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Birth Control and Reproductive Rights in Sri Lanka

This paper traces the career of family planning in Sri Lanka—from its pre-history of the fragmented birth control movement under colonialism to the re-branding of family planning as ‘reproductive health and rights’ after the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD). Although the history of family planning in Sri Lanka resembles much of the careers of family planning programmes undertaken in other countries during the same period, it does have a number of particular aspects. As a country colonized by Western powers over a period of four centuries (ie. 1505 to 1948) and thereafter becoming a development ‘model’ for South Asia in 1970s, Sri Lanka offers a more inclusive conceptual framework to understand how policy decisions taken in the global North fails to have the same impact in the global South.