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ABSTRACT

A simulation of a Congressional hearing on national population policy is provided. University students and community members decide on a resolution introduced in the United State Senate in 1971 which proposed the stabilization of population growth. Students organize themselves into four interest groups--Black Americans, business-industrial, conservation-environment, and women's rights--and present testimony before the hearing. The teacher is required to recruit outside persons as Congresspersons who will eventually decide whether to recommend the resolution to the Senate. Background information on United States population growth and projected future population increases are provided in the unit. Three evaluation methods, a list of possible associated activities, and a bibliography for each of the four lobbying groups are also included. (DE)

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POPULATION STABILIZATION IN THE UNITED STATES A TEACHING CASE STUDY

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During World Population Year, 1974, teachers and students will be asked to talk about the demographic effects of changes in birth, death and migration rates. They will also be asked to discuss in their classrooms the issues of public policy that characterize population policy development.

This article presents an approach to student and community participation in a simulated, or mock, political process. The subject is population policy. The approach can be tailored to meet specific local or class needs. This case has evolved through five years of experience, with 26 separate participating groups of graduate students in public health at the University of Michigan. It is designed for use by students in general. It neither presupposes nor requires specialized political or demographic knowledge. Yet it can also be used among more advanced population students to introduce policy questions and to sensitize such students to intensities of feelings among the various groups affected.

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Procedure

This case is introduced one to two weeks before the actual class session. Students are told that they will be participating in a simulated Congressional hearing on a resolution introduced into the U.S. Senate in 1971. They are asked to organize themselves into lobbying groups, prepare testimony on the resolution and choose a spokesperson. All students read a set of general references, plus specialized readings for the lobbying group they wish to join.

The teacher is required to recruit outside persons as "Congresspersons." In our experience with this case, we have used more advanced and sensitized students, faculty, local political leaders or officials particularly involved with local planning issues, members of state and national legislative staffs, members of state administrative divisions with population or planning concerns, feminists, family planning service providers, advocates of zero population growth. We have tried to maintain variety of policy positions among our "Congressional Committee" representatives, and have been successful in eliciting both active interest and mature statements from student-participants no matter what the level of knowledge among the panel members. However, at least one member of the "Committee" needs to know the demographic and policy facts; and it aids student debates if members of the panel do not ask irrelevant or factually incorrect questions.

POPULATION POLICY IN THE UNITED STATES

Case writing team

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Definitions

The following working definitions are used:

Family Planning: Action by individuals and couples to plan and assure the number and timing of children that they want.

Population Planning: Action by society to achieve the growth rate and size of population it wants.

Class Procedure

U.S. Senate Joint Resolution 108 was introduced by Senator Cranston and co-sponsored by Senators Taft, Cook, Hart, Inouye, Packwood, Spong, Bayh, Bentsen, Burdick, Cannon, Case, Chiles, Dole, Goldwater, Harris, Hatfield, Humphrey, Magnuson, McGovern, Metcalf, Nelson, Percy, Proxmire, Saxbe, Stevenson, Javits, Robert Byrd, and Tunney. It resolves:

> "That it is the policy of the United States to encourage and develop, at the earliest possible time, the necessary attitudes and policies, and to implement them by actions which will, by voluntary means consistent with human rights and individual conscience, stabilize the population of the United States and thereby promote the future well-being of the citizens of this Nation and the entire world."

In accord with normal procedure the Resolution was assigned to Committee, whose responsibility is to study the Resolution and recommend Senate action on it. One common step in the process is public hearings, usually held in Washington, D.C. but sometimes held in other places around the United States. The class will be a simulated Senate Committee hearing on the Resolution. Invited guests act as Committee members to hear testimony on the Resolution.

What Class Members Must Do

Members of the class are asked to prepare and present testimony from four interest groups. (See Apendix A.) Each individual should sign up in advance for one of the four groups which will prepare testimony before class meets. The class session will consist of presentation of testimony and questioning by the Committee. A final vote of all class members will be taken by secret ballot.

