

Transnational and International Organizing Strategies of The North American Pro-Choice and Pro-Life Movements

This paper concerns the extent to which the abortion issue has become a transnational one in North America, and forms part of my forthcoming book, North American Abortion Politics (Lynne Rienner). The extent of the social movement organizing may be seen in the historic linkages with first, the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) and then later Human Life International on the other side of the question. Human Life International has partners in Human Life International Canada and Pro-Vida in Mexico. While Vatican unease with demographic policies that include reproductive control has been demonstrated since the 1950s, more recently women's rights groups and the Holy See have opposed one another in a more public manner at UN Conferences, particularly the Cairo International Population Conference in 1994 and the Beijing Conference on Women in 1995. Besides IPPF, groups which have consistently opposed the Vatican's stance on reproductive rights include the International Women's Health Coalition as well as certain governments, including those of Canada, Japan and the EU.

Overall, this discussion will first give a history of UN conferences, how they are called and structured, and the role for NGO's vs. official delegations. In particular, it highlights the privileged access given to the Holy See as a "state" rather than an NGO, and how this has affected the formulation of UN Programmes of Action at the end of population and women's conferences.

The discussion will illustrate the importance of treating the UN framework as a "feedback loop" of influence, a contested site of power interactions between organizations such as the Holy See, international feminist organizations, and the internal politics of nation-states, all

represented in state delegation submissions to the UN. While many are familiar with the current Bush Administration policy regarding the use of US AID funds, it is important to know about the long-term rhetorical battles over the meaning of “development,” “North vs. South sovereignty” within the UN since the 1950s, and how those debates have shaped the more recent debates over the definition of “the family,” “reproductive rights,” and “gender rights.” When examined closely, discourse shifts can reveal the extent of power shifts between states and/or between international organizations at the UN, and similarly, knowing the ways in which power may be shifting through the UN terrain enables us as the public to anticipate ways in which official discourse may shift in the time before the next UN International Conference.

There have been two broad time periods operating with reference to women and reproductive rights during the UN’s history. The first was that in which the largely US-based “family planning” industry worked to fund country-specific activities, often through the IPPF and UN Fund for Population Assistance (UNFPA), in which women were viewed as passive beneficiaries of US-led development programs. The second, touched off mostly by the emergence of the internal women’s program structure in the UN and the emergence of women’s movements in most countries, in effect “took back” control over the framing of women’s reproductive rights.

Theoretically underpinning this discussion are relevant political opportunity structure concepts from Tarrow and advocacy network variables from Keck and Sikkink.¹ Tarrow’s concepts of access to the state and availability of allies are clearly the most important when discussing access to international fora. This was true for population scientists privileged in the first time period by funders such as the Rockefeller Foundation that wished to bring “developed” notions to the rest of the world, including population control. It also became true for the Vatican and for women’s organizations, to have access to the “Prep Com” process before and during UN Conferences. Another concept from Tarrow’s political opportunity structure, availability of allies, has helped the Vatican and pro-life groups and women’s pro-choice groups. Participating

in UN activities is a multi-level strategic process, one which undoubtedly both sides have learned from each other. Important allies for the Vatican have included certain Catholic states, pro-life US politicians, and the North American transnationally-based Human Life Institute. For pro-choice groups, key allies can be grouped into three categories. They are: the “embedded” pro-choice women who had long been involved in UN activities, such as Arvonne Fraser and Nafis Sadik; help from unexpected quarters such as Cabinet Secretary Tim Wirth during the Clinton administration, and finally, allies such as Planned Parenthood International and globally-based women’s organizations, including the International Women’s Health Coalition.

In terms of Keck and Sikkink’s strategies available to transnational advocacy networks such as the pro-choice and pro-life movements described here, the most relevant have included “symbolic” politics and the politics of “material and moral” leverage.² With respect to symbolism, an early pro-life example of this was when the Vatican tried to fan the flames of a divide between “privileged Western women” and those from the rest of the world who might value large families, into a direct attempt to frame feminists as being unconcerned with families. Pro-choice responses to the continued pro-life emphasis on the immorality of abortion included the idea that women all over the world desire to have the control over their own reproductive processes. The second type of strategy defined by Keck and Sikkink is using “leverage” for a group or network to gain “influence far beyond their ability to influence state practices directly,” and “is a crucial step in network campaigns.” This clearly relates to Tarrow’s political opportunity concept of access to allies, as Keck and Sikkink note, since “NGO influence depends (among other things) on securing powerful allies.”³ Material leverage can involve the framing of an issue in economic terms, such as the unfairness of IMF loans or in this particular case, examples of globally Northern pharmaceutical companies using the global South as their testing ground. The group or network then claims that economic changes are needed to the issue. Another type of material leverage, Keck and Sikkink note, may also “link the issue to votes in international organizations.” This has been the strategy of both feminist pro-choice groups and

the globally-based Catholics for Free Choice (CCFC) since the Vatican was given the voting privileges typically reserved to states in the early 1970s. Moral leverage has often involved the “politics of international shame,” such as a sweatshop boycott.⁴ In this particular study, moral leverage and symbolism are often barely distinguishable since abortion has been opposed mainly on morality grounds by the transnational pro-life network, using symbols of morality such as fetal murder. On the pro-choice side, groups have used the symbolism of women seeking variously to overthrow the control of patriarchy, the Church, capitalism, or to become more individualistically empowered.

The Structure of Representation in the UN

Arvonne Fraser, former Coordinator of the Office of Women in Development at US AID, and Marilyn Danguilan, M.D. of the Philippines, are both women who have written scholarly accounts on the issue of group representation at and through the UN, steeped in their own experiences as members of their official delegations to these conferences.⁵ Both note that there is a time lag, generally a few years, between the calling of an international conference by either the General Assembly or ECOSOC (the UN Economic and Social Council) and the ultimate event. As Fraser notes, once a conference topic has been decided, either a special secretariat will be established or a UN agency assigned for the conference organizing.⁶ Questionnaires may be sent out to all nations to elicit their views and further information, and “all member states are officially informed and they get to work.”⁷ Then, “extensive background papers are prepared, and preparatory committees meet to go over and revise or prepare a draft document for submission to the conference. Similarly, background papers are prepared for the official delegates, with “negotiations between nations, across capitols,” often taking place to “resolve differences on particular points.” There will usually be at least three meetings of the Preparatory Commissions, or “prep coms” in the UN vernacular, before the final conference.⁸

The composition of the official delegations to the UN Conference is weighted toward governmental representatives. The delegation is typically headed by top officials of either the Department of Foreign Affairs or U.S. Department of State. Other delegates may be drawn from relevant government agencies, academic departments, interest groups and NGO's, but as Fraser notes, they only speak for the official government whom they are representing. They are however also sources of information for the national government which may solicit these delegates' views on matters in advance.⁹ With reference to NGO's, Fraser notes that many early actions by the UN were a result of these women, who "moved back and forth between organizations and governmental institutions," transmitting the ideas back and forth. She cites the example of the Inter-American Commission on the Status of Women, begun in the 1920s, which lobbied successfully for including the equal rights provision for women in the UN Charter.¹⁰ Similarly, she has noted that over time, "the best international conferences..." are those where government and NGO delegates "confer formally and informally before, during and after the conference...where the ngo's will often "recommend...specific language that they want inserted into the document."¹¹ NGO's and states must meet the requirements of the UN Charter, which among other things promises non-discrimination based on race, gender and other grounds, to be admitted as official members.

