U.S. Government Promoting Overpopulation

Proposing a solution to overpopulation in the United States by limiting government aid based on number of household members

Tag words: Overpopulation, Birth Control, Government Aid, Welfare, Household Size, Number of Children

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Summary

This paper focuses on the prevention of not only unintended pregnancies but also ones intended due to false rationalizations. This paper is based on a hypothesis that by supporting it’s citizens with aid the United States government is ironically contributing to the increase in population. Federal aid increases with increasing household size, and therefore families are more apt to ignore their reality and follow the natural instinct of desire. Federal aid therefore offers a portal through which the government can directly control birthrate. If federal aid was limited and did not depend on household size, then the American government would be removing the incentive for underprivileged families to have families grander than they’re capable of supporting. A study consisting of a cross-sectional survey focused on household size, yearly income, and government aid received, has been conducted in order to test this hypothesis. This paper and the study results serve to hopefully open up a door for discussing this particular hypothesis and conducting more research on it.

Video Link: http://youtu.be/dCq1Sc0o6Kk

Overpopulation—the Term, the Reason, and the Result

(HX) In terms of sociology, overpopulation is a generally undesirable condition where human population exceeds the carrying capacity of our earth. Since people are not evenly spread, the overpopulation can happen locally when the population exceeds the carrying capacity of one region. There are two vital terms in the word “overpopulation”, which are population and carrying capacity.

Population Growth and Carrying Capacity

There are reasons of population growth rate increase, such as an increase of birth, a decline of morality, an increase of life span, etc. Since the end of the Middle Age, global
population has been increasing continuously, especially in these fifty years. This continuously growth may due to the improving medical technologies and increasing in agricultural productivity, which extend the average life span. The increasing agricultural productivity also increases the carrying capacity of the environment, and makes the continuous increase of population possible.

*Transition countries include countries in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. Agricultural total factor productivity (TFP) measures the average productivity of all land, labor, capital, and materials used to produce crops and livestock. One percent growth in TFP means 1 percent fewer resources are needed to produce the same amount of output. Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using Evenson and Fuglie (2010), *Journal of Productivity Analysis*, Vol. 33, No. 3, pp.173-190.
However, the carrying capacity of the environment cannot always support the increasing population. Thomas Robert Malthus wrote a famous book *An Essay on the Principle of Population* that illustrates a critical point—the natural resources cannot support the growing population forever. He made an example of the unequal nature of food supply to population growth. He claimed that food supply was subject to a linear growth model, but the population growth was subject to a power growth model; therefore, over a threshold, food supply can no longer feed everyone.

In fact, nowadays, thanks to the agricultural technology and the fertilization, the growth rate of agricultural productivity is still greater than population growth rate. However, since the unused land is becoming less and less, the growth rate of agricultural productivity can be predicted to decrease in the future (Figure 1).

Moreover, when we apply the modern agricultural technology to the production, we value our short-term interest more. In China, the unregulated fertilization cause more and more adverse effects to the environment, such as eutrophication of the freshwater system, soil degradation, heavy metal contamination, etc. These effects lowered the long-term capacity of land to produce, and may reduce the agricultural productivity in the future.

**Effects of Overpopulation**

Overpopulation, by definition, happens when the environment cannot support the current population of human being. Therefore, the first effect that may come out is the decrease of living status. In order to make most people live, we may have to sacrifice some of our enjoyment, such as diet, living space, spare time, etc. Then, we may decide to satisfy our current need first, which means we may no longer consider about our sustainable development. Due to this, some environment issues, e.g. greenhouse effect, pollution, may rise. Also importantly, these all can be the source of social instability.

In the real world, a larger birth rate may statistically relate to poverty. In fact, poverty is highly related to the problem of overpopulation in the world. We analyze the GDP per capita and total fertility rate data in CIA Factbook, and find an interesting result. In Figure 2, we relate the GDP per capita to the Total Fertility Rate for each nation. Although there are some countries that have a low fertility rate but also a low GDP per capita, we find that there is few country exceeding 30,000 USD GDP that has a fertility rate over 2. Also, countries that have a fertility rate over 3 can seldom exceed a GDP of 15,000 US dollar per capita (blue line). This draws a conclusion: a low GDP per capita does not mean a high total fertility rate; however, a high total fertility rate means a low GDP per capita. The high fertility rate may be one of the reasons of poverty.

**The Tragedy of the Commons, and the Social Welfare**

Garrett Hardin, an ecologist, wrote an influential article “The Tragedy of Common” in 1968, illustrating a point of view that “multiple individuals, acting independently and rationally consulting their own self-interest, will ultimately deplete a shared limited resource, even when it
is clear that it is not in anyone's long-term interest for this to happen." He gives an example of the use of common land. In a village in Europe, people share a common parcel of land. Each villager thought individually that when he grazed the cow as much as possible, he could get the most benefit. As a result, the common land became overgrazing.

