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Between Continuity and Change: A Critical Discourse Analysis of the Cairo International Conference on Population and Development's Program of Action

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Abstract

The history of the population control movement is one replete with controversies and where narratives about coercive population control policies and programs abound. Questionable practices such as the wide sterilization campaigns as took place in India during its state of emergency period in the 1970s or the use of contraceptives in the developing world already banned from Western markets contributed in casting a shadow over the population control movement for years. It is in this context that we need to understand the Cairo International conference on Population and Development of 1994, which, many claimed was an important paradigm shift that served to re-define population policy and change the course of the population debate. The Program of Action firmly established the primacy of human welfare needs over a "simple" concern with demographic targets and goals. For activists and commentators alike, a consensus was reached at Cairo and the conference represented a complete break from the international population movement's controversial past. However, this has led to the misconceived assumption that the debate on population control is now "dead and buried" (Brigham, 2012). Hence, some authors argue that the public and global interest in the issue of overpopulation has for some time been on decline. The argument of this paper is however that the consensus reached at Cairo happened less through a change in perspective than by finding a language that was so vague as to allow a coalition by a variety of actors with divergent interests; between women's rights advocates, population control advocates, religious groups, market-oriented economists and environmentalists. Through a critical discourse analysis (CDA) of the Program of Action, the paper argues that it is important to see the Program of Action not as a complete break from the population control movement but as a continuation of the same discourse albeit in a changed political context, and, family planning has now become the vehicle through which the old population control discourse is legitimized and lives on.

Keywords: discourse, CDA, Malthusian discourse, population control, family planning

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1. Introduction

This paper is concerned with the politics of population control, and more precisely the very discourses that problematize the reproductive behaviors of some segments of populations and construct population growth as a threat for the welfare of individuals, of nations and of the world.

Different nations have at some point in their history engaged in one or another form of population control, either by encouraging reproduction or by discouraging it. In some cases it has been a combination of both where those deemed "fit" were encouraged to reproduce while coercive measures were taken to discourage the reproduction of the less "fit". Hence, Nira Yuval-Davis has talked about three main discourses that have historically dominated national policies for population control: the "people as power" discourse, the eugenicist discourse and the Malthusian discourse (Yuval-Davis, 1997).

Simply put, the people-as-power discourse means that a nation, or simply a group of people, depends for its future and for its survival on its continuous growth. Different nations have at some point in their history encouraged or, in some instances, coerced women to reproduce. This can for instance be seen in the case of settler societies (such as took place in Australia) were attempts were made to incorporate "reproduction" as a crucial aspect of their national-building process; the incentive here being 'to populate or perish'. The eugenicist discourse on the other hand is concerned less with the size than with the "quality" of the "national stock". Hence, steps are taken to improve the "biological" characteristics of the nation by favoring the reproduction of the "good stock" (the supposedly "genetically" superior) while discouraging the "genetically" inferior from reproducing. The population discourse of Third World countries has however been predominated by the Malthusian discourse, that is predicated upon the belief in an imminent crisis of a population that can't feed itself. Thomas Malthus, British clergyman turned economist, predicted in the late 1800's that population growth if unchecked would eventually outgrow global resources for food (Yuval-Davis, 1997: 29-32).

The focus of this paper is however on the international institutional level where population policy has historically been predominated by the Malthusian discourse and where it is the reproduction of the populations of the Third World which has often been the focus. Moreover, the history of the international population control institution is one replete with controversies and where narratives about coercive population control policies and programs abound. Questionable practices such as the wide sterilization campaigns as took place in India during

its state of emergency period in the 1970s or the extensive use of contraceptives in the developing world already banned from Western markets contributed in casting a shadow over the population control movement for years (Pearce, 1995: 199).

It is in this context that we need to understand the Cairo International conference on Population and Development of 1994, which, many claimed was an important paradigm shift that served to re-define population policy and change the course of the population debate. It is argued that the Program of Action firmly established the primacy of human welfare needs over a "simple" concern with demographic targets and goals. For activists and commentators alike, a consensus was reached at Cairo and the conference represented a complete break from the international population movement's troubled past (MacIntosh & Finkle, 1995).

The problem with claiming a "paradigm shift" however implies that population control no longer is an issue or that the debate on population control may now be over. It also means that whatever was wrong with previous population policies – all the controversies and debates, all that the population movement was blamed for; population control, coercion, imperialism, human rights violations – is relegated to the past. Hence, the possibility of bringing that much dreaded past into dialogue with the present that we might in the process discover that the past may still have some bearing on the present is significantly reduced.

The renewed interest in environmental issues that has been taking place since the turn of the century and that has gradually been resurrecting old Malthusian fears of overpopulation has however proven otherwise (Hartman, 2011). What I want to stress here is that Cairo was a way for the population establishment to redeem itself. It seemed as if it at last acknowledged its longstanding critiques by incorporating through the Program of Action the views of its opponents into the articulation of a new population policy agenda. The current paper argues that through a closer attention to the language and discourse contained within the pages of the Program of Action, it is possible to see the text not as a complete break from the population control movement but as a continuation of the same population control discourse albeit in a changed political context.

The importance and relevance of the Cairo Program of Action in guiding worldwide population programs cannot be overstated. Since its inception in 1994, the Program of Action has been one of the guiding principles for the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), which itself is one of the largest multilateral funder of worldwide population programs. Furthermore, in 2011, the UN general assembly renewed its commitment to the Program of

Action by deciding to extend the Program of Action beyond 2014 (which was supposed to be its last application year) for further implementation (population division, 2013). Though the Program of Action is a legally non-binding document, what gets agreed in such international conferences remains important as it sets the priorities for the global population agenda and it also determines resource and funding priorities and in this way guides and directs action.

Statement of Purpose

The aim of the present paper is, by carrying out a critical discourse analysis of the Cairo International Conference on Population and Development's Program of Action, to see whether the conference and its resulting text really were the turning point of population policy and discourses as has been claimed, and whether they constitute a redefinition of population discourse politics.

Some clarifications

Population control is often associated with limiting the size of populations through different kinds of methods though mostly through coercion. However, when population control is mentioned in this paper, it not only refers to the instances when coercion and violence have been used but it also refers to any technique employed by a governing body to affect or influence the reproduction of its population, so that, even in the absence of direct control and coercion, we can still talk about population control. The adopted perspective of this paper is informed by the view put forward by Yuval Davis that "one cannot dichotomize between 'natural' and 'controlled' reproduction: all so called natural biological reproduction takes place in the specific social, political and economic contexts which construct it" (1997:27).

2. Is There a Population Crisis?

It has always been the fear of overpopulation that has underlaid the desire and the many attempts to limit and control reproduction. The question if there is an overpopulation crisis has however been the object of great debates and scholarly attention in various disciplines since the late 18th century. Though interests in the topic existed prior to that, the overpopulation issue never attracted as much attention as it did through the release of Thomas Malthus' *An Essay on Population as it Affects the Future Improvement of Society* (1798).

Then, is the world facing an overpopulation crisis? Has the world with its ever growing population exceeded our planet Earth's carrying capacity? And, are we breeding ourselves to extinction?[1] The dominant view for many years was that the world was indeed overpopulated. Some writers argued that the world due to excessive population growth, unless strict population control measures could be adopted worldwide, would soon be running out of the resource base necessary for its survival (Paddock & Paddock, 1967). In his 1968's *Population Bomb*, Paul Ehrlich went as far as to claim that we had already exceeded the earth's limits and that the "battle to feed all of humanity" had been lost (xi)[2].

In *The Coming Anarchy* (1994), Robert Kaplan offers a frightening vision of a future West Africa where overpopulation, environmental degradation, resource scarcity, crumbling state borders and weak states, disease-ridden shantytowns and cultural conflicts have become the overriding national security issues. He paints a vision of a future where soil degradation, deforestation and resource scarcity, themselves consequences of overpopulation and environmental degradation, lead to unprecedented mass migration in turn resulting in the exacerbation of cultural and racial tensions, leading to conflicts. This, Kaplan argued was also to take place everywhere else as a result of environmental and demographic pressures. It is however a vision of a divided world with "impenetrable" borders where one part – representing the affluent (or Francis Fukuyama's "Last Man") – though operating under the same environmental limits has learned through technology to master its environment, and, where the other part, condemned to a life of poverty and "cultural dysfunction", fights for

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[1] I am here referring to an article with the same name – *We Are Breeding Ourselves to Extinction* – where the author, Chris Hedges, argues that if the current growth rate, the depletion of the earth's resources and the extinction of various species associated with that are allowed to continue, our planet will soon be approaching an era of "extinction and desolation... unseen since the end of the Mesozoic era... when the dinosaurs disappeared".

[2] These are just two works in a long series of authors which for a long time propagated the view of a population crisis running out of control. Such works include, among others, Fairfield Osborne's *Our Plundered Planet* (1948), William Vogt's *The Road To Survival* (1948) and Garret Hardin's "The Tragedy of the Commons" (1968)

survival and battles over "scraps of" an "overused" and overcrowded earth (Ibid: 62). Few years prior to Kaplan, Thomas Homer-Dixon, also argued for the changing landscape of wars and conflicts where population pressure and the scarcity of natural resources such as water would become likely causes of conflicts (1991).

Economist Julian Simon however challenged the idea that the world was facing resource and raw-material scarcity due to overpopulation. Believing in the "propensity of people to develop and innovate" (1996: 214), Simon argued that population growth was on the contrary the remedy to raw-material scarcities since resource crisis (often resulting in high prices for that scarce resource) would offer incentives for innovation and the search for alternative resources as substitutes (1996: 165). Elsewhere; for economics professor Jacqueline Kasun in *The War against Population*, overpopulation or the argument that the world is running out of its natural resources, sources of energy and living space necessary for the survival of mankind is a myth (1999). She argues that economic underachievement cannot be attributed to population size, but, if anything, population growth favors an increase in per capita output, stimulates technological innovation and economic development. Moreover, according to Kasun, the idea of overpopulation produces a "limit discourse" which invokes the image of a "crowded lifeboat" where in order for anyone to survive some others, by necessity, need to be left behind (1996: 26).

For Zygmunt Bauman, overpopulation is rather "a fiction of actuaries". It is a "code name" for the victims of modernity and economic progress. They are those, in today's globalized world and economy, whose very existence makes the smooth and proper functioning of the economy difficult. They are those whose ways of making a living have been made redundant through the passage of economic progress. And as their numbers are continually and "uncontrollably" growing, they are increasingly "adding to expenses yet nothing to gains" (2004: 34). In a world that values producers all that needs to be produced to keep up with existing demand can be produced without their labor. In a society that values consumers, they are those with no means to purchase the produced goods and hence to advance the consumer market. It is therefore that their fertility is perceived as wasteful, and, limiting it is made the overriding goal of any population policy (2004).

3. Methodological Framework

3.1 CDA as Theory and Method

CDA is the chosen method of this research. However, CDA is more than just a method for data analysis but rather a theoretical package with its own ontological and epistemological presuppositions. Hence, the researcher must comply with the philosophical (the ontological and epistemological) principles of CDA to be able to use it as one's method of empirical study (Jørgensen and Philips, 2002:4). By doing this I am consciously taking a distance from what Bourdieu and Wacquant have termed "methodologism"; the tendency to view "method as a theory-free means of achieving results" (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999: 16). Hence, CDA will here be used as both method and theory. There are different approaches to discourse analysis and each presupposes its own theoretical points of departure and methodological tools. The chosen discourse analysis method of this paper is however premised upon the principles and insights of Norman Fairclough's own version of CDA.

Moreover, by choosing CDA, I acknowledge the sorts of epistemic influences that have inspired the development of CDA as a method of text and discourse analysis. Here I am referring to the method's indebtedness to post-structuralist theory, particularily Foucault's theory on "discourse". This is especially true for CDA's view on the relation between discourse and social practice. However, CDA diverges from post-structuralism's tendency to reduce the whole of social life to discourse. Furthermore, CDA positions itself against post-structuralism's so called "judgmental relativism". Hence, in *Discourse in Late Modernity*, Chouliaraki and Fairclough can then argue that "although epistemic relativism must be accepted – that all discourses are socially constructed relative to the social positions people are in – this does not entail accepting judgmental relativism – that all discourses are equally good." (1999: 8) The underlying assumption is here that unequal power relations and injustice are continually reproduced and legitimized through language and discourse. Hence, CDA does not promise to be politically neutral (Fairclough, 1992: 12).