NGO's as such did not gain their own "parallel" forum until they demanded it in 1992.¹² Fraser notes that these events, held at the same time as (but in a different location from) the official conference have served many functions, from galvanizing interest across national organizations and the international media, as well as serving as a participatory forum for interested government officials who had not been included on the official delegation. She also describes the freer, less constrained structure of these conferences, especially since statements were not constrained by a government's view on the issue. Thus, they served as a "marketplace of ideas"...and a venue for the exchange of information, experience and networking between individuals and groups.¹³ The NGO conference is organized by "interested international

organizations which are recognized by the UN” who then raise the money to host the event. As with the official conference’s secretariat, the NGO conference organizers delegate responsibility to a Director and a staff, who then establish a subcommittee to ensure that the daily newspaper is published, covering both official delegation decisions and Forum discussions and decisions. During the world conference, the “NGO forum becomes....a highly-sophisticated lobby, aimed in the short term at influencing the conference and the world’s media” and in the longer term, at influencing governments, media and public opinion around the world.¹⁴ It is also true that those who currently or historically have opposed a particular topic may attend the NGO forum to “use the fact of the conference for their own ends.” Also, an NGO may try to petition for ECOSOC (UN Economic and Social Council) accreditation, of which there are three levels. If given accreditation, the NGO can send representatives to the main conference and/or the Prep Coms (not just the parallel NGO Forum). There are three levels of ECOSOC accreditation for NGO’s. The top level is that of being recognized by the UN as having “special competence” in virtually every area; the middle level, which is attained by most NGO’s including twelve pro-life ones, as well as Catholics for a Free Choice (CCFC), requires that NGO’s show this competence in vaguely-defined “specific areas,” and the lowest is that of “roster” status, including Human Life International and the International Right to Life Federation. If they wish to attend the Prep Coms or the final Conference, groups in this lowest rung must try to negotiate with kindred groups in the second tier to give up some of their spaces to third-tier representatives. Examples will later be given.

As Fraser sums up, for women’s organizations to become effective actors in the international system, they have had to learn a lot about the UN system over decades. This includes learning about... the “unique UN system which operates more by consensus than majority rule,” the difference between different governmental and party system structures, to “the differences in cultural and religious traditions that affect both women and governments,” and the conflicts between modernization, the drive for equity and the pull of tradition.”¹⁵ One reason

for the necessity of learning their way around the inside UN pathways is that the end result of a conference is a world plan of action, “recommending specific actions for national or international governments or other groups.” While these recommendations may become “owned” by representatives from a particular country and funds pledged to enact them, they may also simply be dependent on the goodwill of various national and international actors to implement them.¹⁶ For example, the World Plan of Action adopted at the first International Women’s Year Conference in Mexico City, 1975 included a recommendation that governments establish “specialized policy machinery for the advancement of women.” By the end of the 1980s, 137 of the reporting countries had created such units.”¹⁷ On the other hand, the fact that the majority of UN countries in the industrialized and non-industrialized worlds have ratified CEDAW, the Convention to Eliminate Discrimination Against Women, has not influenced the US to ratify. On one hand, if there is consistent and sustained pressure by national networks closely tied to the UN process, a country may in fact implement some of these important programs, as happened with the Philippines during the Beijing Conference, where the result of national and international women’s networking in government, academic, diplomatic and civil society group settings was the implementation of the thirty-year plan for Gender and Development (PPGD).¹⁸ Lacking this type of proactive networking, the UN Program of Action has no autonomous power to force itself on nations.

The History of the Vatican at the UN

Danguilan notes that for the Cairo conference as was true for others, Prep Coms 1 and 2, held in March 1991 and May 1993, established the “skeletal frame” of what would be worked on at the final Prep Com.¹⁹ While language is negotiated by states, with NGO input, at the earlier Prep Coms, it is particularly at the final “Prep Com meeting,” where member states negotiate most of the contents of the major document of the conference. If a member state objects to certain language, that language is placed in brackets. With the UN’s mode of consensus decision-making, one state can heavily influence the agenda for the final conference by bracketing

language at the final Prep Com. That state has most often been the Vatican when it comes to the UN Conferences on Population and Development, and more recently the Conferences on Women and Children as well. As Danguilan, an MD who was a member of the Philippine official delegation to the 3rd Prep Com for the Cairo Conference in 1994 and to the Beijing Conference in 1995 notes, the less contested (bracketed) language after the final Prep Com, the more consensus is evident. If there are brackets in the language as it goes to the delegates for the conference, the delegates must negotiate them before beginning other work at the conference. The importance of being an actor at the final Prep Com is highlighted by Danguilan when she states that “most UN observers say that at least 60 percent of the final outcome of a UN world conference is determined during the preparatory meetings.”²⁰ Thus, from the standpoint of a state actor feeling strongly on an issue, the strategy is to hold fast to its objections during the final Prep Com, so that the document released after the Prep Com meetings becomes the basis for the “official conference” document. Another part of the strategy is to lobby the global media and opinion-leaders in certain selected states to retain the bracketed language in the version of the document emanating from the World Conference, so that it remains in the Programme of Action that will then influence the global framework for the next ten or twenty years. All of these strategic options were exercised by the Holy See regarding the 1994 Cairo Conference on Population and Development, as chronicled by Danguilan, who began as an official member of the Prep Com 3 delegation from the Philippines but after that meeting, due to strenuous lobbying by the Catholic Church in the Philippines, the only Catholic country in Southern Asia, she and another prominent woman were removed from the delegation.²¹ She attended the world conference as an NGO delegate.

The Holy See represents the Pope, his authority in Vatican City in Rome, and the worldwide Roman Catholic Church. It began its presence at the UN by attending meetings of the General Assembly, the WHO (World Health Organization) and UNESCO (U.N. Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization). When the Holy See first inquired about potential UN

membership in 1944, Secretary of State Cordell Hull responded that Vatican City did not meet the requirements. While the Holy See, wielding its sovereign authority over Vatican City and the Catholic Church, acts as the international relations liaison for the Church in general, performing functions related to treaties and receiving of envoys, it lacked critical authority in one matter, according to Hull. “Under the UN Charter, a member state is required to commit military power in collective measures,” while “Article 24 of the Lateran Pacts of 1929 binds the Holy See and Vatican City to a policy of neutrality which is regarded as incompatible with membership.”²² Thus, the definition as it has consistently stood is a requirement to be able to commit a military force to aid UN missions. In 1956, the Holy See became elected to ECOSOC and to the International Atomic Energy Agency.²³ ECOSOC is a major co-ordinating Council within the UN system, “coordinating the work of the 14 specialized UN agencies...”. It “issues policy recommendations to the UN system and member states; its weblink states that ECOSOC’s “purview extends to over 70% of the human and financial resources of the UN system.”²⁴

The Holy See became a “permanent observer” to the UN in 1964 simply by naming one, based on its historical presence at the UN. Danguilan explains that the permanent observer category was begun “as a matter of custom” in 1946, when Switzerland named one and this was accepted by the Secretary General. The UN Charter contains no provisions on the category.²⁵ While historically permanent observers could attend and participate in UN meetings, they historically could not vote in the General Assembly. “Recently, however, General Assembly resolutions...have invited ‘all states’ to participate, and they have been able to participate with full voting rights.”²⁶ This is an interesting case of rights being granted simply on the basis of longevity. First, based on its attendance at the UN, the Holy See was granted “non-state permanent observer status,” and then it benefited when “states” were granted voting rights. One of the chief opposition groups to the Vatican’s influence at the UN is the U.S.-based Catholics for a Free Choice (CCFC), which notes that by various common criteria, the Vatican does not enjoy “state” status, so should not be allowed to vote as other states do.²⁷ Overall, the chief argument

against the Holy See's participation on this basis is that it is not a state according to the UN's definition, yet gets to exercise all the rights of states at the UN. Thus, the Holy See and Switzerland share the same curious status in the UN system.

