial to the viability of reproductive health programs in low income countries. National electoral influence has greater impact on women's access to their reproductive rights than attempts to water down global consensus on conference outcomes. Thus, even though the POA was confirmed and, in some areas, strengthened at ICPD+5, and at the ESCAP Conference three years later, the funding decision of one government was capable of undermining it. In this instance, however, the European Union has stepped in to partially fill the funding gap and UNFPA has used the occasion to increase public support for its work (anon 2002a). However, since less than half the committed funds have been received for the Cairo program, any further loss is keenly felt.

Does the moral right support United States foreign policy objectives? Charlotte Bunch, director of the Center for Women's Global Leadership, suggests one reason why the Bush administration has adopted with such alacrity the moral right's aim of unsettling the UN.

"Their overall goal has always been to weaken the United Nations, in particular its capacity to be a constraining force on the flow of global capital and militarism. Attacking reproductive rights is convenient because it also delivers for the right wing," [said Bunch]. And it's low risk. "The Bush Administration has been able to get away with what would be appalling to most moderate Republicans," explains Jennifer Butler, the Presbyterian Church's UN

representative, who tracks the Christian right's activities at the UN. Very few people - including members of the press - pay attention to UN meetings, she observes. "Bush can throw a bone to the Christian right and score some points, and he can do that without a cost." (Bunch, cited by Block 2003)

The United States has signed few of the UN human rights conventions, including the Women's Convention. Never a strong supporter of multilateralism, it has been more outspoken in its lack of support for global conventions and international institutions, such as the International Criminal Court, since 2000. Indeed, it seems to have embarked on a course of unilateralism in order to strengthen its position as global hegemon. Its decision to mount an attack on Iraq, for instance, posed a strong challenge to the UN Security Council.

Its militaristic stance on Iraq contrasts strongly with its alliance with this government and a number of other states opposed to women's rights at the World Summit on Children in 2002. The contradictions between the United States Government's aggressive attitude to countries deemed to be sympathetic to terrorist organisations, or part of the 'axis of evil', and its alliance with them over the issue of women's and children's rights has been observed by leaders of the women's health movement.

This alliance shows the depths of perversity of the [U.S.] position. On the one hand we're presumably blaming [Sudan, Libya, Iraq and Iran] for unspeakable acts of terrorism, and at the same time we are allying ourselves with them in the oppression of women. (Adrienne Germain, president of the International Women's Health Coalition in Lynch 2002)

Opposition to the 'empowerment' of minorities - although women, who are half the world's population, are hardly a minority, feminists are treated as one - is able to transcend the realist foreign policy objectives of the Bush administration. Despite the campaign against terrorism which is distancing the United States from Islamic nations, an alliance of conservative American Christian organisations and Islamist governments has announced its intention "to halt the expansion of sexual and political rights for gays, women and children at United Nations conferences. ... The main issue that brings us all together is defending the family values, the natural family" (The Washington Post 2002). The contradictions revealed by the United States' ability to sustain enmities in the realist, macro, sphere of military security while pursuing alliances with the same governments over the micro issues of women's reproductive lives are of great interest to International Relations scholars who observe the politics which "[v]ery few people - including members of the press - pay attention to" (Butler in Block 2003, above).

The battle being waged over women's rights is the politics of the everyday. While it is currently being waged with the modern tools of the Internet and other telecommunications and played on a global stage, with the UN as facilitator, it is an old battle, as the history of feminist struggle attests. At the time of the Cairo conference, feminists were in a position of strength, due to the prominence of rights discourse and the relatively pro-feminist Clinton administration. Ten years later, the moral right has the support of the Bush administration and the United States Congress, and more organisations accredited to the UN than ever before. So far, feminists have held the line on the transformative ICPD agenda, with the support of the majority of the world's governments. The opposition of the moral right may have helped to mend some of the fault lines revealed earlier in this chapter.

3.7 Conclusion: the micro agenda needs a macro context

At the end of the decade, feminists appeared to be more united in defending the ICPD agenda than they were in 1994. Most feminists were, on the surface at least, unanimous about the importance of uniting to counter the moral right's increasing power. Lynette Dumble (1994b), who had earlier accused the ICPD agenda of being Malthusian, wrote more favourably in 1999.

In 1994, in a break with past ICPD traditions, people rather than numbers were hailed as the primary consideration. In a shift away from demographic targets, girls' education, women's reproductive rights and empowerment and the shared reproductive responsibilities of women and men became the focus of Cairo's 20-year plan of action to stabilise the world's population. (Dumble 1999b)

Mira Shiva, who in 1994 accused the POA of blaming "ethnic conflict and resource scarcity in the South on Third World women's fertility" (Shiva and Shiva 1994) was one of the authors of a 1999 document to remind the Indian government delegation of commitments it made at ICPD.

The ICPD POA approved by consensus by 179 countries at Cairo in 1994 ... landmarks a comprehensive vision of population and development. The new vision is based on ensuring human well being as the focal point of all international activities designed to address issues of economic development and balanced sustained economic growth. It emphasises the primacy of women's empowerment and individual rights as important ends in themselves but which are also strategically critical to the actualisation of a people-sensitive population and development vision. (Mukhopadhyay et al 1999)

At ICPD the international women's health movement's over-riding aim was to move the objectives of population programs from fertility control to responsiveness to women's reproductive health needs. It was able to call on an international feminist network strengthened by UN Women's Conferences and successful NGO organising for UNCED and the Vienna Conference on Human Rights. Since ICPD + 5, efforts to maintain the language of the POA have produced "immense frustration with the expensive, reified and time-consuming nature of the haggling over words" (Otto 1999, 11). Despite their victory over language, feminists are seeing reductions in resources for programs which enhance the reproductive rights and health of women and young people, and the major donor to population programs is more responsive to the demands of the moral right than to advocates of women's rights.

The concepts of empowerment, reproductive rights and reproductive health which captured the support of the international community in 1994 are less favoured in 2002. The ICPD's 'quantum leap' was contained in the POA's micro approach. While the macro political and economic environment of the decade has been a crucial factor, as I argue in the next chapter, some pertinent observations can be made about the micro agenda itself, based on the discussion in this section. First, the concept of women's empowerment, which first entered Southern feminists' writings as a transformative concept in the mid-1980s, emerged from the ICPD as a concept acceptable to governments and other institutions with little interest in advancing the liberation of poor women. Second, the concept of reproductive health, while on the surface unexceptionable, has become a field of contest because it includes safe, legal abortions. Finally, the concept of reproductive rights which went to the ICPD was focused on biological reproduction and failed to incorporate the enabling conditions which many feminists saw as crucial to their achievement. Many developing country governments were challenged by the concept of reproductive rights even in its narrow definition.⁹³ As the pre-ICPD statements indicate, the concept of 'reproductive rights' was not supported by all sections of the international women's health movement although they could agree on empowerment and reproductive health. By contrast, the Cairo definition has been endorsed by most of the international community. The 'enabling conditions' which Correa and Petchesky include in their broadened definition of reproductive

⁹³ See the case study of Indonesia, Chapter four.

rights, it is argued in the next chapter, may be more successfully incorporated into a 'rights-based approach' to development. The task for feminists is to engender these broad civil society campaigns. This is not to argue that the concepts enshrined in the ICPD POA should be discarded. Each is crucially important to the feminist project and together they hold transformative potential. This, of course, is the major reason that governments have not taken the 'quantum leap'.

The world at the turn of the century seems less favourable to the achievement of feminist objectives than it had six years earlier. The UN is a less useful forum for the international women's health movement due to the reasons discussed above. As a consequence, Otto reports:

[I]n the view of many of the participating NGOs, the time is fast approaching when the costs in human resources will outweigh the small and precarious gains that result from the endless compromises and deals over acceptable language that are struck in the corridors and back rooms of the UN. (Otto 1999, 11)

Together, these trends suggest the need for a reassessment of strategies for future global campaigns. As the next chapter shows, however, feminists are no longer so focused on the UN, as the powers they need to challenge are vested in the institutions which shape the global political economy.

Chapter four The macro-context I: The reproductive body in the global political economy

[F]rankly, in my view, the money that's being moved for women's discussion has been to get women's attention exclusively focused on reproduction again and leave the debates on economy to the men. ... So, the women's movement needs to transcend the agenda of reproductive obsession and balance attention and focus also on issues like global economy and globalization since they do affect our lives. (Vandana Shiva 1996)

4.1 Overview

Chapter four moves from the micro to the macro level in search of answers to the question 'Why didn't the ICPD change the world?' It locates the (female) reproductive body in the global political economy, beginning the examination of the macro concepts and trends which shape population and reproductive politics. Chapter five continues the discussion by looking at how the reproductive body is located in the globalised political ecology. A gender lens is applied in order to discern the gendered politics embedded in economic and ecological approaches to population and reproduction.

This thesis argues that 'macro' issues, which include the broad area of global political economy and the role played by international financial institutions in global governance of population and reproductive issues, were largely unexplored at the ICPD.⁹⁴ By contrast, when addressing the issue of population, key international actors like the World Bank tend to ignore the 'micro' issue of reproduction. The organisers of the ICPD believed that its reproductive rights and health approach was a major achievement, because "population growth problems cannot be tackled through a macro numbers approach: solutions must be found at the micro level. ... Programmes must be based on a proper understanding of people and their needs as individuals and communities, on the status of women, and must represent a genuine effort to help meet such needs in a caring and sensitive manner" (Sai 1997, 6). The corollary of the emphasis on the micro issues of individual women's rights and health was the failure to address the impact of international, macro trends on governments' ability to implement the transformative aspects of the POA. In this, the POA is typical of UN conference

⁹⁴ Chapter III of ICPD's POA which deals with these issues is examined in more detail in Chapter five of the thesis.

documents which “describe problems, but ... fail to analyze the roots of the problems, so, often the proposed solutions are either inadequate or unworkable” (Riley 2001).

In the 1990s, discussions about reproduction and population were couched in broader debates about sustainable development, a term adopted for global discourses on environment and development by the Brundtland report, Our Common Future (WCED 1987). Most feminist organisations preparing for ICPD did not tackle this concept, nor did state delegations want to reopen the topic after UNCED.⁹⁵ The contentious place of population in debates about sustainable development is explored in the next chapter of this thesis.

The POA links the micro conditions of women’s lives to the broader economic context of development with its assertion that women’s empowerment is “essential for the achievement of sustainable development” (UN 1994, 4.1). I argue here that it is women’s labour, rather than their empowerment, which underpins sustainable development.⁹⁶ In particular, the unpaid reproductive labour of women provides essential services which underpin the formal economy but is not ‘counted’ in national economic statistics.⁹⁷ Despite its centrality to sustainable development, however defined, and its integral relationship to population issues, women’s reproductive labour was not addressed at the ICPD.

The links between micro and macro issues have been established in a growing literature, with contributions from many feminist scholars. The dominance of neoliberal economic approaches is reflected in the growing influence of global economic institutions such as the World Trade Organisation (WTO) which, feminists argue, oversees a trade regime which has deleterious impacts on the lives of poor women. Concurrently, as described earlier in this thesis, the United States-based moral right movement has increased its political influence over some governments, recruiting them

⁹⁵ Harcourt (1997a) and Gita Sen (1994a, 1994b) have presented their concerns about the implications of ‘sustainable development’ for women.

⁹⁶ Here I include productive as well as reproductive labour, in the understanding that demand for women’s work is conditional upon availability of suitable men and subject to the relative price of their labour, where this is remunerated.

⁹⁷ See Waring 1988 for a detailed analysis from a feminist perspective of the calculation of national accounts.

in their campaign to restrict women's access to their rights. Since both approaches have disastrous implications for women's empowerment, reproductive health and rights, a number of feminists are engaged in exploring links between the two trends.⁹⁸

In this chapter, I explore the connections between the micro aspirations of the feminist agenda for reproductive rights and health and trends at the macro level of the global political economy in which they must be realised. To do this, it is first necessary to outline the major trends in the global political economy through the 1990s and early twenty-first century, in particular, the dominance of 'neoliberalism'. I then address the dislocation of micro and macro economic levels, and consider whether the intermediate 'meso' level provides opportunities for governments to secure the enabling conditions necessary for women's human rights. I examine feminist critiques of the way that economics is conducted in the globalised world and analyses of the difficulty of incorporating a gender perspective in the areas of government concerned with economic management. I consider Amartya Sen's concept of 'development as freedom' and the 'rights-based approach to development' (which incorporates the 'right to development') to determine whether these are useful avenues for feminist campaigns for women's empowerment with the potential to provide the enabling conditions for reproductive rights and health.

In examining institutions which shape the global economic environment I focus on the operations of the World Bank since it plays a decisive role in shaping development, provides a high proportion of funds to population programs and plays a key role in bringing developing countries into the global political economy. To show how policies shaped in boardrooms and offices impact on governments and are felt at the level of women's bodies, I look in detail at the impact of Bank and International Monetary Fund advice and conditions on one country which has been subject to their intervention. While a number of low income countries could be used to illustrate the argument of this thesis, Indonesia is chosen as a case study because it is frequently heralded for its success in lowering fertility. Adjustments made in response to the 1998 economic crisis demonstrate the impact of structural adjustment on women's reproductive health and empowerment. The country study reveals the impact of 'macro'

⁹⁸ See Sen and Correa 1999 for an argument linking campaigns for economic justice and women's rights.

development policies and political economy on the ‘micro’ of women’s health and reproductive lives, illustrating why the ICPD POA failed to change poor women’s experience of the world.

4.2 Population and the economic orthodoxy

The ICPD occurred at a time when concerted efforts were being made to transform the global political economy. The economic approach which was strengthened by these processes is labelled variously in the literature of political economy: neoliberalism (Brain 1999), orthodox liberalism (Cohn 2000), neoclassical economic theory (Stretton 1999), the rational expectations-equilibrium theory (Dornbusch and Fischer 1987) and the Washington Consensus (Martin 2000a). In this thesis, I use the term ‘neoliberalism’ and the term ‘New Washington consensus’ (Martin 2000b) to refer to later adjustments which give governments a minor role in providing ‘safety nets’, such as food supplements and subsidised health and education services, to assist the ‘losers’ in the neoliberalised global economic environment. An explanation of neoliberalism is outlined below.

Contemporary neoliberal economic theory takes the view that “[e]conomic growth is not difficult and could be largely left to markets” (Brain 1999, 5).

The balance of payments will behave itself and growth will be maximised by policies which facilitate specialisation in products in which a country has at least a comparative advantage. These products, of course, would be identified by untrammelled markets and strategies should be adopted which remove any obstacles to the workings of market forces. (Brain 1999, 62)

According to this theory, how do low income countries fare when the market determines their economy? The World Bank describes the “mechanism of mutual benefit” which includes the following processes. Macroeconomic reform to open the economy will improve “cost competitiveness” and attract capital flows which will, in turn, improve productivity and capacity in the relatively unskilled manufacturing sector. This improved competitiveness will increase poor countries’ penetration into high income markets, expanding local production and increasing demand for low-skilled labour which will lead to increased wages in low income countries. Real wages will fall for low-skilled workers in high income countries, but this is compensated by cheap imports. Increased real incomes of workers in low income countries increases the demand for medium to high technology goods and services from high income

countries, which will increase demand for high-skilled workers in high income countries, leading to rises in their incomes.⁹⁹ The state's role is reduced to "applying policies and establishing collaborative, co-operative networks between businesses, and between businesses and government" (Brain 1999, 63).¹⁰⁰

Neoliberalism had been applied to 'population' before the ICPD under the label of 'revisionism'. The idea that the market should be allowed to define reproductive decisions was introduced by the United States at the 1984 Population Conference. Earlier approaches, which saw population growth as deleterious to economies, since catering for increased numbers required investments in infrastructure and services would reduce savings and restrict the ability of economies to grow, justified programs to reduce fertility. At Mexico City, the United States instituted its 'Global Gag rule' which added a moral reinforcement of its economic decision to reduce funding of population programs.

In the revisionist approach, individuals, couples and households are characterised as 'rational reproducers' whose decisions are allowed to determine macro population trends.

[C]ritical behavioral decisions regarding population and development are made at the micro level - by households, by individuals, and by other entities - given the resources under the control of the decision-makers and the market and policy environments in which those decisions are made. (Behrman 2001, 371)

As Behrman's comment indicates, households are embedded in political economies, and the 'rational reproducer' is also influenced by social and cultural factors. There is little recognition that the 'rational reproducer' is a woman whose reproductive decision making is constrained by relations of power at every level of her life, from the household to the national and global economy.

Because it has created a policy environment in which funding to population programs is reduced, revisionism is unpopular with the population establishment which prefers the earlier orthodoxy that "population growth inhibited economic development—a relationship that impelled funding for programs to reduce population growth" (Sinding

⁹⁹ This list of assumptions is adapted from Brain (1999, 62).

¹⁰⁰ See Taylor 2000 for an expanded discussion of the state and neoliberal macroeconomic policy.

2002a). UNPD's recent predictions of eventual population stabilisation and decline have taken the sharp edge from neo-Malthusian interpretations. Revisionist approaches and the reinstatement of the Mexico City policy in 2001 made the global political economy an unsympathetic environment for attracting funds to population programs and reproductive health services. For a combination of reasons discussed in this thesis, the ICPD agenda failed to gain the financial support necessary for its success.

In 1995, the bilateral donor commitment to population assistance was \$1.4 billion which was \$3.6 billion short of the total bilateral and multilateral commitments for implementing ICPD by 2000. Seventy-three per cent of this came from just four donors - the US, the UK, Germany and Japan. ... [T]he 2015 target stands little chance of being met [since] aid from international donors has declined, especially from the US. (Standing 2002b, 8)

Nafis Sadik was concerned that the shortfall in funds was because ICPD's micro approach was of less interest to governments, UN officials and international financial institutions than earlier orthodoxies which framed population as a macroeconomic problem (Sinding 2002a). As a consequence, she organised a conference in the run-up to ICPD + 5 to highlight economic and population relationships. In his foreword to the collected papers from the conference, Conway suggests that 'revisionism' was unquestioned at the ICPD and led to an underestimation of the macroeconomic rationale for concern about high population growth (Conway 2001, v). At the 1998 workshop, demographers and economists revived arguments that rapid population growth reduces economic growth in developing countries. In summary, their findings are that, first, rapid population growth exercises a quantitatively important negative impact on the pace of aggregate economic growth in developing countries. Second, rapid fertility decline makes a quantitatively relevant contribution to reducing the incidence and severity of poverty for poor families, creating a 'demographic window' of opportunity. Third, the impact of rapid demographic change on the rural sector is mixed (Birdsall and Sinding 2001, 6).

As I argue in this chapter, the neoliberal framework now forms the context in which governments make decisions about funding for health and other programs related to reproductive health. Therefore, bodies like the UNFPA have the challenging task of convincing governments that population and reproductive health are cost-effective investments. On one hand, it must convince developing countries that their growing populations are a problem and that improving women's reproductive health is a worthwhile intervention. On the other, it must convince developed countries that

investing in population and reproductive health programs in high fertility low income countries is a good investment. However, in the neoliberal economic environment, where development assistance from North to South flows at lower levels than debt repayments from South to North, it has been difficult to persuade governments concerned about their own low fertility, ageing societies that investments in population programs elsewhere will benefit them. Making a case for improving women's reproductive health is similarly difficult. Current trends at the macro level of the global political economy are inimical to the implementation of measures to improve women's access to their reproductive rights and health because women appear in economic models as ungendered beings, despite their crucial reproductive inputs in creating future workers and consumers, and despite their own roles in these processes. A gender lens shows a different picture, as explored below.

4.3 The micro, macro and meso in economics

Part of the difficulty in revealing women's essential economic contributions is the division of economic processes into 'macro' and 'micro'. These terms, which are used to describe separate branches of economic policy, are artificial divisions, but convenient labels, as Stretton (1999) points out. The microeconomy refers to component parts of the national economy, primarily households and firms, while the macroeconomy describes the system as a whole, including aggregate levels of employment and investment, total consumption and the money supply (Stretton 1999, 648; Alexander and Baden 2000, 16-17). The strict division between the specialised approaches opens a wide crack through which gender relations fall (Alexander and Baden 2000, 16).

This gap reveals an area of growing interest to feminist economists. Structural adjustment programs imposed on national economies by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank are based on macroeconomic aggregates, which obscure impacts and issues at other levels, including elasticities of supply and demand, mobility of factors of production, transaction costs and market competence which have direct impact on women's lives (Palmer 1991). There are levels more 'micro' than microeconomic theory recognises, as Folbre's extensive work (1988, 1997) on the power relations which shape women's economic decision-making within households suggests. Furthermore, economic models fail to capture the interaction between the

micro and macro economic arenas. Feminist economist Frances Stewart identified the 'meso' level in order to make interactions between the micro and macro visible.

[Meso] refer[s] to a level of analysis between the [macroeconomic] aggregated national economy and the [microeconomic] level of individuals, firms and households to draw attention to the critical policy-making process especially with respect to public finances. Meso policies concern the distributional impact of macro policies, determining which income group, sector and gender bears the brunt of reforms. (Alexander and Baden 2000, 18)

The meso is the level where governments and institutions make interventions to correct the 'failures' which result from the market's inability to "capture the full value of women's labour" (Alexander and Baden 2000, 18). Birdsall's work suggests that changing demographic trends requires interventions in the 'meso' area.

[T]here is an important set of policies and programs implied in the analyses of economists ... that joins the macroeconomic analysis of economic consequences of aggregate demographic change with the microeconomic emphasis on maximising the well-being of individuals and families. (Birdsall 2001, 414)

Birdsall was an economist at the World Bank from the mid-1980s until the late 1990s and her approach to gender, population and development is reflected in the Bank's approach. Her work explodes revisionism's myth of the 'rational reproducer'; she stresses that the poor make their reproductive decisions without full knowledge of the market. While Birdsall supports the Bank's macroeconomic approach she advocates interventions at the meso level to compensate for the market's failure to provide the 'right signals' to poor women. These policies, which include increasing girls' education and providing reproductive health and family planning services, are the basis of the Bank's "win-win" approach to population.¹⁰¹

[C]ombined with some simple welfare economics and a bit of common sense about the goals of development, they [her examples] strengthen the argument for public support of policies and programs that improve the environment in which the poor too often make constrained decisions about childbearing. Most broad development policies, from deepening of financial markets and rationalization of labor market regimes to expansion of girls' education and of reproductive health and family planning services, meet this test. ... Moreover, to this justification for policy based on the congruence of efficiency gains along with gains in well-being, we can add the additional justification that policies to improve the environment in which the poor make fertility choices are likely also

¹⁰¹ See Birdsall 1994a for a fuller explanation of the synergistic links between poverty, development and population.

to move societies closer to the 'right' distribution of well-being. (Birdsall 2001, 416)

All three levels - micro, meso and macro - are relevant to the political economy of reproduction. ICPD's POA's recommendations are directed primarily to the meso area, since this is the area over which governments, the Programme's main audience, have most control. Interventions were also suggested for the micro level, through recommendations to change the balance of power in gender relationships and involve men more in the household's reproductive work. The area most neglected was the macro area, which was taken as a 'given', as the next chapter explores. The organisations involved in setting the agenda for ICPD failed to account for the political economy of reproduction. Their focus on the UN and the reproductive rights and health approach blinded them to international processes occurring concurrently with their own preparations.

4.4 Globalising the political economy

In this section I outline trends which were occurring in the global political economy alongside the ICPD and its preparatory meetings. This is a complex topic to deal with in a short discussion, but it is important for the purposes of this thesis to establish the ways in which these trends relate to my exploration of why the ICPD failed to change the world. The global political economy is a major force shaping the world and its impact on poor women is profound.

Of all the regional preparatory and other official preparatory meetings for ICPD, only the Latin America and Caribbean Population and Development Conference discussed macroeconomic issues. The conference concluded that "[e]xternal debt and its servicing" prevented "those countries from giving priority to social programmes aimed at raising the population's standard of living" (cited in Johnson 1995, 35). These concerns were weakly reflected in Chapter III of the POA, backgrounded by the ICPD's micro focus and proposals for government action in the meso sphere. While more attention to the macroeconomic sphere may not have produced different results - the POA is only an advisory document - global political economic trends play a major role in shaping reproductive and population politics and inhibit governments' ability to take the quantum leap offered by the ICPD POA. Consequently, in this section I bring them into debates about population and development.

While feminists were campaigning at Rio de Janeiro, Vienna, Cairo and Beijing for women's rights, a different set of global talks was taking place in other cities among different actors. These meetings were geared at setting up a global institutional architecture to accelerate governments' implementation of the neoliberal economic agenda. These discussions were greatly influenced by representatives of corporations and their lobbying bodies, and the resulting framework leans strongly in their favour.¹⁰² Human rights and social justice were not on the agenda of these talks and, as many feminist economists have argued, environment, women and the poor were afterthoughts added to appease critics of the neoliberal globalised economy.

The early machinery of the globalised economy was established as the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) at the Bretton Woods conference in 1944.¹⁰³ The GATT was extended by a series of multilateral trade negotiations. The last of these was the Uruguay Round which began in 1986 and concluded in 1995 with the Marrakesh Agreement that embedded the GATT in the World Trade Organisation (WTO) as the major multilateral body governing trade and investment.¹⁰⁴ WTO structures are more formal than its predecessor's, and extend beyond trade in goods to include trade in services (through the General Agreement on Trade in Services - GATS), trade-related aspects of intellectual property rights (TRIPS), and trade related investment measures (TRIMS). The WTO can enforce compliance through the trade policy review mechanism and settle disputes through its Disputes Settlement Body. Any country may seek membership of the WTO, where each has an equal vote. Nonetheless, reliance upon consensus decision-making favours the countries which act as an informal agenda-setting group, collectively known as the Quad: United States, European Union (EU), Canada and Japan.

The formation of the WTO effectively ruled out the possibility of a revival of initiatives like the G77's New International Economic Order. Many of the Southern governments seeking reform in the 1970s had experienced levels of economic growth which tended to make their governments less critical of the global order. Other governments were

¹⁰² There is a wide literature on this topic; see, for instance the contributions to the volume edited by Stubbs and Underhill (1994); Korten (1995) is a key text for proponents of this perspective.

¹⁰³ The World Bank and IMF were also products of this process.

¹⁰⁴ This discussion is based upon Cohn 2000, especially Chapter eight, Global Trade Relations.

clamouring for entry to the GATT in the hope of gaining markets for their agricultural and manufactured goods. In addition, global lending institutions were demanding, as a condition of structural adjustment programs, that indebted governments decrease spending and liberalise trade to receive the necessary IMF stamp of approval for financial assistance. The special and differential treatment that low income countries received under the GATT had been eroded, reducing their leverage in the global trade arena.¹⁰⁵

Trade in the 1990s was fundamentally different from the regime that the GATT was designed to address (Cohn 2000). One-third of trade is conducted among affiliates of international firms, and consequently, is less exposed to state regulatory policy. While neoliberal economists argue that low income countries benefit from increased involvement in the global economy, most trade and investment interactions occur between Western Europe, North American and East Asian economies (Cohn 2000, 357). The support promised to developing countries with capacity-building and gains in areas such as agricultural and textiles trade is yet to materialise.

Companies based in the quad countries are driving the trade liberalisation agenda.

As globalization as (*sic*) increased, a growing proportion of domestic firms in the advanced industrial states have become reliant on multinational operations, imports, exports, and intrafirm trade. These internationalist firms have played a major role in pressuring for trade liberalization at both the global and regional levels. (Cohn 2000, 230)

The World Bank and IMF advise low income countries to tackle poverty by increasing exports and putting more effort into attracting investment. Current evidence indicates that a very small proportion of investment flows reaches the poorest countries, with Africa receiving a mere 0.6 per cent of total world foreign direct investment flows (OECD 2002, 5). Levels of development assistance from wealthy countries are falling, especially to the poorest countries. Far from achieving the goal of 0.7 per cent of GDP agreed at the UN in 1970, the average level of aid from the developed countries of the G7 has fallen throughout the decade to a low of 0.21 per cent of GDP in 1999

¹⁰⁵ See Korten 1995 and Raghavan 1997 for critical perspectives on the WTO and other institutions of the globalised political economy.

(Mehrotra 2002, 531).¹⁰⁶ Less than ten per cent of this is allocated to the social sector, which includes education, health, water and sanitation, the ‘enabling conditions’ of reproductive rights. The percentage of assistance to population and reproductive health services has increased, but this has provided little improvement in reproductive health services to poor women, since access of birthing women to skilled birth attendants increased only from forty to forty-two per cent while limited inroads have been made on unmet need for contraception (Mehrotra 2002, 533). Reproductive health advocates are pessimistic about campaigning for increased funding from a diminishing aid pie (Proctor 2002).

Private United States-based foundations have stepped in to partially plug the gap vacated by governments.¹⁰⁷ High profile foundations with a special interest in population and reproductive health-related issues include the Bill and Melinda Gates, Ford, MacArthur, Packard, Mellon, Rockefeller and Turner Foundations, and they have proved to be a rich source of funds to NGOs, the UN and its affiliates.¹⁰⁸ Pierce (2002), in comparing UNFPA’s capacity to the private foundations which provide much of its core and project funding, noted that “The Gates people dwarf us”.

Billionaires are able to pursue their special interests by granting funds to selected organisations, often cutting across the plans of multilateral institutions and raising the ire of governments.¹⁰⁹ Ted Turner, who has promised the UN \$US100 million annually over ten years, to be allocated according to his fund’s priorities, has a liberal neo-Malthusian view of population and environment problems. “I see the whole field of environment and population as nothing less than the effort to ensure the survival of the human species” (Turner undated). Turner’s aims incorporate the ICPD’s reproductive health and rights agenda, and he has provided funds to UNIFEM for “women’s needs,

¹⁰⁶ While wealthy countries endorsed the Millennium goal of bringing development assistance up to the level of 0.7% GDP by 2015, it remains to be seen whether this will occur, and what form that aid might take.

¹⁰⁷ See Knickerbocker 1999, Rembert 1999 and Rogers 1998 for more information on the kinds of projects that private philanthropists favour.

¹⁰⁸ Time Wirth, who led the United States delegation at ICPD, was appointed Director of the Turner Fund in 2002 (Imse 2002).

¹⁰⁹ An instance was the Gates Foundation’s donation of \$US200 million to fight HIV/AIDS in India, raising the ire of the Indian government, which was not, at that time, prepared to admit that the disease was of problem proportions (UN 2002b).

including family planning and children's health" (Atlanta Journal 2002). The Packard Foundation, which is also a large provider of funds to population programs and advocacy groups, is much more populationist in approach, according to its web page.

Continued growth of the world's population places unprecedented demands on the earth's resources, and impacts the quality of life for both present and future generations. The mission of the Population Program is to slow the rate of growth of the world's population and to expand reproductive health options among the world's poor. (Packard Foundation, undated)

Capitalist 'philanthropy' provides funding opportunities to NGOs which might otherwise be openly critical of the inequitable global political economy. Due to their origins in capitalist enterprises, private funds will not often be allocated to projects that challenge the economic structures that have enriched their donors. There are exceptions to this, however; DAWN acknowledges on its web site that it receives support from the Macarthur Foundation.

A strong critique of trade and investment liberalisation has emerged from development organisations.¹¹⁰ The gendered impact of neoliberalism, however, has been overlooked by most critics despite the publications of Southern feminist organisations like DAWN, the International Gender and Trade Network (IGTN) and Northern feminist economists.¹¹¹ Northern feminist NGOs, despite their international focus, paid little attention to the meetings shaping the global economic architecture. Lobbying Western European and North American governments in the early to mid-1990s to take a strong stance in favour of human rights took precedence over global political economy matters. They focused on the UN conferences which placed their issues on newspapers' front pages in preference to the meetings of the Uruguay round, which were reported further back in the business pages.

A different set of government actors was involved at each set of meetings. The bureaucrats and Ministers from Departments of Trade, Finance and State Treasuries

¹¹⁰ See Kwa (2002) and Khor (1992) who represent organisations based in the South (Focus on the Global South and Third World Network respectively) which have developed a strong critique of trade liberalisation.

¹¹¹ See Acosta-Belen and Bose 1990; Afshar 1991; Bakker 1997; Buvinic 1983; Elson 1989, 1991 and 1998; Grown, Elson and Cagatay 2000; Haddad *et al* 1995; Hopkins 1996; Moghadam 1998; Palmer 1995; Sassen 1996, 1998; Sen and Correa 1999; Sparr 1994; Whitworth 1994a; and Youngs 1995 for a representative sample of the literature.

who attend trade meetings have a stronger voice in domestic political decision-making than their counterparts in ministries and departments concerned with environment, human rights and population. As Mason (2002), Director of Gender and Development at the World Bank, points out, economists and finance bureaucrats tend to speak only to each other and to favour arguments couched in the language of neoliberal economic theory. Thus, IMF and World Bank economists converse with State Ministers of Economics and Planning in Northern and Southern governments “who went to the same universities” (Mason 2002) rather than to health and education planners.