One important contribution of CDA for the purpose of this paper is the way it problematizes language and discourse and their role in shaping and reproducing social structures. The methodological premise of CDA is that language does not just reflect or represent "reality" as some sort of transparent medium through which thought can be simply transmitted, rather, language helps construct and constitute that reality (Fairclough, 1992: 3). CDA employs a critical perspective which attempts to scrutinize how discourses can be shaped by relations of

power and ideologies. Moreover, CDA makes another important contribution for this paper through its understanding of "text". According to CDA, the meaning of texts can never be fully understood through an analysis of their content alone. Rather, texts need to be critically read and interpreted in the light of their social, historical and political contexts (Fairclough, 1992). Hence, the overarching argument regarding the choice of discourse analysis as the method of this research is then that texts in a substantive way can tell us something about the context whence they originate, about society and societal structures.

Moreover, using CDA also entails considering the semantic (that is, meaning) values of textual features and linguistic constructions and how specific language choices in a text reflect the broader social context whence from the text is produced. As Fairclough has noted; "the values of textual features only become real, socially operative, if they are embedded in social interaction" (1989:141). The purpose of this research is then of course to show the social significance of the Program of Action by showing how certain features of the text are associated through discourse with certain social values and thus become involved in particular power relations. Hence, this implies that to achieve this goal, one needs to go beyond a simple text analysis, a mere description of texts and their elements.

3.2 Defining some concepts

Here, a few words need to be said about the definition of discourse that is employed by this paper. CDA's understanding of discourse is influenced by Foucault's discourse theory. Accordingly, discourse is defined as "a group of statements which provide a language for talking about - i.e. a way of representing − a particular kind of knowledge about a topic" (Hall, 1992: 201). When statements about a particular object of knowledge or a particular topic are established in discourse, it makes it possible to talk and reason about the topic in a certain way, thus excluding other discourses and ways of relating to the topic. Hence, discourse determines the "conditions of possibility" by structuring areas of knowledge. Discourse structures what can be said and respectively cannot be said, what counts as true and what does not, what counts as knowledge and what does not. Discourse then refers to particular ways of representing and giving meaning. Moreover, by constraining what can be thought and known discourse also constraints and dictates action. It is in this way that discourses end up having social consequences on social practice (Fairclough, 1989). When I use discourse throughout this paper, it is this understanding of discourse that I have in mind.

Another important definition that is employed in the course of the paper is that of an order of discourse. Discourses are part of a broader system that structures the relationship among them. Every social field and institution is constituted of a corresponding order of discourse. The order of discourse is in other words, the semiotic aspect or the discursive dimension of an institution or organisation, and, it is the sum of all the different discourses that are found within a given social domain. However, that there are many discourses within the order of discourse of an institution does not mean that all discourses are equal. Any given order of discourse structures the relationship between the different discourses contained within it in relationships of complementarity or of competition and of struggle for dominance. In any given institution or social order, certain ways of making meaning are more dominant (that is, more accepted) while others are considered marginal or oppositional. Hence, the order of discourse is not a closed system, but is rather subject to contestation, struggles of language and struggles to fix meaning. Moreover, because of this relation of competition and struggle for dominance that might exist between different ways of making a meaning, it might be the case that some discourses through becoming dominant may serve as legitimisers of relations of power and domination (Fairclough, 1989: 31-35). This then entails a "conflictual picture" of orders of discourse where different discourses may co-exist and struggle for the right to define meaning (Jorgensen and Philips, 2002: 13).

3.3 Theoretical Framework

The aspects of Fairclough's theory on discourse and discourse theory employed by this paper can be summarized into three main points:

1. Discourse is a form of social practice (Fairclough, 1989: 27).

2. Meaning can never be fixed; hence, the order of discourse is never a closed system but is rather subject to contestation of language and struggles to fix meaning (Fairclough, 1989: 31).

3. Power constrains discourse by constraining content, knowledge and belief. This last argument is itself related to the idea that discourse is both a site and a stake in power struggles (Fairclough, 1989: 105).

The first argument highlights the need to view discourses as social actions with their own social consequences. This in turn has a bearing on the framing of policy as how a problem is defined will necessarily determine the shape of its solution. For Fairclough, the whole of

social life is constituted of practices, and people – through practices – produce and reproduce their social world. Hence, if discourses are forms of actions that have social consequences, this then generates a view of discourse as historical and contextual and where discourses can only be understood with reference to their context (1989:63).

The second argument highlights how the order discourse (here, the institutional order of discourse of the population control movement) can be a site of contestation between different competing discourses. As Fairclough has argued this is not just a struggle over words as it is a struggle over the power to shape meaning and, with that, the power to direct action and policy. What is also at stake is the legitimation of action (1992: 57). For instance, when applied to the case at hand, this argument stresses that the resultant meaning generated by the population control movement at the Cairo Conference and at any given time in history is the effect of struggles to define and set the course of the movement and hence shape policy.

What the third argument makes clear is the importance of the relationship between power and discourse in discourse analysis. According to Fairclough, power constrains discourse in three ways: by constraining content which is, in other words, a constraint on what can be said and what can be done; by constraining the social relations that can be entered into in discourse; and finally, by constraining the sorts of subject positions that can be occupied by people in discourses. Hence, discourse helps construct systems of knowledge and belief, social identities and social relations (1989: 105). To clarify, the current research's interest lies principally with the ideational function of discourse, namely, the power to constrain content and thereby knowledge and beliefs, the power to favour certain interpretations of events while excluding others. It is the system of knowledge and beliefs, and the meanings that get reproduced through the Program of Action that is the focus of the paper.

Taken together, these three arguments showcase just how much is at stake in discourse and in struggles to shape meaning. Consequently, in the population discourse, different representations and discourses struggle to define the meaning of the population crisis. And depending on the discourse, the priorities and the suggested solutions to tackling the issue may be different.

3.4 Analytical Framework

The discourse analysis of this paper will here be carried out through Fairclough's three-dimensional framework of analysis. Since CDA is premised upon the principle that texts should never be analyzed in isolation but in relation to the social context where they originate,

the three-stage model is a useful analytical framework for that end. The three-stage analysis takes place at three levels, the level of the text, of the discursive practice and of the social practice.

The first stage which is the stage of the description of the text looks at the linguistic features of the text and how formal features of texts may be associated with social values and thus become involved in particular power relations.The second stage which is the situational analysis is concerned with the processes of production and consumption of the text. In other words, it identifies how certain conditions contribute in the production of the text and how those same conditions also influence the interpretation (or the reception) of the text. This stage also looks at how text producers and consumers alike draw from already existing discourses (interdiscursivity) in the production and consumption of texts. It is then here that one incorporates an interdiscursive analysis (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002: 66-68).

The final stage of analysis, which is the social analysis, looks at the social practice; the relationship between text and the wider social context wherefrom the communicative event originates. The aim of this stage is to look at the consequences of the text on social practice; whether the text reproduces or changes the current order of discourse. This relates to the general aim of CDA which is to look at the relationship between language use and social practice and what consequences language use has on social practice by either maintaining the social order or by contributing in restructuring it (Ibid: 70).

3.5 Operationalization of the Three-Stage Analytical Framework

According to Fairclough, in analyzing the formal features of a text, one can either perform an analysis of the grammatical structure of words (morphology), of sentences (syntax) or of more formal aspects of meaning (semantics). In the first stage of analysis (the textual analysis), this paper will carry out a semantic analysis (Fairclough, 1989: 6). A semantic analysis can look at, among other things, argumentation, narrative, modality, transitivity and nominalization. The paper however focuses more on the structure of argumentation, and, to a lesser degree, I also refer to transitivity, hedging and presuppositions. In a nutshell, a transitivity analysis looks at the way action is depicted – "who does what to whom". A Transitivity analysis can unveil inequalities in power relation by showing how, through the use of passive verb forms or sentences, agency and responsibility for action can be concealed. What is interesting with the textual analysis is to investigate the ways in which through some textual features and

some choices of words, the Program of Action represents events in particular ways, and by consequence, construct specific versions of reality (Jørgensen & Philips, 2002: 83).

At the second stage of analysis, I will be looking at the processes of production and consumption (as outlined in the section above). The analysis of this stage will also include an interdiscursive analysis. More specifically, I will be looking at "interdiscursive hybridity". Texts may be hybrid in regard to genre, style and discourse. Hence, when different discourses originating from different social domains and institutions are drawn from in a text, it gives rise to interdiscursive hybridity. Moreover an interdiscursive hybridity analysis is a fruitful way of investigating how different (sometimes conflicting) interests can be articulated together in a text. (Fairclough, 2011:1). The Program of Action was acclaimed for incorporating a whole range of other issues into the population agenda. As a consequence, the text re-articulated the population discourse by drawing on different perspectives and discourses. It then becomes important to look at what the different discourses found in the Program of Action are, how they are articulated together and what the potential consequences of this re-articulation of the population discourse with other discourses can be.

The operationalization of the third stage of analysis will also take place as outlined in the previous section. More specifically, I inquire into what the ideological, social and political consequences of the Program of Action can be. I ask whether the Program of Action managed to change the order of discourse of the population institution, whether it challenged existing power relations or whether it only contributed in reproducing it.

According to Fairclough, it is not always analytically feasible or even warranted to keep these different stages separate. It is however recommended to keep them separate for no other reason than to make it crystal-clear for the reader what sort of analysis each stage involves. However, this is not a straightforward division of tasks. For instance, there is a sense in which description to some extent presupposes interpretation (Fairclough, 1989: 31). Moreover, the text, the object of description, is not "unproblematically given", but rather description entails a certain amount of selection by the analyst as to which parts of the text are deemed worth describing. Hence calling the first stage of analysis the stage of text description may be misleading since the first stage is as much dependent on the analyst's own interpretation as are the other two stages of analysis. Furthermore, it does not matter which stage one begins with as long as they are all included in the analysis and it is clear that they are mutually explanatory (Ibid: 22).

3.6 Methodological Limitations

One of the benefits of Fairclough's version of CDA is that it, apart from most methods for discourse analysis, provides with a set of concrete techniques and tools for textual analysis. With that being said, there remain some important ontological and epistemological limitations to CDA, especially regarding the question of reflexivity. I acknowledge from the start that the role of the interpreter in affecting the outcome of the research should not be disregarded. As Fairclough has noted; "what one 'sees' in a text, what one regards as worth describing and what one chooses to emphasize in a description, are all dependent on how one interprets a text" (1989: 27). A different researcher employing the same analytical framework on the Program of Action may be able to arrive at different conclusions. Though acknowledging that different readings may generate different conclusions, as Fairclough has argued, this should not be perceived as "grounds for consternation" (1989: 14)**.**

Moreover, I am aware that this may make it difficult to produce results that are highly generalizable. On the other hand, CDA, given its methodological foundations, never aspires to produce the kind of generalizable knowledge that is universal, neutral and based on "a context-free foundation" (Jørgensen & Philips, 2002:156). Neither am I making claims of covering everything and saying all that needs to be said about the present issue. This research should rather be viewed as a contribution. And, though maybe incomplete as it only covers specific aspects; I can argue together with Yuval Davis that "unfinished is not the same as invalid" (1997: 1).

3.7 Data and Material

This research relied on both primary and secondary sources. It also predominantly used academic literature. The critical discourse analysis of this paper is carried out on a policy document; The Cairo International Conference on Population and Development's Program of Action. Given that CDA entails a critical interpretation of texts in the light of their wider social contexts, the analysis of the Program of Action is also carried out in conjunction with a reading of available notes from the conference and a number of statements to the conference by, for instance, NGOs.