The important relevant distinction to make is that the Holy See is the only international religious body accorded these rights; there is a significant difference between the rights of a "state" and of an NGO in the UN system. All other religions get to petition for (and often receive) NGO status. There are very clear ways in which status differentials between NGO's and "states" (used in parentheses to indicate the Holy See's ambiguous status) are found with respect to the official conferences. First, in the "Preparation Commissions" (or "Prep Coms" in the participants' vernacular) leading up to the official conferences, which often take years of negotiations, such as those leading up to the Cairo International Population and Development Conference (1991-1994), states have votes and are part of the official representation, while NGO's do not. NGO's may monitor public plenary sessions and open sessions of "working groups"(subgroups) appointed to work out disagreements on certain issues, but they do not vote. Their influence during "Prep Coms" is felt in watching the official, national-government appointed delegations and lobbying those delegations in between sessions.²⁸ National government delegations are free to take or ignore their advice. Official state delegations at the Prep Coms, are able to voice opposition at the sessions and to delay delegates' consideration of other matters.

UN Conference History and Developing Discursive Conflict

Period I- The Scientific Expert-led Model of Development

As Danguilan and others have noted with reference to many UN Conferences, disagreement between states over contraception policies at least has been evident since the UN entered the population and development field in the early 1950s. The period from the 1950s-1970s has been characterized by Danguilan and others as the "development period," in which the

UN, often through UNFPA (UN Fund for Development and Population Assistance), and usually affiliated with the International Planned Parenthood Association and/or the Population Council brought reproductive health information and care to countries in the “developing” world of Africa, Asia, and Latin America where no other provisions were generally being made. The prevalence of the “development” period through the late 1970s can be viewed as based on a large fraction of self-interest in the U.S., based both on fear that population growth in the “third world” would threaten the living standard in other parts of the world, and the laboratories’ desire to have ready-made testing grounds for their products.

The first decades of the development period belonged mainly to the scientists and UN administrators of the Population and Development Fund. Even though the first world population conference was held in Rome in 1955, there seems to be no available record of Vatican opposition to it. This was also true for the next such conference in Belgrade, Yugoslavia, held in 1965. These two “proto-conferences” were held by and for the “population experts” and were not open to global participation. This changed for the next population conference, the first such UN World Conference held in Bucharest in 1974. The opening of participation to all UN member states, the fact of the momentous *Roe v. Wade* decision in the U.S. in 1973, and accompanying media attention made it apparent that the UN population conferences had entered a new era of becoming the site of contestation over reproductive rights. Danguilan notes that the Plan of Action adopted at the end of the Bucharest conference added a new feature which would prove highly significant for the future. In addition to the “old” emphasis on population control, the newer idea was the inclusion of the factors leading up to fertility, such as governments providing “incentives and disincentives for couples to limit their family size.” This warranted an integration of contraception and family planning into the traditional maternal and child health programs.²⁹ It also guaranteed that opposition from the Holy See over these sections would intensify.

By 1984 and the next World Population Conference in Mexico City, opposition to including family planning and contraception had clearly hardened. The Holy See was able to work in a new “political opportunity structure” since the 1980 election of Ronald Reagan and his particular openness to Vatican lobbying.³⁰ The U.S. delegation was headed by pro-life former Senator James Buckley, and completely changed the US position taken ten years earlier to favor that of the Holy See. The U.S. text for 1984 stated that the U.S. and other governments had previously been swayed by “extremist reactions,” and that “population control programs alone cannot substitute for the economic reforms that put a society on the road toward growth and....slowing population increases as well.”³¹ This text parallels nearly verbatim Holy See and pro-life NGO objections that population control policies are based on false, Malthusian assumptions that population growth outside the industrialized world is unwarranted and unmanageable. The final program also adopted the language, revisited ten years later, of the “Mexico City principle” that “abortion not be used as a method of family planning.” This was again tied to Holy See pressure.

As with most of the positions taken in the reproductive policy area, there is a grain of truth in it, however magnified to an unrecognizable degree. The first twenty years of U.S. and UN development policy can be faulted precisely on the grounds of privileging certain populations over others, and of using that policy to yield results of mixed benefit. Another problem with this policy in the eyes of many other countries was that it came tied to conditions imposed by the World Bank that finances would only be released if the countries adopted population policies.³² However, to argue as the US did in 1984 and the Vatican has since that point that any policy aimed at controlling population growth is wrong ignores women’s own desire to have control over their reproductive lives. While the earlier development policies could be argued to have helped women to a certain extent while also bypassing their wishes as to the methods of family planning, the later opposition to family planning is based precisely on the same grounds.³³ It also

demonstrates a “divide and conquer” mentality on the part of the Holy See to keep pro-choice women working together on a global scale.

Over time, the control over UN policies affecting women’s reproductive rights has shifted to a broadened issue network involving church groups on both sides of reproductive matters, national government representatives from around the world, the US private family-planning organizations funded by USAID ,and activists springing from the second-wave women’s movement. The latter group, according to two Population Council authors, stems from changes largely wrought by the women’s movement both in the US and globally, that first, “many feminists are now found in high-level policy and management positions in foundations and in family planning, health, research, and advocacy agencies,” from which they can work to “further the acceptance of women’s goals within their organizations and to secure funds to aid in feminist-supported activities,” including in the population planning field. Similarly, until at least the 1970s in the US and probably beyond, the women’s movement in industrialized countries tended to neglect the impact of development policies upon their counterparts elsewhere until women from the other countries mobilized to teach the population scientists and women’s movement actors in other countries about the pernicious effects of UN policies.³⁴

There were two interesting outcomes of the 1984 Conference for the purposes of this discussion. The first was the banding together of the “G-77” and its “Mexico Declaration” issued at the conference’s conclusion that the industrialized world was the problem in terms of using up world resources, and that therefore development and population policies were targeted at the wrong countries.³⁵ It also showed the emergence of the “developing countries’ bloc” as a real counterforce within the UN structure, that would have to be reckoned with in the future. The second major development with an eye towards the future was the final text calling for governments to “make family planning services universally available as a matter of urgency.”³⁶ In short, the nexus of various long-term developments came together at about the time of the 1984 Mexico City World Conference on Population. These included the Holy See’s displeasure

at language shifts in the documents, which in turn reflected equal emphasis on the “old” economic development model and the newer emphasis on family planning as both wanted by women and helpful to controlling global demographics. The rise in power of a socially conservative government headed by Ronald Reagan gave the Holy See a stronger entrée into US domestic politics as reflected in the US submission to the prep coms and final document. Another noticeable factor was the organization of the “developing world” into the G-77, which portended its ability to act as a cohesive bloc as a counterweight to real or perceived US and European control. Finally, despite the presence of conservative, cost-cutting governments in many countries, women were stronger in the 1980s than in the 1970s due to the results of organizing. Women could thus begin to flex their muscles in the prep com and final preparation conferences as well, starting in Mexico City in 1984.³⁷

