#### **Population Footprints** May 2011 UCL, London, UK

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## Introduction

Do sexuality and population issues have any common ground besides their shared connection to reproduction?

Sexuality entered the population discourse at the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in 1994<sup>1</sup>. Since the ICPD, the international population field has focused primarily on Sexual and Reproductive Rights and Health (SRRH)<sup>2</sup>. However, population and sexuality approaches to SRRH differ. Combining them has proven difficult in practice for a Dutch SRRH NGO<sup>3</sup>. More than sixteen years after the ICPD; the question remains whether and how sexuality and population issues can be integrated.

This study explored the links between Sex & Population by analyzing academic research that combined both topics.

### **Research Aims**

Provide a descriptive overview of recently published research to:

#### **Methods**

• A systematic database search to assess how many studies were published.

Sex & Population

It takes two!

• A qualitative text analysis to explore the content.

### Data

• **Demographic academic publications** were analysed.

• Publications were retrieved from the databases Popline and JSTOR. • **Abstracts** were used as unit of analysis, as they concisely summarize research articles.

## **Research Approach**

The "SRRH & Population" field was seen as an 'issue culture', which is an "ongoing discourse that evolves and changes over time, providing interpretations and meanings for relevant events"4.

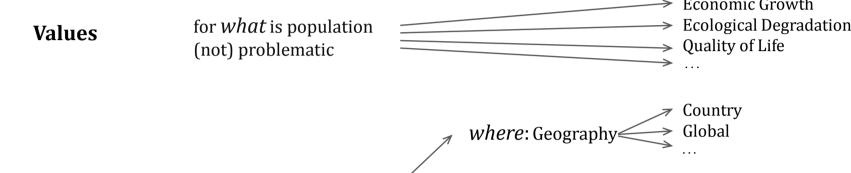
## **Defining Concepts**

sexuality itself, to positive (enabling) rights and to negative (harm redressing) rights, gender issues, reproduction, contraceptives, information, education, health and abortion<sup>5,6,7,8,9</sup>.

#### **Population issues**

Overpopulation is a normative concept<sup>10</sup>. How overpopulation is defined depends mainly on the actors' *perspective*<sup>11</sup>. Perspectives guide the *interpretation* of demographic *facts* and also determine which policies are chosen for *influencing* those facts.

Actors often use different definitions<sup>10</sup>. They implicitly disagree on some of the following points:



- Contribute to reflexivity SRRH-Population actors on own work.
- Identify possible future research directions.

### **Research Question**

How can the research in the field of "SRRH & Population" be described?

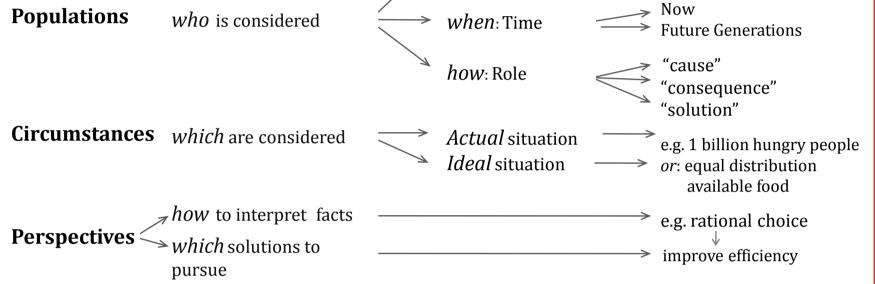
- a. How many research has been published?
- How is this research structured?

Whether sexuality and population issues have anything in common depends on how they are defined.

#### **SRRH** issues

A clear conceptualization of what sexual and reproductive rights entail is lacking. The concepts might be "more like a code, meaning different things to different people"<sup>1</sup>.

A definition of SRRH has to include a broad range of topics related to



Results Not n			Table 1: <b>Research combining 'SRRH' and '</b> Facts						<b>'Population' issues</b> Interpretations				"Population issues"			Influence		Map 1: Countries mentioned in "SRRH & Population" research		
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PK, PA Poplin Values of seat <b>Inclus</b>	Displayed are <b>the</b> A and JA denote the ne Keywords, Popline s in the cross-section rch words. <b>sion criteria</b> : publish <b>ces</b> : Popline <sup>12</sup> and JST	e three dif Abstract a s depict th ned in Engl	ferent data nd JSTOR A le total of u ish, "Popula	base sear bstracts. nique hits ation Studi	ches and a generated	are abbrev by each co	ations for mbination		19 19		7 27 8	People & Gro Youth Women Other groups Men Couples Debates & Advo Programs & Poli Others	cacy	Couples Men	Har ment	rdly T ioned	heory	<ul> <li>Theoretical models used explicitly</li> <li>Individualism, Hierarchy and Egalitarianism         (arguments to reduce population growth)</li> <li>Neo-liberalism</li> <li>Political economy of fertility framework</li> <li>Gender systems approach</li> <li>The Doyle model</li> <li>Thomas Homer-Dixon's model of environmental security</li> <li>Stratified reproduction</li> <li>Demographic transition (2x)</li> </ul>	Discourse analysis 1 Ethnographic research 1 Participant Observation 1 Charting 1 Monitoring 1 Capture- Recapture 1 GIS 1	

**Recommendations** 

Conversation

• Focus on Women

• Focus on Health

size fits all!

Conclusions
• Only a few demographic publications combine Sex & Population.

• Within this literature, a lot of 'debate' is going on in comparison with empirical research. • Many different countries are considered, but interest for cultural differences is limited.

• Remarkably absent are:

- Positive notion sexuality
- Analysis Population problems
- Sex and family planning education
- Men and Couples
- Action Research

### **Reflection**

- Has the SRRH field, and especially Family Planning, managed to establish itself as independent from population issues?
- Are "SRRH & Population" issues international concerns that relate to developing countries?

### Discussion

- Limited database search
- Due to the search criteria used, related research using different terminology might have been overlooked.
- Descriptive vs. informative abstracts
- Most abstracts lacked complete information, so the validity of the conclusions may be limited.

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<u>A little more</u> ... A little less ... Action Critical mind Action research • Solutions are *not* one The field's focus on development and emancipation could be reflected more in its research designs.

• Inclusive • *With* vs. *about* people • Men • Couples

Include other disciplines

• Broader

- Contextual sensitivity

- Interventions • What is needed? • How to realize? •What works where? • Why?
- Other strategies? Sex Education
- Population *or* Energy consumption or ... ?
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