The four interest groups that will prepare and present testimony are:

Black American

Business-Industrial

Conservationist-Environmental

Women's Rights

The Case

One important consequence of the high rates of American and world population growth following World War II has been the increasing awareness that some day the human population of the world and its geographical parts must stop growing. For many of the less-developed countries which are now experiencing population growth rates of 2-3 percent per year, their immediate goal is simply to reduce their rate of population growth.

In the United States, there is growing public debate as to whether the nation should adopt an explicit population growth policy, and if so, what the content and direction of that policy should be. A zero rate of population growth would be possible in the United States and is advocated by an increasing number of individuals and organizations. Some experts believe a growth rate of about 1 percent per year is desirable; others strongly support a zero or even a negative rate of population growth.

Stationary Population: What It Is (And Isn't)

Stationary population, or zero population growth, means that the birth rate equals the death rate when net migration is zero. With the world-wide spread of public health and other measures following World War II, mortality in many less developed countries fell to levels far below the birth rate. These low mortality levels will no doubt continue so that population growth rates are now governed largely by birth rates. In most countries international migration plays a lesser, and often negligible role.

Zero population growth now is not the same as replacement reproduction (popularly called the two-child family). In the United States the total number of children necessary to replace those now in the reproductive ages is actually 2.1 per woman. That is, during a lifetime, women would have an average of 2.1 live births. This takes account of mortality before reproduction. Replacement reproduction, then, refers to replacement of the reproducing generation and is not directly related to the death rate.

Population growth rates are now largely governed by birth rates. In turn, birth rates are determined by the natality level and timing of births among reproductive age women and also by the proportion of the total population that currently consists of women in the reproductive age group 15-44. Because of the high natality levels following World War II in the United States, we now have an age distribution with an unusually large proportion of women in the peak reproductive ages 20-29 years. The proportion of this group in relation to the total population is larger than it has been in recent years and larger than it would be in a stationary population.

Because of the imbalance in the population age structure, even though we are now experiencing approximately replacement reproduction, it is very likely that the population of the United States will continue to grow. If the current low natality rates are maintained, U.S. population will increase for 70 more years from about 209 million in 1972 to about 275 million people. (U.S. Bureau of the Census: 1972 a.) No matter when we start to reproduce only enough to replace the parental generation, approximately 70 years will be required to eliminate the effects of the present high proportion of reproductive age persons and reach the stationary population size and age distribution. Some substantial growth of the U.S. population seems inevitable. Recent birth rates may indicate that many people will have fewer children than analysts had expected. But young people may just be postponing births. The rise in natality may simply be delayed. (Commission on Population Growth and the American Future: 1972: 17-18.)

To achieve zero population growth now, or at any time before the year 2040, would require an average number of children per woman of less than 2.1. For an immediate zero rate of population growth, families would have to limit themselves to an average of one child for about 20 years. Two-child families could then be the norm after the year 2000.

Background Information on United States Population Growth and Projected Population Increase

In reaching your decision on the social benefits and costs of any population policy for the United States, you will need to know the following facts about population growth and current U.S. government policy.

Although the birth rate of the United States has recently been at record lows of about 16 per 1000 population per year, it has not approached the death rate, which is now about 9 per 1000 per year. Even at the annual rate of natural increase, 0.7 percent, which this produces, the population of the United States would double in a little more than 100 years. But the low birth rate probably will not continue, since the large group of women born in the post World War II baby boom are now reaching their twenties. A higher proportion of the total population is moving into the peak reproductive period. U.S. Census Bureau projections of replacement and below replacement natality rates indicate increasing numbers of births and rising birth rates until the early 1980's. (U.S. Bureau of the Census: 1972 c.)

The major contribution to our population increase comes from white middle class Americans. Between 1960 and 1965, 70 percent of all births occurred among women classified as white who are neither poor nor near-poor. (Campbell: 1968: 236-245.)