Different conferences over time have been charged with varied mandates. For example, the 1984 Mexico Population Conference was charged with reviewing the Bucharest 1974 Program of Action and to develop the recommendations for further implementation. The Cairo conference in 1994 had a mandate to investigate the relationship of sustained economic growth, sustainable development and population.”³⁸ Depending on their order in the Conference scheduling as well as the site of the conference, alliances can shift from one to the other, resulting in different rhetoric and voting patterns. For example, the Cairo Conference which took place after the Rio Environmental Summit enabled the demographic planners of the UNPD to work with environmentalists in making their arguments. In this they were opposed by international women’s networks, sufficiently sophisticated by then to point out the unequal nature of this type of argumentation. It also fostered no love from the Vatican, which saw these arguments as false “Malthusian” strategies. Other conferences have included: the Copenhagen Conference in 1995, with poverty and development as its theme, one in Vienna aimed at human rights, and Beijing, focused on “Action for Equality, Development and Peace.” As noted by Danguilan, “all these conferences somehow had ‘empowering women’ as one of their major themes.”³⁹

Period II-Women's Increasing Influence

The other set of relevant conferences includes the UN Conferences on Women, with the first such conference being held in 1975 in Mexico City, starting off the “UN Decade for Women” through 1985. As has been noted in the literature, the Holy See conducted a similar campaign for women's conferences as those on population, working to influence Muslim countries to oppose US and western-led delegations' emphasis on family planning and reproductive rights. Fractiousness between these groups of women, including the fact that a self-described terrorist member of the PLO was the Palestinian delegation leader became evident at the Nairobi Conference. As was noted previously by Fraser, UN Conferences, particularly recent ones, can easily be turned into media performances especially if controversy seems present. The Nairobi conference was one such event, where Muslim women publicly confronted Western women for “over-emphasizing” demographic policies which hurt their countries. While this made good theater, it is also true that the women's movement in mostly non-Muslim countries was by 1985 seasoned enough to treat the exchange as good fodder for the media.

For many, the ICPD in Cairo in 1994, Beijing in 1995 and the Beijing +5 review in New York City in 2000 have been the most contentious and interesting conferences. Each conference has bested the media and NGO attendance record of the previous one. Starting with the ICPD Conference in 1994 in Cairo in 1994, the structure of influence and representation was highly contested. The long-term, rather “porous” structure of discourse on document preparation leading up to the final UN Conference may be shown in that the resolution calling for the Cairo Conference on Population and Development happened in 1989, yet the preparations did not begin until 1991. Thereafter, five regional conferences were held, with the documents from these “serving as the basis for the document of the Cairo Conference on International Population and Development's Programme of Action.” During the three Prep Coms that took place between 1992 and 1994, the “agenda of that conference was set and the work program scheduled, and the

document studied and filtered before given over to the official delegates of the world conference.”⁴⁰

There were two sets of issues on which the Holy See protested most strongly at the 1994 Cairo conference, having bracketed significant amounts of language throughout the Prep Coms. By the time of the official Conference, the first two days had been spent in the general session solely on one section, paragraph 8.25, Paper 8 (concerning “Health, Morbidity and Mortality”). The final draft before the conference, released on May 13, 1994, “kept the entire 8.25 section enclosed,” at the request of the Holy See and Costa Rica, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Malta, Benin, Poland, and Slovakia...among others.”⁴¹ Examples of the disputed language include the following. “All governments, intergovernmental organizations and relevant NGO’s are urged to deal openly and forthrightly with unsafe abortion as a major public health concern...Governments are urged to assess the health and social impact of induced abortion, to address the situations that cause women to have recourse to abortion and to provide adequate medical care and counseling. Governments are urged to evaluate and review laws and policies on abortion so that they take into account the commitment to women’s health and well-being...rather than relying on criminal codes or punitive measures...” In short, this section recognized that whether legal or illegal, abortions are sought around the world by women who cannot care for children in certain circumstances. Among other objections, the Holy See practiced the politics of “divide and conquer,” asserting that this was an example of how “the US...was imposing on other countries the ‘right to abortion on demand.’” The Holy See consistently maintained across population conferences that it could not agree to language about “safe abortion,” since by its definition, abortion was never safe for the fetus.⁴² Another was to the use of the term “unwanted pregnancy,” since the Vatican’s definition was that every pregnancy is wanted (by God). The Chair of the Main Committee by this point urged the delegates “not to turn the ICPD into a conference on abortion.”⁴³

The EU's proposed changes to the text of Paragraph 8.25 as presented at Prep Com 3 and subsequently signed on to by many countries on all continents included language that "all attempts should be made to eliminate the need for abortion," and that "in no case should abortion be promoted as a method of family planning." The latter clause had been included in the 1984 Population Conference in Mexico City, although the Holy See did not sign on to the ultimate document. The EU-revised paragraph also had a new ending to the effect that "any measure to provide for safe and legal abortion within the health system can only be determined at the national level through policy changes and legislative processes..."⁴⁴ It was clearly hoped that this compromise would take account of most of the Holy See's objections. After that, the Chair of the Main Committee proposed further revisions along the lines of the EU-sponsored changes, but moved the Paragraph's language so that all text followed from the beginning statement reaffirming the 1984 "Mexico City Principle" that abortion not be used as a method of family planning, and making the language about abortion policy being only open to change at the national legislative level even clearer. This revised text brought about Women's Caucus objections that the Mexico City language had been applied in overly-broad fashion since 1994 to "preclude support for legal abortion counseling and services, and to prevent any discussion of the problem." However, the Holy See objected to the second compromise attempt, arguing that it could not accept any language stating that there are "circumstances in which abortion is legal," and therefore could not support the paragraph.⁴⁵ As has been noted, the official delegates' response was a chorus of "boos," the first time ever in the history of the UN. By this point, most Catholic states had abandoned the Vatican's position, including Ireland, Poland, and the Philippines, the only Catholic country in Asia. Only a few Latin American allies remained.

As is usually the case with contentious language, after more than two days of negotiations, the Main Committee Chair referred this particular paragraph to a working group of fourteen members, to report back in two days. It did not include the Holy See, which delegation constantly worked behind closed doors, and all inquiries were referred to the Press Office.

During the two days allotted to the working committee, the Holy See made public a statement signed by Mother Teresa, calling abortion “the greatest destroyer of peace in the world today.”⁴⁶ Ultimately, the revised text authored by the working group, submitted on Sept. 9, 1994, added some technical changes, such as going from “legal” to “not against the law,” and included in a footnote the World Health Organization’s definition of unsafe abortion. This still did not satisfy the Holy See, which continued to oppose the paragraph and the Paper. It did record agreement with the majority of the draft document, for the first time at a UN population conference.