State finance ministries have avoided taking gender issues seriously in their planning, in the belief that only economic experts should be involved in financial decision-making (Gita Sen 2000a). Treasuries and finance ministries have escaped domestic and international lobbying from feminists due, Sen suggests, to the ministries’ lack of receptive structures and attitudes and most women’s organisations’ inadequate knowledge and poor capacity to effectively lobby them. Women with expertise in reproductive health and rights tend to focus on the micro perspective of women’s lives which financial planners and trade negotiators see as irrelevant to their work.

The World Bank has, since the late 1990s, begun to acknowledge the relationship between macroeconomic policy-making and social issues. The economic crises of East Asia in 1997 demonstrated that the ‘macroeconomic’ has major impacts on the ‘social’. As yet, however, there is no evidence that changes introduced by the IMF and World Bank (‘the New Washington Consensus’) will make any difference to poor women’s lives. Elson and Cagatay argue that the three major biases of mainstream macroeconomic approaches - deflationary bias, male breadwinner bias and commodification bias - combined with the IMF and World Bank’s over-riding objective to reduce government deficits “prevent the formulation of gender-equitable people-centered development” (Elson and Cagatay 2000, 1348). While the Bank has made a commitment to consult with affected communities, the IMF sees no need to take ‘participation’ beyond Ministers of Finance and Governors of Central Banks (Elson and Cagatay 2000, 1352). The World Bank and IMF have been unable to reconcile the macro with the meso level where social policy is designed. Their solutions to protect the poor are limited to the introduction of temporary social safety nets.¹¹² To

¹¹² This approach is scrutinised more closely in the section on post-crisis Indonesia later in this chapter.

do more would require fundamental institutional change which, as the discussion of the World Bank below demonstrates, would be unacceptable to their Boards.

Applying a gender perspective highlights the link between micro, meso and macro economic levels and reveals how policies applied at one level impact on all the other levels. As DAWN points out, the perspective of “poor and oppressed women” provides a “unique and powerful vantage point from which to examine the effects of development programmes and strategies” (Sen and Grown 1985, 17). Palmer argues that misconceived macroeconomic policy ‘trickles down’ to other levels of the economy.

If the assumptions made upstream are based on misconceptions, policies will fail to work downstream at the meso and micro levels. This is what is meant by linking the macro and the micro. In plain language if macroeconomic policy is to be effective it must be informed by what agents at the micro level can and wish to deliver in response to signals transmitted to them via the meso level of the market. (Palmer 1995, 1981)

Poor women are clustered at the micro economic level. The view from this location provides a different picture of the meso and macro economies to that seen by politicians, bureaucrats and other policy makers. Economic planners who wanted to benefit the poorest could be expected to seek their views. Indeed, the skills, resources and ability that would facilitate poor women’s participation in policy development are integral components of the ‘empowerment’ that the ICPD POA centralised in its transformative micro agenda. However, poor women’s views are rarely sought in the design of services directly related to their lives. As the next section explains, services for their general and reproductive health are being redesigned with little thought to women’s needs and interests.

4.4.1 Sexual and reproductive health in the context of health sector reform

Neoliberal reform of the health sector is profoundly altering health service delivery in many countries. While the governments of very poor, heavily-indebted countries have had little power to influence the direction of these reforms, civil society organisations have had less. The pattern for health service delivery is set by multilateral institutions such as the WHO, IMF and World Bank and bilateral donors.¹¹³

¹¹³ Standing (2002) provides much of the information for this section.

The World Bank Report of 1993, Investing in Health, outlines the reform agenda for countries struggling with debt and collapsed social sectors. It recommends reduced public financing of health services, increased involvement of the for-profit and not-for-profit sector, the introduction of sector mechanisms to improve cost control and increased cost recovery mechanisms (user charges, pre-payment schemes and insurance). In the early years of the reforms, which were required as part of structural adjustment programs, the increased role of the private sector and proliferation of separately funded projects resulted in a fragmented and uncoordinated health system where some localities were poorly serviced and specific health needs overlooked. More recently, sector wide approaches (SWAs) have been introduced in which governments, the 'pool' of aid donors and multilateral institutions set priorities for longer term planning. Project-based funding continues. Priorities for funding are set on evidence-based data expressed as Disability Adjusted Life Years (DALYs) "which were invented by health economists to measure years of healthy life lost due to fatal and non-fatal disease and disability" (Berer 2002, 8). Since pregnancy, menstruation and menopause are not diseases, although some girls and women experience serious health issues with them, sexual and reproductive health has fared poorly in the competition for funding. The World Health Organisation has attempted to address this problem, identifying problems with the data on which DALYs are based, which tend to concentrate on maternal mortality and morbidity, since "[o]nly the five direct obstetric complications that result in maternal death (haemorrhage, sepsis, hypertensive disorders, obstructed labour, abortion) were taken into consideration [in the World Bank's Global Burden of Disease survey of 1990 on which DALYs were based] along with estimates of the prevalence of major STDs (syphilis, gonorrhoea, chlamydia), HIV/AIDS and reproductive cancers" (WHO 1998).

Feminist health advocates, with their focus on the micro concepts of reproductive rights and health, have only recently woken up "to what has been going on around us" (Berer 2002, 7). As we have seen, the international women's health movement and family planning organisations played an important role in shaping the agenda of the ICPD and its reviews. NGOs and the UNFPA had the opportunity to make connections between the failure of the ICPD POA to gain financial support with macroeconomic trends like health sector reform. However, the focus and efforts of the NGO Forum at ICPD + 5 were on Southern governments' reluctance to take up the reproductive rights and health agenda rather than upon obstacles to their ability to do so (ICPD + 5 NGO Forum 1998;

IPPF 1998). As Chapter three shows, the international women's health movement also had to again counter the attempts by the moral right to roll back the Cairo programme. A group of parliamentarians meeting at the Hague Forum included a paragraph titled 'Economic crisis' in their Declaration.

The effects of recent economic crises have been very severe, including falling gross domestic products, soaring unemployment, rapid inflation, sharp declines in consumption levels and difficulties in servicing external repayments. The implications for health and social sectors have been particularly devastating. (UNFPA 1999d, para 28)

This paragraph links funding problems with economic crises, rather than recognising that neoliberal macroeconomic policies, through health sector reform, are supporting decisions to reduce government funding of these services, leading to a perpetual health crisis for the poor who rely upon state-funded services. This is illustrated by the Indonesian case study below.

As discussed above, feminists attempting to establish dialogue with economic and finance bureaucrats encounter differences of culture, priorities and perspective. Health reformers focus on "system level change but with no associated monitoring of outcomes for health or their impact on service delivery" (Standing 2002, 21). The rights-based Cairo and Beijing visions of women's health are invisible to those setting priorities, for five reasons. First, health economists, who speak a managerial, technocratic language and feminists, who use the language of advocacy, rarely interact at the national and international level. Second, health sector reform focuses on the macro economy and the supply side of the health equation, looking no further than financing mechanisms and human resource issues while reproductive health advocates are more interested in the micro level issues of service delivery. Third, sexual and reproductive health services are seen as the province of special interest groups who must compete for funding with other groups. Fourth, "sexual and reproductive health advocates did not sufficiently understand the importance of engaging with reforms at a systems level" (Standing 2002a, 22). Finally, the reproductive health agenda has been presented within a human rights framework whereas the WHO and Global Health Fund use a "public goods approach" which combines the language of social justice alongside enlightened self-interest of states (Standing 2002b, 9).

These are major obstacles and it is unlikely that health economists will initiate attempts to bridge them. For this reason Tom Merrick, a Program Adviser on population at the

World Bank, advises reproductive health advocates to seek every opportunity to “be at the table” when resources are allocated.

It is important that [reproductive health advocates] do not leave resource allocation decisions up to the economists and finance people. They need to be familiar with the language and analytical tools of reform... (Merrick 2002, 136)

This strategy requires that feminists increase their economic literacy and knowledge of the power structures of financial and health bureaucracies in order to raise the demand for funding of sexual and reproductive health services above “special pleading” (Merrick 2002, 135). Standing (2002) recommends using the language of the ‘public goods approach’ to convince finance departments that funding for reproductive health is a good investment. This is far from the human rights approach taken at Cairo and Beijing and shifting to the language of economic discourses will require a major reorientation of the international women’s health movement’s campaign. In this chapter I explore the usefulness of framing a rights focus in the broader right to development for the achievement of reproductive health objectives.

4.4.2 Human rights: a challenge to global economic structures?

The right to development has been enshrined as a human rights instrument since 1986. The Declaration on the Right to Development recognises the indivisibility of all human rights and attaches it to communities and to the individual (DFAT 1998).

The emphasis on the right to development reflects the conviction that a narrowly defined notion of economic development is not enough to [create the conditions necessary for the universal enjoyment of human rights]. Development that occurs without respect for human rights and the rule of law remains incomplete. Development leads to the strengthening of human rights to the same degree that the promotion and protection of human rights provide the basis for sustainable development. (Department of Public Information, UN 1998, 22-23)

At the Vienna Conference on Human Rights in 1993, the right to development was extensively discussed, and the High Commissioner took on the task of reorienting the implementation of economic, social and cultural rights by giving the right to development special attention (Department of Public Information 1998). Governments agreed to take a human rights approach to development at the World Summit on Social Development several months after the ICPD. The Human Development Report of 2000 ranks states according to their ratification of human rights instruments and proposes a framework for a rights-based approach to development (UNDP 2000). The

International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights has potential as a tool for claiming the rights of poor women; the main problem with the instrument is that it is rarely enforced.

In strengthening the operation of the ICESCR from women's point of view it seems important to pursue both a violations approach which can focus on individual cases and a capacity building approach which can focus on the systematic design of a rights-based approach to economic policy, informed by a gender-aware understanding of how economies function. There has to be an emphasis on strengthening the property rights of poor women, not only in terms of their ownership of private property (including not only land rights, but also job rights etc), but also in terms of their rights not to be excluded from common property, both national resources and social and physical infrastructure. (Elson and Gideon 1999)

The components of Correa and Petchesky's (1994) enabling conditions for reproductive rights are encompassed in the right to development.

Human rights and human development are both about securing basic freedoms. Human rights express the bold idea that all people have claims to social arrangements that protect them from the worst abuses and deprivations - and that secure the freedom for a life of dignity.

Human development, in turn, is a process of enhancing human capabilities - to expand choices and opportunities so that each person can lead a life of respect and value. When human development and human rights advance together, they reinforce one another - expanding people's capabilities and protecting their rights and fundamental freedoms. (UNDP 2000)

Centralising a rights-based approach to development, however, requires a transformative approach to macroeconomic policy.

The fulfilment of the right to development requires a fundamental change in the way that development is perceived and a rethinking of the current tendency to measure development as economic growth, subjecting other social and political objectives to this objective. (Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative 2001, 43)

The neoliberal agenda promoted by the international financial institutions threatens to over-ride the global human rights conventions and agreements established and reaffirmed at the UN conferences of the early 1990s and their reviews. As Elson and Cagatay point out, the social justice principles established at the 1990s UN conferences "will be extremely difficult to realize in substantive ways unless macroeconomic policies are brought out from behind closed doors" (Elson and Cagatay 2000, 1361). To be useful, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights needs to be used not only negatively (identifying and addressing violations) but also positively (building capacity to implement it).

In strengthening the operation of the ICESCR from women's point of view it seems important to pursue both a violations approach which can focus on individual cases and a capacity building approach which can focus on the systematic design of a rights-based approach to economic policy, informed by a gender-aware understanding of how economies function. There has to be an emphasis on strengthening the property rights of poor women, not only in terms of their ownership of private property (including not only land rights, but also job rights etc), but also in terms of their rights not to be excluded from common property, both national resources and social and physical infrastructure. (Elson and Gideon 1998)

The Beijing Women's Conference began a shift within global feminist networks from an over-riding emphasis on women's human rights towards campaigns on economic issues. By the time of the five year review in 2000, the detrimental impacts of transnational corporations and global financial institutions on poor women's livelihoods were clearly visible to feminist organisations. Riley (2001) believes that the shift in women's attention to macroeconomic issues coincided with the change in rhetoric of the UN and other development-related institutions from adding WID to mainstreaming GAD. The GAD approach "demands transformative change in gender relations from household to global politic and policy and within all the mediating institutions, such as governments, the World Bank, the IMF and the World Trade Organization" (Riley 2001). At Beijing + 5, Northern feminist networks began to combine the human rights approach fashioned through campaigns at UNCED, the UN Conference on Human Rights and ICPD with demands for economic justice (Grown, Elson and Cagatuy 2000, 1154).

In a rights-based approach to economic and development policy, access to the goods and services necessary for survival, such as sufficient nutritious food, water and adequate housing, are regarded as basic entitlements. They are the pre-requisites for what Amartya Sen terms "development as freedom" (A. Sen 1999) and provide the basis from which people can demand other freedoms and rights. These include the freedom/right for self-actualisation through education, freedom/right of movement and the freedom/right to determine one's reproductive and sexual life. Good reproductive health is a basic requirement for this last freedom/right. Sen's approach is valuable to feminist reproductive rights advocates since he offers a political, action-oriented and holistic approach rather than a technical 'add-on' to business as usual.¹¹⁴ As Sen points out, 'freedom' or 'access to the full range of human rights' is both the means and the

¹¹⁴ See Symington 2001; AWID 2002.

end of development, and thus, provides a useful framework for evaluating its impact on people.

Women's freedoms are central to a 'rights-based' approach to development.

Nothing, arguably, is as important today in the political economy of development as an adequate recognition of political, economic and social participation and leadership of women. This is indeed a crucial aspect of "development as freedom." (A. Sen 1999, 203)

They are also the prerequisite for 'solving' the 'population problem' and provide a powerful argument against coercive practices.

[T]he solution of the problem of population growth (like the solution of many other social and economic problems) can lie in expanding the freedom of the people whose interests are most directly affected by over-frequent childbearing and child rearing, viz., young women. The solution of the population problem calls for more freedom, not less. (A. Sen 1999, 226)

A rights-based approach to development and the perception of 'development as freedom' are yet to enter the lexicon of economic policy-makers. While the UN's Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights (2002) asserts that "human rights are the primary objective of trade, investment and financial policy", it also acknowledges that "international economic law and human rights law have developed as two parallel and separate regimes, with the risk that human rights principles, instruments and mechanisms will be marginalized as highlighted by the actual or potential human rights implications of World Trade Organization agreements". This has proved to be the case, since the WTO has so far refused to accept that human rights are relevant to its trade negotiations. Furthermore, the lobbying of multinational corporations has kept them immune from human rights obligations, since the guidelines for the conduct of multinational enterprises remain voluntary¹¹⁵ (OECD 2001).

While campaigns to require transnational corporations to comply with human rights charters and multilateral agreements have been unsuccessful and were further set back at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002 (see Chapter five), efforts to integrate a rights-based approach in multilateral institutions may have a better future.

¹¹⁵ In the later 1990s, the OECD appeared to be moving towards the imposition of obligations on the investment of MNEs (multinational enterprises) but veered away from this towards the establishment of voluntary guidelines which companies could choose to report on, but generally do not.

Feminists have set their sights on the World Bank in particular, as it has been responsive to campaigns to improve its environmental credentials and to take a gender perspective, though its operating framework and major objectives militate against the transformative change required. In the next section, I explore the policies and practices of the World Bank presented in reports, other documents and critiques to determine its approach to the micro concepts of women's rights and reproductive health and ascertain its openness to a rights-based approach to population and development.

4.5 The World Bank in the global political economy

The World Bank plays an important role in setting the agenda for development policy in many countries of the South.¹¹⁶ It is a major lender: in the early 1990s, it distributed over \$US20 billion in loans annually (Kardam 1993, 1994) making it the South's largest creditor (Bryant and Bailey 1997, 87). Each dollar lent may raise two or three more from aid agencies, private banks and recipient governments, increasing its effect. The Bank's country and sector-strategy reports prescribe economic regimes to individual governments and influence the planning of donors, and its structural adjustment loans are conditional on governments altering their domestic spending, with far-reaching social, political and economic ramifications (Kardam 1993). "The Bank is now the largest external financing agent for health activities in low and middle income countries and exerts an enormous influence over international and national health policy" (Standing 2002b, 7).

The Bank's work has a number of indirect effects as well. It is the largest employer of economists, it performs more development-related research than any other financial institution and it commissions a large amount of research from external consultants (Reddy 2000).¹¹⁷ Its focus on specific topics in annual reports reflects its own policies, sets the terms of public discourse and influences national governments. The World Bank, however, is criticised by developing countries and NGOs for representing the

¹¹⁶ It does so with its partner Bretton Woods institution, the IMF. The World Bank was set up as the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development by the Bretton-Woods conference in 1944, along with the IMF. Although it has 150+ member countries, it is controlled by a Board of Directors which is constituted by representatives of those countries which provide the most finance. Voting is weighted according to contribution; industrial free market economies have over half the available votes.

¹¹⁷ Much of the Bank's research in the 1970s and 1980s set out to establish the determinants of fertility (O'Brien *et al* 2002).

perspective of the Western industrialised governments which dominate its Board. The United States contributes one-fifth of its funding and has equivalent influence on the Bank's board (Kardam 1993). Consequently, Bank reports cannot be regarded as an objective presentation of best development practice.

Reports published, or initiated by the World Bank ... present themselves as offering an objective view of 'development' issues, untainted by political considerations. This view draws for its authority on the strategic position of the World Bank ... as a body able to define for national governments and commercial institutions the creditworthiness of indebted governments. 'Power' gives authority to 'truth' which offers legitimacy to 'power'. (Williams 1995, 174)

Through all the above, the World Bank contributes to the framework of the International Political Economy (IPE). It is a major proponent of neoliberalism and the so-called 'new Washington consensus' (Martin 2000b). Neoliberalism is forced upon developing countries through a package of policy instruments regarded by the Bank and the IMF as necessary elements of 'first stage policy reform'. Structural adjustment programs contain all these components: reduced budget deficits, elimination of subsidies and administration costs, tax reform, liberalisation of interest rates, manipulation of exchange rates to increase the range of goods and services exported, encouragement of foreign direct investment, privatisation of state enterprises, abolition of regulations which impede the entry of new firms or restrict competition, and extension of private property ownership. "The essential characteristic of the 'Washington consensus' was belief in the universal applicability in all circumstances of these abstract 'laws of economics', to the extent that all other areas of both public policy and academic discipline are subordinated or entirely squeezed out" (Martin 2000a, 2). As the list above indicates, the needs of poor women are "squeezed out" by the policy imperatives of neoliberalism.

4.5.1 The World Bank in International Population Politics

At the ICPD five year review, the World Bank claimed that it was "the single largest external financier of human development programs in developing countries also working with partners and client governments to address population issues within a broader context" (World Bank 1999a). The Bank increased loans to population programs by \$US 2 billion after 1994, claiming that they assist in poverty reduction and human development. "Even more lending has been provided through support for child survival, girls' education, and the empowerment of women, where the links to

population and reproductive health are indirect” (World Bank 1994a). I argue that this expenditure indicates concern about population growth rather than women’s welfare.

As an influential proponent of the ‘free’ market, the Bank’s position on population is an interesting anomaly. Despite its major role in forcing neoliberal economic policies on client states, the Bank is not ‘revisionist’ in its approach to population. It has advised Southern states’ governments to bring down fertility rates since the early 1980s, when the president, Robert McNamara, claimed that “population was the overriding cause of poverty in the developing world” (Finnemore 1997, 214). In most other health-related areas, the Bank was advising privatisation in the context of health sector reform, presented as a framework in its 1993 World Development Report Investing in Health.

The Bank’s progress towards becoming a major funding source for population programs has been gradual. Prior to the 1980s, it lacked staff with the expertise to formulate programs, and was geared to providing governments with technical advice about building power plants and dams which better suited its interest in moving large volumes of money. Nonetheless, the Bank responded to the Malthusian concerns of British and Indian elites and financed the setting up of a Population Project Department in 1969 (Caldwell 1998). In 1972, it initiated social sector loans to India for the First Population Project (PIRG 1996).

The 1984 annual report, published prior to the Mexico City Population Conference, signalled a change in the Bank’s overt approach to population. Published directly after the 1980-83 recession, it gives two grounds for state interference: “divergences between private and social calculus of high fertility” and “the absence of market mechanisms capable of meeting the ‘substantial unmet need’ for family planning services in many Third World Countries” (Kabeer and Humphrey 1991, 85). The fear that a Malthusian future awaited the poor countries of Africa and South Asia led to the assertion that “rapid population growth is a development problem”. Defined thus, population growth is a suitable subject for the World Bank because it reduces the quality of life for millions of people and impedes savings and investment, the engine of economic growth. The 1984 report advises governments to introduce measures to reduce population growth.

In short, policies to reduce population growth can make an important contribution to development (especially in the long run) but their beneficial effects will be greatly diminished if they are not supported by the right macroeconomic and sectoral policies. (World Bank 1984, 105)

“The right macroeconomic and sectoral policies” include “the maintenance of an open trading system” and a shift from agriculture to manufacturing exports (World Bank 1984, 41). In other words, the policies which the Bank advocates for development conveniently have the synergistic effect of slowing population growth.

The 1984 advice of the Bank has been echoed in later publications dealing with population. “Policies to reduce population growth” include encouraging breastfeeding, increasing female literacy and increasing the use of contraceptives. Prolonging girls’ school attendance is considered the single most effective way of reducing fertility and maternal and infant mortality and morbidity since it delays marriage. Entry of women into industrialised labour markets is also desirable, since “research tends to show that urban women who work full time, particularly in ‘modern’ jobs, have fewer children” (World Bank 1984, 110). Further, governments are urged to increase the status of women and bring down fertility rates by guaranteeing women’s rights within marriage, divorce and inheritance. More accessible family planning services will enlarge “the choices available to people, a central purpose of economic and social development” (World Bank 1984, 127). Family planning also “improves the health of mothers and children. Both infant and maternal mortality in developing countries could be substantially reduced if pregnancies were spaced at least two years apart, and if pregnancies among teenagers and women over forty were prevented” (1984, 127). The bulk of this advice, Rathgeber (1995) suggests, links the improved maternal health and declines in birth rates to increased economic efficiency and productivity; women’s health and well-being, while a welcome consequence, is not the primary objective.

At Mexico City the World Bank disagreed with the Reagan administration’s revisionist position on population. The Bank’s president asserted that “[t]he evidence is overwhelming that rapid population growth impedes efforts to raise living standards in most of the developing world” (Clausen 1984, 29). The World Bank committed itself to expanding family planning services in client countries and supporting research into contraceptive methods, in the belief that “we shall have taken a giant step toward more rapid economic and social development in the developing world” (Clausen 1984, 36). Bank funding in part compensated for the shrinkage of United States spending on family planning during the Reagan administration’s Global Gag rule. The Bank’s increased spending on population allowed the United States to continue indirect funding of population programs out of the sight of the moral right which prompted the

Mexico City policy. It reflected the opinions of many European delegates on the Bank's board.

The Bank developed a 'population' focus before it adopted a 'gender' focus (Kabeer and Humphrey 1991). The World Development Decade for Women, 1975 to 1985, was slow to make an impact on the Bank, although neoliberal economist, Ester Boserup (1970) pointed out the shortcomings of development policy in regard to women well before it began. Women are invisible in the Bank's 1978 report, although population is mentioned briefly.¹¹⁸

The prospect of large additions to the population, to be supported by scarce resources, underlines the urgency of strengthening family planning programs, of establishing the institutional framework for sustained improvements in agricultural productivity, especially among small farmers, and of implementing special programs for employment and the distribution of essential public services directed at the poorest sections of society. (World Bank 1978, 46)

The Bank appointed a Women in Development (WID) adviser in 1975 and in 1979 she produced a position paper making a strong case for integrating women into development. Using language that economists could understand, she argued that this would improve economic efficiency. She also pointed to women's lack of power in trade unions, their double work load and inequities within households (Kabeer & Humphrey 1991; Chowdhry 1995).¹¹⁹ In 1987, a WID Division was established, and later, WID coordinators were placed in each of the Bank's regional centres. In 1994, the Bank promised to mainstream gender concerns, claiming that it was changing its operational framework from WID to Gender and Development (GAD) (Rounag 1995, 24).¹²⁰ The Bank's increased attention to gender issues reflects the efforts of Northern and Southern feminists and the Norwegian, Netherlands and Swedish governments (Siddharth 1995, 35). The mainstreaming of gender is incomplete, however, since Country Assistance Strategies, the main documents prepared by the Bank to develop and evaluate loan programs, are not required to incorporate gender equity and human

¹¹⁸ The World Bank's 1978 prediction for world population in 2000 is 3.5 billion, a little over half the actual 2000 population of \$6 billion.

¹¹⁹ The report was titled Recognizing the "Invisible" Woman in Development (Chowdhry 1995, 31).

¹²⁰ See Moser 1998 for recommendations as to how gender can be better mainstreamed in the Bank's operations (and a damning critique of its failure to do so). See also Razavi 1998 and 1998 for an outline of difficulties feminists have encountered in engendering institutions like the Bank.

rights, and civil society is excluded from the preparation of these documents (Barroso and Jacobson 2000, 359).¹²¹

The World Bank is in a powerful position to pressure governments to introduce policies to benefit women and girls through its Country Assistance Strategies. It has tended to reflect the views of national elite women, however, due to its limited consultation mechanisms.

The World Bank acts as a custodian, it determines the concepts, methodological categories and data base used to analyse gender issues. The 'donor community' controls the institutional framework (at the country level) ... Because the World Bank constitutes the main source of funding, national women's organisations associated with the seat of political power, will often endorse the World Bank gender perspective. (Chossudovsky 1995)

As many women's organisations argue, affirmative action for women does not, by itself, challenge the multiple power relationships by which women are oppressed.¹²² Some women are better situated to benefit from the Bank's interventions in societies where injustice is systemic and experienced according to class, race, ethnicity, location and age, as well as gender. The World Bank's Charter requires it to work with governments, not civil society organisations. Consequently, government-sanctioned women's organisations have greater opportunity to influence World Bank projects and oversee the establishment of women's bureaux and programs therefore reflect their notion of women's needs and service delivery.

For example, the mechanisms for integrating gender into planning and policy are often as complex and difficult as most mainstream planning. Moser describes planning cycles, data collection, monitoring and feedback procedures that would exclude all but the most formally educated women in the South (and North). (Parpart 1995, 236)

This indicates, as I argue in the next section, that the Bank's understanding of empowerment is limited by its economic framework.¹²³

¹²¹ See below for an outline of the recent Country Assistance Strategy for Indonesia, where the same problem arises.

¹²² See the contributions to Marchand & Parpart 1995.

¹²³ I use the word 'economic' to define an approach that prioritises neoliberal economic considerations above all others.

4.5.2 The World Bank's notion of empowerment

The World Bank began to use the term 'women's empowerment' as an objective of development in its 1990s Reports. Its notion of empowerment is, however, generally limited to the provision of primary education for girls, increasing women's access to economic resources and increasing access to reproductive health services. The Bank's 1993 report, which has had direct impacts on poor women's health, coopts the term 'empowerment' for neoliberal economic objectives. The Bank's 'empowered' women are more successful at maintaining their own and their families' health and have fewer children (World Bank 1993 82-86). While the 1993 report prioritises women's reproductive health, it is narrowly defined. More attention is given to the reproductive health problems of the one-third of women in their reproductive years than the two-thirds who are not. Merrick, Senior Population Adviser, was less interested at that time in women's empowerment and reproductive health than in providing contraceptives to the "burgeoning" numbers of women entering their reproductive years (Merrick 1992).¹²⁴ The report is particularly concerned about the health of married women since male violence and repeated pregnancies and related ill-health reduce their ability to care for families, harming "the health of other family members, particularly young children" (World Bank 1993, 50), impacting on the economy's health.¹²⁵

The Bank's concern about girls' education is similarly instrumental in approach.

[G]overnments also need to expand basic schooling, especially for girls, because the way in which households, particularly mothers, use information and financial resources to shape their dietary, fertility, health care, and other life-style choices has a powerful influence on the health of household members. (World Bank 1993, 7)

This rationale for education treats girls as biological reproducers rather than producers. Education, it is implied, 'disciplines' girls as good mothers, responsible for the care of the rest of the household. This approach to education offers little for girls' diverse needs and ambitions.

¹²⁴ The appointment of demographer Thomas W. Merrick as Senior Population Adviser in 1992 may have given strength and commitment to the Bank's population division (see Carty 1992, Merrick 1992). Merrick had been President of the Population Reference Bureau and was a strong advocate of the 'unmet need' approach.

¹²⁵ This was the major human rights issue that feminist human rights activists campaigned around in Vienna in the same year; its mention in the report may be strategic, although its instrumentalisation would indicate otherwise.

The World Bank in the early 1990s was out of phase with the objectives of the international women's health movement, indicating a lack of consultation with stakeholders. Despite its title, Investing in Health, the 1993 report focuses on the macro issue of population rather than women's reproductive rights and health. At that time, the Bank's direct funding of population programs had increased to \$US1.3 billion (Shiva & Shiva 1994b) from \$129 million in 1986 (Sai & Chester 1990). Bank President Preston's speech and World Bank publications prepared before the ICPD focused on achieving sustainable development through reducing poverty and slowing population growth. Preston urged development planners to "ensure the effective implementation of their programs: by better targeting resources, so they reach the poor; by strengthening partnerships; and by keeping population issues at the forefront of the policy dialogue" (World Bank 1994c).

The publication of the ICPD draft POA provided a new language for the Bank and phrases like "safe and effective services that meet individual reproductive health needs" entered media releases and speeches (World Bank 1994c, 15). By contrast, the Bank's 1994 report, Infrastructure for Development, prepared before the draft was available, expanded 'women's empowerment' to encompass participation in the economic sphere but did not recommend women's empowerment as a worthwhile objective in its own right.

The 'empowerment' of girls and women is promoted in World Bank documents only where such improvements are seen to have flow-on impacts on the economy. Southern women are depicted either as vehicles for economic aims or victims of culturally-imposed ignorance. Descriptions such as "women in the South generally lack self-confidence, education and basic skills, even for feeding children' reinforce the construction of Third World women as a homogenous, vulnerable group in need of development by Northern experts" (Chowdhry 1995, 34). The empowerment of 'women' was to be addressed by interventions focused on women; occasionally, however, men's role was acknowledged.

Full realization of the benefits of increased female educational attainment for women's productive and reproductive roles in society ... also requires empowerment of women through better legal protection for young girls and unmarried women, improvements in reproductive health and counseling services, commitment by parents and community leaders, *and most important, changes in the attitudes and practices of men.* (World Bank 1994c, 75 - italics mine)

Generally 'gender' is a synonym for 'women' in World Bank parlance, and much is expected of them. President James Wolfensohn, appointed by the Clinton administration, put women at the forefront of the Bank's rhetorical agenda. At the 1995 Beijing Women's Conference, he delivered a speech entitled 'Women and the Transformation of the 21st Century' which centralised women in efforts towards sustainable development, economic advancement and social justice. Wolfensohn reaffirmed his "commitment to the crucial importance of harnessing their talents with equal opportunity and fairness for all".

[N]ot to empower women is a tragically missed opportunity - not only to create a more just, but also a more prosperous society. Empowering women, by the same token, means ensuring their full participation in every aspect of development. (Wolfensohn in World Bank 1995b)

Despite the escalation of economic and social benefits claimed from 'empowered' women, this is not a quantum leap for the Bank. Its notion of empowerment remains limited to girls' schooling, economic participation and extending credit to poor women for micro-enterprises, based upon the Grameen Bank model in Bangladesh. These micro economic interventions have been criticised for skipping the poorest women, who are not good credit risks. Those assisted are unlikely to move from the margins of the formal economy, where their empowerment is limited. Feminist research reveals that, unless combined with broader programs and accompanied by measures to safeguard their control over loans, micro-credit programs do not guarantee improvements in women's lives.¹²⁶ Furthermore, they reinforce, rather than destabilise the economic structures which have impoverished women in the first place.

Because the Bank focuses on education as a primary means of empowering women, it deserves close scrutiny. While feminists are unlikely to oppose an increase in girls' education, they are unlikely to endorse its instrumentality. The Bank does not propose to give girls very much education, as can be seen in Wolfensohn's comment below, or to offer a high quality curriculum which responds to their needs, or to give women access to education and training after leaving school.

¹²⁶ See Goetz and Sen Gupta 1996, Kabeer 1998, Mayoux 2002, Rozario 2000 and Samuel 1997 for examinations of the impact of microcredit programs on women.

Of these investments, female education, particularly at the primary and lower-secondary level, is the most important as it is the catalyst that increases the impact of other investments in health, family planning, agriculture, industry, and infrastructure. Women themselves are agents for change because they play a key role in shaping the welfare of future generations. (Wolfensohn in World Bank 1995b)

The literature on the links between girls' schooling and their subsequent empowerment is inconclusive. Barroso and Jacobson sum up a wide body of research and conclude that it fails to reveal a correlation between years spent at school with women's ability to control their own lives. They suspect that the Bank associates decreased fertility, which is one of few measurable outcomes related to increased years at school, with women's empowerment.