The Program of Action is available for download from a variety of websites, notably, the UN's and UNFPA's official websites and the United Nations International Conference on Population and Development's own website (www.iisd.ca).

4. A Historical Account on the Population Control Discourse

This chapter is concerned with reviewing the history of population control. The chapter is important as it serves as a bridge to the analysis. Moreover, given that critical discourse analysis is the study of text in their context (both the immediate and the broader socio-historical context), looking at the history of population control is one way to establish that context. Acknowledging the context is also important as it enables one to look at the "insertion of history (society) into" (Fairclough, 1992) the Program of Action in order to establish whether or not the Program of Action really was the turning point of the history of population policy.

Moreover, I believe that tracing the history of the population debate is a necessary task as it shows where I come from in claiming that a discursive shift has taken place in the population discourse. This is also a worthwhile task as it makes it possible to establish the context whence from Cairo emerged in order to enable us to understand how the outcome of the Cairo conference could be received the way it did.

A lot has already been written on the history of the population establishment (Walter Greene: 1999, Hodgson: 1991). The point of this section is not to reproduce what has already been done elsewhere, but I nonetheless wish to look at some key processes and elements that contributed in shaping the content of the discourse on population as we know it today. What I hope will become clearer is that population movement as is articulated today emerged as a product of historical political struggles to define the meanings and limits for a global population agenda. In as much as these were struggles over meaning and definition, they also necessarily qualify as discursive struggles. In the following sections, I attempt to trace the history of the population debate from Thomas Malthus to the contemporary population movement.

Moreover, to understand the ideology behind the population control movement, it does not only suffice to trace its roots back to Thomas Malthus' An Essay on the Principle of Population, but we need also consider how the population politics of the US of the early twentieth century are an important link between Malthus' original theory on population and the subsequent institutionalization of the population control discourse of the early twenty-first century.

4.1 An Essay on the Principle of Population

In his *An Essay on The Principle of Population as it Affects the Future Improvement of Society*, Malthus argued that population always tend to increase exponentially while food increase was only linear. In other words, the former increased by multiplication while food increased by addition (1798: 7). There seemed, as he predicted, to be a race between the rate of population increase and the increase in food supply, a race in which the power of population always toped the available means of subsistence – thus, populations always tended to outgrow the food supply needed for their survival (Ibid: 33).

According to Malthus there were two types of checks on population growth that offered a solution to the imbalance between population increase and food supply; preventive and positive checks. Preventive checks consisted of voluntary restraints made by "rational" individuals to limit their birth rates through for instance economic evaluation, late marriages and celibacy. However, without voluntary preventive checks to counter the overwhelming power of population, population growth would be brought back to balance by "misery and vice", that is, "the constant operation of the strong law of necessity acting as a check upon the greater power" of population (Malthus, 1798: 8). These positive checks as he called them were periods of famines, epidemics, war and other ills brought upon by excessive population growth that increased the death rate of population and hence served to curb overpopulation and re-establish the balance between population and resources. Without voluntary preventive checks, it was, according to him, those "positive checks" that would function as "able ministers of depopulation" (Ibid: 61).

The consequences of the imbalance between food increase and population increase, according to Malthus, always tended to subjugate the lower classes more severely. Malthus was convinced that there existed a correlation between high birth rates among the lower classes and their poor economic conditions. Furthermore, Malthus was a strong opponent of the English Poor Laws (poor relief laws) because he thought they would have negative consequences for population growth. According to Malthus, giving money to the poor would only encourage increased birth rates as they would give the false impression to the poor classes that the resources to support large families were readily available. Moreover, alleviating the poverty of the lower classes was to Malthus socially unfeasible because of the effects it would have on the general welfare of the populations. The poverty among the lower classes could according to him only be solved through fertility control (1798: 31).

It is important to view *An Essay* in the wider context whence it originated. Malthus' An Essay was part of an intellectual debate on the roots of poverty. He wrote it as reaction to those intellectuals, social reformers such as William Goldwin and the Marquis de Condorcet, who believed that all the ills subjecting men were socially conditioned and could be eradicated with the right social structures. To Malthus, however, misery such as famines and poverty were natural consequences of the imbalance between population growth and food production. Malthus's theory also represents the first attempt to link procreation to economics (Greene, 1999: 39).

As the nineteenth century proceeded, the influence of Malthus' theory gradually declined as a result of technological advancement, increasing agricultural productivity in spite of an increasing population and the discovery of new territory for agriculture in the colonies, the opening of new markets for international trade, among others. It will be in the North American colonies that Malthusian overpopulation fears would be revived again in the beginning of the twentieth century (Hodgson, 1991). In the section that follows I will give a needed account of the history of the US population control movement that paved the way for the subsequent institutionalization of population control and I will show how Malthus' theory exercised a great influence in shaping the direction of the movement.

4.2 Tracing the origins of global population policy

The theory of Malthus did not at first resonate with the situation in America where there were a few people relative to an availability of abundant fertile land and where food supply depended on the access to a great army of labor to work on the land. Hence, America proved, at least initially, to be an exception to the Malthusian "principle of population". Through the unfolding of new events – with the "end of the frontier" and as America was now "filling up" – Malthusianism started to gain a foothold in the United States. (Hodgson, 1991: 24)

New fears partly caused by heated immigration debates resurrected old Malthusian concerns. But, in the United States, Malthusianism came to take a slightly different course. It was in the US that Malthusian concerns came to become increasingly intermingled with the eugenics movement, and in the process gave rise to a new kind of Malthusianism that differed from Malthus's original theory on important aspects (Hodgson, 1991: 5).

Fertility declines among city dwellers and the affluent had started being noticed as early as the mid-nineteenth century. But it was not until the end of the century, as the country experienced

increasing immigration from Eastern and Southern Europe and to some lesser extent from China and Japan that the decreasing fertility among the upper- and middle class White population of northwestern European descent started becoming a problem. From having been previously referred to as an act of "prudence" stemming from the desire to only have a number of children that could adequately be provided for, fertility declines were now referred to as "selfishness" and "race suicide" (Hodgson, 1991: 10).

The new anxieties originated from growing demographic fears that the quantity and quality of the population was now being threatened by, as one commentator at the time observed, "beaten men from beaten races; representing the worst failures in the struggle for existence" (Walker, 1896: 828). The old Malthusian concerns about the economics of reproduction were now coupled with concerns about the "compositional characteristics of the reproducing body" (Walter-Greene, 1999: 39). As another concerned writer noted at the time; "The economic question is by no means the most important one to consider in the problem of immigration. It is a race question and the birth rate shows the racial group that is to survive." (Bushee, 1903: 61) Whereas traditional Malthusianism was concerned with the fact that populations if unchecked tended to increase faster than the means of subsistence, the concern was now that though a population increase was taking place, it was being caused by the "inferior" races. This redirected the attention from a concern with the economic "prosperity of a nation" to one about the "biological quality" of the population. This re-articulation of the Malthusian discourse with a eugenic discourse gave rise to a new form of Malthusianism; what Hodgson calls "biological Malthusianism" (1991: 5). This problematization of the fertility of some groups came to set the course for population concerns and debates in the United States for the following years.

By the 1930s, interests in populations matters already existed in fields as various as biology, public health, geography, history, sociology, economics, statistics, law and politics. Population issues were also important for different political activists, especially so for reproductive rights activists. And because of this very broad and diffuse character of the population field, there existed no consensus on which population problem was the most pertinent. Beliefs on what constituted a threat to the nation ranged from concerns on "overpopulation, depopulation, uncontrolled fertility, excessively controlled fertility, unrestricted immigration, race suicide, race degradation", etc. (Hodgson, 1991: 1). Hence, neither the history of the field or of the resultant discipline of demography can ever be

thought of as a simple straightforward one, but a rather complex one where different discourses and ideologies converged and struggled for dominance.

For instance, the first attempts to institutionalize the management and control of population in the United States took place within private foundations. Hodgson traces the history of the population movement back to one meeting that was held in December of 1931 at the New York University office of Henry Pratt Fairchild, himself a strong proponent of immigration restriction. Thirteen guests in total were convened, all with one common denominator; a concern with research and work in the area of population. This came to be known as the first meeting of the Population Association of America (Hodgson, 1991: 2). According to Hodgson, the list of invitees alone is very telling of the divergent strands that made up the field of population in the United States in the early years of the movement. There were four major factions that early on constituted the population movement; the biological Malthusianist in league with the eugenicists, the immigration restrictionists, the birth control movement and the population scientists (Ibid: 2-3). The existence of all these different strands within the organization I believe portrays the eclectic character of the movement from its early years. Moreover, to some of the members of the Population Association of America claiming allegiance to one of the factions did not preclude adopting one of the other views as well. Henry Pratt Fairchild that had summoned the meeting and that later went on to become the Population Association Movement's first elected president is a case in point. According to Hodgson, "Fairchild uniquely personified the disparate elements of early twentieth-century American population thought: a nativist with clear eugenicist leanings who had an academic post teaching courses in population studies while serving on the Board of Directors of Margaret Sanger's birth control clinic." (Ibid: 21). In the person of Fairchild, we see the physical materialization of the eclectic character of the early population movement.

Though the election of Fairchild could point to the relative dominance of biological Malthusianism in the early stages of the Population Association of America, important events in the late 1930s made that the organization quickly came under the dominance of population scientists. By the end of WWII, Nazi Germany had largely succeeded in rendering eugenics unpopular and discrediting it. On the other hand, there had already been rising demands, following the Great Depression, within different government institutions and private companies such as life insurance companies for the sort of detailed demographic analysis that population scientists offered. Population statistics then enabled the rise of a "science of the

state"; the registry of "[p]ersons in the land, their ages, their places and forms of habitation, their employment, their births, illnesses, and deaths – all these were noted and transcribed. They were turned into figures, and collected together at central points; the unruly population was rendered into a form in which it could be used in political arguments and administrative decisions." (Walter-Greene, 1999: 43). It is in this context that demography emerged as a scientific discipline in its own right culminating in the establishment of the Office of Population Research at Princeton University. These "population scientists" could now set themselves apart from the "popular writers" on population issues and from social activists such as the Birth Control movement activists through their "insistence on empirical research methods" (Ibid, 46 & 47). Population scientists came from then on to set the tone for the population movement.

It has been argued that though, by the end of WWII, social Darwinism and eugenics had been on the way out, this does not mean that the old racist ideology was banned from the population movement, but rather that the racist effects of biological Malthusianism came to be re-stated and were now operating under the guise of a new discourse on population (Walter-Greene, 1999: 49). The Great Depression had been marked by a period of fertility declines in the United States. But, faced with rising fertility rates in Asia and in Africa, there were increasing interests in Malthusian problematizations of population growth. The attention was now redirected to the differential reproduction rates between the "West" and the "rest". It is in this context that the Indian famines of the 1960s, which the proponents of Malthusianism claimed were a consequence of the unequal relationship between high population growth and food supply, came to become the archetype of how unchecked population growth in the Third World would come to affect the economic welfare of populations in the developed world (Ibid: 47).

As this problematisation of the relationship between the fertility rates of the developing world and economic development gained popularity, it increasingly became the new dominant discourse on overpopulation. Efforts were also made to institutionalize the population issue at the international level. And in 1967, through the mediation of the US, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) was created. Through the UN and its organs, the Malthusian discourse on the relation between population and resources could be exported to the Third World. An international population crisis was created by bringing together a Malthusian-type of discourse on population growth with a development discourse (Walter-Greene, 1999: 157).

And, the same way as Malthus problematized the fertility rates of the poor, by adding development to the equation, the reproduction of the Third World increasingly became the focus of international development agencies.