The ICPD Secretariat had hoped for a non-controversial conference that could concentrate on its main theme of environment and population. To this end, the Secretariat, led by Conference Secretary-General by Nafis Sadik, an Egyptian (woman) physician, and head of the UNFPA, held thirty-five meetings to prepare, and “invited NGO participation.” Similarly, under Dr. Safik’s leadership, “the original draft of the Program of Action (after the Prep Coms had finished) was revised more than a dozen times.” Some critics of the final product regarding demographic policy hold that the section was too “watered down” and “emphasized the individual’s actions in parts of the world where the economy was declining and the religion and culture tend towards pronatalism.”⁴⁷ However, many reasons have been given for why the ICPD Conference, once held, spun out of control. One was that there were numerous fault lines among the participants, including the U.S. vs. the Holy See, feminists vs. the Holy See, feminists vs. demographers and some Muslim states (Iran, Libya) aligned with the Holy See against feminists and the U.S. Both the Pope and the U.S. were accused of violating rules that were painstakingly worked out beforehand; for example, in April 1994, after the conclusion of Prep Com 3, Pope John Paul violated the previous agreement between the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) and the Holy See in unilaterally releasing the text of his remarks after his meeting with Dr. Sadik. Part of the Pope’s charges that the “US was interested in foisting abortion rights on the world,” through the UN or as he called it the “culture of death,” were unfortunately given evidence when in March 1994 the U.S. State Department also broke the rules by sending a cable to all diplomatic and

consular posts stating that the “present language on abortion rights is inadequate, and that the United States believes that access to safe, legal and voluntary abortion is a fundamental right of all women.”⁴⁸

What is clear from both these governments breaking the rules is how important the abortion issue had become in international politics, seemingly never too far away from UN deliberations. Although the Secretariat in the form of Chair Nafis Sadik had tried to keep the abortion issue “off the table,” so to speak, by framing it in the section regarding public health and not gender rights, it was soon pulled from that section by Holy See rhetoric and elevated as one of the main issues. McIntosh and Finkle also note that in essence, the Secretariat’s strategy of trying to work out all possibly conflictual issues beforehand was inherently undercut by its other action of being broadly inclusive of NGO’s in the preparatory process.⁴⁹ Examples of this are that NGO’s for the first time had access to the conference halls and participated in the drafting of the Prep Com and final versions of the report. This seems to have formed a benchmark from which the UN cannot now retreat in its conference preparations. Other lines of opposition were seen, likely ascribed to a framework where the population “scientists” who had for so long controlled the definition of the issue were being opposed by an increasingly savvy active network of women’s movement organizations.⁵⁰ Thus, women’s movement organizations for example took the view that demographically-driven programs, “intended to act directly on fertility” were coercive and deprived a woman of her right to choose the timing of her children. Similarly, the feminist viewpoint has been that women’s empowerment, through education, job training, and “otherwise raising their status in the family and community” logically will lead to opting for smaller families.⁵¹ Similarly, McIntosh and Finkle implicitly critique Safik’s chairing of the conference report preparations, since she “had been in contact with US foundations, international women’s groups especially from the US and Nordic countries,” and ...”remained firmly in control of drafting the document and did not hesitate to overrule groups whose views she did not endorse.”⁵² In short, it appears that the new more open and consultative approach begun by the

woman Secretary-General of the 1994 Cairo conference offended the sensibilities of those who were used to traditionally controlling the development and population areas through claiming to hold scientific expertise.

Some notable instances of women's groups activities to influence the document through the Prep Com process included circulating the "Women's Declaration on Population Policies" just prior to Prep Com II, by the International Women's Health Coalition (IWHC, an umbrella feminist women's health group based in New York City). This document reflected the input of twenty-four experts from five continents, stating as a goal the inclusion of a "broad range of reproductive health and development issues to be incorporated into population policies." As noted by McIntosh and Finkle, despite "tension between the 'populationists' and the IWHC at Prep Com II," it was decided "to accommodate the women's demands" by including the two new papers on "Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women" and "Reproductive Rights, Reproductive Health, and Family Planning." Similarly, language was added to reflect various possible framings of "family" and "families."⁵³ Needless to say, these would become the subject of Holy See disagreement at the final conference, papers to which it ultimately did not sign on. Next, there was a campaign in the eleven months remaining until Prep III, headed by feminists from various organizations, while "radical feminist views were sidelined by this coalition in an effort to win acceptance." As part of this lobbying strategy, "feminists gave lectures, appeared on panels, lobbied the ICPD Secretariat, gave briefings to State Department officials and members of Congress," participated in the Prep Coms and "secured a number of seats on the final official delegation."⁵⁴ By Prep Com III in March 1994, "feminists in IWHC and the Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO), chaired by Bella Abzug," among other things "a veteran of population conferences since Bucharest in 1974," put together a Women's Caucus with a membership of over 300 people from around the world. At Prep Com III, the Caucus held workshops and meetings, presented resolutions to delegates, acted as a transmitter of information between the Caucus and floor debates, and "drafted new language on issues proving

difficult.”⁵⁵ Among these, of course, were issues of contraceptive and abortion rights as well as the definition of “family.”

While McIntosh and Finkle seem willing to give the Holy See the benefit of sincere opposition to these ideas, they do not do the same for the Women’s Caucus developed for Prep Com III, stating that they “tended to close ranks in the face of Holy See opposition” and that feminists basically controlled the agenda by the end of Prep Com III. Obviously this is an overstatement, given the evidence of argumentation that occurred during the final conference and the extreme measures taken to move beyond the abortion issue. The IPPF also notes that much of its own Strategic Plan of Action adopted in 1992 was a strong influence on the 1994 ICPD Cairo Program, firmly “moving the focus of family planning away from fertility targets and national demographic goals towards meeting the needs of individuals for family planning and reproductive and sexual health care.”⁵⁶ Thus, if McIntosh and Finkle wish to blame an international feminist conspiracy for the results of the 1994 Cairo Conference, they would seem to need to include the International Planned Parenthood Federation, not historically known to be run by feminists, in the mix.

Overall, groups worked throughout the strong oppositional fractures and tension throughout the Cairo process to produce a Program of Action representing some important “firsts,” especially for women. These included the “first mention in a UN document that abortion could be legal and safe” (not subscribed to by the Holy See), the first time that women’s interests in population matters had been broadly and seriously considered, and the unprecedented level of NGO participation” (and it should be added media coverage, especially of the NGO forum).⁵⁷ Another piece that was included for the first time was attaching long-term dollar amounts to the reproductive health and family planning aspects of the final program, to link policy and implementation. While the figures may not have been high enough, and while the Cairo formula proposed a redistribution from the then-practiced 25-75 financial responsibility from recipient and donor countries to a one third-two thirds was later bemoaned in the age of budget deficits, it

is important for what it did address. In the intervening time, private donors such as George Soros have emerged to become important funders in this area..