But reduced fertility *per se* is not an accurate indicator of broader changes in women's autonomy or empowerment, or the full realization of reproductive and sexual rights. (Barroso & Jacobson 2000, 353)

Jeffery and Jeffery agree that the Bank emphasises the link between schooling and lowered fertility. "[A]mong the economists of the World Bank ... female schooling and empowerment are not issues worth fighting for, unless they bring with them the promise of lower fertility" (Jeffery & Jeffery 1997, 256-7). Like Barroso and Jacobson, they refute the assumption that school attendance *per se* increases girls' empowerment or that educated women are more empowered. Their research in India suggests that attending school is not a reliable predictor of women's empowerment.

The general Cairo arguments fail to look closely at what is meant by schooling, and how its content and meaning can be dramatically different in different places at different times. ... Girls' schooling can lead to women's empowerment only when class, community and gender politics are changed to make this possible. ...

Women who have been to school will not be empowered by their schooling if they remain embedded in structures which limit their room for manoeuvre (*sic*). (Jeffery & Jeffery 1997, 255-256)

Jejeebhoy confirms this observation. She found that in settings where gender inequality is high, education may increase women's use of contraceptives and childcare but it rarely threatens traditional power structures. Nor does education, by itself, lower fertility. Bledsoe *et al* (1999, 3) confirm that "the assumption of a simple causal relationship between higher levels of female schooling and lower fertility is not universally supported by the empirical record". Jejeebhoy concludes that "such contextual factors as the overall level of socio-economic development and the extent to which the society is male-dominated can condition the effect that small amounts of

education have on women's lives, including their reproductive behaviour" (Jejeebhoy 1995, 177).

The content of education is as important as its availability. The number of girls in schools is quantifiable, but what goes on inside the school-room is variable and difficult to track. Lloyd and Mensch (1999) found that demographers tend to conclude that formal schooling is uniformly positive since it often leads women to delay marriage and childbearing and invest more in the fewer children they produce. Yet, they observe, schools often reinforce the gender inequalities of the larger society because ideologies are embedded in the content and style of education delivery. For many religious movements schooling is a political strategy, delivering different material to boys and girls or denying girls access to education altogether (Freedman 1996). In a secular society, school curricula may reinforce a market-based, consumerist approach (Williams 1999). Barroso and Jacobson suggest that education intended to reduce fertility and empower girls and women, men and boys would provide information about sexuality and human rights, but Diamond *et al* (1999) found that family planning education was by no means universal, especially in the primary education which is all that most children in poor countries receive.

The World Bank ignores these complexities and suggests that educating girls is a solution to poor countries' economic and population problems. Wolfensohn admitted in his speech to the Beijing Conference that women may be hurt by structural adjustment programs but suggests that specific interventions for social objectives, in particular, the education of girls will overcome their disadvantages.

Education for girls has a catalytic effect on *every dimension of development*: lower child and maternal mortality rates; reduced fertility rates; increased educational attainment by daughters and sons; higher productivity; and improved environmental management. Together, these can mean faster economic growth and - equally important - wider distribution of the fruits of growth. In addition, educating girls opens the door to economic and political opportunity for future generations. (Wolfensohn 1995, italics mine)

These are big claims, and pragmatic feminists who support education as a human right may temper their criticism if the rhetoric is reflected in better education for more children. The Bank's belief in education for girls, however, does not extend to making it free and universal. The Bank requires user-pays imposts on social services regardless of the prevalence of poverty in client states, thereby removing access to health services and education from those who need it most. The impacts have been profound and

counter to the Bank's stated objectives; in Ghana, seventy-seven per cent of Accra's street children dropped out of school when fees were imposed (Dunne 2000). More attention is given to the impact of user fees in relation to health, below.

The World Bank is a dispersed institution with multiple centres of power. The Bank's global public profile is established at its central office in Washington but at the periphery, where projects are conducted, practices may not reflect rhetoric. Six World Bank Poverty Assessments from four Sub-Saharan African countries indicate that GAD approaches have not trickled down (Whitehead and Lockwood 1999). No amount of gender mainstreaming will produce better outcomes for poor women when the implementing body fails to understand that poverty is experienced differently by women and men (Barroso and Jacobson 2000, 362; Donaldson 2002).

As noted earlier, education of girls is a major component in the ICPD POA's strategy for empowering women. Indeed, education is an integral component of population programs. In the following section, I investigate whether the World Bank's population programs fulfil the POA's objectives.

4.5.3 The Bank's population policies in practice

The Bank's instrumental approach to empowerment has been the subject of feminist critique, as described above. At the ICPD and the WCW, the World Bank came under fire for structural adjustment programs' impact on poor women's health and lives and for some of its population programs.¹²⁷ Although the Bank's rhetoric focuses on increasing the access of girls and women to education, critics accuse it of prioritising the diffusion of contraceptives and family planning programs in population and women's health programs. In this section, I assess the Bank's performance in the field.

The Bank has played a significant role in the establishment and maintenance of population programs. The Bank's access to officials and politicians at the highest levels has assisted in the establishment of population programs in Turkey, Jordan, Malawi,

¹²⁷At Beijing, during the official conference, UNIFEM organised a panel on Women's Empowerment, Globalisation and Economic Restructuring. One of the panelists was Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala of the World Bank, who argued that feminists' criticisms of SAPs were based on misinformation and she 'urged her audience to inform themselves to strengthen their capacity to influence adjustment policies as a process of empowerment' (Tsikata 1995).

Indonesia and Zambia (Sai and Chester 1990). Its economic influence over governments has allowed it to insist on the introduction of population programs. The Bank's structural adjustment assistance in Bangladesh was instrumental in having voluntary sterilisation placed in its family planning program (Sai & Chester 1990, 186).¹²⁸ A 1987 evaluation of the World Bank's effectiveness in population issues declared that "[p]erhaps the single most effective element in the Bank's work on population is the policy dialogue that links population issues with other aspects of development" (Simmons & Maru 1988 cited in Sai and Chester 1990, 189).

Hartmann accuses the Bank of promoting contraceptive use and other fertility control measures at the expense of broad health interventions, especially for older women and girls. For instance, a World Bank loan to Nigeria provides family planning with considerably greater funds than the Health Ministry's budget for all recurrent expenditures (Hartmann 1995, 127). The major killers of Indian women are under-nutrition and communicable diseases; girls under the age of fifteen make up thirty per cent of women's deaths while just over two per cent of women die from pregnancy-related causes. Yet the Bank focuses on women's reproductive health (Rao 1996). The two-tiered system advocated by the Bank, which gives wealthier women access to a better-resourced private sector while the government provides essential health services for the poor, "reduces women's health care to services during childbirth. ... Government will subsidize family planning services but ... women will receive contraceptives without medical supervision" (Turshen cited in Hartmann 1995, 138).

Feminists also criticise the types of contraceptives funded by the Bank. Norplant®, Depo-Provera and other implants and injectables are provided to poor women at low or no cost. Some women may choose them because they are long-lasting and can be used without partners' knowledge. However, they have significant side-effects and under-resourced health centres are unable to monitor the health of women using them. The Bank's support of the Indian Government's reproductive health program focuses "almost exclusively on the poor, with special attention to girls, scheduled tribes and scheduled castes" according to Shiva & Shiva (1994b, 28-29). At the end of the decade, despite a 'reproductive health' approach, Indian feminists were accusing some state

¹²⁸ Hartmann (1995) accuses the Bank of offering food for 'voluntary' sterilisations during famine periods in Bangladesh.

governments of making women's access to resources contingent on accepting contraception (G.Sen 2000b). Follow-up medical care is often not available.

The World Bank promotes the Safe Motherhood Initiative, aimed at reducing maternal mortality, in a number of countries. It was a condition of economic assistance to Egypt after the introduction of 'Open-Door Economic Policies'. Morsy saw the Safe Motherhood Initiative as "the masquerading of population-control efforts as humanitarian concern" (Morsy 1995, 172) and correlates it with reduced support for the integration of women into development.

Examination of the state's current policies regarding maternal and child health brings attention to the priority of population control as imposed by international aid donors. Far from "putting the M back in Maternal and Child Health" ... the selective focus on maternal mortality appears to be a medicalized form of fertility regulation. (Morsy 1995, 163)

Although Egyptian women are susceptible to a range of illnesses, the Bank and other western donors see 'excess fertility', defined as 'unmet need' (Cochrane & Massiah undated), as the 'disease' to be controlled, while it neglects poverty-induced malnutrition and funds programs which destroy local agriculture.¹²⁹

Brunet-Jailly finds that, by its own analysis, the Bank's interventions are

most successful in focusing on capital investment needs, developing infrastructure and providing supply inputs', but that success is 'modest' in cases which concern for example targeting the specific needs of the poor. ... Only 17 per cent of projects are reported as having contributed significantly to development.... Lastly, among the 68 projects whose project completion reports were analysed, only a few 'provided objective documentation of the impact of project investments on health, fertility or nutrition outcomes' (Brunet-Jailly 1999, 353).

Lisa McGowan (1998) shows that in 1996, the Bank's private sector lending accounted for forty per cent of Bank lending, much of it accelerating the transfer of ownership of state-owned industries and services to the private sector. The Bank's privatisation policies are exempt from its guidelines for participation and the mainstreaming of gender concerns. Owoh observes that the World Bank's health strategy for Africa is narrowing health options for the poor, as governments are steered towards 'market-driven' strategies of 'user-pays' and privatisation of health services which are neither

¹²⁹ Sixty per cent of rural Egyptian women are said to have 'unmet' contraceptive needs (Cochrane & Massiah undated).

solving the debt problems they are designed to overcome nor improving services. After fees were introduced, deliveries at one maternity hospital fell by more than seventy-five per cent (Owoh 1996, 224). *Fifty Years is Enough* (undated) cites a 1993 UNICEF report which blames the introduction of fees in the early 1990s for the deterioration of health services in Zimbabwe. As a result, deaths of women in childbirth doubled and fewer people visited clinics and hospitals. After the introduction of fees in Northeast Zimbabwe, attendance at one clinic fell from 1200 in March 1991 to 450 in December of the same year. Attendance at Nairobi's Special Treatment Clinic for Sexually Transmitted Diseases fell by forty per cent for men and sixty-five per cent for women over a nine-month period when fees were introduced. In India, the World Bank's promotion of the private health sector leaves the poor with nowhere to go (Gupta 2000). According to these accounts, the health sector reform promoted by the Bank cause ill health.

Without adequate employment, income, food, water, sanitation and access to comprehensive primary health care - which the World Bank's larger policies in the economic sphere are themselves undermining - the reproductive health approach, however fashionable and "gender sensitive," appears equally doomed to failure. (Rao 1996, 2)

An economic rationale underlies the Bank's advocacy for population control and reproductive health programs. *Investing in Health* points out that "reproductive health services" are among the "best buys" in terms of health returns for dollars invested (Aitken & Reichenbach 1994, 177). As this scrutiny shows, World Bank funded population programs have tended to focus on controlling poor women's fertility rather than their reproductive health needs, far from the holistic vision called for by the ICPD POA. While there are exceptions (see Donaldson 2002) these result from the campaigns of feminist health activists rather than Bank policy. The Bank's economistic framework takes the approach that women's health is a public good, where it matters at all, for all the reasons given by Wolfensohn above. As yet, it is far from accepting that women's health is a human right, as the discussion in the following section indicates.

4.3.3 The Bank and women's human rights

This sub-section explores the Bank's approach to rights in general and reproductive rights in particular. An analysis of World Bank reports indicates that the human rights focus of the UN conferences of the 1990s is not reflected in Bank policies despite lobbying by some of its employees and outside activists for a 'rights-based' approach to

development. The Senior Population Adviser avoided mentioning rights in his observation that the ICPD POA “parallels the Bank’s own move toward greater emphasis on social development and on balancing its goals of poverty reduction and human development with more traditional concerns about public finance and macroeconomics” (Merrick in World Bank 1999a). On the one hand, this is not an accurate depiction of the POA; on the other, the statement indicates the Bank’s reluctance to use a term central to the ICPD document. Petchesky (2000a, 21) observes that the World Bank and WHO “rarely if ever cast their policies in human rights terms as opposed to economic ‘cost-benefit’ terms”.

The Bank’s ability to incorporate human rights is limited by its Articles of Agreement which state that “only economic considerations shall be relevant” to its decisions (Gaeta and Vasilara 1998, 3). Enhanced human rights are a secondary consideration in a framework which prioritises economic growth. Often, the objectives run counter to each other as Elson & Gideon point out: “[t]he [human rights focus] treats people as ends in themselves, the [economic framework] treats people as means for production and subjects them to a financial calculus” (Elson & Gideon 1999, 31).

In the environment of the 1990s, an institution which had been the target of civil society campaigns for several decades had to address human rights. The Bank produced a 1998 report on human rights (Gaeta and Vasilara 1998) and held an internal seminar on the relationship between its lending policies and human rights (World Bank 2002). The records of this forum provide an insight into the diversity of opinion in the Bank and some employees’ desire to incorporate civil society themes. Ian Johnson, Vice-President & Network Head, Environmentally and Socially Sustainable Development Network reflected this in his question “how do we explain ourselves and how do we make ourselves even more relevant to [the human rights] debate?” (World Bank 2002, 13).

At the seminar, Wolfensohn argued that the Bank is actively promoting human rights (World Bank 2002, 10). He told staff that the Bank enhances rights by reducing poverty and giving people the chance for a better life. Nonetheless, he expressed frustration with limits placed on the Bank’s ability to explicitly promote human rights.

But generally the best way for us to proceed has been in a sort of step-by-step way, doing it quietly, trying to assert the delivery of rights, but not necessarily couching it in the terms of human rights....

How do we express [the notion that protection of human rights is at the base of poverty alleviation] without putting ourselves out on a limb politically and setting ourselves back in the pragmatic task of trying to achieve conditions under which people enjoy certain rights, whether it be for education, or for indigenous people, or for women, or for equality, or for whatever the particular enshrined objective in United Nations agreements are? (Wolfensohn in World Bank 2002, 10-11)

The Bank, he implies, is caught between two opposing positions. On the one hand, “external critics are quite vocal in saying that the Bank is inhibiting the provision of rights, and that the conditions of Bank lending or the overhanging debt is an abomination in terms of the ability to deliver rights” (World Bank 2002, 11). On the other, many of the Bank’s Directors and client states oppose an explicit human rights approach.

Some staff at the seminar felt that the Bank should explicitly promote human rights. As a first step, some expressed concern about their own human rights. “A claim was made for greater respect of freedom of expression at the Bank, including the need for greater transparency and openness for such a dialogue within the Bank” (World Bank 2002, 8-9). Other staff members argued that the Bank’s economic framework provided sufficient scope for a rights discourse. Alfredo Sfeir-Younis, Special Representative to the WTO and UN, warned that the mainstreaming of human rights would require major changes to the Bank’s value systems, content and procedures. He saw the two discourses as separate but complementary.

[I]ssues of rights have been debated in economics for years. ... Human rights and economic approaches are, in fact, two sides of the same coin, one defining the desirable and the other the possible. Economic policies without regard for human rights are inappropriate and incomplete, and a human rights package without economics is, at worst, simply a false promise or, at best, an act that will yield only short term benefits. (Sfeir-Younis in World Bank 2002, 7)

Wolfensohn argues that the Bank “contributes directly to the fulfillment of many rights articulated in the Universal Declaration [and t]hrough its support of primary education, health care and nutrition, sanitation, housing, and the environment, the Bank has helped hundreds of millions of people attain crucial economic and social rights” (Gaeta and Vasilara 1998). These are the enabling conditions of human rights, described by Correa and Petchesky.

Despite these claims, this thesis suggests that the kind of development promoted by the Bank does not enhance women’s ability to exercise their rights, except indirectly and not as a primary objective. The imposition of user fees contradicts universal rights to

health and education and the two-tier system resulting from the privatisation of health services leaves the poor without decent health care. Southern feminist organisations oppose privatisation of public health services, claiming that it limits women's right to health care. At the Third World Women's Conference Against APEC, held in parallel to the Kuala Lumpur APEC meeting, 182 women from a range of NGOs endorsed a statement that declared: "[p]rivatisation of health care is a violation of women's basic human rights to total well-being by denying them access to safe, appropriate, affordable, high quality preventive and curative health care. It also commodifies reproductive health needs" (Third World Women's Conference Against APEC 1998).

While the Bank has adopted the terminology of women's empowerment, it has not responded to feminist demands that women's reproductive rights and health be centralised in development and population programs. Freedman and Isaacs (1993, 24) argue that the Bank should be guided by legal and ethical standards when "it engages in 'population dialogues' and approves conditional loans for population programs [and] such standards should be fashioned by the international community according to international law, including human rights law". The quality of family planning programs is crucial to their acceptance by women.

A reproductive health program based on a genuine concern for the well-being of women is important and acceptable. One based on population or demographic principles will be rejected. (Pooley 1990 in Freedman and Isaacs 1993, 24)

In contrast to its silence on human rights in general, and reproductive rights in particular, the Bank actively promotes property rights. These fit with the neoliberal economic agenda and the Bank's Charter. The 1998 report on human rights discusses 'property rights' as though they have a legitimate place amongst the human rights enshrined in UN Declarations. Land ownership is, in the Bank's view, an 'enabling condition' for participation in every other aspect of social, economic and political life.

Property is the ultimate potential asset of every poor person. It is the foundation upon which citizens participate in community and political life. When poor people own property in a secure and recognized fashion, they are more likely to attend school, seek medical care, invest in land, protect the environment, and build social harmony. (Gaeta and Vasilara, 18)

The Bank does not say that property ownership indicates the possession of sufficient wealth to "participate in community and political life". 'Property rights' are an integral component of the neoliberal agenda of placing common property resources into private

hands. Poor people, by definition, are not in a position to exercise property rights. Bryant and Bailey (1997) and Shiva (1989) argue that it is *access* to land rather than ownership that provides the basis of livelihood for poor people in many Southern countries, and that land privatisation often reduces poor peoples'. In common property regimes, access rights vary according to complex systems of "rules and conventions which establish peoples' relationships to resources, translating interests into claims, and claims into property rights" (Gibbs and Bromley 1989, 22). Common property regimes involve multiple actors and fluctuate in response to shifting relationships, environmental circumstances and social conflicts and cannot be 'fixed' as the World Bank and state and business developers would prefer. The Bank's preference for the privatisation of public resources, including land, reflects the ideology of Hardin's 'tragedy of the commons' which is, I argue in Chapter five, Malthusian in its effect on the poor.

The Bank promotes property rights as a means of empowering women: "[s]trategies that strengthen women's property rights, can enhance their economic status *and* contribute to greater economic efficiency" (World Bank 2000a, 9, italics in original). This is a false claim since poor women are among the groups most likely to be displaced by the alienation of common land resources.¹³⁰ The impacts on their livelihoods can be profound. Kabeer (1994) and Wacker (1997) provide examples which show that taking land from common property regimes, where the poor may use it, and opening it up for private ownership, where wealthier people can purchase it, reduces poor women's ability to provide food and water and their power to negotiate in families and communities.¹³¹ Poor women lack purchasing power, and the loans available to them through the micro-credit schemes the Bank promotes are too small to purchase or rent land.

Property rights fit with the World Bank's Charter, reproductive rights do not. As this examination of the Bank's approach to human rights illustrates, despite the campaigns of Northern and Southern NGOs, a 'rights-based' approach to development is not likely

¹³⁰ Shiva (1988) offers many examples of this process in India.

¹³¹ Wacker (1997) describes the effects of the introduction of private land ownership in Kenya on Kikuyu women and Kabeer 1994, 153, describes the importance of land in the gender-differentiated experience of poverty in Bangladesh.

to be adopted by the World Bank while it retains its Charter. Further, many of the states which dominate its Board have shown little interest in promoting the right to development.¹³² Consequently, the Bank cannot assist the ICPD project of ‘changing the world’ with an explicit reproductive rights agenda, although it has the ability to improve the enabling environment for the achievement of those rights.

The Bank claims that it has mainstreamed gender and developed a GAD approach. If this is so, there is potential for the Bank, which is a major actor in the macro sphere of the global economy, to facilitate the ICPD agenda, by implementing policies for the empowerment of women. In the next section of the thesis, I examine debates on the Bank’s recent moves to ‘engender’ development to assess the potential of these processes to contribute to the enabling conditions necessary to improve Southern women’s access to their reproductive rights.

4.5.5 Women’s reproductive labour in ‘engendered’ development’

I have argued that, despite the efforts of feminists inside and outside the institution, the World Bank has not advanced women’s access to their reproductive rights and that efforts to change this situation are unlikely to gain the support of its governing bodies. This argument is supported by WEDO’s findings that, in 2002, the Bank’s Board of Governors included only 5.5 per cent women while they accounted for 8.3 per cent of its Board of Directors (WEDO 2002). Karen Mason, Director of Gender and Development at the Bank, reported that her unit experiences difficulties in “infiltrating” the thinking of Bank economists who represent “the elites of the elites of the world”. Many of the Bank’s professionals come from regions where women’s status is low and reflect their countries’ cultural expectations of women (Mason 2002).

Taking these constraints into account, the mainstreaming of gender within the Bank would be a major achievement. The document Engendering Development (King and Mason 2001) is a substantial effort to provide sound economic reasons for “an institutional environment that provides equal rights and opportunities for women and men and policy measures that address persistent inequalities” (King and Mason 2001, 1).

¹³² For the reasons given in this thesis, the human rights community was sceptical when the Bank began

For these reasons, **gender equality is a core development issue—a development objective in its own right**. It strengthens countries' abilities to grow, to reduce poverty, and to govern effectively. Promoting gender equality is thus an important part of a development strategy that seeks to enable *all people*—women and men alike—to escape poverty and improve their standard of living. (King and Mason 2001, 1 - bolding and italics in original))

The document's authors relate gender inequality to economic development and present a persuasive "business case" that gender inequality has "something to do with development" (Mason 2002). Research assistants and the major authors prepared an exhaustive literature review and commissioned twenty-seven background papers, many of them based on new research. Yet even in this comprehensive document, discussion of human rights remains general and is presented in terms of equality between men and women. Reproductive rights, which by their very nature are gender-differentiated, are missing from the document's brief discussion of rights.

Ensuring equality in basic rights. Gender equality in rights is an important development goal in its own right. Legal, social, and economic rights provide an enabling environment in which women and men can participate productively in society, attain a basic quality of life, and take advantage of the new opportunities that development affords.

Greater equality in rights is also consistently and systematically associated with greater gender equality in education, health, and political participation—effects independent of income. (King and Mason 2001, 13)

The most persuasive critique of the document relates to its lack of recognition of the role of reproductive labour in sustaining the economy. This omission indicates the limits of the ability of neoliberal economic policy to improve girls' and women's lives. In the draft stage of the preparation of the document, feminists from North and South pointed this out.

The document seems to focus exclusively on the aspects of development related to productive activity; and on gender roles in production. We would suggest that such a review is incomplete and distorted if it does not give substantial consideration to the reproductive functions which have to go on in a society to ensure its continuation from generation to generation. Some of the greatest conceptual advances in the gender and development literature to date have been on the invisibility of 'reproductive' as opposed to 'productive' work, and the artificial divide often set up between these two spheres, sometimes referred to as the 'commodity economy' and the 'economy of care' respectively. The artificiality resides in the fact that the productive economy could not function without the invisible, unaccounted-for inputs made to it by the reproductive economy. Unless the latter is afforded greater value - intrinsic value, rather than solely economic value - vis-a-vis the former, and unless

its discussions on human rights. See Gorina-Ysern 1999.

efforts are made to facilitate the integration of these two economies, attempts at promoting gender equity are likely to fall short of their objectives or even obstruct them, by inadvertently and invisibly transferring costs from the commodity economy into the economy of care. (Orton & McGee 1998)

In the final document, the work that women perform in households and families is acknowledged.

In almost all societies gender norms dictate that women and girls take primary responsibility for household maintenance and care activities. In developing countries household responsibilities often require long hours of work that limit girls' ability to continue their education and constrain mothers' capacity to participate in market work. Several types of interventions can reduce the personal costs of household roles to women and girls. (King and Mason 2001, 23)

The suggested interventions do not challenge gender relations. The Bank lists actions familiar from earlier documents, with a greater focus on women's economic participation: increasing women's education, wages and labour market participation "coupled with access to reproductive health and family planning services" (King and Mason 2001, 25); public support for child care services so that women and girls can have "greater economic participation"; and the advice that "[s]elected investments in water, fuel, transport, and other timesaving infrastructure can hasten reductions in women's and girls' domestic workloads, particularly in poor, rural areas—freeing girls to attend school and women to undertake other activities, whether related to income generation or community affairs" (King and Mason 2001, 24-25). Despite recognition that women work more hours than men, there are few concessions to women's reproductive roles. Measures, such as maternity leave, which reduce women's double load are cautioned against as they "may bias hiring decisions against women" by increasing costs to employers (Mason and King 2001, 24). The costs to women are not an issue, it seems. The Bank's suggestion for reducing the reproductive work load is, that those who can afford it should contract household work and childcare out to less well-paid workers. In this way, it is implied, economic benefits will trickle down to the poorest women. This recommendation indicates that the Bank has no intention of challenging class structures or changing the relations between rich and poor women; in its desire to get women into the labour market, it entrenches class divisions.

During its navigation of World Bank processes, Engendering Development has lost any transformative potential its authors may have intended. World Bank governors, board and client states look for "the business case for gender equity, not the social justice

case” (O’Brien *et al* 2002, 45). Despite the best intentions of some in the Bank, the project of ‘engendering’ development by empowering poor women may be impossible for the Bank.

This study has shown that the World Bank has failed in two ways to advance the Cairo agenda. At the micro level, it fails to promote women’s reproductive and sexual rights, although some of its programs have led to improvements in women’s reproductive health. Without explicitly focusing on the micro issues of human rights, the World Bank cannot shift the unequal gender relations which feminists challenged at Cairo and Beijing. At the macro level, the Bank perpetuates the assumptions of the neoliberal economic paradigm by invisibilising and naturalising the reproductive work of women and girls. Within this economic framework, increasing girls’ participation in education and paid work and facilitating their access to credit are not sufficient to empower women. The global political economy that the World Bank, IMF, the WTO and other international financial institutions police has proven to be antithetical to the quantum leap envisaged by feminists in the early to mid-1990s. The economic crises of the late 1990s in south-east Asia illustrates the vulnerability of poor women. In the remainder of Chapter five, I explore the impact of the economic crisis and the World Bank’s structural adjustment programs on Indonesian women and girls, with a particular focus on their reproductive rights and health.

4.4 Economic crisis, gendered impacts in Indonesia

Indonesia has been chosen as a case study for three reasons. First, Indonesia, with the world’s fourth largest population, was proclaimed at the ICPD as a model in engineering fertility decline, due to its attainment over thirty years of an overall fertility rate of three children per couple (Johnson 1995, 23).¹³³ Second, prior to the political and economic crises of 1998, Indonesia was regarded as an example of the success of the export-led economic growth model (Cohn 2000, 336). Third, the deep involvement of the World Bank in funding Indonesia’s population program and instituting a ‘rescue’ package after the crisis, in contrast to the experiences of Malaysia and South Korea, provides an opportunity to assess the Bank’s rhetoric against its practice.

¹³³ In 1997, Indonesia’s official population figure had reached 200 million.

Stretton argues that the policies which facilitated Indonesia's economic success prior to 1997 also contributed to the crisis which occurred when Western lenders called in their loans, while "selling down" borrowers' currencies, making it impossible for Indonesia to repay its debts (Stretton 2000, 126). As a result, GDP was halved to \$US580 per capita (World Bank 2001b, 5). The Australian Government development bureau, AusAID, described Indonesia's experience as "one of the twentieth century's worst economic collapses, surpassing in severity that experienced by developed countries during the Great Depression of the 1930s" (AusAID 1999, 7). Some critics accused the 'rescue packages' imposed by the IMF and the structural adjustment loans provided by the World Bank of exacerbating the situation (Stretton 2000, 126). While it is still too early to make decisive conclusions, observed trends indicate that the crisis increased poverty and that its impacts were profoundly gendered. Thus, the Indonesian situation provides a case study for the impact of the vicissitudes of the globalised political economy, combined with domestic political factors, on women's reproductive rights and health.

Indonesia played a strong role at the Fourth Asian and Pacific Population Conference held in Denpasar in 1992. The resulting Bali Declaration called for rapid progress towards population stabilisation (Johnson 1995, 181) and lacked a critique of macroeconomic trends. Indonesia's successful population program had almost halved fertility between 1968 and 1992. At ICPD, government delegates stressed approaches which strengthened family values "in accordance with each country's own culture, tradition and religion taking into account the level of its development without ignoring their individual and community rights as well as their responsibilities" (Haryono at the ICPD, cited by Johnson 1995, 156). Although a signatory to the Women's Convention, the Indonesian government reiterated its restrictions on abortion (Johnson 1995, 108) and was unwilling to allow women the right to control their reproductive lives.

Furthermore, it is also our conviction that decisions concerning sexual and reproductive matters are family decisions and therefore are not solely the exclusive rights of an individual. (Haryono 1994, cited in Johnson 1995, 156)

Haryono's understanding of women's empowerment reflects the World Bank's although he restricts it to the framework of the family.

My delegation is of the firm belief that the empowerment of women should be done through wider provision and access to educational opportunities, skill training and employment opportunities. ... This policy in itself is providing the

basic means of empowerment in the sense of empowering women and men to enable them to live and work together in facing the challenges and opportunities based on equality, sharing and caring for each other's dignity and welfare. (Haryono 1994, cited in Johnson 1995, 147)

Indonesian feminists were not invited to participate in the preparation of the government's position for the ICPD or ICPD + 5 and thus, were denied the opportunity to challenge their government's focus on population stabilisation (Correa 2000, 229). The government measured the program's success by demographic indicators with little regard to the principles of the ICPD POA (Hull and Hull 1997). Most government officials believed that Indonesia had been on the right track since the 1970s, and that the ICPD endorsed its approach; some officials asserted that Indonesia had "gone beyond ICPD" with its reproductive health programs and income-generating schemes for women (Sadli *et al* 1999, 257-58). Yet, the involvement of Indonesia's military force, ABRI, in providing facilities and personnel for 'safaris'- rapid visits to outlying districts to sign up as many 'acceptors' as possible - indicates that women's involvement was not always voluntary. "If the target is still high and has not yet been reached, and the people are difficult to reach, the army makes them a little bit afraid so that they are willing to come together for a family planning session" (family planning fieldworker in Hull & Hull 1997, 395).

[T]his ideology was never committed to notions of individual, and especially women's, rights, and as a result the family planning 'successes' in Indonesia are not necessarily consonant with the definitions of success sought by those with other ideological assumptions, a subject much in the spotlight in the period surrounding the International Conference on Population and Development. (Hull & Hull 1997, 398)

Nonetheless, its success in achieving its targets by the early 1990s allowed some adjustment in response to women's groups' criticisms about the lack of voluntarism and the poor quality of programs. BKKBN, the government department responsible for family planning, adopted the language of 'quality of care', but as Hull (1998, 30) points out, due to concern that implementing this approach would increase expense and reduce progress in fertility reduction, there was little effective change. Similarly, Correa noted that "in the first few years after Cairo, there was reluctance from the government to talk about the rights aspect of the [Beijing] Plan of Action in related seminars or meetings in areas that were regarded as sensitive and controversial, such as abortion, adolescent sexuality and reproductive rights" (Correa 2000, 229).

Correa argues that Cairo and Beijing produced little attitudinal change in most Southeast Asian governments which considered that they had already achieved satisfactory “gender equality, women’s empowerment, social and economic equity and accessibility of health care services” (Correa 2000, 231). These governments resisted the ICPD’s emphasis on enhancing women’s human rights. While the Indonesian government claims to have adopted a reproductive rights framework, its maternal mortality rate of 450 deaths per 100,000 live births indicates inadequate health care for pregnant women (UNSFIR *et al* 2001, 31; Correa 2000, 234).¹³⁴ Indonesia’s economic situation alone cannot be blamed for these failures. Hull suggests that improving the quality of services “is more a matter of changing the attitudes and behaviour of service providers and policy makers rather than purchasing technologies and equipment” (Hull 1998, 31). A number of problems in the Indonesian population program were evident before the crisis, as the Hulls point out.¹³⁵ First, the division of responsibility and funding between BKKBN and the Department of Health, which was responsible for general health programs, has caused reproductive health issues to fall between the cracks. Second, the program’s focus on increasing contraceptive acceptors rather than delivering quality services emphasised longterm methods such as IUDs, injectables and implants. Third, lack of consultation with users and NGOs about the program’s objectives and methods forced NGOs into the role of critics rather than partners. Fourth, the armed forces’ role in program delivery led to excessive militarisation, confusing demographic targets with political and nationalist ends. Fifth, increased private sector involvement in program delivery since the early 1990s has created a two-tiered service, offering greater choice of methods to men and women who could afford them while offering reduced services to the poor.

