



Population Council records

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Rockefeller Archive Center

15 Dayton Avenue

Sleepy Hollow 10591

archive@rockarch.org

URL: <http://www.rockarch.org>

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Summary Information

Repository:	Rockefeller Archive Center
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Language of the Material:	English .

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Biographical / Historical

The Population Council was founded by John D. Rockefeller 3rd in 1952 to undertake "significant activities in the broad field of population." Its goal has been to bring about a reduction in the number of births that occur in the world. In its early years, the business of the Population Council was conducted by a Demographic Division and a Biomedical Division. Through its Demographic Division, the Council sought to document what it conceived to be an overpopulation problem threatening many areas of the world. To accomplish this purpose, the Division facilitated research on the economic, social, and psychological factors which affect the growth and decline of human population. This Council-assisted research effort was conducted not only by staff of the Demographic Division but also by other institutions and scholars, some of whom received Council grants and fellowships and some of whom received informal advice and consultation on how to design and execute studies.

The Biomedical Division, which, beginning in 1959, occupied a laboratory at The Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research (now The Rockefeller University), has conducted pure and applied research on plant, animal, and human reproductive physiology and on the development, the physiological action, and the safety and effectiveness of contraceptive methods. The Council facilitated similar types of medical research by non-Council scientists at other institutions by giving grants and fellowships for such research. The Council's biomedical research and its support for research by non-Council scientists were instrumental in the development of the modern intrauterine coil and the birth control pill.

In about 1960, the scope of Population Council activities expanded. The Council began to render practical and technical aid to foreign nations. Beginning in that year, the Demographic Division, in

addition to supervising research, became involved in Pakistan's family planning program, extending practical and technical aid in organizing and running a national family planning program. By 1964 the Council's Demographic Division had assisted in organizing family planning programs in South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, Tunisia, and Turkey. In that year, the Council created the Technical Assistance Division. This division, in ensuing years, continued the assistance of the Council in the countries where it had already become involved and also helped start and run programs in India, Morocco, the Philippines, and Puerto Rico.

An underlying aim of the Council's grant programs has been to encourage the development and growth of institutions that would promote family planning programs. To this end, the Council has given grants and advice to various universities and research centers for starting and upgrading programs for demographic and biomedical training and research programs; has assisted the United Nations to set up and expand regional Demographic Training and Research Centres in Bombay, India, Santiago, Chile, and Cairo, Egypt; has worked with the Ford Foundation on family planning programs in Pakistan, India, and North Africa.

In addition to rendering technical aid and sponsoring research, the Council has undertaken several complementary public relations efforts. To reach the general populations of the United States and of foreign nations, Council officers have worked to inform the mass media about population issues and to encourage magazine articles, movies, and books dealing with population matters. Council officers and representatives have also made trips and prepared reports to convince various foreign government leaders of the importance and the desirability of promulgating family planning programs. In addition, Council officers participated in and helped organize and finance conferences for demographers and medical scientists active in population work.

The Population Council has obtained its financial support through large contributions. The Ford and Rockefeller Foundations and the Rockefeller Brothers Fund have been the principal institutional supporters of the Council. John D. Rockefeller 3rd has been the single most significant individual backer of the Council.

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Scope and Contents

The records of the Population Council document its day-to-day operation as an organization that, among other activities, evaluated and administered grants, sponsored conferences of scholars in the field of population control, and provided advice to individuals, private institutions, and governments concerned with population. There is some material relating to major policy decisions of the Council. There are also letters and reports from scientists involved in medical research and from Council staff members and representatives involved in family planning activities abroad.

The Council records are divided into two accessions. Accession 1, most of which is dated before 1967, consists of material received by the Archive Center in September, 1976. Accession 2, most of which is dated after 1966, consists primarily of material received by the Center in April, 1977.

The records of Accession 1 and Accession 2 have been kept separate because the Council evidently employed different filing systems in each of the two units and because the existence of the different filing systems sheds light on the manner in which the Council was organized and run. The use of this approach has meant that the files are organized in such a way that material relating to a given topic may appear in several different parts of the collection under either identical names or titles, or under different names or titles. For example, in the case of some institutions whose proper names are in a foreign language, records may have been filed under both the foreign name and under an English rendering of the name. The files also contain many carbon copies and there is duplication throughout the collection, so that copies of the same item may appear in several places.

To conduct a thorough search for records on a given topic, it is essential to look for material in as many different sections of the collection and under as many different names or titles as possible. For example, material relating to a given organization may be listed under the name of the organization, under the name of important figures in the organization, or under a title reflecting a study or type of work done by the organization.

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Arrangement

Arranged in two record groups by accession, each comprised of multiple series. Series are designated primarily by record type. The record groups and associated series numbers are representative solely of when the materials were processed by RAC, and do not imply an original order of the records. Within series, records are maintained in original order as received. Additional finding aids are created as records are processed and open for research.

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Administrative Information

Publication Statement

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Conditions Governing Access

Open for research with select materials restricted as noted. Brittle or damaged items are available at the discretion of RAC.

If accessing the records of the Population Council, I understand that I am given access to these records on condition that I will not identify by name, either in my research notes or in publication or recording, the names of individuals who received or apparently received medical diagnoses and/or treatments, whose case(s), may be documented or mentioned by personal name in the Population Council records.

Researchers interested in accessing digital media (floppy disks, CDs, DVDs, etc.) or audiovisual material (audio cassettes, VHS, etc.) in this collection must use an access surrogate. The original items may not be accessed because of preservation concerns. To request an access surrogate be made, or if you are unsure if there is an access surrogate, please contact an archivist.

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