Over the years from the beginning of the International Women's Decade, 1975 to 1985 and on through Cairo in 1994, important discursive and real power shifts have taken place between women and men in the areas of development and global population policies. Danguilan has noted that prior to 1975, in the international development period, "women were considered to be passive beneficiaries of development aid and 'targets' of population planning." The International Women's Decade raised the consciousness of women and of (some) population experts who saw women as essential contributors to development.⁵⁸ Similarly, Danguilan notes that the Cairo conference "placed women at the center of population policies and call for investments in improving reproductive health presence in teaching programs," and general improvements aimed at facilitating women's education, to lighten their workloads and in "widening their employment opportunities."⁵⁹ While some in the "population establishment" clearly disagree with this emphasis on general educational, social and employment empowerment as a means to raise girls' and women's self-esteem and power to make choices, including in reproductive rights, it highlights an important shift in UN text and understandings. In addition to mentioning the safety of abortion and its importance for the first time, the Cairo Plan of Action discussed for the first time women's right to sexual health, meaning "their right to have control over and decide freely and responsibly on matters related to their sexuality."⁶⁰

New issue framings by the Holy See at Cairo and again at Beijing and New York have included the ideas that all feminists are "radical," and that pro-choice ones wish to foster a "culture of death" around the world. The "culture of death" rhetoric is found in most current HLI materials and on their website. Similarly, the Holy See argues against the UN as a "world government" which if left to its own devices would force all countries to adopt liberal initiatives. This is puzzling, given the Vatican's own privileged representational status within the UN and actions it has taken there and elsewhere to lobby national governments against abortion. For

example, even as the Holy See railed against “world government by international organizations” at Cairo, it quietly was trying to push through an international “Conscience Clause” into the Program of Action, to elevate to the international level laws adopted in some countries, including the US, where pro-life medical practitioners can opt out of providing abortion procedures. Similarly, one study has shown that since the formation of the EU, the Vatican has lobbied both the European Parliament and the Council of Europe, having had more success at the latter, which ironically has no legislative powers. Like the UN, however, the Council’s authority derives from its moral stances and persuasive powers on that basis, including on international organizations. For example, the UN solicited the CE’s Parliamentary Assembly’s during its Cairo preparations. A coalition of “stalwart Vatican allies and Christian Democrats strategically shifted the tone of the assembly’s ensuing report to the UN” on reproductive rights issues.⁶¹ Examples are that the assembly’s original language, stressing that “all population policies must be based on freedom of choice,” was amended by adding the clause, “in the belief that the choice of responsible procreation is an inalienable right of all couples.” Similarly, in a sentence reading that “this freedom can only be exercised in a context of human dignity,” the Christian Democrats added “based on the values of life and the family” after the word “freedom.”⁶² Across the Cairo and Beijing time frames, the Holy See consistently punched out two points throughout the international media; that reproductive choice equaled abortion and that changing definitions of family meant only giving rights to gays and lesbians. On the latter front, the Holy See expended much energy during 1994, the UN Year of the Family, in defeating pro-civil union legislation both in the European Parliament and at the national legislative level in Italy.⁶³

With regard to Holy See lobbying activity between the 1994 Cairo and 1995 Beijing Conferences, Danguilan notes that all the language the Holy See had bracketed prior to Cairo was bracketed before the 1995 conference. This effectively ensured that the process start over again, to the effect that of “the 362 paragraphs in the draft document that went on to Beijing, 438 sets of brackets remained around disputed text in about 171 paragraphs;” others have noted the

figure as at about 40% of the proposed Beijing document.⁶⁴ These were not due to the Holy See alone, also including the “usual suspects” such as Islamic countries and Benin, Honduras, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Ecuador, Malta and other Latin American countries.”

However, many were surprised that after re-bracketing most of the text that had been adopted at Cairo and was to be considered at Beijing, the Holy See also stated just before Beijing that it intended “not to reopen issues that had been decided to the satisfaction of many nations in Cairo.” Many observers attributed this as an attempt to regain the stature lost by its intransigence at Cairo.⁶⁵ Another extremely savvy tactic was in naming one of the best and most prominent women law professors in the US, Mary Ann Glendon of Harvard, as the head of the Holy See delegation to Beijing, to counter the impression that only men were pro-life. The delegation itself was majority female, another interesting change. Another interesting shift practiced both by the Holy See and developed nations’ delegations at Beijing was their decision to sit at the back of the plenary hall and let the delegations from the G-77 countries in effect “run the show.”

Ultimately, the Holy See found itself waging a mostly losing battle at Beijing, since the provisions on abortion and women’s sexual rights were retained (although the latter was moved down 90 sections to one of the last paragraphs) and a new concept, that of “gender” was added. This fueled the Holy See’s attempt to define “gender” as “removing any distinctions between women and men in the law” and thus ultimately condoning homosexuality. Delegates were not buying the argument, however. The Holy See did not sign on to the “Health” section of the document. In addition to the Program of Action containing the wording, for the first time ever, that women have the “sexual right” to say no to sexual intercourse, other “firsts” were evident in the document. Regarding abortion, which took time to negotiate but generated little of the heat evident at Cairo, the new phrasing at Cairo, enshrining women’s rights to “quality health care and related information,” survived the Beijing negotiations. The Holy See’s action of attaching an international conscience clause to this phrasing, undertaken in the Beijing Prep Coms, was overruled in the final document. Another new abortion-related clause added in Beijing was to

have governments “consider reviewing laws containing punitive measures against women who have undergone illegal abortions.” A compromise with the Holy See was reached to add language from the Mexico City Population conference in 1984 that “abortion should not be promoted as a method of family planning.”⁶⁶ Another extremely important “first” in the Beijing Platform of Action was the inclusion of asking each head of state or chief delegate to list “country-specific actions that their nation would take to empower women within their borders.”⁶⁷ About half of the 187 member states represented there complied. In short, an enforcement mechanism of sorts was built into the Program for the first time, enabling successive reviews of the Program to measure success such as happened at the “Beijing +5” Conference in New York in 2000.

Overall, the negotiations took even longer to conduct than at Cairo; agreement was not secured on the final Program of Action until 5 am on the last scheduled day.

Important NGO Actors in the Transnational Framework

The International Planned Parenthood Federation, founded in Bombay, India in 1952, and the International Women’s Health Coalition have been overt but not the only actors working to preserve text concerning women’s reproductive rights in UN Plans of Action and in national laws. Another chief actor in this coalition has been Catholics for a Free Choice (CCFC), based in the US with branches in Canada and Mexico and a key representative for Catholic women wanting a broader range of reproductive choice options than permitted by the Vatican. CCFC recently celebrated its twenty-fifth anniversary and has included many different endeavors in its strategic repertoire. For example, it observes the activities of the Vatican constantly and informs its membership via newsletters and publications. Other recent campaigns CCFC has undertaken include the “See Change” campaign in the 1990s, lobbying the UN Secretary-General to revoke the Holy See’s “special status” since it does not conform to the definition of a state by accepted measures, does not represent women, since they do not live in Vatican City, and works against

the reproductive rights of women. So far, they have not been successful in changing the UN's mind, but it has been a high-profile campaign that has garnered much media interest. Other prominent campaigns currently include "Bishop Watch," to inform women around the world which Catholic Bishops are lobbying most strongly against reproductive choice in various media, and "Condoms4Choice," arguing against the Catholic Church's prohibition in this matter. Within North America, the IPPF and CCFC are active in opposing attempts to limit women's reproductive rights, while the latter usually confines itself to commentary on church-linked actions. Another transnational actor is the National Abortion Federation, which includes as members NARAL from the US and CARAL from Canada.