In the late 1960s, another factor was also added to the list of harms caused by overpopulation through the release of Ehrlich's *The Population Bomb* in 1968. In it he warned of an impending overpopulation crisis which he predicted would take place in the 1970s where hundreds of millions of people would starve to death. Through *The Population Bomb* Paul Ehrlich recuperated Malthus's concerns about the impact of population growth on resource availability. This time, however, the impact of population growth was extended to the ecological environment. As he argued, excessive population growth was not only straining food resources but it was also contributing in depleting and destroying the natural environment and its ecological systems. Using the example of the 1965 famine of India, Ehrlich argued that overpopulation had already created a worldwide food crisis as developing countries no longer could provide for their growing populations and were increasingly dependent on food aid from the developed world (Ehrlich, 1968: 70). Due to increasing limited resources and a world population's growth spinning out of control, nothing could remedy the impending catastrophe unless "a 'death rate solution,' in which ways to raise the death rate — war, famine, pestilence — finds[s] us" (Ibid: 34). Ehrlich considered different scenarios that could occur as the world faced a situation of worldwide food crisis and famines; civil wars, food riots and nuclear confrontations (Ibid: 78). Regarding international food aid, due to growing limited resources and the impossibility of providing for the entire world population, he suggested a system of "triage" in which the United States and the developed countries should only reserve famine relief to those nations that were able to achieve food self-sufficiency. He argued that any human suffering that would result from this could in no way be equated to the human catastrophe certain to occur if nothing would be done (Ibid: 147).

With its very alarmist tone, Paul Ehrlich's book, though not the first one to integrate the "population crisis" with environmental concerns, contributed in greatly popularizing and globalizing the Malthusian discourse as he problematized the relationship between world population growth and the earth's natural resource base. His main focus was on how the rising fertility rates of the developing world not only threatened their own nations but the world at large (1968). Through environmentalists such as Ehrlich, attempts were made to link

population and economics to yet another variable, that is, the environment. A discourse on environmental degradation added an additional incentive in the mission to combat population growth. Here is also the same emphasis on limits, though the set of limits contained within the later discourse encompasses more factors than the one envisaged by Malthus; from a concern on food, to the fear that a growing population not only threatens the survival of families, groups of people, states but also the entire biosphere.

Again, through the publication of the *Population Bomb* and because of the political interest it came to generate, Paul Ehrlich contributed in popularizing Malthus theory on an unprecedented level. By problematizing the fertility rates of the Third World and by making the link between global overpopulation and the economic and ecological welfare of the world, he popularized the idea of a common world were its people were linked together and shared a common fate. It was in this context that the first world population conference was convened, the 1974 World Population Conference of Bucharest.

4.3 The Conferences leading up to Cairo

Apart from the Cairo conference, there had been two more international conferences on population; the 1974 World Population Conference of Bucharest and the 1984 International Conference on Population of Mexico City. Furthermore, prior to these two, there had also been two more conferences; one held in Rome in 1954 and the other one in Belgrade in 1965. The first two conferences however differed from the later ones in that their focus had been more directed to technical and scientific information on populations, their growth, health and fertility. These two conferences also mostly convened experts in the field of population studies. Organized by the UNFPA, under the auspices of the UN, the later conferences were on the other hand more global and political in character as they included more international participation from governments and civil society actors such as NGOs (Scorsone, 2006: 12). According to Seamus Grimes, the two later international conferences played a major role in "bringing the cause of population control forward on an incremental basis… to more daring and open targets for stabilizing the world's population." (1994:211)

The Bucharest World Conference represented the first attempt to build an international consensus on the issue of overpopulation and the West's suggested solution for population control through family planning. However, despite great efforts to advocate for the merits of family planning programs in development planning, no consensus on the issue could be reached at the Bucharest world conference (Grimes, 1994: 210).

The Mexico conference continued on the previous efforts to integrate population programs with development planning though the Mexico document, compared to its predecessor, stated the link between population politics and development more explicitly. Moreover, the Mexico document also gives more consideration to the issue of family planning and acknowledges the need of family planning for the achievement of desired demographic targets (Reed, 1995: 29). It is also worth mentioning that these conferences coincided with certain developments in some countries. In 1976, two years after Bucharest, India carried out a widespread sterilization campaign where over six million men and women were sterilized (Paul Demeny, 1985: 100). This took place while China had, in 1969, introduced its one-child policy which more often than not resulted in cases of forced abortions and sterilizations (Reed, 1995: 31). This is the historical context wherefrom the Cairo international conference (which is the object of the following chapter) would later take place. But, before turning to the next chapter, a brief summary of what has been said so far is in order.

This chapter was concerned with tracing the origins of the population control movement and looking at the events that made possible the creation of a "population crisis" and in so doing made visible the reproduction of certain classes of people and the fertility rates of the populations of the Third World. Through the formation of the UNFPA, what was created was a new area of expertise and a site where the population control discourse could thrive. It was also a site through which the management and control of the populations of the Third World would be legitimized and rationalized.

5. The Cairo International Conference on Population and Development

The Cairo international conference was the third international conference to take place under the auspices of the UN. The conference was viewed as a major "paradigm shift" and a re-direction of population policy that put women's concerns at the center of population policy (Brigham, 2011). It is also upheld as an important milestone in the history of the women's rights movement (Ibid). From the conference, there occurred an important shift in emphasis from what had previously been a strict focus on demographic targets to a people-first and rights-based approach. This was, it is argued, an approach that, like never before in the context of population policy, stressed the primacy of human welfare needs and sustainable development goals in the place of demographic reduction concerns. Most notable was that sexual and reproductive health issues were now moved to the center of population policy. It was agreed that promoting sexual and reproductive rights were key to poverty eradication and to development. This was accordingly perceived as a great leap forward from the population control's controversial past. It is moreover argued that the Cairo conference also managed to move the population debate beyond the simplistic and reductionist theories that had for years been characteristic of the population movement to a position that acknowledged the complexity of population issues (Brigham, 2012).

For the proponents of the conference, the uniqueness of the Cairo conference hence lay in the fact that it could set itself apart from its predecessors – the Bucharest and Mexico City population conferences of 1974 and 1984 – on significant issues, most importantly women's health and rights issues. The success of the conference, it is further argued, can also be attributed to the introduction of new "symbols and concepts" in the discourse on population (McIntosh & Finkle, 1995: 249).

Others point to the fact that the report did not depend on the common "apocalyptic" imagery that for long had characterized the population control movement. Instead of limiting the discussion to statistical calculations of fertility rates and concern on the increasing availability and use of contraceptives, the document included a wider range of issues such as; gender equality, universal education, high infant mortality and morbidity, maternal health and the prevention and treatment of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. The program of action also included new categories such as "adolescents" and "men" not focusing only on women in connection to fertility (Brigham, 2012: 11). The very fact that these issues were given equal consideration at the Cairo conference, it is further argued, is an indication to how far the world has come

since the time when the debate only focused on the "population bomb" (McIntosh and Finkle, 1995).

However, there was one issue in particular that attracted much media attention and coverage; namely, the conflict surrounding the concepts of reproductive and sexual health. Already during the three years of preparation to the conference as different sessions and consultation meetings were held to discuss the Program of Action draft that had already been released, the inclusion and the detailed treatment of different reproductive health issues in the text became the target of intense criticism from different religious groups (such as the Vatican, a number of Islamic nations and Latin American countries) and "right to life" groups (Grimes 1994: 219). Their criticism focused on the different issues of abortion, sexual health, adolescent sexuality and extra-marital sexual relations. The concern was that the conference would become "a forum for advancing worldwide abortion rights, sexual promiscuity and the breakdown of family unit" (Reed, 1995: 25). Though this conflict between religious groups and reproductive rights advocates threatened to undermine the outcome of the conference, the conference still ended with a broad consensus though with some reservations to certain provisions of the text by a number of countries. And, for the first time since Bucharest, the Vatican, though abstaining from a number of chapters, still endorsed substantial parts of the program (Ibid).

6. Analysis

Between the 5th to the 13th of September of 1994, the International Conference on Population and Development took place in Cairo. This was the third international population conference. The draft that was subsequently to be debated at the conference had already been released. However, this was not the original draft that had been prepared by the Security general together with his team of advisors as it had gone through important changes.

As is the case with any international conference of this kind, there was more than what took place at the actual conference in Cairo that determined the direction of the conference and the content of the Program of Action. The whole process started July of 1991, when the United Nations Economic and Social Council called, under resolution 1989/91, for a third international population meeting. The conference was named the "International Conference on Population and Development" and a first draft covering the main themes and objectives of the conference was also issued. Three Preparatory Committee meetings and regional population conferences would also later be convened (Earth negotiation bulletin, 1993).

In the Preparatory Committee meetings, government delegates and NGOs' representatives were to discuss and agree on the final draft that was to be presented at the Cairo conference. It was also in these sessions that it was decided what the conceptual framework of the document would be and how much of the issues, the depth and the level of detail, would be covered. These meetings consisted of formal plenary sessions and informal consultations that were normally not open for observers. It was in the later that the major negotiations and debates took place. Agreements reached at in the informal consultations were then forwarded for adoption in the final draft document to the conference (Earth negotiation bulletin, 1991)

6.1 CDA's Three-Stage Analytical Framework

As already stated, the critical discourse analysis of the Program of Action follows Fairclough's three-stage analytical model. As has also been mentioned, the operationalization of the three-stage framework of this paper does not follow a strict order. The analysis will start with the situational analysis (the second stage) by looking at the relation between the text and the conditions that led to the production of the text. The analysis at this stage will also include an interdiscursive analysis; in other words, I look at how the text draws from a variety of other discourses and what consequences that has on the meaning of the text and the broader discursive practice. I will then move on to the stage of the description of the text which will

be followed by the last stage which looks at the consequences of the text on social practice and structures.

6.1.1 Situational Analysis

6.1.1.1 Processes of Text Production and Reception
When the United Nations Economic and Social Council called for a third international population meeting, it was stated that the focus of the conference was going to be on population and development (Earth negotiation bulletin, 1991). However, by the time of the actual conference the draft had been substantially changed that the issue of development had been minimized in favor of new methods for population control that were now being promoted through a new discourse, a reproductive health discourse. As has already been noted, for the proponents of the Program of Action, the conference was upheld as a major "paradigm shift" and a re-direction of population policy that was now putting women's concerns at the center. Similarly, it is commemorated as an important milestone in the history of women's rights movement (Brigham, 2011).

The first argument I want to make here is that it is no that the issue of numbers and population growth was all of a sudden no longer relevant for international population policy. Rather, the document even devotes two entire chapters on the issue of an "all-time high" population growth (Program, 1994: 32). Furthermore, in his opening speech to the conference, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros Ghali emphasized the needs for collective actions to be taken to meet rising demands in a world of a rapidly growing population (Earth negotiation bulletin, 1994). Whereas the dominant perspective at international conferences on population had previously been on the need of population control in order to meet the challenges of an excessively growing population; by incorporating some new discourses, population control through family planning could now be justified as primarily being in the interest of men, women and even adolescents. It is rather then that the document was now employing a new language, one focused on issues of social justice and the right to universal access to health care, with reproductive health and family planning being promoted as part of the most basic of primary health care provision that should be provided for by governments. It was now a question of ensuring "access" to family planning and enabling people to exercise their "right to have children by choice" (Program, 1994 : 42). No longer was population control presented as a goal in itself for meeting the challenges and dangers of rising populations, rather, the goal was now to improve the "quality of life" (Ibid: 32) of people through the provision of family planning. Population control through family planning could now be presented in terms of

needs; that is meeting people's "unmet needs" for "safe, effective, affordable and acceptable methods of family planning of their choice, as well as other methods of their choice for regulation of fertility" (Ibid: 43).

Moreover, this new position could be strengthened by speaking of fertility control and access to family planning as the reproductive rights of all men and women. In this way, fertility control could now be advocated using the language of rights and entitlement. It could also be justified as an important tool to lower maternal and child mortality and morbidity, as an important step in the promotion of gender equality and a necessary strategy for social and economic development. Here is still an emphasis on decreasing fertility as a means to solve other issues. However, it is no longer argued that individuals' rights are to be sacrificed for the sake of the aggregate or that family planning is being explicitly advocated as the solution to underdevelopment as was the case during the Bucharest conference. Rather, family planning was being promoted as an entitlement and privilege owed to all men and women.