Although the Indonesian government believed that it was already more than fulfilling the POA, after ICPD it changed its rhetoric without changing its approach. Its notion of ‘gender equality’, for instance, did not increase male involvement in family planning

¹³⁴ There is disagreement about the level of maternal mortality in Indonesia, reflecting poor statistical collection. While I use the conservative estimate of 450 deaths per 100,000 in this thesis, ARROW (Sadli *et al* 1999) uses WHO’s estimate of 650 deaths per 100,000. The Indonesian Government claims in one part of its report to ESCAP that maternal mortality has been reduced to 334 deaths per 100,000 and in another that it remains high at 390 (Republic of Indonesia 2002).

¹³⁵ This list is compiled from Hull and Hull 1997, Hull 1998, 2002 and Sadli *et al* 1999.

programs. Indonesia's family planning program has always promoted female methods of contraception and the Asian-Pacific Resource and Research Centre for Women (ARROW) study found that ninety per cent of birth control acceptors are women, since "mothers are considered to be more responsive and responsible than fathers" (Sadli 1999, 258). Hull (2002) reports that the combined reported use of male methods of condoms, vasectomy and withdrawal decreased from 3.1 per cent in 1987 to 1.9 per cent in 1997.

Leaders in the community and the family planning program became remarkably conservative about the idea of promoting male methods. Increasingly they questioned the efficacy of condoms and the acceptability of vasectomy, opting to ignore clear evidence that ordinary Indonesian men and women were quite interested in trying the male methods. ... As a result Indonesia in a time of HIV saw the steady decline in condom use for family planning and the failure of relatively inexpensive male sterilization to reach even one third of the number of female sterilizations. (Hull 2002, 5)

More than rhetoric to shift is required to shift culturally embedded discrimination against women. "Many, especially among the Muslim officials in government, feel that men and women are not equal from the start, so the question of equality should not arise" (Anwar 1999, 276). According to one NGO representative interviewed by the ARROW team, safe motherhood interventions are geared towards babies' health rather than women's. The government defines reproductive health narrowly as 'reproductive welfare', construed as "healthy reproductive functions that have an impact on the welfare of the family" (Sadli 1999, 261). "The term 'welfare' seems to accentuate the economic/material side [and] may divert the government's attention from issues of women's reproductive health and reproductive rights" (Sadli 1999, 266).

Most government agencies have not adopted the term "reproductive rights". The ARROW team found that in Southeast Asian countries "the term 'rights' is perceived as loaded with negative connotations such as free sex, homosexuality, abortion and other western values and practices regarded as unsuitable within the Asian context" (Anwar 1999, 276); this language is reminiscent of the moral rights. The ARROW team found that government officials at all levels had a poor conceptual understanding of reproductive rights and health and a selective approach to the ICPD agenda. In response to this criticism, the POA's sovereignty clause was invoked.

The Indonesian government couches discussion of individual rights within the context of women's social obligations. The ARROW report claims that, although the POA was translated into Bahasa Indonesian, poor women remain unaware of their rights to

control their reproductive lives and to good health. Macroeconomic trends have not changed the government's approach to reproductive rights, health and women's empowerment, but fiscal contraction restricts the government's ability to continue improving and expanding services. The impacts of the crisis on the Indonesian economy were immediate and stark. After expanding at the rate of seven per cent annually, the Indonesian economy contracted by thirteen per cent in 1998 (UNSFIR 2001, 35). The number of Indonesians living in poverty increased from pre-crisis numbers to twenty-seven per cent of the population at the height of the crisis in late 1998 (World Bank 2001b, 5). The impact was felt most strongly by the poor, who had not enjoyed the benefits of earlier economic growth. Health statistics show that many children are under-nourished.¹³⁶

The impact of the crisis fell disproportionately on poor women, increasing the social reproductive work they are required to perform (Francisco and Sen 2000). This was due, first, to the immediate rise in prices of basic commodities with imported content, with food prices rising faster than non-food items. To provide food for their families, women sought work wherever it was to be found, making sacrifices in their own nutrition. The Indonesia Human Development Report 2001 stated that female labour force participation increased from forty per cent in 1995 to fifty-five per cent in 1999. This did not increase their wealth, however, since between 1997 and 1998 the number of women on wages less than the poverty line doubled from eleven per cent to twenty-two per cent, while, in 1998, women's real wages were a third lower than men's (UNSFIR 2001, 13). Women's working days lengthened and they were forced to find new sources of income. Some resorted to prostitution which, due to the poverty of their customers, was not lucrative (UNFPA 1999a).

Second, the contraction of public funding impacted strongly on the health and education sectors. Government real funding of public education halved, from 1.4 per cent of GNP in 1996/97 to 0.7 per cent in 1997/98, while expenditure on health fell nine per cent per capita in 1997/98 and a further thirteen per cent in 1998/99 (World Bank 2000b, 4). Overall numbers attending public clinics decreased by 1.8 per cent, while the number of children attending clinics dropped by six per cent. Abortion rates

¹³⁶ Indonesia's Ministry of Health reported that in 2000, 4.5 million of a total of 25 million children under five suffered from malnutrition (Anon 2002b).

are reported to have risen dramatically due to rises in the cost of contraception (Anon 2000). While free treatment at public clinics is available to the very poor, many are unaware of their eligibility and others distrust the services or fail to meet the headman's requirements (Jellinek 1991; Mukherjee *et al* 2002). Consequently, funds for the social safety net administered by the government and funded by the Asian Development Bank were underspent. The Bank attributed this to government delays in implementing the program, weak eligibility and accountability checks and vague instructions given to civil servants, compounded by poor publicity of the availability of health cards (World Bank 2001c, 70).

The World Bank has been influential in setting the fiscal responses to Indonesia's political and economic crisis. The Bank highlights failures in transparent, fair and accountable governance and the lack of 'voice' of civil society as prime causes, while paying scant attention to the macroeconomic context of the Asian crisis.¹³⁷ Despite 'mainstreaming' within the Bank, its advice to the Indonesian government gives gender issues little attention. The Bank document, The Imperative for Reform, fails to mention gender altogether, and homogenously presents "the poor" as a group to be "empowered" through more participation "at every level of decision making ... [f]rom consultation in the planning stage, to community implementation of programs, to monitoring of poverty programs" (World Bank 2001a, 4.8). Its Country Assistance Strategy for 2001-2003 (World Bank 2001b) confines gender issues to a box entitled 'Gender Inequalities Persist in Indonesian Society' which lists examples of women's inequality: literacy figures (female illiteracy at twenty per cent while male illiteracy is at nine per cent), the concentration of women in low-skilled and poorly paid employment, the paucity of women in public positions and the extent of violence against women.

But these statistics do not give the full story. The inequalities are more deeply embedded and have been institutionalized. The main issue facing women in Indonesia is one of visibility and voice. Although the Constitution gives equal rights to women, successive state policy documents have defined separate roles for men and women: men as the heads of households and women as mothers and caretakers. And there is a concern that decentralization may reverse Government's attention to gender issues. (World Bank 2001b, 7)

¹³⁷ The reports consulted for this thesis include World Bank 2000c, 2001 a, 2001b and 2001c.

One half-page box in a key document does not imbue confidence in the Bank's mainstreaming of gender. Furthermore, it bypasses the Bank's own advice that the decentralisation which was occurring at its insistence might "reverse Government's attention to gender issues". The Country Assistance Strategy is prepared as a guide to economic planners by economists who, for the reasons noted above, do not see gender issues as relevant, despite Bank guidelines.

Indonesian men and women have different concerns. A third document, the Poverty Reduction Strategy notes that women are more likely to prioritise education for children, a clean environment and adequate sanitation while men list low social status as their main concern (World Bank 2001c, 3). The Strategy notes the limitations of using the household as the main unit of analysis, since women are hidden within it.

One cannot say how many 'women' are expenditure poor - one can only say what fraction of women live in households in which each member would be poor *if resources were distributed equally among all members*. (World Bank 2001c, 3, italics in original)

The authors observe that poverty has a gender dimension "as women and girls often bear a disproportionate burden of the additional work created by a lack of infrastructure" and the welfare and education of girls is often sacrificed in poor households (World Bank 2001c, 3). The report focuses on transport and water provision, two areas where it notes that women's needs are consistently overlooked. It links women's transport needs to their reproductive, productive and community roles which are of less interest to government than men's travel to productive employment (World Bank 2001c, 125). The observation that women's burden of fetching water "takes time that might otherwise be used for income-generating economic activities" (World Bank 2001c, 129) suggests that women's productive activities are to be prioritised. The Bank's recommendation that many functions of government should be devolved to the lowest possible administrative level is accompanied by advice that, "for the community's voice to be heard, local people - especially women - must be empowered and this process will not happen by itself" (World Bank 2001c, 64). The document stresses the need for outside assistance to empower women and other marginalised groups because existing organisations do not represent them. The official voice for women, the Organisasi Pendidikan Kesejahteraan Keluarga (PKK) or Family Welfare Organisation is dominated by elite women and led by the wives of headmen, effectively marginalising poor women from decision making. Although members of the

organisation elect their leaders, this has not led to better representation of poor women's interests (World Bank 2001c, 65; Hunter 1996).

A final document prepared under the auspices of the World Bank attempts to represent regional variations in the concerns of Indonesia's poor. The authors of People, Poverty and Livelihoods: Links for Sustainable Poverty Reduction in Indonesia (Mukherjee *et al* 2002) use the sustainable livelihoods framework, finding its emphasis on participation and people-centred approaches and macro-micro links the most useful analytical tool for devising forward-looking strategies. The study team conducted in-depth consultations with the populations of hamlets in four different settings. A gender perspective informs their study design, and men and women were consulted separately. Although the team found different problems at each site, they offer some general observations. First, they note the reliance of poor people on common property resources, which are becoming less available as they are taken over by competitors with greater technological and financial resources, often in collusion with local government authorities. Second, they stress the interconnectedness of the lives of poor and wealthy people: "poverty is a dynamic condition connected to social, economic and political systems" (Mukherjee 2002, 30). Third, few poor families can afford the secondary education crucial to remove children from the cycle of poverty. Fourth, there are insufficient credit services for poor people who, in rural areas, tend to seek support first from family and community and, in urban areas where kinship links are weaker, resort to expensive money-lenders. Fifth, although poor people do not trust the village councils and headmen which administer the infrastructure and services they rely upon, they are unable to travel elsewhere. Sixth, the rural and urban poor who rely on common or public land lack secure tenure and are not consulted in negotiations over land use change. Seventh, the new technologies only wealthy people can afford marginalise the poor by destroying and degrading the environments they depend upon for their livelihoods.

Mukherjee *et al* conclude that long term solutions to poverty in Indonesia require national collective action. Their definition of 'empowerment' is broader than the Bank's, and closer to DAWN's, requiring action at the macro, as well as the micro, level. "[E]mpowerment' of Indonesia's poor is in part the process of community enablement, and in part the process of democratically deactivating powerful structures and systems that prey on the weak and powerless" (Mukherjee *et al* 2002, 72).

The emphasis on sustainability in the SL approach clearly highlights the need for long term systematic solutions to poverty which usually implies *transforming* the social, political and economic practices and power distributions that give rise to poverty, addressing its root causes. (Mukherjee *et al* 2002, 8, italics in original)

They are critical of the Indonesian Government and World Bank's micro-strategy of 'empowerment' of the poor since "the emerging popular discourse on 'empowerment' is mainly *reformist*: it seeks to adjust, rather than transform, existing social and economic systems and relations" (Mukherjee *et al* 2002, 81). Further, they condemn the Bank's macroeconomic formula.

This study has emphasised the importance of linking strategic policy decisions to practical understanding of the dynamics of how poor people manage their assets and risks to obtain their livelihoods and how they are actors and decision-makers, rather than passive recipients of programmes. While policies may appear balanced and economically convincing at the macro level (e.g. privatisation of state-owned enterprises to increase state revenue) they do not necessarily favour sustainability for poor peoples' livelihoods) e.g. when they reduce access by the poor to common property resources). (Mukherjee *et al* 2002, 85)

The study team's work at the micro level of individuals and their communities provides a picture of poor peoples' local adaptations to the macro political economy. Although these studies are cited by the Bank (2001c), the team's recommendations for change are not incorporated into the body of the Bank's document.¹³⁸ The World Bank's analysis is confined to the macro level, viewed through a neoliberal economic lens and its recommendations for devolution of power to regional and provincial level and greater voice to the poor are based on fiscal rather than social analysis. By contrast, advocates of sustainable livelihoods talk to the people who the Bank claims 'lack voice'.

Women's reproductive rights and reproductive health are given minimal attention in the Bank's Country Assistance Strategy. Mukherjee's study team found that poor Indonesian women are deeply concerned about issues related to family planning and reproductive health needs. Their findings are incorporated into the following discussion of the impact of Indonesia's economic crisis on women's reproductive health and rights.

¹³⁸ See World Bank 2001c, page 69, footnote 39.

4.6.1 The economic collapse and women's interests

The narrow emphasis of the Indonesian Government on birth control targets has led to neglect of women's interests. While "women have wanted to control their fertility for centuries ... their efforts have been blocked by factors beyond their control, such as male domination, female traditional roles and unequal access to resources" (Makabenta 1993, 17). Consequently, the impacts of Indonesia's economic crisis are considered here from two perspectives: impact on fertility rates (the macro perspective) and impact on women's reproductive rights (the micro perspective).

As noted earlier, public health expenditure was an early casualty of the crisis. Despite this, contraceptive prevalence rates remained constant at fifty-seven per cent (Wasisto 2002; Republic of Indonesia 2002). Changes in contraceptive use have occurred, however, in response to decreased availability and higher cost, with the rate of pill users declining by more than half (Republic of Indonesia 2002). Although family planning services are free to eligible poor couples, visits to *puskesmas* (community health centres) for supplies fell by a third while the proportion of injection users obtaining supplies from village midwives increased (Republic of Indonesia 2002). Decentralisation and budget cuts reduced the reliability of data gathered in the 2000 census, but demographers generally felt optimistic about population trends.

When looking forward to 2025 it is well to remember that Indonesia is well past the half-way point in the transition from high to low fertility, and there is every indication that the decline in family sizes will continue, barring the catastrophic worsening of the current political malaise such that the factors affecting the supply and demand of children are dramatically changed. (Hull 2002, 1)

According to Hull, the earlier success of efforts to reduce the numbers of births allowed post-Suharto leaders to put their priorities elsewhere, as required by the political exigencies of the period. The impact of decentralisation is uncertain, since priorities of politicians at that level may differ from national aims. Hull (2002) believes that the work of BKKBN in training volunteer and paid outreach workers has the potential to maintain services at pre-crisis levels. Adrian Hayes, a demographer working in Indonesia, is sceptical about the objectives of local officials.

But with decentralization some districts are saying they want more population to give them relatively more political clout in the country, and therefore they don't want family planning any longer. Reproductive rights and empowerment of women arguments don't cut much ice with some of these local officials ... *If population had been retained more clearly as an important macro planning variable we would have more leverage to protect the RH/FP program during*

decentralization. The issue is not population control in the sense of pressuring women to have fewer children than they want, of course (the old worry of coercion); the problem is it may be impossible to rein in some of the pronatalist development planners at the regional levels using Cairo arguments alone. Local officials rarely see health as a priority, and reproductive health is usually off the bottom of the page. I don't expect fertility to go up, because it is currently declining because women genuinely don't want more children. But the quality and availability of services, which is already too low, could suffer. (Hayes 2002, italics mine)

Hayes suggests that the change in emphasis from the macro to the micro, from population to reproductive rights, is an impediment to the implementation of the Cairo agenda in a restructured Indonesia. Indonesia's approach to population growth has Malthusian roots so arguments based on reproductive rights lack the persuasive power of population pressure. Officials treat gender equality as a low priority, as the following extract from the central government's report to ESCAP indicates.

Other constrains that are still faced to achieve gender equality and equity i.e.: the lack of the political will and commitment of sectoral ministries and community to implement the gender mainstreaming strategy in their respective policies and Programs. There is structural and socio cultural values that are still patriarchal and male dominated in some areas of the country. The lack of information on issues and disaggregated data of the situation of women and women to show the gender gap makes difficult to convince other policy makers on the issues of equality and equity. This is due to the lack of understanding and awareness of officials and planners on the implementation of gender mainstreaming in the planning and implementation. *Furthermore, women empowerment is regarded as the least priority in sectoral ministries plan.* Recently, the regional autonomy euphoria has led to misconception on gender implementation authority. All of these constraints are more becoming serious with the low level of education of most of the women. The increased of poverty is leading to various new emerging critical issues for women, especially as results of prolonged economic-crisis and disintegration. (Republic of Indonesia 2002, errors in original, italics mine)

The report confirms Hayes' observation: "[a] major obstacle to the integration of services was the perception among some family planning workers that programs should not be integrated since there is a feeling that a move to reproductive health programs might dilute family planning efforts" (Republic of Indonesia 2002). The report also notes an increase in marriages of children under seventeen years old as a response to poverty (Republic of Indonesia 2002).

Clearly, there are conflicting forces at work in post-crisis Indonesia. At the national level, the amended Constitution calls for equality of men and women and President Wahid's Minister for Women's Affairs renamed her position as Minister for Women's Empowerment and claimed the authority to oversee the BKKBN in order to bring a

gender perspective to its operations. In 2000, a Presidential Instruction on Gender Mainstreaming in National Development was issued, requiring all ministries, including the Armed Forces, Police and District Attorney, to include policies and programs for gender mainstreaming. A National Strategic Plan on Empowerment of Women was devised for 2000-2004 "to achieve gender equality and equity of men and women in the family, community and state" (Republic of Indonesia 2002). The National Strategic Plan incorporates policies on issues relevant to women and children, including policies to increase women's equality.

The political obstacles to implementation are enormous, however, and post-Suharto regimes are preoccupied by ethnic and religious violence and government corruption rather than population and reproductive health. Macro-micro links will be crucial in determining the future of fertility reduction and women's reproductive lives in Indonesia.

For most Indonesians the time horizon for thinking about the future has shrunk since 1997. Economic crisis, political turmoil, and concerns about the emergency support mechanisms available in society have come to dominate thinking. Politicians have a time horizon of 2004, the next general election. Economists focus on the IMF negotiations for the next year, and breathe hefty sighs of relief each time a positive growth estimate for the next year is released, and deep sighs of depression when they think of the national debt, the banking crisis and low foreign investment. While it is easy to dismiss these as parochial interests of men in suits, there are clear links between these myopic visions and the factors shaping the plans and aspirations of young women entering the years of potential motherhood. Each woman (*sic*) who fails to progress to higher levels of education risks having parents consider marriage as an alternative future. Each worker laid off from factory work risks finding the most feasible alternative to be the maintenance of a household. Women without education and without work find their negotiating position in the family potentially undermined. In such situations elite Indonesians fear that poor women will simply retreat to childbearing to put meaning in their lives. (Hull 2002, 9)

Wasisto (2002), Siagian (1999) and the Indonesian Government consider continued foreign aid to be essential to maintain free family planning services for Indonesia's poorest people. The decentralisation of the program, however, presents problems to donors such as the World Bank and UNFPA which must work with national governments.¹³⁹ UNFPA is committed to a human rights approach in its post-ICPD activities and to working in accordance with the principles and objectives of the ICPD

¹³⁹ Decentralisation was a condition of the Bank's own structural adjustment program.

POA (UNFPA 2000, 4). This is not always easy in Indonesia where, the Fund observes, “[d]espite the acceptance of the concept of reproductive health by the Government in the past years, the broader dimensions of reproductive health as defined in the ICPD Programme of Action have not been fully institutionalized” (UNFPA 2000, 7). In its sixth Indonesian project and program proposal, UNFPA outlines a number of objectives for its \$US28 million allocation. These include: extending services to adolescents in cooperation with NGOs; preventing the further spread of HIV/AIDS through condom distribution; supporting communication between BKKBN and the Department of Health and between these agencies and decentralised implementing bodies; reducing the number of unsafe abortions; and assisting the move towards self-sufficiency in contraceptives. The needs of poor women require considerably more resources; female participants in the Sustainable Livelihoods study reiterated many times that they found family planning services inaccessible, too expensive, or coming too late for them (Mukherjee *et al* 2002, 25).

In the West Java study area, the researchers found that the access of women with families of up to twelve children to family planning services was reduced by government spending retractions. Families eligible for free services found it difficult to pay post-crisis prices of 10,000 rupiah for ‘the injection’ (Depo Provera) or 3000 rupiah for a month’s supply of contraceptive pills.¹⁴⁰

How can we spend that much for contraception when we can’t buy enough rice to feed our children? We are seeing more births per year in the village since the last two to three years. (Survey participant in Mukherjee *et al* 2002, 35)

Poor women put access to family planning information and methods and trained midwives at local birthing clinics as their number one priority (Mukherjee *et al* 2002, 77). The Government also prioritised these objectives in its report to ESCAP (Republic of Indonesia 2002). Despite difficulties in operationalising these priorities, the congruence between government and poor women’s stated objectives indicates that the ICPD agenda has the potential, over time, of transforming Indonesia’s approach to population issues and that poor Indonesian women will benefit from that change.

¹⁴⁰ While services are free, the contraceptives are not. In the early 1990s, pills were free of charge and the injection cost 750 rupiah for a three-month dose. In 1995, the injection cost 6000 rupiah and the pills cost 1500 rupiah per month (Mukherjee *et al* 2002, 35).

The links between the macro and micro are evident in this case study of the impact of economic crisis on Indonesian women's reproductive lives. The Government recognises this.

However, implementation of the recommendations of the Programme of Action and the Bali Declaration had been hampered by a number of factors, including reducing political commitment, limited human and financial resources, and uncertainty about the effectiveness of some of the Program's recommendations. The macroeconomic and social context in which Indonesia is attempting to implement the recommendations had changed, giving rise to new challenges and opportunities, especially related to prolonged economic crisis and the impacts of political reform. (Republic of Indonesia, 2002)

At the micro level, there has been progress. In its 2002 report to ESCAP, the Indonesian government has acknowledged for the first time that the unmet need of sexually active adolescents and other unmarried people must be addressed. This is a major step towards acceptance of the ICPD agenda. Implementation of micro objectives, however, takes place against macro economic constraints and moral conservatism within government and civil society. The government relies on NGOs to deliver sexual and reproductive health services to unmarried individuals, including adolescents, and ninety per cent of the budget for these services comes from donor financial support. Wasisto (2002) reported that the Indonesian government was reluctant to add to its debt by incurring more loans from development banks for 'soft' projects like reproductive health. In 1999, BKKBN was so indebted that it could provide only sixty per cent of public demand for contraceptives; its appeals for foreign assistance in the form of grants were unsuccessful (Siagian 1999). As a result, the government told it to go 'back to basics', implying that broad welfare initiatives are optional extras to family planning. Another measure to reduce costs, 'empowering' village midwives to attend births and volunteers to provide contraceptives, causes birth complications to go unattended, since these women are not trained to deal with them. Adjustments to social policies within the framework of deleterious macro political and economic trends are inadequate to provide real progress in women's reproductive rights and health; for them the 'quantum leap' that Cairo offered has not materialised.

4.7 Conclusion

Chapter four has focused on the macro-economic constraints to the implementation of the transformative aspects of the ICPD agenda. The global political economy based on neoliberal macroeconomic policies is Malthusian in its impact on the poor, as wealthy

countries reduce their development assistance for social programs in an economic setting which places low income countries at a disadvantage. The POA failed to challenge economic trends which reduce the ability of developing countries to cater for the reproductive health needs of women. An examination of Indonesia's population program and its approach to women's reproductive and other human rights prior to and after the economic crisis of 1997 indicates that poor women's reproductive lives are at the intersection of macro and micro forces. On one hand, the social and cultural environment is still antithetical to women's full exercise of their human rights. On the other, their ability to control their reproductive lives is constrained by economic policies that increase the tendency towards early marriages and reduce their access to reproductive health services. Girls' access to education, always tenuous in poor families in many developing countries, is made more so by the need to maximise family incomes and reduce expenses. Uneducated women are at a disadvantage in the labour market, forced to work for low wages under poor conditions or to seek income in the informal economy. Rises in the costs of food, fuel and other life essentials put further pressure on women's time and energy.

The increase in women's unremunerated reproductive labour is creating a crisis in women's lives, and hence, their families', that feminist organisations like DAWN and WEDO have been campaigning, so far without success, to bring to the attention of the institutions facilitating neoliberal economic policies. The World Bank plays a key role in setting the global context for poor women's reproductive lives in many countries experiencing economic difficulties. Feminists are increasing their economic literacy in their attempts to 'engender' the Bank and to influence financial decision-makers in governments and other institutions which shape the global political economy. As noted in this and earlier chapters, however, campaigns for women's human rights and economic justice need to be linked to reflect women's realities and for greater effectiveness. A rights-based approach to development has the capacity to link the micro agenda of reproductive rights with the enabling conditions for their achievement. The Bank's limited ability and desire to implement such an approach indicates the enormity of the impediments facing those who seek to change the macro environment to one which facilitates women's ability to realise their human rights. The Bank's mission to create a 'world without poverty' will always be thwarted by its commitment to promote a neoliberal global political economy. The Bank is the world's largest source of funds for population programs. Its failure to integrate the reproductive rights

and health approach of the ICPD has led to the loss of a valuable opportunity to change the world through empowering women.

Chapter five The macro context II: The political ecology of population and reproduction

Global warming, only humans suffer. Sorry, don't care much about them till two thirds dead. Six billion is disgusting! (Frank Brown 2000)

The spin doctors are trying to divert attention from the US refusal to take serious measures to cut carbon emissions by playing up the threat of China and India's populations as future energy consumers. Better the one child family over there than a one car policy here, or raising taxes, god forbid, to finance public transport and energy conservation. (Betsy Hartmann 1999)

5.1 Overview

Chapter five continues the analysis of the macro context which, I argue, the ICPD POA failed to take into account in its ambitious agenda for women's reproductive rights and health. While Chapter four focused on reproduction and population in the global political economy, this chapter examines population and reproduction in the global political ecology. As the discussion in Chapter two on neo-Malthusianism indicates, the environment is frequently evoked in debates about population. This chapter starts from the assumption that all explanations of the relationship between humans and the environment represent political perspectives. Consequently, in this thesis I use a political ecology approach which, since it is coloured by a feminist lens, I characterise as feminist political ecology (see 5.2.5).

From this perspective, I begin the chapter by categorising approaches to the environment according to their approach to population and reproduction. This is followed by an extensive examination and critique of the term 'sustainable development', which provides the context for the ICPD POA's treatment of environmental and population relationships. To examine the resilience and usefulness of the sustainable development approach to population, reproduction and the environment, I examine two categories of documents. First, I look at UNFPA's State of World Population Reports which provide a record of 'official' thinking on these issues over the decade. Second, I examine the abundant material published for the 'Year of Six Billion campaign' of 1999 which serves as a snapshot of the politics of population and reproduction at the time of Cairo + 5. I conclude the chapter by reviewing processes and outcomes around the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in 2002 to assess the impact of the ICPD in debates about sustainable

development and the environment a decade after the feminist campaign began at UNCED.

5.2 Population in environmental debates

Human population is central to debates about the environment since “[h]uman activity has affected every part of the planet, no matter how remote, and every ecosystem, from the simplest to the most complex” (UNFPA 2001a). Approaches to population and environment relations differ, however, on several grounds, two of which are relevant to this thesis. First, there are debates over whether *numbers* of people alone cause environmental problems or whether the *activities* of humans are to blame. The first approach is categorised as Malthusian and neo-Malthusian, while the second characterises the consumption/population, women/nature and political ecology approaches described in this chapter. The second issue is the extent to which environmental approaches to population go beyond the macro to consider reproduction (in its narrow and broad senses) in their analyses. The ability to incorporate reproductive issues indicates whether the approach can consider issues related to gender, class, location and other distinctions which define the power of groups and individuals to determine their relationship to the environment. Malthusianism and neo-Malthusianism are macro approaches which fail to consider reproduction and are unable to integrate a gender approach; the consumption approach is also a macro approach which is still in the early days of development, but appears to hold the potential to incorporate issues related to reproduction and gender. Ecofeminism takes a micro approach which begins with reproduction, but it conflates the diversity of women and, thus, fails to take into account the complexity of power relationships in which women are enmeshed. The political ecology approach incorporates an analysis of economic, social and political constraints on groups’ and individuals’ environmental relationships and its macro view reveals the context of reproductive activities. A feminist political ecology approach makes women’s reproductive activities visible and recognises the many levels of oppression which mediate poor women’s relationships with their environments. For this reason, I adopt the feminist political ecology approach in this thesis.

Since this thesis is concerned with the politics of population and reproduction, I examine debates and environmental problems from a political rather than a scientific perspective. My examination of the literature indicates that debates about population

and the environment are always political, even when they are couched in scientific discourses. Environmental debates about population are less about scientific truths than about “whose definition of the problem will prevail” (Jacquette and Staudt 1988).

On the question of the relationship between population and the environment, there has been considerably more heat than light in international dialogue. Many groups have found in the population/environment discussion threats to their own interests. They have attempted for one reason or another to characterize this relationship in a way that suits a political, as opposed to a scientific interest. (Ramphal and Sinding 1996, xiv)

The policy approach taken by governments and other actors determines the framework in which population and environment relationships are viewed. In this chapter, I analyse approaches to population and the environment to clarify the perspective underlying the POA’s chapter on population and development in the context of sustainable development as a basis for assessing subsequent changes in the population establishment’s approach to population, sustainable development and the environment.

5.2.1 Malthusian approaches

I suggested in Chapter three that current neoliberal economic approaches reflect the political economic views of Malthus. Malthusians argue that poverty is the consequence of the fertility of the poor and that efforts to improve their situation will only exacerbate the problem by causing them to have more children, with deleterious effects for themselves and others. Malthusian grounds were cited as reasons for the adoption of politically unpopular population programs in India in the 1950s and China and Indonesia in the 1970s.¹⁴¹

Malthusians sometimes evoke the impact of the populous poor on the environment to strengthen their arguments but environmental impacts are a secondary concern for them, while neo-Malthusians see environmental impacts as the primary problem. Malthusians paint pictures of inevitable social and economic collapse which governments use to justify the erosion of basic human rights in coercive fertility reduction programs. Donors concerned that populous developing countries are a threat to their security evoke Malthusianism language to justify public expenditure on population programs overseas (Paddock and Paddock 1967; Sinding 2002).

Garrett Hardin is an outspoken exponent of Malthusian approaches who has provided much of the imagery for popular conceptions of the population issue. He has contributed two famous metaphors, *Tragedy of the Commons* (Hardin 1969) and *Living on a Lifeboat* (Hardin 1974) to Malthusian discourses, in articles first published in popular scientific journals. In *Tragedy of the Commons*, Hardin extends his analogy of medieval peasants exploiting common land to the conclusion that the right of people to “breed freely” and make free use of the commons (of air, water and land) will lead inevitably to environmental destruction. He offers the neoliberal proposal of property rights through privatisation of the commons and the hardline neo-Malthusian solution of coercive restrictions on the right to reproduce.

Hardin eschews the notion of human rights, since they include the right of the family to determine its size. The Malthusian view is that human rights for poor people signify approval of their tendency to “overbreed”. As noted in Chapter two, Malthus did not believe in encouraging human freedoms and, according to McNicoll, would have reacted to the association of human rights with population objectives with “withering scorn” as part of “[t]he promiscuous multiplication and thus cheapening of human rights over the last half-century” (McNicoll 1998, 312).

Ross suggests that Hardin’s work is “saturated with Cold War passions ... He regarded ‘commonism’ and ‘communism’ as more or less equivalent” (Ross 1998, 77-78). Cox’s historical analysis suggests that the ‘tragedy’ of the British commons resulted from privatisation rather than from common ownership. She establishes that the commons were managed democratically and sustainably until enclosure put the land into the hands of private landholders. “Perhaps what existed in fact was not a tragedy of the commons but rather a triumph: that for hundreds of years ... land was managed successfully by communities” (Cox 1985, 60).

As the commons cannot be shared, the ‘lifeboats’ of rich countries cannot rescue us all, according to Hardin. In *Living on a Lifeboat*, he creates a metaphor which captures the powerful images of refugees in leaky boats fleeing countries made uninhabitable by an ever-deteriorating environment. He cautions that allowing the poor to ‘board’ the ‘lifeboats’ of rich countries will reduce those countries’ ability to support their own

¹⁴¹ See Caldwell 1998, Rao 1998 on Malthusianism in India, Greenhalgh 2002 on Malthusianism in China and Wirosuhardjo 1994 on Malthusianism in Indonesia.

citizens at the level they have earned through more prudent management. He suggests triage-like principles similar to those proposed by Paddock and Paddock (1968): halting development assistance to the poorest countries to discourage people from reproducing more poorly nourished children of little use to the human race. Similarly, immigration above replacement levels impedes our ability to “save at least some parts of the world from environmental ruin” (Hardin 1974, 567). Human rights are dispensable in “lifeboat ethics”. “Without a world government that is sovereign in reproductive matters mankind lives, in fact, on a number of sovereign lifeboats. For the foreseeable future survival demands that we govern our actions by the ethics of a lifeboat” (Hardin 1974, 568).