One of the more recent campaigns undertaken by the IPPF is devoting a link to its website entitled, "Held to Ransom" in which it describes the impact of the "Global Gag rule," based on the 1984 Mexico City Policy from the Population Conference reinstated by President Bush in January 2001. Planned Parenthood has decided not to comply with the rule stating that a member organization receiving US AID funds cannot "promote abortion." It thus states that its revenue loss from this policy decision has been \$18 million since 2001, and "an estimated further 75 million has been lost with respect to grants and commodities" promised during the first five years of the millennium.⁶⁸ Another press piece on the website states that the estimated loss is about \$8 million per year, "about 8 percent of the IPPF's total income." Other governments, notably those of the Netherlands, Sweden, the EU and Japan, which also fund the UN Fund for Population Assistance, have "stepped into" the breach to fund IPPF, as has the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, which has not completely replaced the \$8 million per year," but pledged the \$8 million over five years.⁶⁹ Similarly, the Soros Foundation has been funding research and delivery projects for the Population Council since the end of the 1990s. While all funds may not have been replaced, it appears that at least a good portion have. On its website, IPPF notes that currently, only about .05-.07% of its income goes toward "abortion-related activities," and "most of it has been spent on counseling and post-abortion care."⁷⁰ When compared with the Knights of

Columbus figure in Paper 4 which spends at least 3% of its budget on abortion-related activities, the result is interesting.

The results that IPPF draws from the loss of US AID funding include less money available for reproductive health education and contraceptives, which will violate the “ICPD 1994 Programme of Action pledge to make available universal access to a full range of high-quality reproductive health services, including for family planning and sexual health, by 2015.”⁷¹ However, IPPF also focuses on the complicating factor of donor countries not meeting their 1994 ICPD funding commitments, combined with the fact of increasing demand for contraception. While contraceptive use was only about 10% in the G-77 countries in the 1960s, it is now at about 40%. IPPF claims that the lag in funding both through UNFPA and the denial of US AID funding, at the level of each \$1 million, could lead to: “360,000 more unintended pregnancies, 150,000 more induced abortions, 800,000 additional maternal deaths, 110,000 additional infant deaths, and 140,000 additional deaths of children under 5.”⁷² Thus, IPPF’s current strategy is to strongly emphasize the detrimental effects of withdrawal of US AID funding under the Mexico City Policy/Global Gag rule reinstatement, and the shortfalls in member contributions to the UNFPA, as both immediately harmful but in direct violation of the 1994 Cairo Program which the majority of 187 UN member nations signed.

One of the chief opponents of women’s reproductive rights active both in North America and UN Conferences is Human Life International (HLI), claiming to hold the status of the world’s largest pro-life organization, and its Canadian affiliate HLIC, Human Life International Canada and two groups active in Mexico, Vida Humana based in Miami and Pro-Vida (Pro-Life) in Mexico.⁷³ In one recent high-profile campaign, HLI and HLIC members went to Chiapas, Mexico and mounted loud public protests to rescind that legislature’s amendments to its abortion law. They were successful in that the law was put on “hold” status, which it still retains. HLI was founded in Washington, DC in 1981 and “claims 60 papers in the US and affiliates in 89 countries.” Its assets were valued at \$12 million in 2001, with a reported annual income of \$7.4

million. The organization was founded by a Catholic priest, Father Paul Marx, which led to a “protracted internal struggle for control and allegations of impropriety by his successor,” it is now led by Father Thomas Euteneuer.⁷⁴ The group is well-connected to the Vatican, always being invited to participate in Vatican-sponsored conferences on sexuality and reproduction. Since HLI has a record of being extremist in its statements, such as using anti-Semitism and approving of doctors’ murders in its statements. For these reasons, it was denied the coveted NGO consultative status with ECOSOC, which it sought in 1990. Among other reasons for its denial was given the one that HLI’s stance was “against the purposes of the UN” and intolerant.⁷⁵ As noted by Kissling and O’Brien, such status is essential in the age of increased civil society importance, if a group is to have an impact at the UN. The Canadian affiliate, HLIC ran into political problems of its own under Director Theresa Bell, when Revenue Canada revoked its charity status due to its political activities. The response of HLI and HLIC was to begin a new organization to get around these barriers, incorporated in upstate New York in 1997 as the Catholic Family and Human Rights Institute (CAFHRI).⁷⁶ While it was formed to try to gain consultative status to ECOSOC, it has not yet done so and is still linked overtly to Human Life International, US and Canada especially through gaining funding. Human Life International (the U.S.-based organization) holds the lowest, “roster” status.

Given the organization’s inability to gain this status, Austin Ruse, the recent director of CAFHRI and the founder of numerous anti-feminist, anti-reproductive rights organizations, has set up an office with a United Nations Plaza address and conducts lobbying, both at the UN and to national governments, both of which he freely admits. The rather interesting position in which he finds himself is speaking out publicly against the UN as a body out to “rule the world” (which it cannot do, not having the power to overrule national policies) and run by “radicals,” including feminists, while trying to become an NGO with consultative status. As noted by CCFC, the fact that CAFHRI overtly speaks out against the UN should disqualify it from ever receiving such recognition, since consultative status is only granted to organizations supporting the goals of the

UN. CCFC has gained such status. Thus, CAFHRI is theoretically limited in its avenues to directly lobby the UN, but has adopted strategies to advance its influence. Among them are its “Friday Fax” which “draws back the curtain on the UN activities and airs its dirty laundry...”. As Kissling and O’Brien have noted, CAFHRI takes advantage of the flexible UN procedures as to accreditation for conferences and the opportunity to speak, under its inclusive environment.⁷⁷ Thus, this group which only holds “roster” status with regard to ECOSOC, actively violates the rules of US lobbying in accepting money from its Canadian affiliate (evidence of “foreign influence” on US politics), yet locates its office on the UN plaza and has registered at the recent UN Conferences. CAFHRI has publicly admitted to taking money from HLI, the Homeland Foundation (a church-affiliated group, headed by a priest, located in NYC) as well as from Brigham Young University Law School.⁷⁸

One particularly aggressive way in which HLI and HLIC have participated under the CAFHRI umbrella (again, none of which have official ECOSOC status) at UN conferences was at the Women’s Conference in Beijing in 1995 and during the Prep Com process for the Beijing +5 Review held in New York City in 2000. The varied tactics to this end for the 2000 conference included Austin Ruse, CAFHRI President, sending “urgent” emails to mobilize anti-feminist and Pro-life groups to participate in the Prep Com process and hopefully the final conference in any manner possible so as to counteract the “radical feminist agenda” adopted in the 1995 Beijing Program of Action, purportedly one of the “most radical and dangerous documents you can imagine.”⁷⁹ Another strategy as detailed by CCFC is that of “over-registration” at UN conferences, where pro-life groups work to register despite their lack of accredited ECOSOC consultative status. As noted by CCFC, based on Ruse’s organizing, many “roster groups” were able to take advantage of the lack of clear UN guidelines and arrange to pack the meetings.⁸⁰ They included REAL Women of Canada and the Campaign Life Coalition (the other two most prominent Canadian anti-choice groups, which have existed since the 1980s), International Right to Life Federation and the National Right to Life Committee (US), and the Society for Protection

of Unborn Children, among others. Three hundred and fifty individuals from these groups managed to gain individual accreditation to attend the final conference, including the fact that half of the sixty REAL Women accredited delegates were members of the Franciscan Friars of Renewal, established in New York in 1987. This would seemingly duplicate the official representation given to the Holy See in abundance at all levels of the process. During the Prep Coms, CAFHRI able to work with the 12 accredited pro-life groups to gain admittance to the Prep Coms. In addition to the previously-mentioned groups attending the final conference, US-based groups such as Eagle Forum, Alliance for Life, Concerned Women for America and Family Life International got accreditation for the Prep Coms. The outcome of these strategies was that the Catholic church was able to have a disproportionate number of representatives present, covering every aspect of the preparatory meetings and conference, than any other world religion.