Hence, through a redirected emphasis on reproductive health and gender equality issues, the Program of Action could be able to disassociate itself from the controversies of the population control movement's past. The document states:

> The principle of informed free choice is essential to the long-term success of family-planning programs. Any form of coercion has no part to play… Over the past century, many governments have experimented with such schemes, including specific incentives and disincentives, in order to lower or raise fertility. Most such schemes have had only marginal impact on fertility and in some cases have been counterproductive. Governmental goals for family planning should be defined in terms of unmet needs for information and services. Demographic goals while legitimately the subject of government development strategies, should not be imposed on family planning providers in the form of targets or quotas for the recruitment of clients. (Program, 1994: 43)

How are these discursive changes that took place at Cairo then to be understood? Is it as the document states that this change can be attributed "to major shifts in attitude among the world's people and their leaders in regard to reproductive health, family planning and population growth" (Program, 1994: 6)?

Since CDA necessarily means the analysis of texts in their context, there is here the need to consider the relationship between the text and the social context whence from it originates.

Again, it is because the meaning of any given text can never be straightforwardly read off from its content alone that a critical discourse analysis needs to give account of the ways in which the situational context informs and contributes to the production of the text. This is where the second stage of analysis comes in. Regarding the situational context, one can for instance ask questions about time and place (Janks, 2006: 338). Hence, one question that I find useful to ask here concerning the situational context is whether it could have been possible to produce the Program of Action earlier than 1994?

There are several factors that contributed in making the Cairo International Conference and the Program of Action an idea whose time had come. First, looking at the broader historical context from whence Cairo took place, there are certain important elements that influenced the direction of the conference and its outcome. One such factor was that at Cairo, in contrast to the previous population conferences, there was an unprecedented level of participation by non-governmental organizations not only during the conference but also prior to the conference in the consultation activities preceding the conference. Most importantly, there was an unparalleled involvement by a variety of women's organizations from both the developed and the developing world that began in the preparatory meetings until the conclusion of the conference. To repeat, these preparatory meetings consisted of both formal sessions and informal sessions. And, most notable about Cairo is that NGOs were not only invited to attend but also to actively participate with input in the informal consultations which had traditionally been closed-door sessions (Earth negotiation bulletin, 1993). According to Jocelyn Dejong, this desire to consult with non-state actors reflected the growing recognition of the critical role of NGOs in leading influential lobbying activities at the global level (2000: 944). It is also important to remember that women's non-governmental organizations had since the beginning of the 90s been increasing in visibility and influence on the international scene. As Cairo took place after the Vienna International Human Rights Conference of 1993 where women's groups had been influential in shaping the outcome of the conference and its resulting document, it is perhaps not so surprising that they would later also come to play a crucial role at Cairo. Moreover, they organized earlier and made their presence and claims known already at the preparatory sessions preceding the Cairo conference (Reed, 1995: 34).

However, having said that, the rising influence of the international women's movement cannot alone account for the changed position on population policy that took place at Cairo. But, most important of all, the Cairo International Conference on Population and Development took place at a very critical moment in the history of international population

policy. Given population control's controversial past, the population control institution came to Cairo from a weakened position and in need of new alliances that could help restore its legitimacy (Halfon, 2007).

In the years prior to the conference, the population control insitutuin had been the target of intense criticism from the women's movement; criticism that pointed to the ways in which many population programs had operated with complete neglect of the rights and dignity of people, especially of women (Halfon, 2007: 219). This of course referred to the implementation of different coercive policies and programs in different countries. Particularly, India's and China's population control past had greatly contributed in undermining the legitimacy of the international population institution and contributed in making population control the object of great public controversy for many years. Furthermore, because of the controversial support in the past of China's population control programs by international organizations such as the UNFPA and the International Planned Parenthood, such criticism had such an important resonance at Cairo (Grimes, 1994: 219-220). Consequently, the UNFPA that had traditionally been dominated by the population control discourse and agenda was in need of renewing its legitimacy. A conference whose focus was moved from the former emphasis on control towards individual liberty and rights offered the international population movement the opportunity to break away from its troubled past. It is thus in recognition of the many abuses by past population programs that we need to understand how it could be that many non-governmental organizations, and among them a great number of women's groups, were in the first place invited to participate and shape the course of the conference and its final outcome. As Boland Reed has remarked, at Cairo, "the cast of important players had changed." (1995: 34).

Here, we need to remember what has already been said about an order of discourse being a configuration of different discourses within a given institution or field which structures the relationship between different ways of making meaning. It has also been said that since it is not a closed system where meaning can be permanently fixed, it is the potential site for struggles and competitions over the right to define meaning in a given field or institution. And, most important about orders of discourse is that fields where most if not all discourses have shared common-sense assumptions are more stable and less open to change while areas with conflicting discourses are unstable and more likely to be changed (Jørgensen and Philips: 2001).What then made change possible in the order of discourse of the international population institution was the fact that the conference took place at a "dangerous moment"

(Halfon, 2007: 219) for the population institution. And, that the conference occurred at a time when the activities of the population movement were under intensive attack, made that the domain of population policy (at the international institutional level) was highly unstable and most susceptible for change. Moreover, The Cairo conference was, both in its preparatory stage and during the actual conference, the site where different discourses struggled for the right to define the meaning and the direction of population policy. For instance, the conference had convened a great number of NGOs from a variety of backgrounds; there were feminist activists; family planning and women's health service providers; population control advocates; environmentalists; religious groups; and "right-to-life" organizations (Earth negotiation bulletin, 1993).

Moreover, there are also other important factors that contributed in making the ICPD and its resulting Program of Action possible. Since the 1980s, there had been new developments within the field of public health where "maternal health" increasingly figured as an important public health issue and an important indicator of major North-South discrepancies. Hence, as already alluded to, focusing on "reproductive health" through its reference to maternal health lent credibility to the Program of Action as it introduced to the field of population policy a concept that was now increasingly becoming the object of worldwide interest (Dejong, 2000: 945). In addition, the election of a liberal president in Washington supportive of the feminist agenda and the end of the Cold War both contributed in creating a favorable environment for a broadening of the population policy agenda (Ibid: 944).

It is this same context that of course also conditioned the reception of the Program of Action. Considering the history of the population movement, it is unsurprising that the Cairo conference with a more inclusive approach could be received and understood the way it did as a "milestone" in the history of population policy.

6.1.1.2 Interdiscursive Analysis
Discursive change can take place in different ways. According to Fairclough (2003), changes in discourse are in part social changes, and, some discursive changes can result in changing existing power relations. However, discourses can also change through re-contextualization. That means that a discourse originating from one context gets introduced into a new context. Re-contextualization can take place as a direct response to conflicts and social struggles. That is, they can be a strategic way for dominant discourses to overcome conflict (critique) by incorporating opposing discourses into the same old dominant discourse. In this way changes

in language take place but with no real social changes. Moreover, Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999) caution against such re-contextualization of discourses into new settings as it often entails the "appropriation" or "colonization" of certain discourses, fields and areas by others to serve the strategies and goals of the field into which they are being re-contextualized.

There is a re-contextualization that has taken place through the ICPD. In the text, this re-contextualization is seen through the presence of interdiscursive hybridity (that is, the "mixing of different discourses"). To reiterate, considering interdiscursive hybridity is necessary as it may reveal how different (sometimes conflicting) discourses and interests can be articulated together in a text. In the Program of Action, different discourses originating from other fields and institutions such as a health discourse on reproduction and a neo-liberal economic discourse have been merged together to form a new discourse on population. Hence, the issue of reproduction is presented through the knitting together of a variety of different discourses. First, there is a health discourse that views reproduction as a health issue through its emphasis on reproductive, sexual, maternal and child's health. We also find a rights and entitlement discourse that represents reproduction as a rights issue not only for women, but also for families and couples. Through a gender discourse, reproduction becomes a gender empowerment and emancipation issue. There is also a development discourse which stresses the interrelationship between reproduction (high fertility rates) and socio-economic development. There is a neo-liberal discourse which redefines reproduction as primarily an issue of "unmet needs" and "demand". Finally, through the environmental discourse, reproduction, because of "unmet needs" for contraceptive technologies and services is represented as a threat for the environment, natural resources and for future generations.

Here, a few words can be said about the potential consequences on the meaning of the text of this re-articulation of the population discourse. Through its emphasis on social justice, the gender discourse could lend credibility and legitimacy to the field of international population policy precisely at a time when it needed it the most. The document recognizes women as "key actors in the development process" (Program, 1994:15), hence, improving women's status becomes important for efforts at poverty eradication and the promotion of sustained economic growth (Ibid). Ensuring women's access to reproductive health and family planning is then presented as one element in the wider goal of promoting women's empowerment and status.

Through the health discourse, limiting fertility becomes important for the prevention of maternal and child morbidity and mortality. According to the Program of Action, "child survival is closely linked to the timing, spacing and number of births and to the reproductive health of mothers." (Program, 1994: 57). In this way, fertility control changes the context of the (old) population control discourse as it evokes "an image of respectability and safety that does not generate rumors or embarrass politicians" (Morsy, 1995: 165). This health discourse also serves to justify family planning through a reference to "unsafe abortion" as proof to the fact that there are "unmet needs" to family planning. Hence, for countries where abortion is not legally permitted, providing family planning becomes a way to prevent and reduce "self-induced or otherwise unsafe" abortions (Program, 1994 :57).

The rights discourse commonly connotes individualist interests and claims versus the duty and responsibility of the community (Brigham, 2010: 75). This rights discourse with its association to individuals' entitlements and privileges, however, appears frequently paired with the idea of "responsibility". That is for instance seen in sentences such as "all couples and individuals have the basic right to decide freely and responsibly the number and spacing of their children" (Program, 1994: 11), or, "to ensure that women and men … exercise their reproductive rights and responsibilities" (Ibid: 48). When "rights" and "responsibilities" are joined together in this way, it has connotative implications looked at from the point of view of the history of the population control movement. Given a history stained with cases of coercive policies and programs, a language of rights and entitlements promises a break from the old fears of coercion and violation that were often associated with family planning. Combining rights and responsibilities on the other hand offers the possibility to convey the commitment to a people-centered perspective on population policy inaugurated at Cairo while still being able to underline that people's reproductive choices need to be equally based on their responsibilities towards their communities. As the document states; "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." (Ibid: 40). It is interesting to note that, in the past, violation of people's freedom to choose how many children they could have (as was the case with China's one-child policy) was often legitimized through a reference to the need to safeguard the welfare of the community and the nation. Hence, through "reproductive rights and responsibilities" the focus on the needs and rights of the community is kept without its associated fear of top-down control over people's bodies.

Moreover, it is important to remember that though the agenda of the population control advocates did not dominate the final outcome of the conference, at least explicitly, there were still, as already stated, NGOs promoting a population control agenda present at Cairo (Earth negotiation bulletin, 1993). For instance, through a reading of some NGOs' statements from the conference it can be noted that there were organizations (such as The Population Institute and The Population Action International) that were more concerned with the ability of family planning to reduce population growth than they were about ensuring access to reproductive care. Hence, for instance according to the Population Institute, the "first and foremost" item on the agenda had to be the "slowing down" of "the rapid growth of human population" (Fornos, 1994).

6.1.2 Textual Analysis

While it is often taken for granted that consensus was reached at Cairo, a fact that is often taken out of sight is that the Program of Action was the result of negotiations and debates, pre-conference consultations and drafting taking place both before and during the production of the document. Failing to acknowledge this leads to the sanitation of the tensions and controversies surrounding the production of the text.

If discourses are sites and stakes in power struggles, text is the place such struggles materialize. However, it is also the case that as the consensus document it is, the Program of Action does not seem to be the site where struggles about differences in meaning are taking place. As has been observed elsewhere about policy documents, they are texts which are for the most part "negotiated" (Fairclough, 2003: 43). The Program of Action is after all the last version of an original draft that went through a number of transformations during the three years of preparatory sessions that preceded the conference. It is the result of a longer process of debates and negotiations about what issues are to be covered by the document and in what relation and in what perspectives they are to be presented. However, the document itself is not dialogical; that is, it does not explicitly acknowledge that there might be different (or conflicting) positions on the issues it presents and the statements it advances. The very fact of producing a policy document is after all an attempt to "move from conflict to consensus" (Fairclough, 2003: 43), from difference to common ground.