TABLE 1

ESTIMATED FERTILITY DURING 1960-1965
OF WOMEN IN THE UNITED STATES
BY INCOME AND RACE

Income Status	Average Annual Number of Live Births 1960-1965			Average Annual Fertility Rate* 1960-1965		
	Total	White	Nonwhite	Total	White	Nonwhite
Total	4,097,000	3,440,000	657,000	109.6	104.6	146.2
Poor and near-poor	1,205,000	780,000	425,000	152.5	140.7	180.4
Other	2,892,000	2,660,000	232,000	98.1	97.2	108.5

* live births per 1000 women, 15-44

The average number of children among completed families for the poor and near-poor has been slightly more than 4; among the women not in these categories, the mean has been just over 3 per family. The nonpoor are, of course, a large majority of the population in the United States.

Since some concern about population growth focuses on the relative growth of racial groups, projections have been made of white and nonwhite reproductivity. (Attah: 1973: 1143.) Various combinations of high, through moderate, to low fertility rates for whites and nonwhites separately indicate that in almost all cases nonwhites would contribute much less to population growth than whites. Total genocide, or elimination, of either group would take thousands of years and require widely differing fertility rates. Only a combination of quite high natality for whites and low rates for nonwhite's would result in a reduced proportion of nonwhites among a future total population. The proportion of nonwhites will undoubtedly increase in the forseeable future.

What are the prospects that the United States will either maintain a replacement level of reproduction or achieve a zero population growth rate in the near future? Several factors influence the projections of current trends into the future. One is public awareness as translated into average family size desired. Another is contraceptive technology. A third is governmental policy and action.

As for desired family size, Gallup polls taken several times since 1945 show that Americans now say that, on the average, the ideal number of children in a family is 2.5. In a 1973 survey, only 1 adult in 5 (20 percent) says that the ideal number of children is 4 or more. The percentage was twice as high (40 percent) only 6 years ago. Nearly half (47 percent) interviewed in January 1973, say the ideal number of children is one or two, whereas only 23 percent were of this opinion in a 1945 survey. On the other hand, the "only child" family holds no more appeal to people today than in 1945. Only 1 percent of persons interviewed in both surveys said the ideal number of children is one. (Gallup Poll Index: 1973.)

Another indication of desired family size is found in data on wanted and unwanted births for the period 1966 to 1970. When women were asked retrospectively about whether they and their spouses desired another child <u>at all</u> at the

time of each conception, 600,000 births per year were reported as unwanted. (Jaffe: 1973: 205-248.) This figure represents 15 percent of the total births during the period, or about one-quarter of the natural increase of the United States population from 1966-1970. For women nearing the end of their reproductive years, the subtraction of births reported as unwanted would have reduced their fertility from 3 births per woman to 2.7 births per woman.

Since 1971, young married women 18-24 have indicated that they expect to have families consistent with replacement reproduction. (U.S. Bureau of the Census: 1972 b.) Whether they realize their expectations or change them will have a great effect on U.S. population growth.

Since the introduction of contraceptive pills and intrauterine contraceptive devices in the U.S. in the early 1960's, many have thought that most women could limit their family size if they desired, and that the major portion of unwanted conceptions were due to inadequate provision and organization of medical services for urban areas and for the poor. However, Table 2 shows that for the years 1966-1970, almost one-half of all unwanted births occurred to women who were nonpoor and who presumably had access to existing contraceptive services if they desired. (Jaffe: 1973: Tables 14, 15.)

TABLE 2

PERCENT OF BIRTHS UNWANTED BY SUBGROUP AND PERCENT OF UNWANTED BIRTHS BY SUBGROUP U.S., 1966-70

	Percent of Births Unwanted by Subgroup			Percent of Unwanted Births by Subgroup		
	Nonwhite	White	Total	Nonwhite	White	Total
Poor	40	23	27	24	29	53
Nonpoor	15	11	12	6	41	47
TOTAL	25	13	15	30	70	100

No contraceptive now available is completely satisfactory for all couples and none is 100 percent effective. Thus, unplanned pregnancies occur in spite of many couples' efforts at contraception. Current technology in the form of abortion could help reduce the impact of these factors. However, the demographic impact of widely available legal abortion has been projected as modest. Based on experience in New York City, it is thought that the birth rate might be reduced by 10 percent. (Tietze: 1972: 579-585.)