In the final analysis, while not wishing to understate the impact these groups had on the final text of the 2000 Review, it is probably true that similar to the Holy See at the Cairo Population Conference in 1994 and the Beijing Women's Conference in 1995, their influences were procedural largely by tying the consultative procedures in knots and slowing down the process, as was their goal. However, the Holy See's presence as a non-member state with voting status and its impact on the Cairo and Beijing texts must not be ignored, either.

Conclusions

What this analysis shows is that the site of contestation over women's sexuality and reproductive rights has moved increasingly to the international and transnational levels, as has indeed happened with trade agreements across the world and the consequent new political and social frameworks. Therefore, as analysts of attempts to curtail women's reproductive rights, it requires that we be "smarter" about the variety of options available within different opportunity structures, and the different tactics and types of rhetoric that may be employed. While the Holy

See and affiliated NGO's such as HLI and countries have found ways to "work the UN system" largely by attending Prep Coms, bracketing language and withholding agreement so as to significantly reduce the amount of ground covered at the conference, other groups work to minimize their final effect on Programs of Action and on national laws. These groups include the IPPF and CCFC at the international level, as well as NAF and CCFC at the transnational level. The movement across the two periods in UN and transnational organizing history has not been without problems, both inside the UN and outside of it. To the extent that women's organizations across the world can now work together more strongly and have a better awareness of the existence of globally-tied NGO's and the workings of the UN structure, the news for the future can be positive.

The parts of the political opportunity structure that were shown to matter most in periods I and II were access to the state and availability of allies, respectively. These factors have been found to be important in the country-based papers, particularly moving into the later periods when different sides of the question display strategic learning from each other. Access to the state first, by the Vatican and then by women's NGO's at the parallel fora got the groups into the same arena, during which time they sometimes talked to each other, at other times past each other. Similarly, availability of allies was crucial to both sides of the abortion struggle, in getting their message out during conferences as well as in the intervening years. This worked, for example, for the Vatican in convincing certain countries (US, Philippines) to change their official country's position on abortion or contraception in between conferences. Similarly, allies of the pro-choice side worked to get those arguments covered in the global media during conferences, especially the Beijing one, as well as negotiating with teams from other countries during the prep coms to carry over some of the gains won at the Cairo conference for example to Beijing.

¹ Sidney J. Tarrow, Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics (Cambridge University Press, 1996), and Margaret Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, Activists Beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998).

² Keck and Sikkink, 23-24.

³ Ibid., 23.

⁴ Ibid., 23.

⁵ Marilen J. Danguilan, M.D., Women in Brackets: A Chronicle of Vatican Power and Control (Manila: Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism, 1997), and Arvonne Fraser, The U.N. Decade for Women: Documents and Dialogue (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1987).

⁶ Fraser, 10.

⁷ Danguilan, 3.

⁸ Fraser, 10-11, and Danguilan, Ch. 3, 25-38.

⁹ Fraser, 10-11.

¹⁰ Ibid., 6.

¹¹ Ibid., 11.

¹² Danguilan, 91, n. 1.

¹³ Fraser., 12-13.

¹⁴ Ibid., 12-13.

¹⁵ Ibid., 14-15.

¹⁶ Ibid., 10-11.

¹⁷ Marian Sawyer, "Femocrats and Ecorats: Women's Policy Machinery in Australia, Canada and New Zealand," in Carol Miller and Shahra Razavi, eds., Missionaries and Mandarins: Feminist Engagement with Development Institutions (London: Intermediate Technology Publications/United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, 1998), 112.

¹⁸ Danguilan, 202.

¹⁹ As Danguilan notes, 25-26, the March 1991 First Prep Com for Cairo identified the six clusters of priority issues for the Conference as population growth, distribution, structure, migration, environment and development." While she notes that these initially concentrated mainly on demography, later attempts were made to "link these demographic factors with environmental effects." The Second Prep Com in May 1993 worked to formulate the draft document, containing the demographic-environmental links as well as "using as comprehensive an approach to population as possible."

²⁰ Marilen J. Danguilan, M.D., Women in Brackets: a Chronicle of Vatican Power and Control (Manila: Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism, 1997), 3.

²¹ Ibid., 61-62.

²² Ibid., 18.

²³ Ibid., 18. As Danguilan points out, “the Holy See consists of the Pope, the College of Cardinals and the central departments that govern the Church. The Holy See has long been active in the UN and maintains full diplomatic relations with 157 countries”, p. 18.

²⁴ UN website, www.un.org, ECOSOC link, accessed 8/20/03.

²⁵ Danguilan, 18.

²⁶ Ibid., 19.

²⁷ Another point in this argument from the Center for Reproductive Law and Policy in New York is that according to the Montevideo Convention on the Rights and Duties of States ratified in December 1933 by Latin American and United States, defining the international legal definition of statehood, that four criteria must be met. They include: permanent population, a defined territory, government, and capacity to enter into relations with other states.” The CRLP argues that the Holy See fails to meet the first two criteria. As cited in Danguilan, 20-21, n. 1-3.

²⁸ Described in Danguilan, Paper 3, 25-38.

²⁹ Danguilan, 10-11.

³⁰ Carl Bernstein, cited in research conducted by CCFC (Catholics for a Free Choice), reprinted from Time magazine and cited by Danguilan, p. 13, n. 7 stated that “Pio Laghi, a Vatican diplomat, went around the State Department...in at least six secret meetings at the White House” (concerning Reagan’s anti-Communist agenda in Poland)...and that “in response to concerns of the Vatican, the Reagan administration agreed to alter its foreign aid program to comply with the Church’s teaching on birth control.”

³¹ Danguilan, 13.

³² Ibid., 9.

³³ Paul Demeny, "Bucharest, Mexico City and Beyond," *Population and Development Review*, 11, 1 (March 1985), wrote that in six months alone in India in 1976, over six million people were sterilized; cited in Danguilan, 15.

³⁴ C. Alison McIntosh and Jason L. Finkle, "The Cairo Conference on Population and Development: A New Period?" *Population and Development Review*, 21, 2 (June 1995), 232-260, 238.

³⁵ Arvonne Fraser

³⁶ Danguilan, 14.

³⁷ McIntosh and Finkle.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 228.

³⁹ Danguilan, 187.

⁴⁰ As Danguilan notes, pp. 2-3, the regional discussions for the Cairo conference were structured as follows: Asia/Pacific, Africa, Europe/North America, Arab States, and Latin America/Caribbean.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 93.

⁴² Danguilan, 94.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 95.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 95.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 96-97.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 98.

⁴⁷ McIntosh and Finkle, 230.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 245-246.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 227, 235-245.

⁵⁰ McIntosh and Finkle adopt a critical tone towards the "international women's movement" for altering the framework that demographers had used for the better part of 35-40 years, p. 225-250.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 227.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 230.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 238.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 239.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 239.

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- ⁵⁹ Ibid., 14.
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⁷⁷ Ibid., 17-18.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 15.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 19-20.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 19-20.