Nevertheless, though tensions in meaning are not directly read off the text, one can still find in the text, through some linguistic features, traces of the production process. In other words, one can through some textual constructions in the text see how the context, both the

immediate and the broader socio-historical (and all its controversies), informs the arguments of the text.

6.1.2.1Unity through abstraction

For a long time the order of discourse on population at the international policy level had been dominated by the overpopulation discourse. As a consequence, within the field of population policy, many other issues were identified and articulated first and foremost through the lens of the overpopulation discourse. Hence, overpopulation was often thought to be the cause of diverse issues, such as famines and poverty, social instability and conflict. In other words, this framework made it possible to in a simple and reductionist way explain many social and political issues.

The question about how to view the relationship between population and development was an especially contentious one. As has already been referred to, already at the Bucharest World Population conference, there were disagreements on how to understand the cause-effect relation between the two issues. Most notable from the conference was the conflict that arose between a coalition of developing countries (the G77[3]) and the developed countries. The division concerned two issues; whether population growth could be thought of as the major cause of underdevelopment and the West's suggested solution for underdevelopment in the form of family planning. Developing countries questioned the developed nations' concern with fertility, rejected the external imposition of national demographic targets and stressed that it was the sovereign right of every nation to design their own population policies. Instead, they pointed to the unequal economic and political relations between "North" and "South" as the cause of the underdevelopment of the Third World. It was argued that meeting wider economic development goals was what would lead to slowing population growth. Nothing best portrays the division between the developed and developing world that prevailed at Bucharest than what has now become the best commemorated phrase from the conference, coined by India's delegate, "development is the best contraceptive" (Dejong, 2000: 943).

At Cairo, a consensus seemed to have been reached even on the most controversial issues. I want to argue here that this consensus happened less through a change in perspective than by finding a language that was so vague as to allow a coalition by a variety of actors with divergent interests; between women's rights advocates, population control advocates, religious groups, market-oriented economists and environmentalists.

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[3] The G77 or the Group of 77 is a coalition of developing countries with the aim of promoting and defending the collective interests of its member states and of providing a united joint in negotiations at the UN.

As the issue that often became the point of contention between population control advocates and their critics, looking at how the Program of Action represents the relationship between reproduction and development is an important way to determine whether the Cairo conference and its resulting text really were a redirection of international population policy. For instance, one of the arguments advanced in favor of the new framework introduced at Cairo was that the conference moved from a simplistic and reductionist view on population issues (like the Malthusian perspective) as it acknowledged the relationship between population and other, as the document calls them, "population-related issues" (Program, 1994: 76) – economic development (sustainable development), environment, gender equality, reproductive rights and reproductive health, education and international migration.

However, though the document does acknowledge that the relationship between population and the other issues is indeed a complex one, there is a sense in which it avoids to make any clear statements on the nature of that relationship. This is of course important because in the end it will determine how priorities for political actions are set since how an issue is defined is important as it determines the course of action . As already stated, the text shows evidence of interdiscursive hybridity in the way it draws from a variety of discourses. However, interdiscursive hybridity also makes it possible for the text to list a range of issues together, acknowledge that there exists a "complex relationship" between the issues while avoiding making any statement on the nature of that relationship. Hence the text can claim that

> The population and development objectives and actions of the present Programme of Action will collectively address the critical challenges and interrelationships between population and sustained economic growth in the context of sustainable development."(Program, 1994: 6)

> Sustainable development as a means to ensure human well-being, equitably shared by all people today and in the future, requires that the interrelationships between population, resources, the environment and development should be fully recognized, properly managed and brought into harmonious, dynamic balance. (Ibid:11)

> …to truly integrate population concerns into all aspects of economic and social activity and their interrelationships will greatly assist in the achievement of an improved quality of life for all individuals as well as for future generations. (Ibid: 108)

Using an environmental discourse the Program of Action does acknowledge the need to bring the relationship between the different factors of population, development, resources and

environment into balance. Yet, the document does not explain what that "relationship" and "interdependence" of population with the other issues entail. It does not really explain how population issues are affected or may be affecting the other issues. The document holds that all these diverse issues "are so closely interconnected that none of them can be considered in isolation." (Program, 1994: 6). But merely stating this does not specify the order of importance, whether there is one issue that needs to be dealt with first in order to solve the other issues. On the other hand, when these different issues are articulated together, it is often done so through a "relation of equivalence", that is, they are given equal importance (Fairclough, 2003: 88). However, when a relation of equivalence is set up between population, sustained economic growth, environmental sustainability and resources it rules out any cause-effect relation that might exist between these different discourses and the various issues and problems contained within them.

Fairclough talks about the "logic of appearance" to denote this sort of analysis which merely lists different problems, acknowledges the link between them, yet, does not attempt to look beneath the surface "to specify deeper relations amongst them" (2003: 88). In other words, the issues listed together are only linked by simply appearing together. This is in contrast with the "relational and explanatory logic" which attempts to make sense of the problems listed together and their relations (Fairclough, 2000: 28). The consequence of this is that this "new" discourse on population does not really manage to bring any substantial changes to the field of population policy. Moreover, by saying nothing about the relationship between the different issues it leaves the implementation of the program open for diverse interpretations.

Moreover, when in the chapter on the "interrelationships between population, sustained economic growth and sustainable development", the objectives are presented, the document states that:

> The objectives are to fully integrate population concerns into:
>
> (a) Development strategies, planning, decision-making and resource allocation at all levels and in all regions, with the goal of meeting the needs, and improving the quality of life, of present and future generations;
>
> (b) All aspects of development planning in order to promote social justice and to eradicate poverty through sustained economic growth in the context of sustainable development. (3.4)

Though it is still unclear what the interdependence between population and the other issues implicate, the document goes on to suggest the integration of population and development as one of its objectives. Even though the document does not say much about that integration either, other than its degree through the adverb "fully", the integration of population and development will apparently contribute to the achievement of other goals. The other point of this passage is that the eradication of poverty and of social justice will, though promoted by the integration of population and development, take place through sustained economic growth in the context of sustainable development. The same point is made elsewhere when it is stated that "sustained economic growth in the context of sustainable development is essential to eradicate poverty" (Program, 1994: 1). However, by using a concept – sustained economic growth in the context of sustainable development – as the subject of a sentence or the agent for change as in the extract above, it conceals the fact that social justice and eradication of poverty are social processes that can only take place through concerted, conscious political decisions. Then one thing that is taking place through these statements is what has been referred to as convincing and building unity through abstraction (Fairclough, 1989). In other words, abstraction is used in the place of concrete facts and details.

One could of course argue that the process of producing a policy document such as this would necessarily involve compromises of some sort, hence the use of a cautious language. For instance, according to a reading from the available notes from the preparatory committee meetings, it looks as if when disagreements between different countries arose during the conference, one way to overcome the differences was through opting for a language that was broad enough to incorporate the divergences in conflicts of interests. For instance, during one of the consultation meetings prior to the conference, there was a disagreement between developing and developed countries on India's suggestion to include as one of the objectives in the subchapter Responsibilities of Partners in Development (in the chapter on International Cooperation) "the responsibility of developed countries to adopt favourable macro-economic policies to promote sustainable economic growth and development in developing countries". However, upon negotiations, it is said that a compromise was reached and the sentence could be kept after it was changed and instead became; "to urge that the international community adopt favourable macroeconomic policies for promoting sustained economic growth and sustainable development in developing countries." (Earth negotiation bulletin, 1993). This is just one among other examples where certain aspects of language (whether it be a verb, and adjective, adverb etc.) would have to be changed to accommodate different views (Earth

negotiation bulletin, 1993). This makes clear how language users choose from a set of options available to them in producing their texts, a choice which is not always an objective one but which serves to foreground certain aspects of reality while backgrounding others.

Hence, there is sense to which the very fact of acknowledging and incorporating new issues and challenges into the field is a statement and action in itself. Taking into account the context whence from the Program of Action was produced; listing different issues in this way, through a "relation of equivalence" needs to be seen as an attempt at negotiating conficts and opposing interests. Moreover, keeping in mind the history of the international population movement, it also becomes clear that this re-articulation of population policy through the bringing together of different discourses may have been an important and useful strategy to overcome a controversial past by acknowledging other alternative discourses. As pointed out by Fairclough, interdiscursive hybridity is an important strategy for the "the management of contradictions, problematizations, dilemmas… and social struggles" (Fairclough, 2011: 3).

6.1.2.2 Building an argument for family planning

<u>6.1.2.2.1 Unmet Needs</u>

The provision of family planning services is a central concern for most issues dealt with in the Program of Action. Whether the chapter is dealing with development, education, sustained economic development in the context of sustainable development, gender empowerment, ensuring access to family planning and reproductive health services remains a central concern. And given that this paper is interested in looking at the continuity of the population control discourse in the Program of Action, looking at what the document says on the needs for family planning and fertility regulation is also central to the purpose of this paper. There are three arguments that are advanced to justify the importance of family planning for population and development programs.

1. "The aim of family-planning programs must be to enable couples and individuals to decide freely and responsibly the number and spacing of their children and to have the information and means to do so." (1994: 43).
2. "The success of population education and family planning programs in a variety of settings demonstrates that informed individuals everywhere can and will act responsibly in the light of their own needs and those of their families and communities (Program, 1994: 43)
3. "Owing to declining mortality levels and the persistence of high fertility levels, a large number of developing countries continue to have very large proportion of children and young people in their populations, the ongoing and future demands created by large young populations, particularly in terms of health, education and employment,

represent major challenges and responsibilities for families, local communities, countries and the international community. First and foremost among these responsibilities is to ensure that every child is a wanted child." (Program, 1994: 33)

The claims here above embody a number of presuppositions. Presuppositions or presupposed propositions are implicit and taken for granted meanings or assumptions. Presuppositions are what underlie the meaning of a text without having to be explicitly stated. All form of communication is dependent on some sort of shared, common meaning. However, presuppositions can be manipulative and can have effects on power relations when what is assumed has the function of "commonsense in the service of power" (Fairclough, 1989: 107). Moreover, Presuppositions are important argumentation tools as they "can be used in order to build a basis for what sounds like a logical argument" (Machin & Mayr, 2012: 154). The first presupposition is that "couples and individuals" are not able to act responsibly in their reproductive behaviors or to even space their children unless provided with family planning. The second assumption is that once given the necessary information on family planning individuals would reproduce responsibly in respect to the needs of their families, their communities and their own needs. The third assumption is that high fertility levels are a consequence of too many "unwanted" children being born. Put together, high numbers of population are a consequence of too many "unwanted" children being born as individuals are not able to reproduce "responsibly" due to a lack of access to family planning. The rationality of family planning goes of course without saying. The advocated solution is then that governments need to invest more in family planning services and family planning methods to meet widespread need. Hence, if we accept the above propositions then there is a situation of unmet needs and meeting that need would mean that every child that is born would be a wanted one.

To "prevent" or "protect" women and young girls from "unwanted pregnancies" is one of the stated objectives of the new reproductive health and rights framework introduced at Cairo (Program of Action, 1994: 43). As a matter of fact, the document talks about "the urgent need to prevent unwanted pregnancies" (Ibid: 48). However, this rarely appears alone in the document but is rather paired with a health discourse which emphasizes the need to minimize the risks for maternal and child mortality associated with high-risk pregnancies through the provision of family planning. Family planning is also linked to "safe motherhood, a by-then already globally recognized framework in the promotion of maternal health and in combating

the high rates of maternal and child mortality in the developing world. Elsewhere, in the chapter on Health, Mortality and Morbidity, it is also stated that "child survival is closely linked to … the reproductive health of mothers. Early, late, numerous and closely spaced pregnancies are major contributors to high infant and child mortality and morbidity rates" (Ibid: 48). Through this, the high fertility of Third World women also becomes linked to the higher rates of maternal and child mortality experienced in the developing countries as compared to developed countries. This serves to emphasize the central role of family planning and reproductive health services further by giving it another rationale.