Malthusians take a macro approach to population issues. Hardin uses the word ‘breeding’, effectively avoiding issues of power, rights and justice which have an established place in discourses of reproduction. ‘People’ do not emerge in these discourses of population; women are invisible, despite their central role in the production of population.

Malthusianism is the sub-text of the policies of a number of institutions responsible for the shape of the global political economy. It underlies decreased levels of aid from rich to poor countries. It is evident in World Bank promotion of property rights as a solution to poverty and environment problems. The neoliberal economic approaches of early neoliberals, Bauer and Lal, shape the market-led approaches of many donor countries and institutions and resonate strongly with Malthusianism (McNicoll 1998, 313).

5.2.2 Neo-Malthusian approaches

By contrast, the neo-Malthusian approach requires high flows of development assistance since it is based on the assumption that population control, through family planning programs, is required to reduce population growth and consequent migratory flows (Cohen 1997). Neo-Malthusian approaches characterise the population establishment and influence many environmental organisations’ views on population. In its liberal form, neo-Malthusianism is tolerated by a number of pragmatic feminist organisations. Nonetheless, its tendency to instrumentalise women is regarded with suspicion by some feminists, as this section indicates.

Neo-Malthusianism represents the ‘common sense’ approach to population and environment relationships in contemporary popular understanding. As Evans points out, achieving the status of “‘common sense’ ... is a privileged position [which] allows its [proponent] to promote its moral preferences as value-free, neutral, impartial and objective” (Evans 2001, 38). In other words, in the claim to ‘truth’ in explaining environmental problems, neo-Malthusianism has gained political authority.

As Harvey points out, neo-Malthusian approaches to population are far from ‘neutral’ and are part of the project of locating problems elsewhere.

Ideas about environment, population and resources are not neutral. They are political in origin and have political effects. Once, for example, connotations of absolute limits come to surround the concepts of resources, scarcity, and subsistence, then an absolute level is set on population. And the political implications of a term like overpopulation can be devastating. Somebody, somewhere, is redundant and there is not enough to go round. Am I redundant? Of course not. Are you? Of course not. So who is redundant? Of course. It must be them. And if there is not enough to go round, then it is only right and proper that they, who contribute so little to society, ought to bear the brunt of the burden. (Harvey 1996, 148-9)

Among the verbal imagery of neo-Malthusianism are terms such as ‘tragedy’, ‘explosion’, and ‘bomb’ to describe the impact of increased numbers of humans. These words are calculated to produce alarm and obscure important anthropological debates about carrying capacity; they disregard the inconclusive nature of empirical evidence linking environmental change to population growth (Sen 1994a, 1994b).

While it has Malthusian roots, neo-Malthusianism incorporates the understanding that human fertility can be controlled with modern contraceptive methods, providing the means to avert the disaster which is the inevitable result of ‘overpopulation’. The primary message of neo-Malthusianism is that there are ‘too many people’ on the Earth, and that countries with high fertility rates present a major problem that the global community as a whole must solve. Most of these countries are in the South.

Population control ... is the irreducible bottom line by which third-world countries can respond to environmental limits. Indeed, they can save themselves in no other way. ... Population growth is *the* global question. (Abernethy 1993, 121, italics in original)

Virginia Abernethy presents the extreme neo-Malthusian approach. Like many neo-Malthusians, she frames her arguments in terms of ‘carrying capacity’, “an ill-defined concept that Abernethy allows to slip and slide to fit the argument” (Kantner 1994, 661). The term has its origins in theoretical population biology, where it is defined as

“the maximum population which can be sustained indefinitely in a given environment” (Zaba and Scoones 1994, 197-198). Extrapolated to the entire planet, the term becomes meaningless. Ecologies are diverse and place-specific; furthermore, human beings’ relationships with their environment vary according to their activities and the political, economic, cultural and social systems in which they operate.

There are no absolute standards that can be applied to all populations. This type of carrying capacity depends on the objectives of the resource users - ultimately a political, social, economic and ethical judgement. (Zaba and Scoones 1994, 215)

Natural scientists who espouse neo-Malthusian approaches to ‘population’ imbue them with authority.¹⁴² While their role as scientists adds weight to their assessments, their pronouncements locate them in political, rather than scientific, debates. Their analyses are used by population control lobbyists such as Sustainable Population Australia (2003) and Population Connection (2003) and cited by opponents to immigration.¹⁴³ Furthermore, neo-Malthusian pronouncements make the entire environmental lobby vulnerable to imputations of misanthropy by “pro-growth, ‘sky’s the limit’ cornucopians” (Athanasiou, 1996, 78).¹⁴⁴

Political ecologists have produced the most persuasive critiques of neo-Malthusianism. The Ecologist (1995) takes issue with the assumptions of neo-Malthusian carrying capacity approaches that ecosystems are unaffected by what happens outside their borders and that the people who live in an area are entirely responsible for environmental degradation. The authors argue that the political ecologist’s question of “how is society organized?” is more relevant than “how many people?” The concept of carrying capacity “depoliticizes what is a highly political issue by reducing the debate to one of mathematics. In effect, far from being a neutral and objective measure of

¹⁴² The writings of ecologists in Micklin (1973), Hardin (1968, 1974 and 1995), Ehrlich (1968, 1990), Pimental (in Korten 1995), Flannery (1994) and Recher (1997) provide a general picture.

¹⁴³ Sustainable Population Australia was, until 2002, Australians for an Ecologically Sustainable Population, while Population Connection, a United States-based organisation, changed its name from Zero Population Growth in May 2002.

¹⁴⁴ See the letter from Miss Anthropy (1987) published in Earth First! magazine and reactions to it (Hawkins undated, Vuillamy 1999, anon 1996). The letter includes the comment “[b]arring a cure, the possible benefits of this (AIDS) to the environment are staggering”.

ecological stress, carrying capacity is ... used as a means of preventing radical social change” (The Ecologist, 103).

A number of studies collaborate The Ecologist’s critique of the limitation of carrying capacity approaches in explaining environmental deterioration. Barsh’s study (1994) of the Karluk people in Alaska illustrates the role of global forces in environmental change. While the Karluks’ numbers have shrunk, their ecological impact has increased as contact with the ‘modern’ world has induced lifestyle changes. The devastation of their territory by the Exxon-Valdez oil spill totally compromised their ability to live within carrying capacity limits. The Karluk’s predicament and the degradation of their lands are due to the social and environmental impacts of the global political economy and an oil-driven energy system rather than ‘overpopulation’.

Some neo-Malthusians have developed more sophisticated analyses of population/environment relationships than the carrying capacity approach described above. Furthermore, many have absorbed the arguments on which the Common Ground alliance was based, that allowing women access to their reproductive rights and increasing their empowerment through education and employment will lead to the fertility declines that they believe are needed. The writings of Paul Ehrlich, neo-Malthusianism’s best-known proponent, illustrate the shift from the extreme to the liberal neo-Malthusian position. His first book, The Population Bomb (1968), described his concern about population growth in sensationalised terms and proposed drastic solutions.¹⁴⁵ In books, television programs and radio interviews since the early 1990s, Ehrlich often expresses support for increasing the status of women and places more emphasis on reducing the consumption levels of the North.¹⁴⁶ In this thesis, I classify Abernethy and Ehrlich’s early work as ‘extreme neo-Malthusianism’ and Ehrlich’s later work as liberal neo-Malthusianism.

¹⁴⁵ In the 1968 volume, Ehrlich suggested the addition of temporary sterilants to water supplies, with the government supplying antidotes to produce the desired population size (Ehrlich doesn’t ask how the government would determine eligibility for reproduction). He recognises technical constraints to this option, and alludes to the fluoridisation debate as an indication of the controversy which would accompany such a proposal, but Ehrlich seems to believe that the population problem is so catastrophic that such measures are ethically justifiable (Ehrlich 1968 135-136).

¹⁴⁶ Ehrlich’s wife, Anne Ehrlich, has collaborated with him on his more recent books.

Ehrlich moved neo-Malthusianism beyond carrying capacity approaches by incorporating consumption into the formula, $I=PAT$, he produced with John Holdren. In the formula, units of pollution (I) equal the number of people (P) multiplied by consumption (A) and the pollution generated by the goods consumed (T).¹⁴⁷ Applying this formula led the authors to conclude that “in terms of present patterns of human behaviour and the current level of technology, *the planet Earth is already overpopulated*” (Ehrlich *et al* 1977, 719, italics in original).

The IPAT equation has authority in scientific arguments about the relationship between population and the environment. The scientists at the ICPD’s Expert Roundtable on the Environment, Population and Development argued over its merits (Secretary-General ICPD 1994). Objections included the equation’s over-simplification of complex relationships and its inability to incorporate the role of cultural factors and institutions in equilibrating those relationships and the influence of social attitudes and systems on the types of technologies employed.¹⁴⁸

Here, I focus on the political implications of IPAT. These are embedded in the assumptions underlying the formula and the relationship between its variables. Amalric (1995) questions the assumption that P, T and A are independent of each other and suggests that the aggregation of diverse groups in P obscures the different environmental impacts of the North and the South. Martine (1996) observes that the equation inevitably justifies widespread fertility control measures because isolating ‘population’ in the formula gives it more weight, as an increase in the P factor automatically increases the other factors. He argues that the complex relationships between affluence and technology, population and impact mediate the effect of the population variable. His strongest criticism is that IPAT and similar formulae lack historicity.

¹⁴⁷ Early versions of the formula used (C) for consumption instead of (A), which is intended to incorporate broader aspects of affluence, but was calculated in a similar way (Ehrlich *et al* 1977). By 1999, T represented technology and political and social institutions (Ehrlich 1999).

¹⁴⁸ The earliest and most extensive scientific refutation of IPAT was provided by Commoner (1972) in a seminal interchange with Ehrlich. Commoner was at the Expert Roundtable.

Inevitably omitted in such formulations are exactly those elements which make the subject matter of social scientists so variable, 'irrational', imprecise and unpredictable - differences in aspirations, values, norms, folkways, behaviour patterns and culture; historical and ecological antecedents; adaptability of human populations to changing circumstances; variations in social structure, political organization, land tenure, social stratification and income distribution; conflicts of interest, ignorance, greed, lust and diverse forms of anti-social behaviour; political conduct, manipulation, struggles for power, and so forth. Evidently, it also has no way of dealing with the increasingly intricate interactions between different social groups on a global basis. (Martine 1996, 8)

Including all these variables - which, in any case, defy quantification - in Ehrlich's formula would render it unworkable. As Martine points out, "[u]ltimately, human populations cannot be studied with the same tools and approaches as a population of butterflies" (1996, 10).¹⁴⁹

Hynes (1999a), analysing IPAT from a feminist political ecology perspective, considers IPAT useless without the inclusion of structural factors such as social and environmental justice. She changes the function of the variables, making C reflect human relationships with nature, turning P into patriarchy, adjusting A to take into account the political and economic relations which shape consumption and assessing technology for its scale, efficiency and sustainability. The resulting formula, she claims, is unworkable, as useless for international negotiations as the original formula.

As Hynes illustrates, Ehrlich and Holden's formula omits issues which feminists consider important such as women's rights and power. In later writings, Anne and Paul Ehrlich (Ehrlich and Ehrlich 1990) place less emphasis on the formula and focus on the promotion of women's status through the education of girls and the promotion of women's rights. This parallels the efforts of neo-Malthusian organisations to gain the support of feminists after UNCED revealed the conflict inherent in their views. However, I argue that adding 'women' does not constitute a gendered approach which requires a fundamental review of neo-Malthusian approaches. It is similar to the World Bank's 'win-win' summation that improving women's status is good for population, good for development and good for the environment too. It is an instrumental view of women.

¹⁴⁹ Paul Ehrlich's biological expertise was gained in the study of butterfly populations.

However, Paul Ehrlich's commitment even to this limited position is questionable. In a radio interview, he was scathing about the "political correctness" which diverts people from facing the scientific truth that there are "already too many people on the planet" and the tendency of the "politically correct" to focus on the rights of women instead of population numbers. Despite his interest in population issues, he did not refer to the ICPD and its POA, indicating a lack of knowledge of the global politics of reproduction, if not population (Ehrlich 1999).

In this respect, Ehrlich reflects the reluctance of some Northern environmental organisations to integrate the women's rights agenda of the POA. Cohen notes that a number of US-based environmental organisations - the Audubon Society, Sierra Club, World Resources Institute and the National Wildlife Federation - were unhappy with Agenda 21's neglect of population issues (Cohen 1993, 62). Modifying the extreme neo-Malthusian approach of these and other organisations was the impetus for the formation of the 'Common Ground' alliance.

The feminist movement continues to debate whether adoption of a population policy framework implies endorsement of neo-Malthusian objectives. Richter and Keyzers (1994) argue that feminists' involvement in the Common Ground alliance suggests that they share the concerns of population and environmental organisations. Marge Berer's comment, "We must acknowledge that the world cannot sustain an unlimited number of people, just as women's bodies cannot sustain unlimited pregnancies" (Cohen 1993, 64) seems to collaborate Richter and Keyzers' argument, but all of Berer's publicly available writing takes a rights and health approach.¹⁵⁰ Hodgson and Watkins (1997) argue that North American leaders of the international women's health movement generally oppose neo-Malthusian approaches but used the Common Ground process to educate organisations which assert that poor women's 'uncontrolled' fertility causes environmental degradation.¹⁵¹

Hindsight offers an opportunity to assess whether North American environment organisations which took neo-Malthusian views of the environment and population in

¹⁵⁰ Marge Berer edits the journal Reproductive Health Matters.

¹⁵¹ Bella Abzug took this approach (see Chapter two).

1994 have since adopted the Cairo approach to reproduction. A perusal of recent material indicates that some organisations which were disinterested in feminist concerns at UNCED (Cohen 1993) have adopted the language of the POA. Only one of these organisations, however, demonstrates more than token commitment. The Sierra Club, one of the largest environmental organisations in the United States, has incorporated feminists' concern in its approach to environment and population (Hartmann 2000; Martine 2000). It joined feminist and population organisations in opposing Bush's reductions to family planning assistance in 2002 and called on the United States government to ratify the Women's Convention (Sierra Club 2002). The World Resources Institute, which works with the World Bank, UNEP and UNDP (Young 2002, 74), tends to focus on the technological issues of reduction and treatment of waste and pollution and avoids the political issue of population (WRI 2002).

The other organisations show little evidence of change. The large United States environmental organisation, the National Wildlife Fund, acknowledges the ICPD agenda and expresses its concern about the Bush Administration's withdrawal of \$US34 million. Its 2001 publication, Population, Water and Wildlife: Finding a Balance (NWF 2001), however, suggests that its concern remains neo-Malthusian.

Along with increased consumption of natural resources, growing world population is a major cause of the destruction of the environment. (NWF 2001, 46)

This statement is followed by a call for increased funds for population programs in developing countries. There is no mention of reproductive rights and health, although it attributes the "impressive" fall in total fertility rate to increased access to voluntary family planning programs and women's greater participation in education and economic involvement. The other organisation which fought hard to have population included in Agenda 21, the Audubon Society, recently produced a pamphlet, Population and Habitat: Making the connection (Audubon undated), which claims credit for making sustainable development a fundamental tenet of United States foreign assistance in the 1980s and 1990s.

Since then, Audubon has worked to strengthen US leadership in the arena of international family planning, arguing that the delivery of basic contraceptive services can pay real dividends for women, children, wildlife and national economies the world over. (Audubon undated, 2)

The call for nothing more than "basic contraceptive services" by-passes an opportunity to support the ICPD's reproductive health agenda. Audubon claims that:

[a]s bad as things are now, they are likely to get worse in the years ahead. The reason: at current fertility rates, we will add more people to the planet in the next fifty years than we have in the previous 500,000 years.

Across the globe, more than a billion teenagers are now entering their reproductive years. ... The choices these young people make in the next decade will determine the fate of thousands of species already pushed to the edge of extinction by population-fueled habitat destruction....

Human population growth is about more than wildlife of course. Its also about dizzying rates of infant and maternal mortality, rising rates of unemployment, and escalating economic and social instability in the developing world. (Audubon undated, 3)

The Audubon society shows little evidence of modifying its neo-Malthusian approach with concern for women's rights. Ecological disaster is attributed to the reproductive decisions of today's young, with no attention to the social and economic context of their decision-making. Reducing population growth is the only strategy offered for improving the "dizzying rates" of infant and maternal mortality. The ICPD POA appear to have made little impression on this organisation's neo-Malthusianism.

As the Audubon pamphlet indicates, extreme neo-Malthusian approaches to population lack a gender analysis. Some feminists feel that neo-Malthusianism implicitly blames poor women in countries with high population growth for the world's environmental problems.

Those who are blamed for environmental destruction are elsewhere. A large part of the blame for this deplorable state of affairs is lodged between the legs of poor women of the South. They're having too many children. (Spivak 1996, 48)

Neo-Malthusian approaches see any population growth as problematic. Organisations promoting these views are aware that public support will fall when awareness of declining fertility in most of the world is more widespread, so they either ignore evidence of these trends or bury them in alarm at 'population momentum'. Because neo-Malthusianism "glosses over so many fundamental issues of power, gender and class relations, and of distribution, and because it ignores the historical experience of population programmes, it has come to be viewed by many as a retrograde step in the population-development discourse" (Sen 1994, 220). Nonetheless, it remains the dominant approach to population and environment relationships, and is incorporated into mainstream views of sustainable development, as section 5.3.1 of this chapter argues. This indicates that the political utility of neo-Malthusianism underlies its resilience, an assertion which I examine throughout this chapter.

5.2.3 Consumption's 'ecological footprint'

The connection between environmental degradation and consumption is gaining increasing attention among scientists and environmentalists. However, their relative contributions are contested. The debate between Ehrlich and Holdren (1972) and Commoner (1972) provides a spirited introduction to the issues and presents issues which are still argued today. At UNCED, conflict about the relative contributions of population and consumption divided Northern and Southern governments. Although it was acknowledged that each process contributes to environmental degradation, there was less focus on consumption than many Southern governments and NGOs wanted. This reflects the political implications of problematising consumption, since it locates the source of environmental problems in consumption patterns of the North and among wealthy elites, while blaming population growth locates it in the South. The continuing focus on population in global debates about the environment and population reflects the relative power of Northern governments and NGOs and the dominance of a global political economy which is based on ecologically damaging processes of production and the commodification of environmental goods.

During the 1990s, methodologies have been developed which are capable of assessing the comparative environmental impacts of different consumption regimes. These studies challenge neo-Malthusian views that population numbers are the primary cause of environmental degradation. The 'ecological footprint' approach presents results as areas of land, based on the estimation of "the resource consumption and waste assimilation requirements of a defined human population or economy in terms of a corresponding productive land area" (Wackernagel & Rees 1996, 9).¹⁵² The 'ecological footprint' is calculated from the size of population and its *per capita* material consumption. The basic goods of human life – food, housing, transport, goods and services – are expressed as the amount of land required to produce them and to assimilate wastes from their production and use, expressed in a per capita measure.

The assumption underlying the 'ecological footprint' methodologies is that each person has a negotiable claim to the Earth's resources, equivalent to about 2.5 hectares of productive land per person. Thus, it provides a mechanism for comparisons between nations. It tells us, for instance, that the 'average' Australian uses three to four times

¹⁵² An earlier literature on 'ecological shadows' was based upon a similar idea.

his/her allocation of the Earth's resources (if all were shared equally) while the 'average' Indian uses less than half his/her allocated 0.9 share (Wackernagel & Rees 1996, 13). Wealthy populations living in less crowded situations emerge as more culpable in causing ecological deterioration. This directly confounds the neo-Malthusian focus on population numbers as the main culprit.

The findings of research into the impacts of consumption imply a need for changes in policy direction and a change in emphasis in global debates about population and the environment. The Commission on Sustainable Development's work on consumption and production found that decisions made in the North are the primary cause of the South's environmental and developmental problems. Norway's Minister for the Environment spelled out the implications.

Our consumption patterns, and our efforts to multiply them worldwide, will undermine the environmental resource base even if we were to introduce the best available technology world-wide. I am convinced that without real change in our consumption patterns we will not be able to reach the goals in the climate and biodiversity conventions, nor will we be able to effectively fight poverty. (Bernsten 1994 in Lafferty 1996, 200)

Lafferty suggests that, "[i]f successfully developed empirically, the 'ecological footprint' could provide a useful tool for operationalising North-South interdependencies" (Lafferty 1996, 201). The 'ecological footprint' methodology is able to incorporate the diffused environmental impacts of globalised production and distribution systems. Further, it shows that the large footprint of one group impacts on other groups, illustrating Trainer's (1989) observation that the 'high living' of the North is at the expense of the South.

Like any measure which simplifies complex relationships, the 'ecological footprint', has shortcomings. First, it is difficult to factor in human activities which benefit the environment and which might reduce the footprint of some individuals and groups. Second, because the measure is based on figures derived from national economic statistics, activities conducted in the informal sector, which in Southern countries may be more than 50% of their economies, can only be estimated. Third, current research makes no attempt to estimate the reproductive work of women in families, households and communities which is not measured in national accounts. Fourth, the 'ecological footprint' is based on the assumption that everyone in a given society has an equal

impact on the environment, and cannot single out the institutions which support, and those who profit from, unsustainable production processes

To date, there has been little attempt to incorporate a gendered dimension in ecological footprint analysis. With less stake in the global economy, women are likely to make a smaller environmental imprint than men in a similar class location (Hynes 1999b). Over-represented among the world's poor, women's per capita consumption levels are likely to be lower than men's; a high proportion of poor women's income is spent on food and other household items, reducing their personal environmental impact (UNIFEM 2000). This indicates that the ecological footprint has potential to be a useful tool for feminists in developing a critique both of neo-Malthusian analyses and the gendered impact of economic policies.

A variation on the 'consumption' approach challenging the population numbers approach to environmental issues is the 'household dynamics' approach. An examination of demographic trends in 'ecological hotspots' found that the growth of household numbers in those localities is more rapid than aggregate population growth due to an increased number of smaller households.¹⁵³

Reduction in average household size takes a double toll on resource use and biodiversity. First, more households mean more housing units, thus generally increasing the amount of land and materials ... needed for housing construction.... Second, smaller households have lower efficiency or resource use per capita/because goods and services are shared by more people in larger households. ... Although lower fertility rates may reduce population growth and household numbers, the resulting potential reduction in resource consumption may be offset by higher per capita consumption in smaller households. (Liu *et al* 2003, 2-3)

While limited conclusions are drawn by the authors, this study suggests that the trend to smaller households in the North causes greater resource depletion than increased population numbers dispersed among fewer, larger households. Since he was a member of the research team, the findings of this research may percolate into Paul Ehrlich's writings, adding complexity to his liberal neo-Malthusian approach.

At its present stage of development, the 'ecological footprint' provides a partial and indicative picture, most useful for comparing nations and other geographically coherent

¹⁵³ An 'ecological hotspot' is an area rich in endemic species and threatened by human activities (Liu *et al* 2003, 1).

populations. While it provides a macro picture of environmental impacts, it implies that the solution lies in altering the micro activities of consumers. Even so, it is unable to incorporate issues related to biological and social reproduction at its present stage of development. The development of more complex models suggests that more variables can be added (Foran and Poldy 2002). Incorporating differences of gender, class and race, as well as location, however, which would make it more useful to feminists, may make it too complex to be useful in public debates. Nonetheless the 'ecological footprint' performs a useful function for poor women by relocating the blame for environmental problems from their fertility to the activities of richer nations and individuals.

5.2.4 Ecofeminist approaches

Ecofeminist approaches were first articulated in feminist writings in the 1970s, and have been developed through a large body of work. Ecofeminists tend to frame women's relationship with the natural environment in one of two broad ways. One view is that women have a special relationship with the natural environment based upon their physical being, in particular, their reproductive bodies. This relationship is evoked in several ways: women as mothers enjoying a special relationship with 'mother' earth; women and the earth as victims of 'rape'; women as nurturers of people and the earth; and women as nurturers of their families while the earth nurtures all species. The other view is that the women and nature relationship is socially constructed rather than based on material links. They share a similar location in dominant discourses through patriarchally devised dualisms: men-women; civilisation-nature. These conjunctions reflect hierarchical relations in which 'men' are considered superior to 'women' and 'civilisation' superior to 'nature' (Merchant 1989; Plumwood 1992). The first approach has, to date, given more attention to population and reproduction; consequently, I focus on it here.

Ecofeminist perspectives take a 'micro' approach to population, development and the environment. They look 'through the eyes of women' rather than 'at women' through a macro lens. Because they attempt to present the standpoint of women, reproduction rather than population is fore-grounded. When reproductive issues are the focus, women become visible as central to debates on population, the environment and development. However, ecofeminist approaches focus on 'women' rather than 'gender'

and critics accuse them of failing to incorporate factors related to class, age, race, ethnicity, relationship status and location which are of vital importance in the formulation of a political ecology of reproduction.

Much of the ecofeminist literature homogenises women, as this overview of discussions of population issues indicates. Within ecofeminist approaches, a number of perspectives are possible, though radical feminist perspectives dominate. It is important to recognise, too, that identification with nature is a source of empowerment for many women, and that it has provided a common point of understanding for rural women from the North and the South; this was evident at the Miami women's conference in 1991 (see Chapter two of this thesis and Braidotti *et al* 1994). The passage below presents such a view.

No one speaks for the protection of the environment with greater moral authority than women. Only those who have fought for the right to protect their own bodies from abuse can truly understand the rape and plunder of our forests, rivers and soils. ...

On this occasion, we have come together not to make demands on behalf of our gender, but rather to share a vision. Women from many cultures are gathered here to speak up for the salvation of the human species. Today, we are all mothers of our endangered earth, whose resources are fast becoming exhausted. (Arias 1991)

Ecofeminism provided a common language for diverse women at UNCED, as discussed in Chapter two. It has particular resonance in debates about women and the environment, due to its focus on women's activities in agriculture, forestry and water management. Women are often presented as rural peasants, farmers, rainforest-dwellers and inhabitants of fragile arid zones in ecofeminist writings. Less attention is given to women dwelling in cities, on urban fringes, near industrial waste sites and toxic waste dumps, where the 'nature' connection is harder to establish (Taylor 1997). Race and class, integral to black women's articulations of their oppression, are usually absent from ecofeminist analyses. Taylor (1997) suggests that the discourse reflects white women's views of women in nature and excludes many issues important to women of colour, such as hazardous waste disposal, exposure to toxins, lead poisoning and housing. Hartmann suggests that "[e]cofeminism sometimes resonates too much like a pastoral symphony, mythologizing the Third World woman subsistence farmer. The 'indigenous' becomes reified, as does its opposite, Western development and science" (Hartmann, 1998a, 19).

Women of colour and white ecofeminists have, however, found common ground on population issues. Ecofeminists' focus on reproduction rather than population leads to a critical view of population programs. Salleh sees women as victims of population control programs which reflect patriarchal devaluation of reproduction: "the things that men do – called 'production' – are valued, while the things that women do – and especially re/reproduction – are not valued" (Salleh 1997, 62). She is disparaging of the ICPD POA and critical of the terms 'reproductive health' and 'reproductive rights'. She accuses "Eurocentric liberal feminists" at Cairo of thinking "like most middle-class white men that population control in the Third World is the answer to women's equality and environmental stress" (Salleh 1997, 104). This comment indicates a lack of understanding of the complexities of the international women's health movement's membership and its strategies. While condemning men/women, civilisation/nature dichotomies, Salleh sets up one of her own by implying that all women from the South oppose 'population control' while women from the North support it. She implies that all family planning programs are forms of 'population control' and that all contraception is harmful. Salleh's neglect of the political economic sphere restricts her ability to provide a nuanced view of the politics of population control, policy and reproduction.

Ecofeminists Maria Mies and Vandana Shiva provide the most extensive analysis of population issues from an ecofeminist perspective.¹⁵⁴ They repudiate neo-Malthusian views, claiming that industrialisation, technological progress and affluent lifestyles are the major environmental threats. They assert that poor Southern women's fertility is attacked on a "war footing" (1993, 189) and describe 'population explosion' as a modern patriarchal term which sets up "women's bodies [to be] brutally invaded in order to protect the earth from the threat of overpopulation" (Mies and Shiva 1993, 268). In their critique of 'choice', Mies and Shiva draw heavily on the work of Farida Akhter (whose work is discussed in Chapter three of the thesis). They equate 'choice' with 'self-determination' which, they say, Third World women reject; lacking the safety net of social welfare they need the net of community, which conflicts with individual choice. Like Salleh, Mies and Shiva argue that Southern women choose their rural life-styles.

They do not wish to live free and alone in the anonymity of big cities, to die finally, as we shall, in a home for the old. (Mies and Shiva 1993, 220)

Urbanisation is not solely a Northern phenomenon as Sassen (1998, 2000) points out in her work on women in the global economy. More than half the developed world's people live in cities and towns, and by 2015, and on present trends, more than half the population of developing countries will also live in cities and other concentrated population centres (UNFPA 2001a, 33). Nor does reproductive choice inevitably lead women to the old folks' home.¹⁵⁵ Mies and Shiva ignore the evidence from numerous studies that many Southern women want reproductive choice (Rozario 1998).

Mies and Shiva propose changes in gender relations, but place the onus on women, who, they say, should (re)gain greater autonomy of their sexual and reproductive capacities and educate men to respect their "fertility awareness". They want women and men "to understand sexual intercourse as a caring and loving interaction with nature", to develop a "new sexual and reproductive ecology" (Mies and Shiva 1993, 294). Much depends upon women affecting these changes.

A new ecology of reproduction within the context of economic and political ecoregions will lead to new and/or rediscovered ways to ensure a balanced ratio of people to the environment, without coercive national or international intervention. From an ecofeminist perspective we demand the exclusion of state interference in the sphere of reproduction. (Mies & Shiva 1993, 294-295)

While Mies and Shiva place reproduction within a political economy context, they burden women with the task of transforming entire political, social and economic structures through their reproductive behaviour.¹⁵⁶ This is not the 'empowerment' advocated by DAWN and other Southern feminists. The diverse experiences of poor Southern women are lost in Mies and Shiva's analysis of power relations. An analysis based on women's experience would represent women's lives as they are contextualised by location, race, class and age within the broader political and economic context.

¹⁵⁴ See Rozario (1998) for a critique of Mies and Shiva.

¹⁵⁵ Which, in any case, is not inevitably a place of lonely solitude!

¹⁵⁶ This critique refers only to their section on population and reproduction. Most of the text presents a sound critique of global political economy.

A similar homogenisation of women occurs in literature about indigenous people from many white and indigenous writers and speakers. At NGO fora at UNCED and ICPD, indigenous spokeswomen claimed a privileged understanding of nature and greater proximity to the environment on the basis of their indigenous identity. Although they use language and concepts similar to western white ecofeminists, they speak from within 'the problem' rather than theorising from outside it. At the second PrepCom prior to ICPD, Tauli-Corpuz, an indigenous woman from the Philippines, claimed that "[p]artnership and sharing, not domination and accumulation, underpins our relationship with the earth, among ourselves, and with other peoples" (Tauli-Corpuz 1993). This link operates at a material and spiritual level: "[w]hen the earth is in pain, so is the woman" (Tauli-Corpuz 1996, 106). Tauli-Corpuz' analysis is based on the assumption that indigenous women continue to live traditional lifestyles, which denies the diverse experiences of women who maintain their indigenous identity in other contexts.

As spokesperson for indigenous peoples, Tauli-Corpuz attended most of the UN conferences of the 1990s. At ICPD and its PrepComs, Tauli-Corpuz stated that indigenous women are targets of fertility control programs. High birth rates are a survival strategy, she claims, for indigenous families fighting infant mortality, low life expectancies and high maternal morbidity and mortality rates. Heyzer's research in the Limbang District in Malaysia confirms this.

With an increasing sense of loss over control of their livelihood systems Penans perceive that it is in their interests to have more children. ... The loss of children into another lifestyle is translated into a conviction that women should have more children so that at least a few may remain and adopt the indigenous lifestyle. (Heyzer 1995, 43)

While indigenous women's claims to a special relationship with nature are often associated with their claims to traditional lands, for women in general, emphasising a special relationship with nature in relation to reproductive issues may be counter-productive to feminist objectives. It infers that mothering - of people and of the earth - is rightly women's responsibility due to their biological role in reproduction and reifies that role. These arguments are also employed by moral right spokespeople to assert that their views are supported by feminists.¹⁵⁷ From this position, it is not a large step to

¹⁵⁷ The US organisation 'Feminists for Life' (1999) makes these claims.

claim that it is 'natural' for women to perform the work of social reproduction and that their special qualities should be put to the service of all humanity and the 'planet'.

The assumption of a privileged relationship between women and nature is politically self-defeating because it places the responsibility (*sic*) for saving the environment on the shoulders of women. (DAWN 2002)

This theme was taken up by Wolfensohn at the Beijing Conference and Annan at the Beijing + 5 meeting. Wolfensohn (1995) placed women at the centre of sustainable development, economic advancement and social justice. He committed the World Bank to "enable women everywhere to realize their potential, to improve their quality of life and thus to build a better world for us all" (Wolfensohn 1995). Annan also placed women at the centre of an ambitious agenda.