Application of the Concept on Overpopulation

This concept can apply to many environmental or social problems, including overpopulation. For each individual, when she has more offspring, her family becomes able to occupy more natural and social resources, so that the family members may have a higher living status. This seems beneficial to each family when we think it individually. However, if all people reproduce more, but the natural and social resources do not increase rapidly enough, the resources each of us can occupy become less, which means a poorer living status. This becomes an all-lose result.

This issue becomes more serious after the Great Depression in 1930s, when the welfare system began. Especially after the extended free public education in 1920s, the welfare system takes charge of a major fraction of the raising cost of a child, but then the family enjoys the major benefit. Then, the welfare system becomes the common land, the children become the cows, and the raising cost becomes the grass. Every parent gets his or her rewards by reproduction from social welfare.

Solutions of the Tragedy

There are two fundamental ideas assessing this problem. In 1940, Ludwig von Mises indicated,

If land is not owned by anybody, although legal formalism may call it public property, it is used without any regard to the disadvantages resulting. Those who are in a position to appropriate to themselves the returns — lumber and game of the forests, fish of the water areas, and mineral deposits of the subsoil — do not bother about the later effects of their mode of exploitation. For them, erosion of the soil, depletion of the exhaustible resources and other impairments of the future utilization are external costs not entering into their calculation of input and output. They cut down trees without any regard for fresh shoots or reforestation. In hunting and fishing, they do not shrink from methods preventing the repopulation of the hunting and fishing grounds.

In order to prevent these happen, he suggested that every common resource has to become private. This can be a good reason for the opposition of communist and public ownership system. However, social welfare system is supposed to be common, so that this solution cannot be applied on the welfare system.

Government can offer the other solution. For a common good, governmental regulations can limit the amount available for use by any individual. In this case, government can limit the maximum family members that can enjoy the welfare program.
Overpopulation in the United States

The United States is known to be the third most populated country in the world, following China and India, which are the first, and second most populated countries. Overpopulation simply means a given area that is too crowded, or colonized by too many individuals. Overpopulation is a problem that directly and indirectly causes other problems in this country. According to statistics, the world population will reach approximately 9 billion people by the year 2050. By the time this problem is accounted for, it will be extremely difficult to control. There are various causes and effects of overpopulation in the United States that need to be addressed in order to improve each individual's living situation. However, due to the fact that government aid to those with larger families is distributed easily, many families are taking advantage of this benefit and seem to be reproducing in order to receive more government aid.


Many low-income families receive government subsidies such as Medicaid or food stamps. What many individuals do not realize is there is a correlation between family sizes versus amount of government aid provided to these families, despite their income. After extensive research it is found that there is a positive correlation between family size and maximum monthly benefit. Financial eligibility is assessed depending upon family size, which includes children and their caretaker or guardian. There are various federal government based subsidies that support low-income families. The largest federal government fund comes from TANF.

Temporary assistance to for needy families (TANF), also known as welfare, is a cash assistance program. This program assists families by providing them cash and other supportive services to help them achieve economic stability. Cash assistance by TANF is distributed to families based on family size and income limit. Clearly, based on statistics and research, the more children a family has the more of a maximum monthly benefit that family receives.

The Food Stamp program is a program operated by the Congress in order to improve the nutrition and health of households that produce low income. This program helps these families buy the food needed for a nutritionally efficient and adequate diet. Based on research done in 2011, food stamps are distributed to families based on several factors such as income, household size, resources etc. The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is a specific type of food stamp benefit that individuals can use like cash to buy individual items in a store such as a supermarket or pharmacy. Sales tax are not added to items used with food stamps.

Medicaid is another special program that is designed to provide health insurance to parents, guardians, dependent children, pregnant woman, the elderly and the disabled. The Medicaid program pays for doctor visits, hospital services, prescriptions needed, and other healthcare needs. To be eligible for Medicaid the parents or guardian of the household must be making an income at or below 133% of the Federal Poverty level, in other words $2,444 monthly for a family of four. Due to this standard of eligibility, this may encourage families to reproduce in order to meet the standards for Medicaid benefits.
For most of these government aid programs the adults of the household must meet certain requirements in order to maintain their eligibility. Requirements for each program vary, although there are some basic requirements consistent with all of the various welfare programs. A recipient may be exempt for working is that recipient is a single parent with a child under 12 months. This may excuse that individual from work temporarily while receiving benefits from the government. This may lead to addition reproduction of children so that the recipient can continue to be excused from working, yet still receive welfare benefits. This is one of the many causes of overpopulation.