As already stated, the program of Action introduces yet another category among the beneficiaries of its reproductive health services; adolescents. The text argues that by promoting the education for adolescents on reproductive and sexual health and responsible sexual behaviors will contribute in helping them "attain a level of maturity required to make responsible decisions". It will also contribute in delaying their child-bearing age, protecting them from unwanted pregnancies, minimizing health risks, curbing population growth, increasing their educational opportunities and improving their socio-economic status (Program, 1994: 43). To quote the document:

> The reproductive health needs of adolescents as a group have been largely ignored to date by existing reproductive health services. The response of societies to the reproductive health needs of adolescents should be based on information that helps them attain a level of maturity required to make responsible choices. In particular, information and services should be made available to adolescents to help them understand their sexuality and protect them from unwanted pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases and subsequent risk of infertility. This effort is uniquely important for the health of young women and their children, for women's self-determination and, in many countries, for efforts to slow the momentum of population growth. Motherhood at a very young age entails a risk of maternal death that is much greater than average, and the children of young mothers have higher levels of morbidity and mortality. Early childbearing continues to be an impediment to improvements to the educational, economic and social status of women in all parts of the world. (1994: 49)

What I am interested in here is how sexual and reproductive behaviors are problematized. And through such problematization what is implicitly inferred is that by regulating fertility a range of other goals will be reached. But of course this problematization of reproduction is very subtle. For instance, "the momentum of population growth" is not enlisted as the most

immediate issue and it even becomes clouded by the other discourse on rights and needs and the health discourse. The paragraph starts off by defining the reproductive needs of adolescents in primarily health terms while concentrating on the consequences of early child-bearing for the health of both mother and child.

There is a problem with the way the cause and effect relation between early child-bearing and low educational opportunities and economic status is presented. And this is of course an interpretation to the portrayed problem which ignores other views on the issue, an interpretation which might help to conceal important power relations. In the developing world, for instance, where early child-bearing is often linked to child marriages, the problem of early child-bearing is more often than not a response to a lack of economic opportunities not the other way around (Robbins, 2013). Failing to acknowledge this fact has the consequence of reducing the causes of poverty or low economic status to failures inherent in individual actions and behaviors. Similarly, through an emphasis on family planning, the solution to the problem will also be limited to the individual level. And, as Makoni Busi has noted, such representation is "in essence a moral discourse, not a neutral one" (2012: 418).

6.1.2.2.2 Every child, a wanted child

It is also important to look at how the document constructs the relationship between poverty and population growth and where, through transitivity and the use of certain verb forms, the agency to solve the issue of poverty is assigned.

When the document refers to the future challenges of an ever growing world population and increasingly large numbers of young people and youth, it states that the two greatest responsibilities for families, countries and the international community are 1) "to ensure that every child is a wanted child" ; and 2) "to recognize that children are the most important resource for the future and that greater investments in them by parents and societies are essential to the achievement of sustained economic growth and development." (Program, 1994: 33). What I want to bring to attention here is how agency and responsibility become concealed through the kinds of verb forms that are used. It is here also important to look at transitivity, that is how action is described – "who does what to whom". Transitivity, as already stated, is an important tool in analyzing how inequalities and power relations can become concealed by the use of passive verb forms or passive sentences and, through that, contributes in concealing where agency and responsibility for action is attributed.

What is interesting to point out here is that agency in both 1) and 2) is made clear through the use of active verb forms. However, though both are active verbs, the verb "ensure" denotes material processes while "recognize" designates "mental processes" (Fairclough, 2003: 142). In other words, ensure is an action verb which "describe(s) processes of doing" that necessarily lead to material results and consequences, while recognize is a verb of "cognition" that involves mental processes which do not necessarily lead to any material action or result.

The document makes those statements in the context of child poverty after it has enumerated a number of risks that children living in poverty are faced with such as neglect, malnutrition, disease, exploitation, etc. It then goes on to state what its goals are in order to promote the wellbeing of children, adolescents and youth. However, the words the document uses to describe the responsibilities of countries and the international community to promote the welfare of children have consequences for the meaning of the text and the kinds of actions that are prescribed. Since ensuring that every child is wanted, as already seen, means providing family planning services and programs, and, since recognizing the value of children does not really explain what will be done in practice to improve their quality of life and to combat child poverty, it is then that agency and responsibility for improving people's lives, at least rhetorically, is left to family planning. Hence, though, it is countries and the international community that are described as the doers, looking closely at what is said reveals where agency and hence responsibility really resides. Moreover, though the document does not make clear statements on the relationship between population growth and poverty, whether the increasing numbers of children is what causes child poverty, it still makes one clear statement; that reproductive health programs and family planning are important agents towards the goal of improving children's lives by ensuring that no more unwanted children are born.

Hence, with the above-mentioned examples in mind, there is a sense in which the agency to solve socio-economic issues is assigned to family planning. Moreover, looking at the verbs used in sentences where family planning programs are the agents or the subjects of sentences, there is a predominance of action verbs such as "enable", "provide", "ensure", "make" (as in "make services safer"), "expand" and "upgrade" (Program, 1994: 43). Family planning programs are also personified in some sentences – that is; human attributes and abilities are ascribed to inanimate objects, to processes or abstractions (Machin & Mayr, 2012: 171). In those cases, "recognize" and "emphasize" have been used (Program, 1994: 43). This, I believe, contributes in strengthening the representation of the agentive role of family planning. Moreover, it serves to conceal where the responsibility to change social problems

really lies, especially when the issue of child poverty or adolescent pregnancies are being considered.

While the arguments advanced on the merits and need for family planning is not a generally accepted view (a point which will be developed later), but has always been cause of debate, there is a sense in which the Program of Action sanitizes controversy by failing to acknowledge alternative views on the subject. Moreover, such representations that allow agency to family planning and not its users devalue the knowledge, views and experience of the beneficiaries of family planning. Through these accounts on the developing world's fertility there is no consideration that the people's own perspectives may entail another way of seeing their problems. As is argued, discourses are first and foremost positioned; they are different representations of the same aspects of the world from different socio-economic positions. Moreover, that discourses are different representations of particular aspects of the world from particular perspectives in turn depends on the fact that these representations are themselves the effects of the different relations that people have to the world, relations which in turn are contingent upon their social-cultural positions and identities (Fairclough, 2003: 124).

The text also employs certain linguistic strategies to overcome the lack of evidence for the statements it advances. These can be seen through abstractions such as "experience has shown" (Program, 1994: 90), "experience shows" (Ibid: 22), "there is general agreement" (Ibid: 15), and also through the use of hedging terms to minimize the force or impact of what is being stated. Such examples include "likely" in sentence such as "early marriage and early motherhood … are likely to have a long-term, adverse impact on their and their children's quality of life" (Ibid: 49); "many" as in "reproductive health eludes many of the world's people" (Ibid: 40). It also takes place through the use of generalizations such as "informed individuals everywhere can and will act responsibly" (Ibid: 43). Moreover, the text is low on evidence and examples to back some of its statements. And, when numbers are given through statistics, they lack a sense of context and carry information that is equally as abstracted. The consequence of this is that in the absence of concrete facts, the document is able to build some of its arguments on assumptions. Hence, for instance, it is assumed that just because of future expected growth in population, there will be a similar increase of "unmet needs", demands for contraceptive methods and services. It is stated; "During the decade of the 1990s, the number of couples of reproductive age will grow by about 18 million per annum. To meet their needs

and close the existing large gaps in services, family planning and contraceptive supplies will need to expand very rapidly over the next several years." (Ibid: 49)

The arguments for the need for family planning rest upon a certain understanding of what the needs of the populations in the developing world are. This is especially the case when the document argues that given the expected future population growth, there will be a similar increase in demands for contraceptives. However, it is often never fully explained why Third World populations have larger families in the first place because the irrationality behind their high fertility is taken for granted, hence, the need of family planning as a tool to empower people to make "responsible decisions" concerning reproduction (Program, 1994: 49).

Moreover, by using the argument that the expected future population growth will entail a similar increase in the demand for contraceptive commodities and services, the document is then able to argue for the need of a "partnership" between governments and the private sector. More importantly, the document urges governments to promote and strengthen the role of the private sector in the production and delivery of "contraceptive commodities and services" (Program, 1994: 103). This is to be done by removing all the policies that restrict the access and contribution of the private sector in the production and delivery of contraceptive commodities (Ibid: 105) and by decentralizing the management of public health services (Ibid: 40).

Furthermore, by linking the issue of fertility rates to the other issues of maternal and child mortality, child poverty, lack of educational and socio-economic opportunities, the document is able to stress the urgency of the need to invest in more reproductive health and family planning programs. The document also urges countries to remove all existing barriers to the use of family planning services through education, information and communication programs aimed at promoting "responsible sexual and reproductive behaviour" (Program, 1994: 43). It is argued that the success of the implementation of the objectives of the Program of Action will depend on creating an environment for "attitudinal and behavioural change" (Ibid: 78). Such efforts should start at the earliest stage possible, from primary school and is to be aimed at both boys and girls and is to reach all community levels in order to promote public knowledge, commitment and support "to encourage attitudes in favour of responsible behaviour" (Ibid). Moreover, to meet the great unmet demands for service and information, especially in the context of continually increasing population growth, the document calls for additional resources at the national level and from the international community.

Then, by defining the problem of high fertility using different discourses (the health discourse, the gender empowerment, the reproductive right discourse) to stress the different aspects of the issue, it becomes possible to state and emphasize how pervasive the situation of unmet needs is and how essential it is in the goal to improve the quality of life of people. Furthermore, because of the increasing magnitude of unmet needs given an "all time-high" population increase, it is neither an area that the states' resources alone would be enough to satisfy, hence the need for a "partnership" with the private sector.

6.1.3 Social practice analysis
I will now turn to the third stage of analysis which is concerned with the level of the social practice which means looking at the potential social and political consequences of the Program of Action. One question to ask here is whether the Program of Action contributes in changing existing power relations or merely reproduces them.

6.1.3.1 Discourses as Social Practices with corresponding social consequences
In international fora for population issues and when international policies on population were drafted, the implied mainstream perspective has been that the people of the Third World could not rationally plan their families without external help. The same assumption is found in the Program of Action when it is argued that the objective of reproductive health services is "to enable responsible voluntary decisions about child-bearing and methods of family planning of their choice" (Program, 1994: 40), or that the objective of family planning is to "prevent unwanted pregnancies" and to give couples "the full opportunity to exercise the right to have children by choice" (Ibid: 43). I would like to argue that this view is informed by the old Malthusian discourse about the irrationality of poor people in having too many children than can be provided for. During Malthus' time, this view could offer support for those that opposed the Poor Laws on the ground that giving financial aid to the poor would not ameliorate their economic situation, but, that limiting the birth rates of the poor had, the potential to better their economic situation (Malthus, 1798: 31). In other words, by contesting giving financial help to the poor classes, Malthus was arguing that it was only by reducing their fertility that the poor classes could improve their situation. This marked the beginning of a long history of linking many of the social ills affecting humanity to population growth.

Moreover, as Malthus theory spread to the US where it would subsequently gain in popularity, it increasingly became the preferred perspective on the poverty of the lower classes and the immigrant classes. Later, this perspective could justify talking about the underdevelopment of the Third World as a cause of the high fertility rates of its people.