Five years ago, delegates and non-government organizations went to Beijing to right wrongs and promote rights, to show the world that when women suffer injustice, we all suffer; that when women are empowered, we are all better off ... Indeed, study after study has confirmed that there is no development more beneficial to society as a whole - women and men alike - than one which involves women as central players. ... [T]he future of this planet depends upon women. (Kofi Annan 2000)

While ecofeminists seek justice for women within a framework which aligns them closely with nature, few of them suggest that women alone should take responsibility for the rescue of the planet. As indicated in Chapter four, socialist feminists from South and North are concerned that women's unpaid reproductive labour is already being put to the service of people and the planet. They argue that the crucial task is not to further instrumentalise their labour but to empower women to determine the terms on which they perform it. This perspective on environmental issues is reflected in feminist political ecology approaches.

5.2.5 Feminist political ecology approaches

In his critique of Ehrlich's The Population Bomb and related texts, Enzenberger (1974, 9) points out that theories of relationships between the environment and population are political, even when they purport to be scientific. Enzenberger was writing prior to the emergence of the self-consciously titled 'political ecology' thread of environmentalism. It was from this vantage point that political ecology emerged, to provide a political analysis of environmental discourses and to develop an approach which explicitly acknowledges the political nature of their analyses.

Many thinkers have contributed to the emergence of political ecology, from many perspectives: 'simply living' advocates (Trainer 1985); social ecologists (Bookchin 1986, 1987); deep ecologists (Devall and Sessions 1985; Naess 1999); and Marxists (Pepper 1996). Political ecology approaches emerged from critiques of neo-Malthusianism and the work of geographers and other researchers who analyse environmental issues in the developing world from a political economy perspective.

Ehrlich *et al* stood accused of ignoring the political obstacles to the implications of the global authoritarian state that they argued was needed to solve the world's environmental crisis. It was only a small step from this critique to a recognition of the need to understand environmental change in the Third World itself as a political process. (Bryant and Bailey 1997, 10)

Political ecology sees North and South as integrally interconnected, a relationship developed through dialogue between grass roots environmental activists and Northern researchers and environmentalists. It differs from other approaches to the environment in a number of ways. First, some researchers incorporate research and explanations focused on specific environmental problems, such as soil erosion and rainforest destruction (Blaikie and Brookfield 1987; Leach and Fairhead 2000). Second, political ecologists tend to focus on key concepts linked to important political ecology questions, such as energy (Commoner 1979) and sustainable development (Redclift 1987; Escobar 1995). Third, some researchers examine interlinked political and ecological problems in the context of a specific geographical area (Parnwell and Bryant 1996). Fourth, they explore political and ecological questions in the light of socio-economic characteristics such as class and gender (Rocheleau *et al* 1996). Finally, they examine specific environmental questions in the context of broader linkages seeking the social, political and economic roots of injustice and ecological crises.

The political ecology analytical framework links the macro and micro aspects of issues studied. "It seeks to understand and interpret local experience in the context of global processes of environmental and economic change" (Rocheleau *et al* 1996, 4). Feminist political ecology engenders political ecology by incorporating feminist critiques of science (Harding 1992), Marxist feminist analyses (Hartsock 1982, 1997) and poststructural feminist analyses (Haraway 1988, 1989, 1997; Mohanty 1991a, 1991b) which seek to allow actors to speak for themselves.

Starting out from women's lives, the epistemological sensibility of feminist researchers should further help and strengthen grass roots women North and South to determine their own agendas for change. Recent developments within

feminist research methodologies need to be considered. The emphasis should be on situated knowledges.... Many of the newly emerging alternative discourses and proposals for change lack women's and feminist perspectives. Further criticism of Western science and technology as the solution to the crisis from feminist positions is much needed. (Hausler 1997, 152)

Feminist political ecology began to differentiate itself from ecofeminist approaches before it gained recognition as a field.¹⁵⁸ The approach of some feminists who spoke at UNCED and provided critiques after the conference resonates with feminist political ecology. Brazilian reproductive rights activists unravelled the implications of the Brundtland report's approach to population for Southern women (Femea 1991). Sen (1994) and Hausler (1997) provide feminist critiques of sustainable development. US Women of Color's statement to the Third PrepCom of ICPD linked the experiences of poor coloured women in the North and poor women's lives in the South to "global and economic structures [responsible for] inconsistencies and inequities" (Women of Color 1993). A number of studies on specific environmental issues provide a feminist political ecology perspective (Kirk 1995; Rocheleau 1995). A feminist political ecology approach to population and reproduction provides the most effective framework, I suggest, to transform debates about population and the environment, by repudiating neo-Malthusianism and centralising the role of reproductive processes. It has the capacity to engender debates about sustainable development, to highlight the inadequacy of the concept for poor women and to engender alternative development discourses.

The Committee on Women, Population, and the Environment (CWPE) is engaged in this process. Formed in 1991 to investigate "the reasons why a variety of environmental, social, and security issues are defined ... as population problems", CWPE rejects "the simplistic projection of population growth as the major source of environmental degradation ... in order to redirect attention to roots of the problem, while working with progressive movements to find socially just solutions" (Silliman 1999, ix). CWPE's web site (CWPE undated) and edited collection (Silliman and King 1999) include the writings of feminist scholars and activists Betsy Hartmann, H. Patricia Hynes, Joni Seager and Asoka Bandarage.

¹⁵⁸ See Agarwal 1997; Jackson 1994b; Zein-Elabdin 1996.

The CWPE feared that the Common Ground alliance would “fuel and galvanize a strong neo-Malthusian population control movement” (Silliman 1999, x). To counteract it, they met with a broad range of women’s rights and environmental justice advocates to draft the statement, *Women, Population, and the Environment: Call for a New Approach* (CWPE 1999). The statement presents an activist political ecological approach to population and environment issues.

People who want to see improvements in the relationship between the human population and natural environment should work for the full range of women’s rights, global demilitarization, redistribution of resources and wealth between and within nations, reduction of consumption rates of polluting products and processes and of non-renewable resources, reduction of chemical dependency in agriculture, and environmentally responsible technology. They should support local, national, and international initiatives for democracy, social justice, and human rights. (CWPE 1999)

CWPE is based in North America, where it opposes neoliberal welfare reforms and racist approaches to immigration; internationally, it is involved in campaigns against contraceptives deemed to be hazardous, such as chemical sterilisation and Norplant (Richter 1996; Silliman 1999, xiii).

Higer, a CWPE activist, criticises the international women’s health movement for its “reformist strategy [which] calls for a reproductive health approach to family planning and ‘population stabilization’” and aligns CWPE with a radical approach seeking a women’s health framework which repudiates the aims of population control. She considers the reformist strategy to be “a tenuous one for advancing women’s health and overall status in developing countries” (Higer 1995).

Ultimately, however, if the goal of activists and reformers is to secure from government a genuine commitment to advance unconditionally the reproductive freedom and health of individuals, they may need to look beyond the population paradigm for a more promising international agenda. (Higer 1995)

Hartmann (undated) suggests that, because many Southern and Northern feminist development and health organisations rely on United States funding, whether from private foundations, the government or United States-dominated institutions like the World Bank, they have diverted from their radical agenda of the 1980s towards support for a population stabilisation framework. A focus on reproductive rights is more likely to be funded than campaigns critical of political economy and the debt crisis, as noted in Chapter four of this thesis. Hartmann also predicted that a return to right-wing politics in the United States places the international women’s health movement’s

emphasis on reproductive rights in jeopardy, and precipitates a return to the neo-Malthusian approaches which, she claims, have always driven the politics of the broader environmental and population movements.¹⁵⁹

In conclusion, I'd say that we have to look critically at this kind of globalization the women's movement becoming global, global women's studies, and so forth how that can actually reinforce the hegemony of U.S. institutions. ... We have to look very critically at the institutions involved, who's funding them, why they are funding them, what the debates are, what discourses are emerging, and be much more strategic about how we engage in this new globalization of the women's movement. (Hartmann undated, punctuation in original)

These debates preoccupy the international women's health movement today and, in this thesis, I explore many of the questions that Hartmann raises. An important component of this exploration is to critically analyse the place of population and reproduction in dominant mainstream discourses of the environment.

5.3 Population and reproduction in sustainable development

By 1994, most environmental and development issues were discussed under the rubric of 'sustainable development', the term adopted by the World Commission on Environment and Development. The Commission defined the concept as development which "meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (WCED 1987, 8). The transformative potential of the term was curtailed by its location in the neoliberal economic agenda of a "new era of economic growth ... based on policies that sustain and expand the environmental resource base" (WCED 1987, 1).¹⁶⁰ 'Sustainable development' provided the framework for UNCED and the ICPD and remains the rhetorical framework for discussions on environment and economic issues, although it has been subjected to much critical

¹⁵⁹ Hodgson and Watkins (1997) make a similar but less emphatic prediction.

¹⁶⁰ Redclift (1987, 14), writing before the publication of *Our Common Future*, gained the impression from the preliminary papers published by WCED that "Brundtland is much the most radical departure we have seen".

analysis and abandoned by many progressive environmental and development organisations.¹⁶¹

The resilience of the term, devised to defuse conflict between the objectives of economic growth and ecological sustainability, is testament to its cooption by corporate actors as evidence that they consider ecological issues in their productive processes. Lele is particularly scathing about the motivation behind the adoption of the term.

Sustainable development is a ‘metafix’ that will unite everybody from the profit-minded industrialist and risk-minimizing subsistence farmer to the equity-seeking social worker, the pollution or wildlife-loving First Worlder, the growth-maximising policy maker, the goal-oriented bureaucrat, and therefore, the vote-counting politician. (Lele 1991, 613)

In this thesis, I do not argue that achieving sustainable development as defined by WCED would not signify some progress towards improving environmental outcomes, but I concur with Luke’s observation that the term raises more questions than it answers (Luke 1995, 21-22). To be useful, Luke suggests, answers are needed to several questions: sustainable for whom? development of what? for how long? And, as Mello (1994) asks, who decides? These questions go to the heart of the politics of sustainable development, which I attempt to answer, *inter alia*, here.

Although most governments adopted the term at Rio de Janeiro ten years ago, they have not integrated sustainable development into state policies. As discussed in Chapter four of this thesis, states are not unified actors and their departments have different objectives. Environment departments have less power than departments set up to facilitate resource use. Indeed, the “logic of the state”, which is to further capitalist objectives, would be undermined if environmental governance succeeded in instituting sustainability (Bryant and Bailey 1997, 66).

UNCED advanced a globalised political environment in which major economic actors set the terms of sustainable development.¹⁶² “In the aftermath of Rio, global corporate environmentalism has ... begun to set the terms of the debate along lines favorable to

¹⁶¹ A broad critical literature of sustainable development now exists. See for instance: Adams 1992; Blakers 2001; Chatterjee and Finger 1994; Ekins 1993; Hildyard 1993; Lele 1991; Pepper 1996; Redcliff 1987.

¹⁶² See Beder 1997, Chatterjee and Finger 1994; Conca *et al* 1995; Finger 1993; Karlner 1997.

the transnationals” (Karlner 1997, 31). A decade later, Kofi Annan endorsed this process: “[w]e realise that it is only by mobilising the corporate sector that we can make significant progress” (Corporate Europe Observatory 2002). The UN’s reliance on partnerships with business organisations and private foundations in the project of sustainable development suggests that business and supportive institutions and governments now control the global politics of the environment. Consequently, a decade after UNCED, the concept of ‘sustainable development’ has been rejected by most progressive organisations as incapable of delivering the changes required to improve environmental management.

The discussion above indicates that ‘sustainable development’ is a highly contested term; coopted for contradictory objectives, and by those who exploit the services provided by the natural environment, it is in danger of becoming meaningless. There is no term in mainstream use that captures an approach to development where the maintenance of ecological systems, social equity and human rights is prioritised. In this thesis, I use the term ‘sustainability’ to describe such an approach because it has not been compromised to the extent of ‘sustainable development’ in discourses of the environment. The term ‘sustainability’, as I use it, captures the objectives of those who first saw ‘sustainable development’ as a progressive concept (see Redclift 1987) and stands in contrast to the ‘sustainable development’ which emerged from UNCED and was further compromised in Johannesburg in 2002.

Below, I explore the key areas of concern for this thesis, ‘population’ and ‘reproduction’, in the context of the coopted form of sustainable development. I then explore the way the term is used in ICPD’s POA. The aim of this analysis is to discern whether ‘sustainable development’, which set the parameters of the macro context for the implementation of ICPD’s transformative micro agenda, can deliver the enabling conditions which Southern and some Northern feminists developed in the Rio declaration in 1994.

5.3.1 The *problematique* of population in sustainable development

The World Commission on Environment and Development devoted an entire chapter to population. As a result, feminists were concerned that neo-Malthusian approaches would be highlighted at UNCED, while many Southern NGOs were concerned that population control would be offered as a substitute for development. ‘Sustainable

development' was, from the outset, considered problematic by many Southern governments and NGOs. At the ICPD, the Southern NGO Development Forum challenged the populationist approach to sustainable development in a political ecology analysis of the causes of environmental degradation.

We of the Southern NGO Development Forum firmly believe that sustainable development can only be achieved when wealth and power among and within nations are equally distributed and when unsustainable consumption and production patterns in the North and among Southern elites can be curbed so as to bring about changes in lifestyles while respecting the sovereignty of nations. This would then shift the focus of the population concern to resource use and wastage which today remains (*sic*) at the very heart of the global problem the world is attempting to resolve in this era. (Southern NGO Development Forum 1994)

Many Northern environmentalists in the early 1990s saw 'population' as an impediment to sustainable development. This reflected the 'common sense' of neo-Malthusian views, frequently expressed in scientific literature on environmental issues, as explored above. Demographers have also addressed the relationship between population and the environment, and here I explore the writings of demographers on this topic, to see whether they endorse these views.

Like all writings on population issues, the diverse views expressed in demographic writings are not devoid of politics. Some population scientists claim that there is no direct relationship between demographic variables and the environment. "Short of extreme densities or rates of population growth, the demographic situation in itself says nothing about environmental conditions or the course of environmental change" (McNicoll 1994, 81). Marcoux (1999) observes that pollution results from economic and technological models which favour mass production and careless individual and household behaviour rather than population numbers.

A survey of demographers' writings on pollution and climate change provides insight into the political assumptions that demographers and others in the population establishment make in the links they draw between population and global warming. Lutz (1994) suggests that a high degree of detailed data is required to draw conclusions about the relationship between population numbers and climate change and that these will vary according to the level of aggregation of population chosen for the study. He suggests grouping populations by levels of wealth and poverty to gain a clearer contribution of their relative contributions to climate change. MacKellar *et al* (1995)

point out that it is the number of households rather than total population that determines greenhouse gas emissions.¹⁶³

Other demographers are more ambivalent. Even when the evidence suggests that, at most, the relationship between population and the demography is a proximate one, they conclude, like Keyfitz, that “a higher probability attaches to the ecosphere being so disrupted by increased numbers of people and technological straining to provide for them that without any [ecological] collapse many of the amenities of living are lost” (Keyfitz 1998, 187). Meyerson (1998) concludes that there is a direct causal relationship between global increases in carbon emission and population growth. Although Birdsall admits that there is “only a limited basis for adding the spectre of global warming to the arguments in favour of reducing rapid population growth rates in developing countries, and there is little basis for the view that the South could contribute to major reductions in global warming by taking new and stronger steps to reduce its population growth” (Birdsall 1994, 39), she advocates establishing the conditions for population reduction. Bongaarts writes that “[a]lthough future population growth is not the most important cause of global warming, it is a key determinant of greenhouse gas emissions, and efforts to slow population growth in both the developed and developing world s hould b e a n e s s e n t i a l e l e m e n t o f a c o m p r e h e n s i v e p o l i c y t o r e d u c e g l o b a l w a r m i n g” (Bongaarts 1992, 316). Preston (1996) suggests that the reduction of population growth, while a minor contributor to industrial pollution, is a cost-effective, and therefore, a worthwhile intervention.

Demography is closely associated with political actors who push a neo-Malthusian agenda: United States foreign policy makers who fear the growing populations of the South; conservative institutions which have provided much of its funding; the family planning field with its pre-occupation with fertility reduction and neglect of socio-economic factors; and political movements which promote birth control, eugenics and restriction of immigration (Hodgson 1983, 1988; Demeny 1993). In part, this results from a pragmatic strategy of pursuing research topics that are more likely to attract funding. This is accompanied, Greenhalgh (1996) argues, by an uncritical adoption of modernisation as the path to fertility reduction (DTT). For these reasons, it is

¹⁶³ This observation has been corroborated by later research; see Liu *et al* 2003.

unsurprising that population factors figure largely in their analysis of environmental problems.

Yet this doesn't explain why the Brundtland Commission, environmental organisations and other organisations without links to demography or the population establishment also endorse neo-Malthusian solutions to environmental problems. Shaw (1989) tackles this issue head on. He notes the two "incompatible views" in environmental discourses - the Malthusian and the political ecology view - and concludes that:

[p]opulation policies are not likely to *improve* the global environment, or prospects for sustainable development, unless implemented jointly with measures to tackle more ultimate, 'deeper' causes. ... Because ultimate causes are so resistant to change, interventions to modify rapid population growth - a proximate, confounding influence - may be the most expedient means of preventing further environmental degradation. (Shaw 1989, 199)

Controlling population growth may buy time, but environmental problems will not be solved unless the deeper causes are tackled. Population interventions are comparatively cheap and can be attached to existing programs, such as girls' schooling (Shaw 1989, 207). More important, and key to the approach of the WCED, is the political cost of structural change. Proposals to overturn political and economic structures which perpetuate environmental damage challenge the most powerful global actors, while neo-Malthusian approaches not only divert attention from the sources of the problem, they also target some of the most powerless political actors, poor marginalised women.

This discussion indicates that focusing on population growth as a major barrier to sustainable development, and suggesting that fertility reduction will protect the environment, is a political decision without basis in conclusive demographic and ecological evidence. Nonetheless, populationists insist that demographic issues are key components of sustainable development. A focus on fertility places women at the centre of measures to achieve sustainable development. Yet, although women's roles "in the family, the economy, and the society at large" were seen by WCED as the most important factor in reducing fertility (WCED 1987, 106), discourses on sustainable development tend to be silent on the role of reproduction, as the next section explores.

5.3.2 The *problematique* of reproduction in sustainable development

Sustainable development is a macro concept which obscures the diverse processes involved in development, peoples' interactions with their environments and the factors

which influence reproductive activities. An approach which starts from the (micro) perspective of actors in their environments offers insights into the nuanced strategies required for sustainability. As Gita Sen observes, “The failure of much existing environmental science to connect its focus on global warming and loss of habitat to the needs of people for space, land, health, and secure livelihoods has resulted in serious policy omissions and distortions” (Sen 1994a, 70). A major omission is the failure to take into account the reproductive work that women do in family, social and environmental maintenance.

The populationist approach to sustainable development leads to a view that women’s fertility is the problem to be overcome, authorising state control of women’s reproduction. Viewing women’s fertility as ‘the problem’ overlooks the micro level power relations which shape their reproductive lives; further, it can lead to the assumption that women alone are responsible for their fertility, ignoring the gendered environment in which they make decisions, or have them made for them. It also ignores the macro economic and political contexts of women’s lives.

Most policy initiatives for sustainable development have taken a segmented approach “with women at ‘home’, men in the ‘workplace’ and protected ‘habitats’ devoid of humans” (Rocheleau 1995, 9). In much of the world, women are responsible for “the reproduction of the work force, the production of daily subsistence, and the maintenance of the complex ecosystems and particular species that support agriculture, livestock and forest production” yet this work is excluded from official measures of productivity (Rocheleau 1995, 9). Although Agenda 21 called for women’s full participation in sustainable development, the “past experience of such development projects has shown that they put more strain on already overworked rural women without necessarily leading to much-needed wider legal and political changes for these women” (Hausler 1997, 151).

Focusing on reproduction rather than population as ‘the problem’ produces alternative strategies for sustainable development. Sen suggests that a focus on “secure livelihoods, basic needs (including reproductive health), and political participation”, and reducing mortality and morbidity, would go far towards the achievement of sustainable development (Sen 1994a, 71). Many studies of women’s role in managing

environmental resources suggest that these interventions should focus on women and girls as a priority.¹⁶⁴ This requires an understanding of gender relations and women's existing responsibilities, including an estimation of their productive and reproductive workloads. This reveals women's stake in sustainable development emerge as far greater than the producers of (too many) babies.

As noted above in the discussion on ecofeminism, without a thorough gender analysis, connecting women's concerns too closely with environmental concerns may increase women's reproductive labour, already undervalued and assumed to be part of her 'natural' work. Feminist studies on women's interactions with the environment in diverse locations erode the myth that this work is always environmentally benign, and that women "just know" how to grow food (Jewit 2000) and that they "can truly understand the rape and plunder of our forests rivers and soils" (Arias 1991, 1). A conception of sustainable development based on a reified role for women does not move women towards greater autonomy, reproductive or otherwise.

Women have this knowledge not because they are women but because their everyday practices of labour and livelihood shape knowledge and inscribe gendered relations of power, which not only makes it difficult for women to recognise their own knowledge but also articulate it. The project of women's empowerment therefore requires us not only to celebrate women's knowledge as distinct and special but also to attend to the cultural politics of power and knowledge which marginalise women and their knowledge. (Gururani 2002, 321)

The amount of reproductive labour women perform is often outside their control. The labour migration of male family members can be a major factor shaping the type and amount of work that women perform (Oniang'o 1995; Ruthven and David 1995). This, in turn, is affected by a political economy which operates outside the purview of individuals, families and communities. Feminist political ecologists bring macro and micro issues to debates about sustainable development and encourage women to speak for themselves, understanding that, as Gururani points out, they may not be able to articulate their needs and understandings in a language that researchers understand. Ways need to be found to include their views in debates about development, rather than having their work instrumentalised to other peoples' ideas of sustainable development.

¹⁶⁴ See Green and Baden 1995; Heyzer 1995; Jackson 1995; Jewit 2000; Joekes 1995; Leach and Fairhead 1995; Mackenzie 1995; Shah and Shah 1995 and others whose research is included in a special

5.3.3 Sustainable development and population at ICPD

The ICPD couched its treatment of economic and environmental issues within the context of sustainable development, making this concept crucial to this thesis. The foregoing analysis casts doubts on its ability to deliver the conditions for women's empowerment and access to reproductive rights and health. Nonetheless, in this section of the thesis I look closely at the relevant chapter of the POA to determine the definition of the concept which the ICPD adopted since, as previously stated, there is a wide variation in approaches to sustainable development.

The ICPD's approach to sustainable development relied upon Agenda 21's approach to the concept. Consequently, it has all the problems of a macro approach which obscures the countless interactions which contribute to the whole. As a conference about population, the POA attempted to make explicit links between population and environmental degradation. An examination of Chapter III, Interrelationships between population, sustained economic growth and sustainable development, indicates that it does not succeed in proving a direct relationship, and that the attempt leads to confusion rather than clarity of terminology. Fundamental problems are evident in the following extract.

Sustainable development implies, *inter alia*, long-term sustainability in production and consumption relating to all economic activities, including industry, energy, agriculture, forestry, fisheries, transport, tourism and infrastructure, in order to optimize ecologically sound resource use and minimize waste. Macroeconomic and sectoral policies have, however, rarely given due attention to population considerations. (UN 1994 3.3)

The lack of clarity with which the term 'sustainable development' emerged from UNCED continues to provide difficulties, and Chapter III attempts to explain it in a number of ways, as explored below. The other term lacking clarity is 'population', which is problematic in a document emerging from an international conference on the topic. Does population mean 'people', or does it mean 'demographic trends'? Each meaning is feasible, but different consequences flow from the interpretation endowed in this and elsewhere in Chapter III.

As noted elsewhere in this thesis, UN documents are adopted by consensus. Consequently, clarity is not to be expected since, requiring broad agreement, they often

rely upon unexamined assumptions, broad unsubstantiated generalisations and internal contradictions and make assertions without supporting arguments. ICPD's POA is like other UN documents in this regard. While in political terms these faults indicate 'success' in finding language acceptable to the greatest number of governments, they provide poor guidance for implementation. They do, however, indicate contests in global debates about population, the environment and development, and are consequently worth examination. In the POA, the lack of clarity around the macro-concepts of 'population' and 'development' contrast strongly with the clarity of the sections which focus on the micro concepts of reproductive rights and health.

The central statements of Chapter III are embedded in the introductory section of Chapter III.

There is general agreement that persistent widespread poverty as well as serious social and gender inequities have significant influences on, and are in turn influenced by, demographic parameters such as population growth, structure and distribution.

There is also general agreement that unsustainable consumption and production patterns are contributing to the unsustainable use of natural resources and environmental degradation as well as to the reinforcement of social inequities and of poverty with the above-mentioned consequences for demographic parameters. (UN 1994 3.1)

Placing the statement about population above the statement about consumption and production indicates the priority given to the issues in Chapter III. This is hardly surprising, given the theme of the conference, but suggests an underlying neo-Malthusian approach. It adds to this reader's concern that Chapter III offers little to those who seek sustainability for the environment and human development.

There is nothing to lose and a great deal to be gained, according to the following extract, from a 'population' approach.

Explicitly integrating population into economic and development strategies will both speed up the pace of sustainable development and poverty alleviation and contribute to the achievement of *population objectives* and an improved quality of life of the population. (UN 1994, 3.3, italics mine)

But which 'population' objectives: people's well-being or fertility reduction? Subsuming 'people' in 'population' indicates the absurdity of adherence to a macro approach which, it seems, the drafters of Chapter III are determined to maintain at the expense of clarity of meaning. Is development for population objectives or for people?

The POA recommends further research to increase understanding of the links between demographic processes, consumption, the environment and human well-being.

Research should be undertaken on the linkages among population, consumption and production, the environment and natural resources, and human health as a guide to effective sustainable development policies. (UN 1994, 3.31)

Notwithstanding this admission of incomplete understanding, the POA asserts a consensus view on the role of population in sustainable development. Certainly, there was little debate on Chapter III, which went to ICPD with few brackets, indicating that governments were unwilling to reopen the debates of UNCED. Attempts by Southern NGOs to renegotiate the definition of sustainable development at ICPD were unsuccessful (Alailima 1994).

This lack of attention to the issues covered in Chapter III made 'development' a "poor relation" at ICPD (Lassonde 1997, 48; Petchesky 1995). There were a number of reasons for this. First, as discussed in Chapters three and four of this thesis, the Northern-based population, environment and feminist organisations groups most influential at the ICPD focused on the micro issues related to biological reproduction and women's rights. The Northern-based international women's health movement was weak in its analysis of global political economy and lacked a gendered critique of global political ecology. This was evident at WCW where, as Otto (1995) notes, feminists didn't push for sustainable development. Similarly, Gujit (1997) found that the Platform for Action gives little recognition to the fact that environments are gendered and critical to survival. Second, the Common Ground alliance could agree on a women's rights agenda but developing a critique of macro-economic trends would have challenged that consensus. Third, the lack of emphasis on development reflected some developed countries' greater acceptance of the neoliberal economic agenda of trade and investment and other countries' lack of power to challenge it. Fourth, and related, as Finkle and McIntosh (1994, 1996, 2002) point out, differences in development levels between non-industrialised countries and the "globalization of capitalism" (Finkle and McIntosh 2002, 16) militated against developing countries organising as a block. Fifth, as Presser (1997) and McDaniel (1996) argue, population experts have conducted detailed research on fertility and population lobbyists have

focused on family planning and contraceptive supplies, but their study of development-related issues has been comparatively superficial.¹⁶⁵

The ICPD POA departs from earlier population action documents by explicitly recommending the stimulation of economic growth. By contrast, the Bucharest document recommended “a form of development promoting the balanced and efficient consumption of resources” (Lassonde 1997, 52), a definition closer to ‘sustainability’ than the ICPD’s formulations of ‘sustainable development’. In 1974 ‘development’ was understood in the global community of nations to incorporate sociological as well as economic objectives and macro political and economic trends were explicitly mentioned in the World Plan of Action.

The consideration of population problems cannot be reduced to the analysis of population trends only ... the present situation of the developing countries originates in the unequal processes of socio-economic development which have divided peoples since the beginning of the modern era. This inequity still exists and is intensified by lack of equity in international economic relations with consequent disparity in levels of living. (cited by Lassonde 1997, 54)

The clarity of this passage contrasts strongly with Chapter III of ICPD’s POA. As noted in Chapter two of the thesis, the Bucharest Conference rarely went beyond the macro to the micro, and the ICPD’s treatment of reproductive rights and health issues is far more complex and detailed than at the earlier conferences. Bucharest’s macro analysis, however, influenced by the G77’s campaign for a New Economic Order, considered ‘development’ within a critical analysis of the global political economy. The Cairo POA merely states that:

The achievement of sustainable development and poverty eradication should be supported by macroeconomic policies designed to provide an appropriate international economic environment, as well as by good governance, effective national policies and efficient national institutions. (UN 1994, 3.12)

The use of the word “appropriate” encompasses a multitude of contradictory approaches to the global political economy. The list of terms which follows covers most of the themes of World Bank country reports, reinforcing the advice given by this and other international financial institutions to governments.

¹⁶⁵ See also Demeny 1988 and Szreter 1993.

There are other problems in the assumptions made about the relationships between development, economic growth, poverty and the environment. The first problem is the alignment of development with economic growth. The second is the assumption that sustainable development can be achieved within the context of economic growth as it is currently conceived. The third is the assumption that economic growth will, of itself, solve poverty problems. The fourth is the assumption of direct links between poverty and population. Finally, the neo-Malthusian assumption that population growth leads to environmental problems is adopted, despite the debates outlined above in this thesis.

Chapter III consistently uses the words “sustained economic growth in the context of sustainable development” when referring to development. It is difficult to ascertain the precise meaning of this phrase, and many see the terms as mutually incompatible (Marcoux 1999). Sustaining economic growth requires trade-offs potentially deleterious to environmental outcomes, as Bryant and Bailey (1997) point out.

This inconsistency, which characterised Our Common Future, was not resolved at UNCED, and found its way into the ICPD’s conception of sustainable development. The Brundtland report assumes no conflict between encouraging growth, meeting essential needs for jobs, food, energy, water and sanitation, achieving a sustainable level of population, conserving and enhancing the resource base, reorienting technology and bringing environmental considerations into economic decision-making. The authors believed that facilitating “more rapid economic growth in both industrial and developing countries, freer market access for the products of developing countries, lower interest rates, greater technology transfer, and significantly larger capital flows, both concessional and commercial” would provide the context for environmental improvements (WCED 1987, 89). This is the definition of “sustained economic growth in the context of sustainable development” which was missing from the POA’s Chapter III.

WCED’s advice that population should be “stabilized at a level consistent with the productive capacity of the ecosystem” (WCED 1987, 56) was adopted by UNCED and the ICPD.

Excessive population growth diffuses the fruits of development over increasing numbers instead of improving living standards in many developing countries; a reduction of growth rates is an imperative for sustainable development. ... However a nation proceeds towards the goals of sustainable development and

lower fertility levels, the two are immeasurably linked and mutually reinforcing. (WCED 1987, 105)

This passage naïvely infers that the benefits of development are shared equitably between all people. WCED and ICPD do not explicitly address equity issues. It is assumed that “sustained economic growth in the context of sustainable development” is the solution to poverty, ignoring the problems of uneven distribution between and within countries. ICPD suggests the ‘virtuous circle’ effect of an approach which ‘integrates population’ - but again we encounter a problem with the meaning of the term ‘population’: demographic or peoples’ concerns?

As Marcoux (1999) points out, alleviating poverty is justified on human rights grounds, not simply as a path to other objectives. Further, as argued above, a causal relationship between poverty and environmental degradation has not been convincingly established. The relationship is complex, and varies from place to place. As the ‘ecological footprint’ methodology shows, the poor, with low levels of consumption, contribute comparatively little to current waste and pollution.

Finally, there is little proof of a direct link between poverty and population growth and increased wealth and reduced fertility. Indeed, fertility rates have fallen in a number of states without associated increases in income. Sri Lanka’s fertility rate was reduced by nearly forty per cent between 1960 and 1985 while GDP per capita remained at \$470 at 1990 value. Bello (1993) attributes this achievement to strong government commitment to social welfare and increasing educational levels and employment opportunities for women. The Indian state of Kerala is an often-quoted example of population growth reductions through attention to social welfare and women’s status. While the preceding examples suggest a link between increased equity and fertility decline, this is belied by the Bangladesh experience. There, fertility has fallen without improvements in the well-being of the poor, indicating that a concerted population control program based on supply-side measures can be successful in the absence of broader dimensions of human development.

Chapter III implies that 1994 macroeconomic trends provided a supportive environment for poverty eradication and “sustained economic growth in the context of sustainable development”. The comprehensive list of characteristics of global political economy to be encouraged reflect the WCED’s list (see above) and endorse the agenda of corporate

globalisation (UN 1994, 3.22). While many of these features are now hotly contested, there was little debate at the ICPD.