In the United States we are currently spending about $25 million in private agencies (Planned Parenthood and affiliates) (Planned Parenthood - World Population: 1970) and about $150 million through federal, state and local government agencies (Rosoff: 1973: 7) on family planning services, where the goal is to enable couples to have the number of children they desire. Both public and private agency programs serve largely those who cannot afford or cannot reach private medical care. Although federal monies for family planning services have expanded in just the last few years, no significant increases are foreseen for the next few years.

While there is an increasing amount of education as to demographic, personal, and social effects of families larger than two children, there are many institutionalized supports for higher fertility. Income tax exemptions for children, free public education for all children, and other generally accepted provisions and practices are indicative of a tendency to favor higher fertility.

Should the United States change from its current haphazard policy with conflicting and unplanned effects to an explicitly stated national policy of reaching zero population growth? Inherent in the debate are questions as to the consequences of such a rate. Even if there were agreement on a zero rate of growth as an appropriate goal, there can be further questions about the means of reaching and maintaining such a rate. The means thought necessary depend to some extent on the assumptions one makes as to the "natural course of events," i.e., how much, if any, coercion or education would be necessary to reach the condition of zero growth, and when zero growth should be achieved.

In discussions of these issues, despite their interrelatedness, it is hoped that we can consider separately whether the goal of zero population growth is itself desirable and the further issue of the alternative means to that goal. The first question to be decided and to be discussed by those presenting testimony is whether zero population growth itself would be desirable in the United States. Testimony on the appropriate means should follow and should be treated as a separate issue.

Evaluation

This case has been evaluated in three ways. First is the end-of-class ballot cast by the students. Although this is not an evaluation of the session per se, it provides for the instructor some idea of whether there has been a variety of ideas presented. It also is a way for students to express their personal views based on a class-induced decision making process. The composite votes of the 26 groups already exposed to this case, arranged by year, indicate that there have been rather different outcomes.

Comparison of Total Votes by Year

Percent Distribution

	Population Students	General Students			
	1973	1973	1972	1971	1970
Adopt	50	51	45	34	56
Adopt with Amendments	17	17	24	19	18
Defeat	25	25	31	41	21
Undecided	7	7	--	6	5
TOTAL	100	100	100	100	100

These trends are believed to reflect changes in public discussion and mass media since the composition of the student body did not change significantly. During 1970 the Environmental Teach-Ins focused on population concerns. The next year there was a much clearer division of the environmental movement into those concerned primarily with affluence or consumption levels and those concerned primarily with population growth. During 1971 and 1972 black Americans and other minority groups expressed some strong reservations about any governmental policy that could be targeted toward their groups in a negative or repressive way. Recovery of support for official population policy during 1973, even among the general students, indicates that the case remains a useful way in which to focus teaching about U.S. population trends. The diversity of views present each year indicates the very real discussion the process represents. Teachers should use this case only if they are willing to accept the entire range of opinions.

The second mode of evaluation has been the usual term-end questionnaire returned by students for all sessions of the introductory public health course in which the case is a segment. These evaluations are not reproduced here but they reflect high ratings in comparison with other material presented in that particular course.

A third kind of evaluation has occurred via rewriting of the case by students and faculty. Some substantial revisions were made after the first year. Data and some interpretive points were updated in 1973. Readings have also been changed as new and more pertinent articles appear.

The most satisfactory results are obtained when the case can be followed by one or more sessions of discussion. Any number of points may be chosen for emphasis or elaboration. Examples include:

a. Tradeoff when values differ or conflict among politically strong groups.

b. Unintended or unwanted side-effects of otherwise "good" programs. What can government or other groups do to minimize negative effects? Magnify positive effects?

c. In the political process how are successful coalitions built?

d. How important is population policy? Family planning?

e. What resources can teach us more about these issues?

Some classes may wish to choose other lobbying groups more relevant to their own expertise or interests. The four groups used were chosen to present a variety of points of view, utilize concise and available resource materials, and speak to concerns prevalent among our own students. Also included has been a group of internationalists, but a 1½-2 hour class is barely sufficient for good discussion among four groups. We have never included a religious interest group, since we are trying to focus on population rather than family planning methods.