However, viewing the relationship between reproduction and poverty in this way ends up having consequences on actions. As already argued, in the Program of Action, there is a sense in which the agency to change social problems such as low economic opportunities, child poverty, gender inequalities, lack of access to education becomes attributed to family planning. Moreover, it is when the question of resource allocation is being addressed that it becomes clear which of all the different issues covered by the program is to be prioritized. While the document gives cost-estimates of needed resources for the implementation of the Program of Action in the areas of reproductive health (which includes family planning, prevention of sexually transmitted diseases and data, research and policy development analysis programs), it does not give any figures as to the other program areas such as primary health care, child survival programs, programs for the empowerment of women (including their access to basic education) and development-related programs (including poverty eradication). Except the area of reproductive health care, other areas and programs are merely listed and the Program of Action only states that additional resources for the implementation of those programs are needed. Furthermore, in the reproductive health care area, family planning is to receive the major share of resources (more than half of the share), while the remaining is to be divided among reproductive health care programs, prevention of sexually transmitted diseases and research and data analysis programs (Program, 1994: 78). Moreover, within the area of family planning, the most important components listed are contraceptive and service delivery and capacity building for information, communication and education concerning family planning and population issues (Ibid: 90). It is then clear that discourses are social practices, and, through discourses we create our world, reality, and, through that, specific courses of actions are made possible (Fairclough: 1989:27).

Though it is argued that Cairo was a victory for advocates of women's rights and reproductive health; others worried for the fact that development issues were given only scant attention at a conference whose purported goal had originally promised to be on population and development issues. Hence, many delegates from developing countries at the conference were worried about the fact that too much focus was given to family planning at the detriment of other programs (Earth negotiation bulletin, 1993). Others also criticized this redirection of resources in favor of family planning instead of a focus on social development issues which would have been the most "effective and ethical" policy for population growth reduction (Amartya Sen, 1999). Moreover, one can wonder what matter of victory for women's rights advocates it is which only focused on issues of the "politics of the body and sexuality" while

downplaying "the politics of social development and global inequality" (Petchesky 1995 :159).

6.1.3.2 Discourses as a Limited Set of Possibilities

Though the importance and desirability of family planning is taken for granted in the text, family planning programs in the Third World have often been criticized for their lack of sensitivity to the socio-cultural specificity of reproduction. Critics for instance have pointed to the fact that there are different socio-economic rationales that by necessity favor certain forms of reproduction. Mahmood Mamdani has shown in his study on the village of Manupur in India that from the socio-economic point of view of a poor farmer having a large family may, far from being irrational, be a necessity for survival (1972). According to another study from Bangladesh, it is argued that already at the age of ten, Bangladeshi boys in poorer homes produce for their families far more than they consume. Hence, children may in some specific contexts be a vital source of income and labor, and security in old age for their parents. In many Third World countries, children constitute a crucial part in the family economy. Moreover, in many peasant societies, children may help their parents in the field, tend the livestock, fetch water and wood and look after their younger siblings as their parents perform other tasks (Hartman, 1999).

Parents in the developed countries and among the Third World elite, on the other hand have no need of relying on their children for labor or for security in old age, but, on the contrary, as the transition to high consuming societies occur, children become a major source of costs for their parents, hence the incentive of having smaller families (Hartman, 1999:6). Moreover, in developed countries, personal saving plans, retirement plans and various government programs replace the need and the rationale to have children as one's most fundamental source of social security. In this context, limiting family size makes perfect sense from an economic point of view (Hartman, 1999:8). Hence, it can be argued that the economics of family size vary depending on the socio-economic context.

Moreover it can be noted here that in the developed countries, the move to lower fertility rates could only be achieved through the mediation of several factors; the transition to lower infant mortality rates, society-wide changes that made it possible for women to work outside the home, and through socio-economic and cultural changes which made that children no longer were needed as a valuable source of labor and income by their families. The transition to lower birth rates occurred as a direct reaction to these changes even as birth control and

contraception were still highly controversial and illegal in some countries (Lappé et al, 1998: 114-5).

It is precisely this fact that is often ignored; though it might be, from an economic point of view, rational for certain classes and social groups or for some people in certain societies to have smaller families, it might not be the case for others. It is also this that lies at the root for this attempt to rationalize and universalize the idea that high fertility rates are a consequence of unmet needs and a lack of access to reproductive health care and family planning services (Program, 1994: 40). In this way, the world is rendered into a simple problem-solution formula where suggested solutions can be applied universally. As has been argued, rationality is "a product of a particular social and historical context" (Mamdani, 1972: 128), hence, the ideological function of this perspective is that it attempts to rationalize and universalize the specificities of certain social classes.

It is therefore important that reproduction be dealt with not as a natural but as the social phenomenon it is. It is also necessary to acknowledge in a policy paper such as this the socio-economic conditions that, for certain social groups, by necessity favor large families. Moreover, since it is taken for granted that fertility control through birth control and family planning services are the only ways to stabilize population growth, any form of resistance to such methods is thought to be a result of outdated cultural and religious values, hence, the need to educate and train Third World women in the virtues of family planning (Lappé et al, 1998).

It is then unsurprising that the document argues that if family planning programs have failed in the past it is due to the fact that "[r]eproductive health eludes many of the world's people because of such factors as: inadequate levels of knowledge about human sexuality and inappropriate or poor-quality reproductive health information and services" (Program, 1994: 40). As a consequence, the need for programs to inform and educate people on reproductive health issues is stressed all throughout the document, even an entire chapter is devoted to the topic. The document also stresses the need to incorporate reproductive and sexual health issues in school curricula from the "earliest possible age" up until the university level in training programs for "population specialists" (Ibid: 78).

Moreover, as already argued, when the Program of Action acknowledges that there exists a link between population, development, environmental issues while avoiding to make any clear statements on the nature of that relationship or whether there exists any cause-effect

relationship between the different issues, it leaves the Program open for diverse interpretations. In this way it does not look like the Program of Action constitutes a break from the older (Malthusian) perspective that blamed high fertility for various issues such as the poverty of the poor classes, the underdevelopment of the Third World, environmental problems, etc. A good population policy will depend on acknowledging the different sides of the issue. Such a policy would of course also need to acknowledge that there are economic problems associated with increasing population growth especially in developing countries as it is increasingly exerting more pressure on already strained public services. On the other hand, too much emphasis on the role of population size in causing and perpetuating poverty causes us to overlook the fact that it is limited economic opportunities and social inequities that in the first place create the incentive to have larger families. Yuval-Davis has thus argued that such a discourse which constrains the causes of poverty to fertility, offers to many of its contemporary proponents "an easy let-out explanation for guilty western liberal consciences for the persistence of poverty and a low standard of life in Third World countries in the post-colonial period" (1994: 33).

6.1.3.3 Language as a System of Choices and Semiotic Options

The conceptual frames we use to describe issues will necessarily guide and constrain our understanding of those issues. Language is a system of choices or semiotic options within which language users choose from to produce their texts. Hence, the meaning of a text depends on the choices made by the author, and, in certain cases it also depends on what has not been chosen (Fairclough, 1989: viii). Therefore, the words we use to describe things and events have consequences for the ultimate meaning of texts. These choices also serve to promote certain discourses and interests over others.

How the Program of Action chooses to present the issue of high fertility rates will necessarily have consequences by determining what courses of action can be taken. It is here important to remember that discourses determine the conditions of possibility for what can possibly be said and known in particular situations. Therefore, whether I choose to refer to the issue of high fertility rates and the problems associated to it as an issue of "unmet needs" for family planning or as an issue of lack of economic opportunities, the two choices would obviously lead to different policy recommendations and different courses of action. The former would prescribe "assuring" access to contraceptive technologies and services as the best solution; the later would mean lesser emphasis on family planning and more on issues of social and economic development. If the text would have identified economic inequality

(underdevelopment) as the issue, it would have made the suggested solution – widening the market to contraceptive commodities inappropriate. One can then argue that calling it "unmet needs" serves the interests of the market. It somehow becomes a problem that can be solved by the market. Moreover, it is also worth mentioning that the use of "partners" and "partnerships" referring to the relationship that should be established between the public and private sector serves to conceal the way the interests of the two parties can often clash.

6.2 Concluding Remarks

The analysis started by looking at the situational context that enabled the production of the Program of Action. I looked at the political processes, changes and events that made the discursive shifts that were to take place at Cairo possible. I argued that though there were some important events and political changes that contributed greatly in determining the outcome of the conference that it was mostly the history of a movement at a critical moment that made change inevitable. Through an interdiscursive analysis, I looked at how the text drew from a variety of other discourses and what consequences that had on the meaning of the text. I argued that the knitting together of a variety of discourses with the population control discourse served to re-legitimize and rationalize the need for population control. Moreover, I argued that the presence of interdiscursive hybridity in the text is the result of a recontextualization that has taken place in the order of discourse of the international population institution. Re-contextualization is one way through which discursive changes take place. However, to repeat, Chouliaraki and Fairclough have warned about the dangers of such recontextualization of discourses into new settings as it often entails the "appropriation" or "colonization" of certain discourses, fields and areas by others to serve the strategies and goals of the field into which they are being re-contextualized. This is seen to take place in the Program of Action as it becomes clear that this re-contextualization which introduced a number of discourses (such as a gender discourse, a health discourse, a rights discourse) into the order of discourse of the international population institution instead served to legitimize and build arguments for the need for continued population control but this time through the banner of family planning.

I also argued that given the nature of policy documents, that consensus at Cairo was achieved less through a change in perspective regarding population policy than through the adoption of a language so vague as to make possible the coalition between the most disparate segments of the international population institution as for instance between population control activists and the advocates of reproductive health and rights. I also showed how the Program of Action

overcomes differences in meaning in the text through opting for a cautious language and by avoiding to commit to strong assertions.

I have also looked at the arguments advanced on the merits of family planning. I have shown how through certain linguistic features and constructions, family planning is predominantly represented as being in the actor's position. I have argued that there are some serious implications with such a perspective that reduces social issues into problems that can be mainly fixed by assuring access to contraceptive services and programs, since, this may lead to a certain individualization of social problems as family planning is increasingly promoted as an empowerment tool and as it is argued that by ensuring access to family planning a range of other issues also will be resolved. Moreover, through the promotion of family planning, there is a creation of needs ("unmet needs") that has taken place which is used to justify the expansion of the market for contraceptives and the decentralization of the management of public services.

7. Conclusion

The purpose of this paper has been to carry out a critical discourse analysis of the Cairo International Conference's Program of Action. Through CDA's three-stage framework for analysis I have attempted to show that though there are some discursive shifts that took place through the Cairo conference, the changes depended more on a change in language than on actual social practice change. Through re-contextualization, as the old population control discourse was re-articulated with a range of other discourses, family planning is now the vehicle through which the old population control discourse is legitimized and lives on.

Language has always been central to population policy. From the history of the population control movement, one point can be established; managing and controlling such a private area of life as is procreation has not always been a given. From the time Malthus formulated his *Essay on Population* it took more than a century before the population problem could be translated into actual policy. Hence, getting public recognition that this was indeed an issue worthy of attention, of public investment and funding depended on how the issue was presented and framed and how a potential intervention was justified. This is also one of the reasons why, historically, population concerns had to be articulated together with a whole lot of other issues to give it more credence and to stress the magnitude of the problem.

Hence, the history of the population movement should rather be understood as one of a contested field where controversies abound and where the narrative that dominate the field at any given time in history should be viewed as a product of the historical conditions and the struggles over meaning that take place within the institution. The Cairo International Conference was no exception. I would here like to emphasize the need to understand the Program of Action as a result of discursive struggles taking place at the level of the institutional order of discourse of the population establishment. To repeat, the Cairo conference not only brought together a variety of governments but even different organizations representing different groups and interests. The Program of Action was therefore a way to reconcile in one document divergent discourses and interests. It is then not surprising that what resulted was a cocktail of different perspectives all to be incorporated into a broader vision of population policy.

Some believe (Brigham: 68) that the Program of Action by being too inclusive runs the risk of being so complex and multi-faceted to the point of "losing a clear residual message". However, as the analysis of this paper has sought to show; the change in the language of the

population discourse that took place at Cairo should rather be viewed as attempts by a population control discourse to re-articulate itself with emerging discourses in order to adapt to changing socio-political circumstances. Prior to the Cairo conference, there had been a growing opposition from women's rights' activists that strongly criticized coercive population control programs that targeted women's bodies with complete disregard to their health, empowerment and general wellbeing. Seen in this light, the Program of Action also needs to be viewed as a strategy to reconcile those tensions.

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