There is an enormous disjunction between the micro agenda of the POA and its approach to the macro political economic environment in which it was to be achieved. Indeed, the documents seem to exist in different universes. Chapters VI and VII show the strong influence of the international women's health movement, while Chapter III might have been written by a World Bank economist grappling with concepts he didn't understand, such as 'sustainable development' and 'population' and 'environment'. The chapter reflects more familiarity with concepts like 'sustained economic growth', 'macroeconomic policy' and 'growth rates'. To conclude this discussion on sustainable development in the ICPD POA, I return to the questions put by Lukes and Mello at the beginning of the discussion: sustainable for whom? Development of what? For how long? Who decides?

These questions are easier to answer in the negative: *not* sustainable for the poor women who were the focus of the ICPD micro agenda; development *not* of people but of the global political economy; *not* for long, because the global political economy relies upon the free goods of the environment and the unrewarded labour of people, many of whom suffer hunger and poor health because the global political economy delivers its rewards elsewhere. Finally, those who *decide* are far from the villages, fields, factories, forests, slums and streets where poor women are to be found.

The ICPD organisers ignored the expressed concerns of Southern governments that the constraints of structural adjustment programs would make it impossible for them to fund the reproductive health programs central to the POA. Nor was the broader development agenda challenged, and the refusal of the United States and other developed nations to set targets for clean water access indicates the hollowness of a concept which is supposed to encompass development and the environment. As Petchesky (1995) argues, it is difficult for a woman denied access to clean water to use contraceptives safely. Sadik, the international women's health movement and other NGOs and organisations believed that the provision of comprehensive reproductive health care would transform population programs. A decade later, it is evident that transformation of the economic framework is required before this quantum leap is possible.

5.4 UNFPA State of World Population reports

In the year that the World Bank published its first annual report, 1978, UNFPA published the first of a series of annual reports which present comprehensive population statistics and arguments for introducing, maintaining and extending family planning and reproductive health programs. The State of World Population reports serve as lobbying tools in UNFPA's attempts to increase funding from donor bodies and states and to convince developing country governments of the need to take action on family planning and reproductive health. Consequently, they provide a tool to assess whether UNFPA has adapted its approach in response to changes in global population politics.

UNFPA plays a key role in establishing the funding environment for population activities. Its reports attempt to "plug into the issues of the day" (Pierce 2002), providing a useful guide to assess the way that the population establishment adapts its concerns to global debates. They provide a measure of the extent to which UNFPA has itself taken the 'quantum leap' in its approach to population and development. In this section of the thesis, I provide an overview of State of World Population reports; the reports of 1992, 1999 and 2002, in particular, are scrutinised, but observations are made about the reports in general in order to determine favoured themes.

UNFPA drafted the ICPD POA, organised the conference and associated meetings and oversaw the implementation of the conference outcomes. As a UN organisation, it has access to governments which, for various reasons, do not receive bilateral, international financial institution or NGO funding or support family planning programs.¹⁶⁶ UNFPA's funding base is comparatively small, and decreasing, expected to be about \$US250 million in the financial year 2002-2003 (Pierce 2002). Consequently, it tends to fund small initiatives "to show the way for bigger donors" (Pierce 2002) and to concentrate on strengthening country capacity. It is also an "efficient, profitable procurement agency" for contraceptives (Pierce 2002).

UNFPA's range of activities provides an indicator of trends in population assistance, and its access to funding is a direct reflection of developed government priorities in regard to population and reproductive health activities. While UNFPA receives funding

¹⁶⁶ UNFPA, for instance, has unique access to China.

from around 125 countries, only six governments - the United States, Japan, Netherlands, Denmark, United Kingdom and Germany, and the European Union (EU) - provide significant funding towards its core activities. The election of morally conservative governments, a change in focus from fertility reduction based on demographic change, reduced government support for multilateralism and reduced levels of development assistance in any of these countries has a devastating impact on UNFPA's core activities.¹⁶⁷ Since the United States is its largest source of funds, its decisions to withdraw or reduce funding on moral grounds have a deep impact. The EU has, in the past, compensated for reductions in United States funding and has made up some of the shortfall of the \$34 million funding withdrawn in 2002. UNFPA officials, however, are concerned that the election of morally conservative governments in Denmark, the Netherlands and Norway may reduce EU support in future (Pierce 2002).

Because UNFPA's donors are based in the North (apart from Japan), State of World Population reports tend to reflect their concerns about other states. Throughout the decade, UNFPA focuses on population growth as a problem, despite UNPD's projections that population stabilisation will soon occur in many of the countries regarded as sources of population growth.¹⁶⁸ Countries where fertility has fallen below replacement levels receive little attention.

In 1992, population growth rates were discernibly on the downward path, except in Africa. There, evidence that HIV/AIDS would lead to devastating mortality rates was already available. Nonetheless, in the year of UNCED, the State of World Population report took an extreme neo-Malthusian view of the global situation: "*Ahead lie four decades of the fastest growth in human numbers in all history*" (UNFPA 1992, 2, italics in original). While it is acknowledged that "there is no end in sight to the overall trends that have produced low fertility", the low projection is presented in a one-sentence paragraph followed by an exposition in neo-Malthusian language of the UNPD's high projections:

But there can be no guarantee that fertility in all countries will drop below replacement level. In an insecure world, riddled with pockets of persistent

¹⁶⁷ Funding for specific projects is easier to find (Pierce 2002).

¹⁶⁸ The United States, the sole developed country with an above-replacement fertility rate, escapes attention.

poverty and conflict, it might stay high enough in enough countries to keep the world average above the replacement level.

If this happens, the prospects are grim indeed, as the UN *high* projections spell out. The world's population would go on rising indefinitely. If women continued to have an average of 2.2 children each, population would reach 12.5 billion by 2050 and 20.8 billion a century later. If they had 2.5 children each, then the human race would number no less than 28 billion by 2150. In both cases, population would keep on growing thereafter. (UNFPA 1992, 2, italics in original)

The report takes up the concerns of UNCED: poverty, biodiversity and natural resource protection. Using Ehrlich and Holdren's IPAT formula, and work conducted by Commoner, the report deduces that population increases are the most significant determinant of pollution from cars, commercial energy use and nitrogen fertilisers. Although acknowledged as a factor in environmental degradation, consumption is dismissed, while technological change is attributed with reducing pressure on environmental resources, and its potential to increase environmental degradation is overlooked.

The report concludes with a statement familiar from World Bank documents announcing the synergistic impacts of reducing population growth.

The measures that slow population growth are all beneficial in their own right. They will improve the quality of life for women and children. They will also help reduce damage to the environment and achieve sustainable development. They must not be delayed (UNFPA 1992, 35).

While the Bank emphasises economic growth, UNFPA emphasises reducing population growth. Other acknowledged benefits of a 'virtuous circle' are secondary to their primary aims.

By contrast, the 1995 and 1997 reports are focused on the ICPD micro agenda. The State of World Population 1995 report, Decisions for Development: Women, Empowerment and Reproductive Health, expands on the POA, suggesting operational strategies for the achievement of its key recommendations. Produced the same year as the World Summit on Social Development and the Beijing Women's Conference, it locates population as "an intrinsic part of development and recognizes the need for action by a variety of institutions" (UNFPA 1995, 9).

Human-centred development - in the sense of investing in people generally, and particularly in health, education and building equity and equality between the sexes - is seen as a firm basis for sustained economic growth and sustainable development. (UNFPA 1995, 9)

This is the limit of its attention to sustainable development, although it goes beyond the POA in explicitly calling for “human-centred development”. A box draws connections between gender equity and the environment (UNFPA 1995, 28) but links are not drawn between population and the environment. The 1997 Report, The Right to Choose: Reproductive Rights and Reproductive Health, presents a strong case for the expansion of sexual and reproductive rights and focuses on reproductive health. It gives no attention, however, to sustainable development or other development-related issues, and does not address linkages between population and the environment. This report stands out for its absence of neo-Malthusianism and advocacy of reproductive rights and health (Petchesky 2000c).

The 1998 report, The New Generations, anticipates the birth of the six billionth child, at that time expected on June 16th. The report focuses on adolescent fertility; it contrasts ageing developed societies with the youthful populations expected to over-stretch poor Southern governments. The 1999 report, Six Billion: A Time for Choices, published the year of ICPD + 5, revives neo-Malthusian approaches to population. Its macro focus complements the public campaign focused on the birth of the six billionth child, delayed until October 12th 1999. The impact of the Asian crisis on population and reproductive health is viewed with concern. “[C]hronic high rates of population growth” (UNFPA 1999, 7) are fore-grounded, while the empowerment of women is limited to a small section and linked to the provision of microcredit and participation in electoral politics. Rather than drawing decisive links between population and the environment, the issues are raised in the form of a question.

But as the twentieth century ends scientists are still pondering the underlying question: are there environmental limits to the number of people and the quality of life that the earth can support?

Because natural conditions, technical considerations and distribution patterns are constantly in flux, and there is no universal agreement as to the definition of ‘carrying capacity’, it is unlikely that there will ever be a definitive answer. (UNFPA 1999, 27)

The 2001 report, Footprints and Milestones: Population and Environmental Change, is firmly focused on the environment, with the preparatory meetings for the World Summit on Sustainable Development in mind. In contrast to the previous year’s report, it claims that “[t]he relationships among, environment, population and social development are increasingly better understood” (UNFPA 2001a, 2). The report brings together the micro-focus on reproductive rights and health and the macro focus on

reducing population, claiming that “among other things, slowing population growth in developing countries will contribute measurably towards relieving environmental stress” (UNFPA 2001a, 2).

Governments, international donors, civil society and, in many cases, the private sector all have important roles to play in achieving these goals and creating a virtuous circle of smaller, healthier families, healthier and better educated children with expanded opportunities, and increasing progress towards population stabilization and environmental sustainability. (UNFPA 2001a, 3)

In contrast to the 1992 report, consumption issues are pointed out as a cause for concern, in a reference to Wackernagel and Rees’ work.

A child born today in an industrialized country will add more to consumption and pollution over his or her lifetime than 30 to 50 children born in developing countries. The ecological “footprint” of the more affluent is far deeper than that of the poor and, in many cases, exceeds the regenerative capacity of the earth. (UNFPA 2001a, 6)

An entire chapter is dedicated to ‘women and the environment’, with a focus on gender relationships and the benefit of empowerment to women themselves as well as to broader environmental outcomes. Women are presented as managers rather than victims, although the special vulnerability of women to environmental degradation is illustrated with examples (UNFPA 2001a, 38).

In concluding, the report draws together the outcomes of all the conferences of the 1990s to reaffirm the virtuous circle.

Today, however, the international community recognizes that economic development; the state of the environment; the health of men, women and children; and the status of women are all intricately intertwined. Development requires improvements in the lives of individuals, usually by their own hand, the status of women powerfully determines the state of development, and women require good reproductive health care for their status to improve. (UNFPA 2001a, 49)

The 2001 report demonstrates that its authors have integrated the increasingly complex understandings about interactions between population and the environment and that it retains a strong commitment to the Cairo agenda. While individual reports vary in emphasis, all focus on the ICPD’s approach to reproductive health as a means of reducing fertility. The 2002 report, people, poverty and possibilities: making development work for the poor, focuses on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) agreed by governments in 2000. The omission of reproductive health from the health goal was a major blow to UNFPA and the population and international women’s

health movements. Consequently, the 2002 report builds a case for integrating UNFPA's concerns into the existing eight MDGs. It reports on "new understandings" about the connection between economic growth and population, largely derived from the work reported by the authors in Birdsall *et al* 2001.¹⁶⁹ Its major argument, that dealing with population issues is a means of countering poverty, is supported by the elaboration of links between poverty and gender, health, HIV/AIDS and education. It cites the ICPD POA's focus on reproductive health and rights, responding to unmet contraceptive need and increasing poor women's empowerment through access to education and micro-credit, as the means of dealing with the problem. This report goes beyond the POA in recognising that there are macro-constraints to the achievement of the ICPD's aims. It notes the gender bias in macro-economic policies, criticises governments' priorities of allocating limited health budgets to hospitals and curative care which bypass the poor, points out that user fees limit women's and children's access to services and expresses doubt about the ability of under-resourced decentralised public health administrations to deliver services.

In the 2002 report, despite a predominantly macro approach, UNFPA pays little attention to reproductive rights and sustainable development is mentioned once in passing. The authors state that economic growth cannot, by itself, end poverty (UNFPA 2002, 14). This, and the observation that "globalization has so far had little positive effect on health, education and other social goods for the poor ... the opposite is often the case" (UNFPA 2002, 24) mark a departure from Chapter III of the POA. The report concludes by paraphrasing a key statement from the POA (see Chapter three of this thesis), reflecting once more the virtuous circle of its agenda.

Universal access to reproductive health care, universal education and women's empowerment are goals in their own right, but they are also conditions for ending poverty. (UNFPA 2002, 60)

UNFPA insists in its State of World Population reports that there is still a 'population problem' of high fertility rates in many developing countries, denying the existence, "with 78 million people born every year, of a birth dearth" (Howie 2002). As this overview of a decade of reports indicates, the attempt to remain relevant has relied upon attaching the issue of 'population' to contemporary global debates. In 2002,

¹⁶⁹ This is discussed at greater length in Chapter four.

globalisation was an issue, one hard to ignore after thousands rallied in the streets outside meetings of the WTO, World Bank, IMF and World Economic Forum. References to sustainable development became increasingly rare over the decade, reflecting UNFPA's increased willingness to admit that environment-population links are complex and suggesting that it is no longer a concept with resonance in global debates.

UNFPA has consistently reiterated the themes of the ICPD, although no report matches the 1997 report's primary focus on reproductive rights and reproductive health. Later reports veer away from rights and keep to the safer theme of reproductive health, although contests over that concept make it contentious in the early twenty-first century. Certainly UNFPA treads an uncertain path in the global politics of population, in danger of stepping into a moving minefield, as it steers between neo-Malthusianism and a strong emphasis on women's rights, reproductive health and empowerment, both of which have strong opponents, and supporters, among global population players. It must also take care not to offend the capitalists who are becoming important donors, restricting its potential to mount a trenchant critique of macroeconomic policies which have had a disastrous impact on client states like Indonesia.

5.5 'Our global challenge': the six billionth child

The five year review of ICPD's POA and the anticipated birth of the six billionth child coincided, providing an opportunity for UNFPA to bring the population issue back into the public spotlight.¹⁷⁰ It was assisted in this process by the Communications Consortium Media Center which produced an information kit for media and helped in other ways to publicise the event (CCMC 1999). Television advertisements were produced and a documentary and video news releases were funded by the Gates Foundation (Gates Foundation 1999). A number of population and environment organisations produced material, articles and media releases using the birth of the six billionth person to publicise their particular concerns. The campaign produced a plethora of newspaper and magazine articles, most reflecting the approach promoted by

¹⁷⁰ Ironically, the birth of the six billionth child was moved back twelve months due to revised projections of its birth date by UNPD.

UNFPA, with a smaller number using the opportunity to air pro-life views or critiques of neo-Malthusian approaches.¹⁷¹

The first publication heralding the campaign appeared in 1998, with the Rockefeller Foundation's High Stakes: Global Population and Our Common Future (Mazur 1998). Introducing the booklet, Ilchman, Conway and Sinding suggest several reasons for the campaign. First, the population establishment feared that the 1996 UNPD figures reporting declining global population growth rates would reduce support for population and family planning organisations. Second, public support was needed to keep governments to their promised funding commitments made at the ICPD. Third, it provided an opportunity to inform the public of the Cairo program "which made zero impact on US public opinion" (Easterbrook 1999). Finally, a central objective of the United States-focused campaign was to counter the Global gag rule on funding to family planning organisations.

The six billionth child campaign material provided journalists with a full smorgasbord of arguments, including maternal mortality figures, the environmental pressure of growing populations, the danger of food shortages and threats to global security. Nafis Sadik focused on the large cohort of people entering their reproductive years, linking failure to stem their fertility with a neoMalthusian future.

Reaching six billion marks a success. ... People today live longer and healthier lives than any generation in history. But it is also a challenge. Today there are over a billion young people between 14 and 15. Their decisions about the size and spacing of their families will determine how many people will be on the planet in 2050 and beyond. Their decisions will also help determine how they will live; in poverty and prosperity, on a green and healthy planet or in a world devastated by human activity (Sadik cited in Bone 1999).

Others focused on global security. Joseph Chamie, Director of UNPD, warned of the threat to United States' national security "as populations grow abroad" since "[n]ational borders are not sufficient to isolate the problem" (cited in Fetto 1999). Undersecretary of State, Frank E. Loy, who spoke at a State Government Forum titled Choosing our Global Future, acknowledged the United States' contribution to global population but focused on future population growth "in the developing world - particularly in countries that are increasingly pressed to meet their needs, such as India, Yemen,

¹⁷¹ For an example of the former, see PRI 1999; for an example of the second, see Dumble's article in Green Left Weekly 1999 which was based on CWPE's material opposing the Day of Six Billion.

Angola, and Cambodia. ... Yes, population growth occurs largely in developing countries, but that doesn't mean its 'their problem'. Rather, it is our global challenge" (Loy 1999).

Around the time of the birth of the six billionth child, a campaign to highlight the birth of the billionth Indian was conducted. This birth provided Indian population and reproductive health activists with the opportunity to pressure their government and for Northern neo-Malthusians to compare India's 'failed' program with China's successful one. UNFPA participated in this campaign, which chose an Indian girl born in May as the billionth child. The birth was greeted in western media with headlines such as India Reaching 1 Billion on August 15: No Celebration Planned (Brown and Halweil 1999); Resource crunch as India's billionth child is on its way (Agence France Presse 2000); and Population Clock has given India a Difficult Time (Schmetzer 1999). Schmetzer's article reports good news: India's fertility rate has fallen to such an extent that the year of replacement fertility has been brought forward from 2100 to 2011. The Director of India's Population foundation is surprised. "Its nothing short of a miracle, that Indian women want less children" (Srinivasan in Schmetzer 1999) indicating ignorance about Indian women's preferences.

This is not a point of view expressed by most of the articles, however, who use the occasion to deride the Indian government for its poor record in curbing population growth and for failing to provide the conditions which would reduce poor families' reliance on large families. More detailed critiques accuse India of adopting ICPD's rhetoric without putting its policies into practice. Murthy suggests that "the panic about population explosions tends to overtake concerns of empowering women and enlarging the coverage of primary health care" (Murthy 1999). Sharma (1999) reports that poor women are ill-treated in many health facilities and notes that, contrary to popular opinion, poverty increases motivation for quality family planning services. Gupte blames the government for "indifference - some would say criminal negligence" and suggests that India's politicians view population growth positively since it produces more voters (Gupte 1999). Gita Sen (2000) is generally approving of India's National Population Policy 2000 but expresses concern about the inclusion of incentives to encourage poor women to accept sterilisation. Clearly, 'population' is a political issue in India.

While many commentators used the 1999 and 2000 population events to highlight systemic and political obstacles to women's access to reproductive health services, neo-Malthusian and Malthusian approaches were legitimised by the emphasis on population increase. Fearing this, CWPE produced and broadcast a statement on the Day of Six Billion.

[M]embers of the population establishment still promote demographic alarmism, despite ICPD reform efforts and the fact that birth rates are declining worldwide faster than anticipated. "Day of 6 Billion" reinforces demographically driven population messages, even if it does not explicitly call for population control. It uses numbers to instill fear and give the impression that population increases are out of control. Not only is it a definitive step backward from strategies that prioritize gender and development issues, it reflects the contradictions of attaching progressive agendas to population control. Never mentioned are the real causes of these problems: exploitative economic and political systems, inappropriate technologies, disproportionate consumption patterns, and hyper-militarization. (CWPE 1999)

CWPE's criticism highlights the dilemmas faced by UNFPA as it tries to link its concerns with political themes and constraints. At the end of the decade, with the moral right again in control of United States population assistance, it must choose its messages carefully. However, UNFPA is committed to maintaining the ICPD focus on women's reproductive health and reproductive rights and retaining the support of the influential international women's health movement. The support of populationists and neo-Malthusian environmentalists is also seen as important and their arguments had been effective in the "brief golden era" of the early 1990s (Sinding 2002b). Hodgson and Watkins (1997) predicted this possibility.

If restructuring gender roles is slow to happen, neo-Malthusians will be tempted to seek alternative means of inducing fertility decline. If fertility decline occurs unaccompanied by significant changes in gender relations, as has happened in the past, neo-Malthusians will be tempted to stop working to end gender equalities. Either action is likely to rupture the alliance with feminists. ...

If public support for the reproductive rights of Southern women is insufficient to motivate Northern donors to fund new reproductive health services and keep appropriations for family planning at current levels, then funds for family planning may actually decline. If antifeminist sentiment gains strength, perhaps in conjunction with Presidential or Congressional elections, then neo-Malthusians could see their interests politically threatened. (Hodgson and Watkins 1997, 506, 509)

Ten years later, it appears that ICPD rode the wave of feminist activism; the aims of the international women's health movement concurred with UNFPA's and in 1992 to 1994,

were supported by a liberal United States government. Sadik, prior to leaving her position as UNFPA's Executive Director, recognised this in a 2000 interview.

Somehow this [reproductive health] was accepted and articulation of that came at ICPD at Cairo. In fact, it had already started earlier. Now, of course, it is commonplace and everybody talks about it. (Sadik 2000)

She acknowledges the importance of NGO activism to UNFPA's ability to influence governments at ICPD.

NGOs are a key part of our work. That's why ... we have to increase the partnerships with as many groups as possible. ... For issues that are difficult and emerging, NGOs are the best partners we can have. They are willing to take risks that governments certainly won't, even UN organizations sometimes won't, but (they) can finance it. The second thing we need to use NGOs for is to provide a forum where they can participate in the policy and planning dialogue. ... At the UN level, tried (sic) to bring NGOs in with the government delegations and I think that has had a key influence in many of the positions that have come out of the UN. In Cairo, in 100 government delegations, we had NGOs. (Sadik 2000)

Sadik is fearful that the 'partnership' approach is leading to the cooption of women's organisations, limiting their ability to monitor governments' implementation of the POA.

I see that in many of our countries in the developing world, NGOs now get money to implement, but they are losing their very important advocacy, independence and autonomy. They need resources for sure, but they also need to maintain their autonomy and independence, which has been such a forceful voice for change. (Sadik 2000)

UNFPA's concern that the public is aware of declining fertility rates may be misconceived since a survey of the American population conducted in 1998 found that most people are uninterested and ill-informed about demographic issues and hold contradictory, poorly reasoned, opinions. Most have accepted neo-Malthusianism as the 'common sense' view; they believe that the world is overpopulated, and that "rapid population growth contributes to environmental problems, civil strife, and economic stagnation in developing countries" (Adamson *et al* 2000, xvii). Few correctly estimate global population figures and many over-estimate them. Although ninety-two per cent believes in the "fundamental right of individuals and families to determine the number of children they will have and that the necessary means and information for accomplishing this should be available to all" (Adamson *et al* 2000, xviii), around half support cuts to international family planning programs. Adamson *et al* disagreed with the approach to the six billion campaign.

Our survey suggests that focusing on aggregate numbers - as for instance, most of the press coverage of the day of 6 billion in October of 1999 tended to do - is less likely to interest the public than a focus on individual perspectives. A focus on individual- and family-level quality-of-life issues, such as achieving desired family size, is consistent with the ICPD "approach" to framing population issues, although we cannot assess whether ICPD has had any causal effect on American attitudes. (Adamson et al 2000, xviii)

Adamson *et al* advise UNFPA to pursue the transformative agenda of ICPD, and to present clear messages which emphasise its micro focus on individual women, with the long-term aim of educating the American public, whose support it so clearly needs.

5.6 Population and reproductive politics at the World Summit on Sustainable Development

The World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in 2002 provided the global community with an opportunity to review the concept of sustainable development ten years after Rio. How did population and reproductive politics fare in this stocktaking? Neo-Malthusian organisations worked hard to have population brought back into sustainable development debates and UNFPA made every effort to have the ICPD agenda endorsed by the conference. Its report on Agenda 21's Chapter five, Demographic Dynamics and Sustainability (UNFPA 2001b) found that countries' efforts to implement policies for sustainable development fell far short of commitments made at UNCED.

Despite broad acceptance of Agenda 21, by 2001 only eighty-five countries had produced national versions. Few of these had been implemented, however, due to circumstances outside the control of many of those countries: natural disasters, severe financial crises, continued economic stagnation in many poor countries, a steep drop in the prices of many commodities and social instability and conflicts (UNFPA 2001b, 4). Here is conclusive evidence that ICPD's concept of sustainable development failed to deliver the conditions in which countries could implement programs for women's empowerment, reproductive rights and health.

In the 2001 review document, UNFPA provides a more comprehensive definition of sustainable development than it offered in ICPD's POA. Nonetheless, it again prioritised economic growth and centralised the need to reduce population growth through implementation of the ICPD Programme.

Achieving sustainable development requires a combination of sustained economic growth based on equity, enhancement of the social well-being of all groups, protection of the environment and slower population growth. In many countries, environmental crises can be avoided if policy measures and steps are taken to conserve and manage natural resources while at the same time slowing population growth by providing families and individuals with information and services needed to make informed choices about reproductive health. (UNFPA 2001b, 9)

UNFPA's 2001 State of the World Population report relates the reproductive health agenda to improved environmental outcomes. At the PrepComs, however, UNFPA representatives highlighted population in their lobbying of government delegates and worked hard to have the following, population-focused language included in WSSD's final document.

Noting the interrelations between global population, demographic dynamics, poverty, the environment and sustainable development, as emphasized in Agenda 21 and the POA of the International Conference on Population and Development, it is essential to maintain and strengthen efforts, including resource mobilization, that will contribute to national capacity building for strategies, policies and programmes designed to achieve population related development goals for sustainable development. (PRB 2002)

By contrast, Zonny Woods of Action Canada for Population and Development questioned the concept of 'population', taking it from its demographic context and bringing it closer to 'people'. Turning 'population impact' into 'human impact' produces solutions beyond fertility control programs.

[W]hen talking about population, who are you really talking about? If talking about population impact, the discussion should really be about the human impact on the environment and consumption....if the actual word 'population' were addressed, we wouldn't get anywhere. ... Issues like sustainable cities and transportation are other ways to address population issues without actually calling them 'population issues'. (Woods in Population Reference Bureau 2002)

Both UNFPA's and Woods' approaches to population were rejected at WSSD. After the third PrepCom in Bali in April 2002, it was apparent that population, reproduction, sustainable cities and transport would not find their way into WSSD's final document. The United States' strong opposition to a reproductive health and rights agenda and the focus on trade, with China a new member of the WTO, pushed rights, population and consumption issues from the central agenda. The G77 countries united behind China and India in opposition to linking population issues with consumption issues. Richard Leete of UNFPA suggests that the dismissal of population issues was due to the alliance the G77 formed with developed countries.

Within the more developed countries, there were a lot of differing views and therefore there was no strong consensus on the idea that population is a causative factor in environmental management and protection. ... In some places throughout Europe the population is declining, so they're not really concerned. As a result, there is this odd alliance that is not really supportive of a discussion of population issues in the implementation plan. Essentially, in the end, those that felt population wasn't a major factor prevailed. (Leete in Population Reference Bureau 2002)

While neo-Malthusians were disappointed that population failed to make it into the final document, feminist reproductive health campaigners were equally disappointed to find that ICPD's micro program was neglected.¹⁷²

Woods' statement cited earlier indicates that environment and development organisations were pursuing issues like transport and sustainable cities in their campaigns for WSSD. This fits in with the broader campaign to reduce carbon dioxide emissions in an effort to counter climate change. Worldwatch, which had earlier taken a strong neo-Malthusian approach to environmental problems (Brown *et al* 2000), in 2002 focused on consumption-related issues.¹⁷³ The contribution to climate change of the world's increasing car population, in particular, was seen as a cause for concern.

There are now 555 million passenger vehicles on the world's roads, and factories churn out about 40 million new cars each year. ... Although car fuel economy is again improving after having stagnated for many years, it remains far short of technical possibilities. And in the United States, which has slightly more than a quarter of the world's cars, there is little prospect of significant improvement over the next decade (Flavin 2002).

I argued earlier that attempts to link population growth in the South with global warming failed to establish more than a proximate connection. If concern about numbers of people was transferred to growth in the number of cars, political ecology would become the common sense view of environment and population relationships. Hartmann took this approach in her critique of the six billionth child campaign: "[b]etter the one child family over there than a one car policy here, or raising taxes, god forbid, to finance public transport and energy conservation" (Hartmann 1999).

A fact sheet produced by UNFPA prior to WSSD offers an uncharacteristic critique of the tendency to blame population growth for environmental degradation.

¹⁷² See WEDO's spokesperson, June Zeitlin's comments in PRB 2002.

¹⁷³ Brown left Worldwatch Institute in 2000 and a new President, Christopher Flavin, took his place.

Demographically stable developed nations are now the driving force in global environmental degradation. They are responsible for most of the harmful emissions and generate the bulk of the world's wastes. With 20 percent of the global population, developed nations account for 85 percent of private consumption. In contrast, the world's poorest 20 percent account for only 1.3 percent of private consumption. A child born in the developed world has an ecological impact equivalent to more than 30 children born in the least developed countries. ...

Too often, talk of sustainable development focuses disproportionately on demographic issues, implying that stable population numbers are a requirement for sustainable development rather than a result of it. In fact, meeting basic human needs is essential to achieving both a stable population and sustainable development (UNFPA 2002b).

If population growth has moved from the focus of environmental organisations, it has also moved from the central stage of global concerns, according to the WSSD Plan of Implementation, which sidestepped the population issue altogether, avoiding even the euphemistic 'demographic trends'. Of greater concern to feminists who have spent the last several decades campaigning for women's rights, women's reproductive health needs were given no more than a passing glance. The fleeting endorsement of the outcomes of the 1990s conferences appears token.

[It is recommended that governments address effectively, for all individuals of appropriate age, the promotion of healthy living, including their reproductive and sexual health, consistent with the commitments and outcomes of recent United Nations conferences and summits, including the World Summit for Children, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, the International Conference on Population and Development, the World Summit for Social Development and the Fourth World Conference on Women, and their respective reviews and reports (UN 2002, 40).

This statement was an improvement, from women's perspective, on the draft version, which added as coda "consistent with national laws and religious values". The inclusion of this phrase would have allowed governments to disregard the entire human rights apparatus, providing a major setback for women's rights (Thompson 2002). Even so, WSSD barely held the line on women's reproductive health and reproductive rights did not rate a mention. It restricted discussion of reproductive health services to "[e]nsure equal access of women to health-care services, giving particular attention to maternal and emergency obstetric care", limiting women's reproductive health needs to pregnancy and childbirth. Gender equality is mentioned in a token fashion throughout the document.

WEDO, DAWN, Worldwatch Institute, and many other NGOs wanted WSSD to produce a Plan of Action setting targets related to the Millennium goals. The

'sustainable development' of WSSD was far from the 'rights-based' approach of feminist and development activists. While the Johannesburg conference set some targets, for instance, to halve the number of people without clean drinking water and basic sanitation by 2015, they lack detail, and in many cases, were debated so acrimoniously that environmental and development NGOs were pessimistic that they would be enacted (Flavin 2002). Progressive organisations saw few positive outcomes from WSSD. Shiva (2002) described it as the "World Summit for Supporting Destruction". Naty B ernardino o f t he International South Group Network called the conference Rio "Minus" 10 and the Indigenous People's Caucus announced that it was about "sustainable greed" not "sustainable development" (Thompson 2002).

These judgements express the dissatisfaction many felt with the concept of sustainable development that emerged from WSSD. African gender and trade activist Pheko (2002) observes that "[t]he Chairperson's text reinterprets sustainable development within the neoliberal trade paradigm and the liberalised trade system.... It is critical to note that the repositioning of development in the WSSD also creates a relocation of development issues from the United Nations to other institutions." Both these trends work against women's interests. Women fare badly under the globalised neoliberal economic agenda and Petchesky stresses that, for the recommendations of the 1990s conferences to be enacted, a strong interventionist state committed to social equity and human rights and democratic, transparent insitutions is required, "insofar as they continually call upon signatory governments to take positive actions to implement gender equality, women's empowerment, eradication of poverty and access to health care, including comprehensive reproductive and sexual health services" (Petchesky 2000c). Yet, as Evans argues, "Structural Adjustment Programs (SAP) typify the redistribution of structural decision-making powers away from states and into global economic institutions" (Evans 2001, 48) and the discussion in Chapter four of this thesis suggests that commitment for these objectives is lacking there.

Writing after the Bali PrepCom, DAWN members were pessimistic about the Johannesburg conference. "It may be better to have a failed conference than a conference that ends with documents that fail the global community and default on sustainability and human rights" (DAWN 2002).

At the Bali PrepCom the good guys and the bad guys made deals with each other that prevented or relinquished any references to women's human rights and reproductive rights appearing in the draft documents. They did put women

into documents, but on questionable terms. Women and gender do not appear in any brackets, meaning that governments managed to reach consensus in all cases. In most cases this has happened at the lowest common denominator. ...