Possible Associated Activities

1. Discovering resources in the community for family planning.

2. Discovering interested groups (and their positions) on local population growth. Survey of local politicians.

3. Investigating need for contraceptive services among the students taking the class, or their larger student community.

4. Surveying student concern about:

   a. population growth in the U.S. and/or in the world;

   b. expected or ideal family size;

   c. plans for marriage, actual contraceptive practice, knowledge about contraception.

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U.S. Bureau of the Census.

a. Current Population Reports, Illustrative Population Projections for the United States: The Demographic Effects of Alternative Paths to Zero Growth, Series P-25, 480 (April, 1972): Projection W.

b. Current Population Reports, Birth Expectations and Fertility, Series P-20, 240 (September 1972): Table 1.

c. Current Population Reports, Projections of the Population of the United States, by Age and Sex: 1972-2020, Series P-25, 493 (December 1972): Projections E,F.

APPENDIX A

Required Reading for all students (readings for the 4 Interest Groups listed below)

Commission on Population Growth and the American Future. Population and the American Future, New York: Signet, 1972 (or Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office), 1972: Ch. 8.

Required Reading for the 4 Interest Groups

I. BLACK AMERICANS

1. Willie, Charles V. "Position Paper: A Perspective from the Black Community on Population Policy and Growth," Commission on Population Growth and the American Future, 1971. Available from Population Reference Bureau, 1755 Massachusetts Ave., Washington D.C. 20036.

2. Smith, Mary. "Birth Control and the Negro Woman," Ebony, March 1968.

II. BUSINESS-INDUSTRIAL

1. "If Population Stops Growing: Impact on U.S.," U.S. News and World Report 69 (September 28, 1970): 80-2. (Notes esp. impact on economy and business.)

2. "Economic Growth: new doubts about an old ideal," Time 95 (March 2, 1970): 72-4 (Very good article about effects on the environment of the growth ideal not much emphasis on business or economy.)

III. CONSERVATIONALIST-ENVIRONMENTAL-PUBLIC HEALTH

1. Commission on Population Growth and the American Future. Population and the American Future. New York: Signet, 1972 (or Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1972): Ch. 5, 55-75.

2. Ridker, Ronald G. "Resources and Environmental Consequences of Population Growth in the United States - A Summary," in Ronald Ridker, ed., Resources and Environmental Consequences of Population Growth in the United States: Commission on Population Growth and the American Future Research Reports III. Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1972: 17-33.

IV. WOMEN'S RIGHTS

1. Keller, Suzanne. "The Future Status of Women in America," in Charles Westoff and Robert Parke, eds., Demographic and Social Aspects of Population Growth: Commission on Population Growth and the American Future Research Reports I. Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1972: 267-287.

2. Ridley, Jeanne Clare. "On the Consequences of Demographic Change for the Roles and Status of Women," in Charles Westoff and Robert Parke, eds., Demographic and Social Aspects of Population Growth: Commission on Population Growth and the American Future Research Reports I. Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1972: 289-304.

Additional references - not required

1. Clark, Colin. "Population Growth and Living Standards, in Agarwala and Singh, The Economics of Underdevelopment. Oxford University Press, 1963.

2. Goale, Ansley. "Man and His Environment," Science 70 (1970): 132-136.

3. Frejka, Tomas. "Reflections on the Demographic Conditions Needed to Establish a U.S. Stationary Populatio Growth," Population Studies 22: 379-397.

4. Milio, Nancy. 9226 Kercheval: The Storefront That Did Not Burn. University of Michigan Press, 1970: 37-59, 89-98.

5. "New Feminism: Potent Force in Birth Control Policy," Science, February 2, 1970.

6. Nixon, Richard. "Message Relative to Population Growth, July 21, 1969.

7. "Population and Resources: The Coming Collision," Population Bulletin, June 1970.

8. Tydings, Joseph. "Stabilizing U.S. Population Growth: A Political Strategy," Congressional Record, May 28, 1970.