

Should the population and climate discussion be limited to the policy space?

I completely agree with the points made by Bongaarts and Sitruk-Ware regarding the links between population growth, increased emissions and climate change.¹ Furthermore, I agree with the authors' recommended policy of improving universal access to reproductive technologies, not about coercion.

At the start of their commentary article, a compelling argument is made for population growth to be discussed more during international policy-level climate change debates. Later in their article, various strategies for overcoming barriers to contraception use at the individual level are described, such as media campaigns and careful contraceptive counselling. However, the authors do not appear to be suggesting that messages about population growth and climate change should be incorporated in the aforementioned interventions.

My question is whether it is possible to introduce the concepts of population growth and climate change through media campaigns or during individual contraceptive counselling so as to further inform individuals' decision-making? My sense is that it would be difficult to have such discussions with clients without running the risk of appearing to coerce clients into having fewer children. Consequently, I would be interested in discovering whether the authors believe that the population and climate discussion should be limited only to the policy space and not be included in media campaigns or counselling sessions?

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