Not only women's rights but also "population", and "population growth", the cornerstone of environmental discourse in the times of Rio, is no longer on the agenda. In the Rio process it was a key contentious issue in debates on causes of environmental crises: was it wasteful consumption growth in the North, or population growth and poverty in the South? Today "population" is out and so are the tricky issues of control, abortion, access to contraceptives, women's human rights and reproductive rights, accessible and affordable healthcare. (DAWN 2002)

WSSD confirmed that the corporate environmentalism which had "come of age" at Rio (Karliner 1997, 31) has failed to deliver sustainability by anyone's definition (Karliner 2002). The agenda of the economic right was pushed by corporations, by their lobby groups and by governments. Canada, the United States, European Union and Australia took the corporate agenda into the negotiating rooms. As at Rio, where George Bush Senior argued for 'business rights', the United States delegation played a major role at Johannesburg, working with Saudi Arabia and other oil-producing nations to block initiatives on energy conservation and development of renewable energy sources. As noted earlier, these are the same states that the United States was prepared to ally with against women's rights.

The corporate sector was formally recognised at WSSD as a full partner in efforts to achieve sustainable development, and the Doha Round of WTO negotiations was endorsed as a key contributor to the process. A subtext of the conference was the instatement of the WTO's trade agenda over the UN's rights and development agenda. The Australian Government's summing up illustrates this.

The World Summit on Sustainable Development, held in Johannesburg this week, saw world leaders endorse the work of the WTO and recognise the importance of the Doha Round of negotiations for developing countries.

Trade issues, and in particular issues relating to the negotiations, played a pivotal role in the debate throughout the Summit. The final political declaration and the Plan of Implementation, both of which were agreed to by all UN Members, highlight the important role that trade liberalisation and the WTO play in the development prospects of the world's poorer countries. (Office of Trade Negotiations, Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade 2002)

The other victory at Johannesburg went to the moral right. No states were prepared to fight the United States for women's rights at WSSD. Charkiewicz (2002) points out that "the long battle to include language on women's human rights and reproductive

rights was lost ... [through] tacit agreement amongst three major players - the US, the EU, and G77”.

The global political context of WSSD was a post-September 11 world, with a United States-led focus on terrorism providing the back drop that the Cold War had provided prior to UNCED and ICPD. While it marked a return to the ‘realist’ approach to International Relations which characterised the Reagan era, ‘the enemy’ was no longer embodied in state power and aggression. “The strengthening of US hegemony in the aftermath of 11 September 2001 is a rather new element in global politics. There has never been a single superpower in remembered history. The US, as a global player, is experimenting with how to exercise its power as others try to figure out how to live with it and/or how to resist it” (DAWN 2002).

WSSD confirmed that the period when progressive civil society organisations could influence UN global conferences is over, at least for the time being. At WSSD, NGOs were geographically marginalised in buildings distant from the conference and voiceless in comparison with business representatives who had members on delegations. Since WSSD, progressive civil society organisations have retreated to consider new ways of expressing opposition to the dominant moral and economic right paradigm and working for development which enhances human rights and environmental sustainability. Women are intensely debating the value of UN conferences, since the World Summit on Children and WSSD reveal the limitations on their ability to advance women’s aims while most governments endorse a neoliberal economic agenda and the most powerful nation in the world is actively working to reduce women’s rights (WIDE 2002).

As social and biological reproducers, women are at the intersection of moral and economic agendas. Knowing that only feminists have, until this point, explicitly campaigned for human rights and social justice for women, organisations such as DAWN, WEDO, the International Gender and Trade Network are actively participating in initiatives like the annual World Social Forum which is working to rewrite globalisation through the convergence of social movements, trade unions and progressive political parties (Francisco 2001). Women are welcomed in campaigns for broad aims like debt forgiveness of highly indebted countries, for corporate regulation and accountability and for environmental sustainability, but bringing broader movements into women’s campaigns for legal, safe abortion, and the right to determine

one's own sexual life will test broader progressive movements' commitment to women's human rights (Correa 2003).

5.7 Conclusion

In Chapter five I have provided an overview of the ways that population, development and the environment are linked in environmental debates. I have emphasised that debates about these relationships are political debates, since they suggest policy interventions which are either reformist or transformative. In particular, I have focused on the way that 'sustainable development' was presented in the ICPD P OA and in subsequent documents produced by its main organising body, UNFPA. The review suggests that, in the decade since the ICPD, UNFPA has developed a more nuanced understanding of the complex relationships among population, gender issues, the environment and development than it presented in Chapter III of the P OA. Indeed, analysis of key documents indicates that UNFPA has ceased to rely upon the term 'sustainable development' as an adequate description of the 'enabling environment' for the ICPD agenda. Many feminist and environmental organisations no longer see the concept as a useful and adequate aim for promoting sustainability, following its cooptation by governments, organisations and institutions to promote a globalised political economy which has proven to be antithetical to ecological sustainability, human rights and social equity.

In its endorsement of an approach to sustainable development "in the context of economic growth" the ICPD failed to challenge global economic trends which it now understands have obstructed its micro objective of improving women's access to reproductive health services and its macro objective of reducing population growth in Southern countries, where large cohorts of young people are entering their reproductive years. Chapter five indicates that UNFPA and many environmental organisations are moving away from a neo-Malthusian approach to population towards an approach critical of consumption patterns and inequitable development processes. The political ecology approach is now better represented in academic studies and activists' campaigns.

Within this expanded understanding of the political nature of debates about human relationships with the environment, reproductive issues emerge as integral to strategies

for sustainability, human rights and social justice. The ICPD agenda for reproductive rights, women's empowerment and reproductive health appears more radical from this end of the decade than in 1994, since these concepts are currently out of favour in an increasingly militarised global political environment where the moral right polices women's sexual and reproductive behaviour. This is occurring at a time when neo-Malthusian arguments find less favour, as UNPD progressively brings forward the date when world population is projected to stabilise. They also project a lower figure than that produced at the beginning of the 1990s. This conjunction of trends forces populationists and feminist reproductive health activists to re-examine their thinking and their strategies in a post-ICPD world.

Chapter six Closing the gaps: Reproduction and population in the new century

For population is a quintessentially international field in which big global theories have concrete and sometimes drastic implications for the most intimate personal elements of a woman's or man's life: sexuality and reproduction. (Freedman and Isaacs, 1993, 19)

6.1 Overview

In this concluding chapter of the thesis I present a summary response to the question, did the ICPD change the world? As the thesis has argued, the conference has made a profound impact on population debates and in the way that reproductive health is discussed. 'The world' of International Relations and global political economy, however, remains largely unaware of the changed paradigm wrought in Cairo in 1994. This raises a number of questions. Could any UN conference achieve transformation on a global scale, and in particular, could a conference on population and development? Could a conference on population, which for the first time, talked about women's empowerment, reproductive rights and reproductive health do more than change the population field in which it was set? What was left out? These are questions I address in this chapter.

At the outset, I declared this thesis to be a contribution to the gendering of the discipline of International Relations. In section 6.4 I take stock of the contributions this thesis makes to the major schools of International Relations identified in Chapter one. I argued there that a critical feminist eclecticism talking about population and reproduction within the discipline of International Relations would reveal a different terrain to that usually surveyed in the literature, and here I produce the evidence of this.

In the thesis' introductory chapter, I suggested that 'transversal politics' offers an approach for dealing with the complex issues around reproduction and population. In particular, it can assist in identifying intersections between the micro and macro areas where women are to be found. I consider two progressive movements, in which feminists are involved, which deal with issues of profound importance to poor women.

Finally, I return to the United Nations (UN) where the ICPD POA was endorsed. Feminists are questioning the usefulness of UN processes for furthering the feminist agenda. Women who have never attended a UN conference are asking to be brought

into the process. Their inclusion, the engendering of population discourses and the broadening of the demographic agenda which must occur if the next UN conference on population and development is to be relevant in the twenty-first century will make any future population conferences entirely different from preceding events.

6.2 Did the ICPD change the world?

The world has changed, but not because of the ICPD POA. The changes were already afoot before Sadik made her statement. Her claims about the transformative potential of the ICPD were in two parts: on the one hand she declared “[t]his POA has the potential to change the world”; on the other, she stated that, “in our field it represents a quantum leap to a higher state of energy” (UNFPA 1994, 1). The first is the exuberant statement of someone who has worked for several years for the POA that was endorsed. The second refers to impacts that the POA’s micro agenda would have on the population establishment. Sadik worked tirelessly to entrench the Cairo language in UNFPA documents and fora and in government and institutions’ practices.

In her closing speech to ICPD, Sadik claimed that the conference had “crafted a POA for the next 20 years which starts from the reality of the world we live in, and shows us the path to a better reality” (ICPD 1994, 1). This is only partially true, if the ‘we’ of Sadik’s statement are poor women. Sadik expected a great deal of the POA. She believed that “[e]nergetic and committed implementation of the POA over the next 20 years” would “ensure that every pregnancy is intended, and every child is a wanted child” (UNFPA 1994, 2). Chapters IV and VII state the measures required to achieve this. If implemented, ICPD’s micro agenda would provide a “path to a better reality” for poor women in countries like Indonesia which have focused more on family planning than reproductive health.

However, there are many gaps between rhetoric and reality that poor women are likely to fall through. The ICPD POA does not describe the macro reality of poor women’s lives. Sadik claimed that it would “bring women at last into the mainstream of development ... protect their health; promote their education, and encourage and reward their economic contribution” (UNFPA 1994, 1-2). This has not occurred, in large part because of weaknesses in the POA’s macro agenda.

Sadik's second assessment that the POA was a 'quantum leap' in approaches to population has proved to be more prescient. The process of forming the Common Ground alliance was part of that change. Through the Common Ground alliance, neo-Malthusian organisations gained understanding of the impact of fertility control programs on poor women. The core transformative concepts of empowerment, reproductive rights and health provided a language for the micro agenda of the ICPD.

These concepts have been adopted by many organisations with an interest in population. While a number of organisations still focus on fertility as 'the problem', many now see women's access to quality reproductive health care as the primary concern. UNFPA has maintained a strong commitment to its reproductive health approach, although the increased opposition of the moral right has led to a strategic focus on reproductive health rather than reproductive rights in its publications.

The ICPD took a narrow view of 'population'. In focusing on fertility, albeit through the perspective of reproduction, it paid less attention to, or made weak recommendations about, many demographic trends already evident in 1994. These include the repercussions of low fertility and subsequent ageing in many countries; the sexual and reproductive health needs of people outside their reproductive years; internal and international migration; and morbidity and mortality, apart from maternal mortality. Language about sexual health and rights, abortion and in relation to adolescents' sexual health and reproductive rights in the draft POA did not survive the ICPD process due to the concerted opposition of the Vatican representatives and some Islamist governments.

However, the ICPD was not just about population, it was about population *and* development. This means population *in the context of* development in the fullest sense, not the narrower definition of 'sustainable development', and this relationship was inadequately considered at Cairo. Thus, even if fully implemented, the POA could not challenge the economic and political structures which constrain women's empowerment and ability to exercise their reproductive rights.

Could more have been expected of the ICPD? As Petchesky observes, "[t]he outcomes of the Social Summit and the ICPD+5 processes ... give depressing confirmation that [UN] conferences do not fundamentally challenge global structures of power" (Petchesky 2000c, 30). The successful outcome of the ICPD was the understanding that

poor women's lack of power and services to control their reproductive lives is the problem to be tackled. The POA gives women a powerful tool.

Without the documents, however, and the transformative feminist values they contain despite their weaknesses, and because of women's efforts, there would be little to hold governments accountable for. (Petchesky 2000c, 30)

By itself, however, the POA is not enough to change the world as poor women experience it.

6.3 The gaps

The outcomes of the ICPD reflect the themes of its political context, as did earlier conferences on population. The global political environment was conducive to the transformative micro agenda of the ICPD for only a few years in the early 1990s. These were the early years of the Clinton administration in the United States when the Democrats held the majority in Congress. The first half of the 1990s was a high point in global feminist organising for women's rights at all the UN international conferences of the 1990s, culminating in the Beijing Conference on Women, which confirmed and progressed the ICPD agenda by recognising women's sexual rights. Since that time, instead of progressing the feminist agenda, health activists have been forced to defend the language of Cairo and Beijing.

The consequences of decisions to cut funds, oppose particular kinds of services and insist that only married people can have sex - the approaches of the United States' Bush administration - is that poor women fall through the gaps. In Indonesia, the age of marriage has dropped; this is not due to the United States campaign to 'just say no' but to reduced choices for the poor. The ICPD not only failed to foresee that governments would walk away from their commitments, its POA didn't provide for the enabling conditions for women to exercise their health and rights.

Many of the POA's failures are not due to the efforts of the *moral* right, but result from the influence of the *economic* right at the drafting stage. As a result, the ICPD POA suffers from a kind of linguistic schizophrenia. On one hand, its chapters on empowerment, reproductive rights and health are peopled by men, children and women, with some attention to differences of race, age, class as well as gender. On the other hand, in the chapters dealing with population, economic growth and sustainable development, and technology, research and development, people in all their diversity

disappear. There are no linkages made between these chapters, reflecting the failure to link women's reproductive rights and health with the enabling conditions to achieve them.

Despite the international women's health movement's efforts to challenge the neo-Malthusian approach, it pervades the chapters which deal with macro issues. Thus, the POA was able to satisfy two constituencies: reproductive rights and health activists and populationists. The gap between their objectives is big enough to cause the neglect of poor women's needs.

The POA fails to acknowledge that "the two to four billion human beings that will inevitably be added to the world population over the next fifty years have not only the right to exist but also the right to a decent life" (Lassonde 1997, 137). If 'population' is about people, as well as about demographic trends, and 'development' is about increasing peoples' access to their entitlements, then the ICPD is the appropriate place to address means available to the international community to deliver "a decent life" to poor women. Lassonde suggests some of the issues which need to be addressed.

Given current population trends and on the basis of the principles set by the international community, it is necessary to rethink many aspects of the economic and social system: the definition of productive activities, the nature of wealth, women's participation in reproduction and production, the compatibility of parental and work roles with individual aspirations, time management, income and social security policies, and generally, the structuring of the economy to enhance as much as possible each country's demographic potential ... (Lassonde 1997, 137)

To achieve this, the people in 'population' require a voice and the ability and power to articulate the terms of 'development'.

'Gaps' occur when intersections fail to connect. In particular, women's needs fall between the disjunctures between macro, meso and micro economic levels. The first gap is between the state and the global economy which is overseen by powerful players like the World Bank, IMF and the WTO. States subject to the disciplines of these bodies are often more respectful of corporate rights than of citizens' rights (Evans 2001). As Brown Thompson points out, "in the case of international women's human rights, citizens and transnational NGOs ... *are asking states to assume additional responsibility and obligation in the so-called private sphere of the home and family*" (Brown Thompson 2002, 118, italics in original). Poor people need strong, democratic

states to provide the services they cannot afford in the private sphere of the market. Second, there are gaps between institutions at the global level; as Charlesworth and Chinkin (2000) point out, international human rights institutions are yet to incorporate the understanding that women have distinct rights. Third, there are also gaps in state and NGO partnerships which are particularly relevant in the delivery of reproductive rights and health programs. Adolescent needs tend to fall through this gap, which is enlarged by governments' exclusion of vulnerable groups on 'moral' grounds, as in Indonesia, where government-funded family planning services exclude unmarried people and NGOs are being asked to respond to these needs. Fourth, women's organisations often set up gaps themselves, as the study of Indonesia shows; there, women's organisations recognised by the states are unrepresentative of anyone but their own, elite, members.

Fifth, there are gaps in environmental approaches to population and reproduction, which often ignore women altogether. Neo-Malthusian organisations have recently recognised that education and access to health services for women is likely to reduce fertility, but they don't actively campaign for these services. Consumption approaches compare collectivities, but as yet, researchers haven't produced gendered results. Ecofeminist approaches centralise women but fail to recognise their diversity. In contrast, a feminist political ecology approach consciously sets out to find women *where they are*, at the intersections of gender, class, race, location and age, and to see environmental issues through their eyes.

Finally, women are victims of military conflict. Here they may literally fall through the gaps created by gender blindness, as Rehn and Sirleaf (2002) show. In conflict situations, women's sexual and reproductive health is often the last consideration, yet, as they point out,

[c]learly, women in conflict situations need sufficient food, safe drinking water, protection from violence, basic primary and reproductive health care, and psychosocial support. These are extensions of what women need anywhere. Yet even though war-affected women have greater needs, they often end up with few, if any, services. The knowledge and the tools exist to protect women's health, even in complex emergencies – but is the political will there? There are guidelines for psychosocial counselling, for providing reproductive health services, for ensuring safety in camp situations, for gender-aware food distribution. But these services and protection arrangements still remain the exception, not the norm. (Rehn and Sirleaf 2002, 43)

International Relations theorists do not commonly address these issues, although they are there to be observed, if a gender lens is applied. Indeed, as the next section shows, there are many gaps in the discipline of International Relations through which women continue to fall.

6.4 And the bodies keep falling through...

This thesis is written as part of the feminist project of revealing women's location in the discipline of International Relations. Realist theorists focus on power and security in an anarchic world. Women appear as victims and occasionally, participants, in wars and other conflict situations; Enloe (1989) has written women into these situations as sexual bodies, but they remain invisible as reproducing bodies.

Neorealists are concerned that population growth creates conditions conducive to conflict. Despite these theorists' concern about population growth, women's reproductive bodies are not visible in the scenarios they present, where, as Rehn and Sirleaf point out, they experience the impacts of conflict in multiple ways.

Women are not only victims of the general violence and lack of health care – *they also face issues specific to their biology and to their social status*. To add to the complexity of the picture, women also carry the burden of caring for others, including those who are sick, injured, elderly or traumatized. (Rehn and Sirleaf 2002, 33, italics mine)

International Relations scholars who take a transnationalist approach are already working in areas related to population politics. Questions which might be asked in a gendered approach include: where are women in organisations related to population and reproduction; are they more likely to be found in organisations focused on reproductive rights, and are neo-Malthusian organisations more likely to be run by men? Why do women dominate social movements focused on micro issues such as health while men dominate financial institutions like the World Bank and WTO?

Feminists are deeply engaged in gendering global political economy approaches to International Relations. This is an area of critical importance since it contains the players who set the economic conditions which create conditions of poverty for some and wealth for others. Where do poor women fit in the gap between the global political economy of population and the global political economy of reproduction?

The discipline of International Relations has provided this thesis with a range of approaches. But these approaches do not provide tools that poor women can use in environmental campaigns in their communities or suggest how they can increase their power to shape the global political economy so that their needs are better served. Poor women, who are often illiterate, need a practical politics that works for them in their location. Many are already engaged in political struggle at the everyday level. How can their efforts be made more effective?

6.5 Transversal politics

To achieve their human rights, poor women must cross many divides. Here, I consider two movements with the potential to improve the lives of poor women: these movements are campaigning to bring rights into development and to transform the global political economy. These movements fit the transversal model. They span a number of divides, include grass roots and global players, connect individual rights with the rights of collectivities and link grass roots issues with global trends.

Efforts to integrate a rights-based approach in the rhetoric and practice of development provide a framework for the inclusion of the enabling conditions identified by Correa and Petchesky (1994). This movement has been given a vocabulary by Amartya Sen's work (A. Sen 1999) on development and human freedom.

[The rights-based approach to development] gives primacy to the participation and empowerment of the poor, insists on democratic practices and on the fulfilment by the international community, nation-states, the commercial sector and local communities and associations of their obligations to respect, fulfil and promote human rights. It emphasises the moral and legal duties of global society to ensure a just and equitable social, political and economic order in which all people and persons can live in dignity. (Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative 2001, 40)

This campaign is supported by many development organisations in the North and South, and has been considered by government development agencies and international financial institutions like the World Bank (see Chapter four). Women are involved as the members of organisations like the international development NGO, Oxfam, and the Jubilee Campaign for debt forgiveness. The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) has potential as a tool for claiming the rights of poor women. UNIFEM commissioned a background paper on the potential of the

ICESCR to provide a mechanism for forcing economic planners to consider the impact of economic policy on women's rights.¹⁷⁴ Elson and Gideon point out the importance of common property rights to women in their cautious conclusion to their study, and note the lack of machinery to enforce rights.

In strengthening the operation of the ICESCR from women's point of view it seems important to pursue both a violations approach which can focus on individual cases and a capacity building approach which can focus on the systematic design of a rights-based approach to economic policy, informed by a gender-aware understanding of how economies function. There has to be an emphasis on strengthening the property rights of poor women, not only in terms of their ownership of private property (including not only land rights, but also job rights etc), but also in terms of their rights not to be excluded from common property, both national resources and social and physical infrastructure. (Elson and Gideon 1999)

The rights-based approach to development attempts to reform existing structures. The second movement I consider arose out of a growing lack of faith in reformist strategies and the belief that existing institutions will always be resistant to change. Participating organisations are attempting, instead, to create an alternative to the neoliberal global political economy which they believe to be at the root of social oppression, environmental degradation and poverty. The movement has adopted the slogan, 'another world is possible', and was launched at the first World Social Forum (WSF) in 2001 at Porto Alegre in Brazil. Representatives of trade unions, development organisations, fair trade campaigners and social justice groups are organising together around economic and trade issues, in the understanding that these underlie the diverse issues they cover on a day-to-day basis.

Annual meetings of the World Social Forum (WSF) attract up to 100,000 participants. Women have been involved from early stages. South American feminists are central to the feminist campaign to 'engender' the movement through *Articulacion Feminista Marcosur*, an alliance of feminist organizations, coalitions, and networks. In the WSF, however, feminists have encountered many of the problems that they have experienced with other, less progressive organisations.

Despite being a movement dedicated to global social justice, equality and sovereignty of all people, World Social forum has, over the years, seen

¹⁷⁴ See Elson and Gideon 1999.

marginalization of women's workshops and relatively fewer feminist presentations in the plenaries. (Salazar 2003)

Candido Grzybowski, a member of the WSF organizing committee, suggests that this situation persisted at the 2003 forum. However, his comment suggests that the involvement of women and their persistence in arguing for the incorporation of a gendered approach have changed his view, at least.

[Women are a] minority, created by ourselves within civil society. With respect to that, there is no point in blaming capitalism, neoliberalism, globalization, exclusionary states, etc. This is a major problem that is engendered, developed, and maintained in the culture of civil society itself. (Grzybowski cited in Duddy 2003).

Many women have been involved in revolutionary struggles, subsuming their own interests until 'after the revolution', only to find that the power structures that they have helped to establish are as oppressive to women as those they replace (Molyneux 1985). Consequently, women are entering into alliances at the WSF with caution. As Joanna Kerr, Executive Director of Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID), suggests, there is limited cross-fertilisation of alliance building across the movements outside the WSF.

[T]he tokenism and marginalization of gender issues at the WSF has as much to do with the profound gender blindness on the part of other social movements as the weaknesses within the women's rights community. ...

However, it is important to acknowledge honestly that the women's movement will lose certain battles if it strives to integrate into broader social movements. (Duddy, reporting Kerr 2003)

Despite misgivings about the WSF, many feminist organisations have formed a coalition within the WSF alliance. This both maximises their strength and gives them a 'safe' space to caucus. The Women's International Coalition for Economic Justice (WICEJ) includes feminist organisations from every region and global networks DAWN and the International Gender and Trade Network. The Statement WICEJ issued at the 2003 WSF announced the Coalition's intention to work transversally to progress feminist objectives and to engender other social movements.

The women's movement should inject a feminist perspective into global movements for social change as we create alternatives to the neo-liberal agenda. This means deepening our own analysis and alternatives from the perspective of multiple oppressions, and increasing our leadership role within global justice movements, particularly the World Social Forum. This entails a dual strategy of organizing in women-only spaces, and seeking to integrate a gender/race perspective into mixed forums. Together, we must take our agenda into multiple international arenas rather than having our agenda set by

institutions such as the WTO, the IMF, the World Bank and the United Nations. In this context our vision and strategies must pay more attention to:

* the incorporation of a sharper focus on the intersection of race, class, gender and international relations in our analysis ...

We seek to explore new venues and partnerships; we continue to build alternatives to current economic and social models in a focus on national and multi-lateral accountability; to resist war and fundamentalisms; and to model in our relationships and our advocacy our desired outcomes for justice. (WICEJ 2003)

6.6 The future of UN conferences

As the international community approaches the ten year review of the ICPD, closely followed by Beijing + 10, feminists are questioning whether large UN meetings are useful for women in the current political environment. The growing influence of the moral right and the political outlook of the United States government suggest that the most valued aspects of the Cairo Programme of Action will be challenged if reviewed in an international forum. Events at the ESCAP meeting in December 2002 in Bangkok confirmed these concerns. Although the United States delegation's attempts to roll back the language of reproductive rights and reproductive health were opposed by almost every other delegation, family planning advocates and governments keen to maintain the Cairo language fear that the same battle will be fought at regional meetings prior to the main ICPD + 10 event. Most governments at the meeting of the Commission on Population and Development in March 2003 opposed, for political and financial reasons, a major global event in 2004. The final decision will be made by UNGA.

Since a working group appointed by the General Assembly is considering what kind of coordinated approach to +10 events (for Cairo, Beijing, Copenhagen etc.) would be most suitable, G-77 and China and the EU (representing 25 countries) indicated that they would leave it to the GA to decide on the basis of the report of this working group what action should be taken, if any, on Cairo+10. The working group is expected to complete its work by the end of June 2003 and to submit its report to GA at its session starting in September 2003. GA's final action will come towards the end of the year. It is therefore unlikely that anything other than a purely commemorative event on **ICPD+10** in 2004 will come out of this process. (Anon 2003)¹⁷⁵

Consequently, UNFPA will not press for a large international conference, although some United States-based right wing organisations are pressing for it, seeking

¹⁷⁵ The points of view of other major players, organisations of the moral right and neo-Malthusian population and environmental organisations with a global focus are not available on public web sites.

opportunities to challenge the language of reproductive rights and health (Pierce 2002). Sinding's organisation, IPPF, favours a large international conference since "every time we have a fight we win" (Sinding 2002b). IPPF relies upon the media exposure of international events to attract financial support. UNFPA plans a technical and scientific conference for ICPD + 10, while IPPF will organise a roundtable where invited NGOs can review progress in the implementation of the Programme of Action.

Most women's organisations agree with UNFPA's plans for ICPD + 10 and are debating the value of a major conference for the ten year review of the Beijing Platform for Action. This discussion is occurring at women's conferences and through electronic discussion groups. Analysis of contributions to one discussion group indicates that feminists' arguments reflect the weariness of women who have attended many of the UN conferences and follow-up meetings in the 1990s and early 2000s, and the desire of many Southern feminists to be involved in any processes set up for the Beijing review.¹⁷⁶

We in Trinidad and Tobago support this as women in our region who cannot afford to attend activities at home will be motivated to participate at home and in the region, less expensive, the fear of travelling to a strange where they cannot speak the language.

We experienced some difficulties in getting some of our rural women to leave their comfort zone and travel more than 20 miles to learn computer technology, now after three lessons they are so excited with the new technology and the new knowledge gained opportunities such as the one suggested will be of great benefit to them. (Taylor 2003, grammar in original)

DAWN spokesperson, Sonia Correa (2002) warns women to ensure that their opposition to large UN conferences is not seen to endorse the arguments of governments opposed to large-scale conferences because they dislike the UN's democratic style of multilateralism. DAWN has decided to oppose a large Beijing + 10 conference after consulting with members and other organisations. With the 'war on terrorism' in full swing, DAWN suggests that creating opportunities to open up the ICPD and Beijing documents would set back the hard work of the 1990s.

Post 9/11, DAWN feel even more strongly that these are dangerous times in which to risk agreements reached through earlier UN Conferences. Anyone who doubts it need only look at what is happening in the preparatory processes

¹⁷⁶ The debate is being conducted through WIDE and AWID, and the emails are posted on the WIDE site (see WIDE 2003).

for ICPD+10, where reproductive rights language is being targeted by the US government for exclusion from the Conference document. If successful in their endeavours, the gains for women won through the ICPD, and reiterated in Beijing, and retained through both ICPD+5 and Beijing+5 will be lost. (Slatter 2002)

Hessini (2002), an Egyptian feminist, agrees that women should lobby for a postponement of the Fifth World Conference on Women until a more favourable time. She suggests that women's organisations should reassess their focus on the UN.

In addition, women's and health groups need to rethink the focus on UN processes; while it has been instrumental in the past, this work has run its course and it is now important to focus on different types of global advocacy (i.e. interacting more with human rights systems, special rapporteurs, general treaties, etc.). (Hessini 2002)

Liu, a Chinese woman researching the involvement of Indian and Chinese women in world women's conferences, emphasises that UN conferences provide yardsticks which Southern women can use in lobbying their governments. She reminds "'fatigued' stars" that "the legitimacy of the United Nations outside the western world is striking" (Liu 2002). Japan's Women's Watch are keen to use the Beijing + 10 process to counter the growing backlash of right wing opponents of women's rights in Japan (Hashimoto 2002). Vere (2003) of the Pacific Concerns Resource Centre argues that a major women's conference would provide Pacific women with an opportunity to review governments' commitments.

Since the ICPD, technologies which allow wider participation have been integrated into women's networks, creating new opportunities for women to participate through electronic communication. Communication technologies, however, open up another gap into which poor women fall. The cost and skills involved in using computers and communications programs put them out of most poor women's reach. When they have computer facilities at all, Southern women's organisations struggle with outdated equipment, lack of electricity and phone lines in rural areas and the need to achieve high levels of literacy, often in languages other than their own. Is this an area where Northern women can assist in the empowerment of Southern women, putting theory into practice?

An email conversation is not a decision making forum, so it is likely that some women will lobby for a conference and others will oppose it. It is apparent from the postings I

have read, which cover more than three months, that many Southern women want a conference, but they want it to be conducted in a way that involves them. The participation of more women from the South will change the agenda of future UN conferences - if they are involved in setting the agenda.

If their concerns are reflected, there will be more emphasis on 'development' in future conferences on population and development. While the current empowerment, reproductive rights and reproductive health agenda is likely to be endorsed, there will be more of a focus on providing conditions in which these concepts become reality. The voices of women like the Indonesian women who participated in the sustainable livelihood study (Mukherjee *et al* 2002) provide an indication of Southern women's concerns: they want good reproductive health services, and the condition most likely to 'enable' them is an end to their poverty and marginalisation.

Global trends already evident will contribute to a broader demographic focus. Any change in UNFPA's agenda will be contested, inside the organisation, with other UN member agencies, by governments and among the NGOs which have close associations with its current agenda. For, as this thesis shows, population and reproduction are highly political areas which reflect the broader politics of the international community and provide a vehicle for contests between impassioned, deeply-felt values and ideologies. Due to the efforts of feminists from the North and the South, any future conference about population will ensure that 'population' is not discussed without its parallel process, 'reproduction'. Next time, with the economic literacy feminist networks are gaining through their engagement in the WSF and campaigns to engender macroeconomics, it might also address reproduction in its broader sense. This might give ICPD +? the capacity to change the world.

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Abbreviations and acronyms

APPC	Asia Pacific Population Conference (2002)
ARROW	Asia-Pacific Resource and Research Centre for Women
AUSAID	Australian Agency for International Development
AWID	Association for Women's Rights in Development
BADEPAL	Indonesian Environmental Impact Management Agency
BKKBN	Badan Koordinasi Keluarga Berencana Nasional - National Family Planning Coordination Board (NFPCB) of Indonesia
CCMC	Communications Consortium Media Center
CEDAW Women	Committee for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CEDPA	Center for Development and Population Activities
Cepia	A Brazilian feminist organisation which has adopted the name of a local flower, Cepia
COPE	Campaign on Population and the Environment
CPS	Contraceptive Prevalence Survey
CSD	Commission on Sustainable Development
CWPE	Committee on Women, Population and the Environment
DALYs	Disability Adjusted Life Years
DAWN	Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era
DHS	Demographic and health surveys
DTT	Demographic Transition Theory
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Commission (of the UN)
ESCAP	Economic and Social Commission of Asia and the Pacific
EU	European Union
FINRRAGE	Feminist International Network for Reproductive Rights and Against Genetic Engineering
FIRE	Feminist International Radio Endeavour
G77	Group of seventy-seven countries

GA	General Assembly (see UNGA, below)
GAD	Gender and Development
GATS	General Agreement on Trade in Services
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GPE	Global Political Economy
HERA	Health, Empowerment, Rights and Accountability (a feminist NGO)
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1976)
ICPD	International Conference on Population and Development (1994)
IGTN	International Gender and Trade Network
IIASA	International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IPAC	Women's International Policy Action Committee
IPE	International Political Economy
IPPF	International Planned Parenthood Federation
IR	International Relations (the discipline)
IRRRAG	International Reproductive Rights Research Action Group
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature
IUD	Intra-uterine device
IUSSP	International Union for the Scientific Study of Population
IWHC	International Women's Health Coalition
IWTC	International Women's Tribune Center
KAP	Knowledge/Attitude/Practice (surveys)
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
NIEO	New International Economic Order
OBOS	Our Bodies, Ourselves (Boston Women's Health Book Collective 1985)