The two most common causes of overpopulation in the United States are a result of immigration or reproduction. Reproduction seems to be an important aspect to population growth that has influenced the living situations of many families, primarily in urban areas where the areas are more populated. Overpopulation is a problem because it results in financial stress for families with more children then they can provide for. Which is what would make them eligible to receive government benefits.

Overpopulation, a Growing Problem in US

The concept behind overpopulation is simple. The world is overpopulated due to exponential growth as a result of uncontrolled reproduction. Therefore, any responsibility for population control rests primarily with each individual. The responsibility to be able to provide and financially support each child also lies with the adult or guardian of the household. Aside from the fact that some cultures or religions may limit the amount of children families are able to have, overpopulation cannot be controlled due to exponential growth. China on the other hand, the most populated country in the world is able to control their population overgrowth. This is done so due to a policy, which allows most families to only have one child. Although this will never happen under any circumstance in the United States, the comparison of overpopulation growth control in the two countries increases level of awareness in the United States.

Overpopulation not only effects the environment, but also the standard of living. When a country is overpopulated, it results in a high rate of unemployment, which in turn results in a high demand for government financial aid. There are limited resources on this planet; therefore, in order to protect families and cities from starvation the government offers food stamps, Medicaid, and other financial benefits to ensure an adequate living situation for all low-income families.

It seems that many individuals make a living on having multiple children by reproducing and receiving welfare, specifically cash assistance from TANF. All individuals who are financially comfortable pay taxes, which inevitably go toward paying for food stamps, houses, daycares, or even Medicaid for those who lead low-income lives. Many believe that the welfare system is corrupt in that it takes money from those who work hard and supplies it to individuals who take advantage of the fact that they are receiving free financial aid. A majority of individuals who do not receive welfare believe that if the government were to raise the eligibility requirements for welfare, then those who reproduce in order to take advantage of the benefits would think twice.
However, for whatever reason low-income families/ lower class individuals use their government aid for there are an abundant amount of advantages of the welfare state system. There is a percentage decrease in homelessness, which in turn decreases the rate of crime, especially in heavily populated urban areas. The biggest advantage, which individuals/families may or may not take advantage of is that it provides basic living needs by using taxpayer money to pay for their apartments and transportation.

Along with each of the advantages of the welfare system, there are also disadvantages and reasons why welfare distribution should be limited. An adult can receive payment from the government (from programs such as TANF) without contributing to society and taking part in the work force. For those families that must keep reproducing and contribute to the overpopulation problem in the United States, it can eventually demean their child’s inspirations to later on work and earn money. This may undoubtedly result in children reproducing and starting families of their own in the future and feeling it is sufficient to live a life on welfare.

Overpopulation is the one of the chief causes of poverty in the United States. As mentioned above, it also leads to crime. This problem is primarily blamed on the bad economic policy in the United States, which leads families and individuals with minimum income to file for government aid such as TANF or food stamp programs such as SNAP.

There are many extraneous affects of overpopulation that go unnoticed. Some of the biggest issues that arise from overpopulation include food shortages and associated malnutrition, shortage of nonrenewable resources, per capita shortage such as water that in turn affects food supply, and environmental change caused by destruction of environmental habitats due to urbanization. In the future, this problem can be foreseen to get worse unless the population is stabilized. Being that government aid for food is given out primarily to families with no working income, food shortages as well as decrease in nutritional resources will become a long-term problem in this country. The population is growing so fast that whatever advances are made, or however much assistance the government provides to families who need food, it will eventually end up at a point where there will not be enough food and resources; resulting in starvation, being nature’s way of equalizing supply and demand.

Government aid to families who have large families and who do not have an income ultimately will and do result in forests disappearing due to overpopulation. This is actually an important matter since tax payers money are paid to the government so that they are able to build new homes and apartments to provide these families with. In order to do so, forests, farmlands and other open spaces are used and urbanized.

Some main factors contributing to overpopulation include lack of education, and not so predominant in this century now, but economic opportunities for women. Lack of maternal healthcare for women (which is also provided by the government for women in families incapable of affording health care) may also be a factor leading to constant reproduction in order to receive benefits from the government. Continuous migration of people from underdeveloped to developed areas also created overpopulation in urbanized areas and causes pressure on the available resources. The problem caused by overly populated cities is a result of poorly planned growth of new towns, cities, and buildings.
The problem of overpopulation differs in the United States from other countries in that the U.S. population tends to exceed its carrying capacity. Like mentioned above, this is shown in building new homes, buildings, and shelters to compensate for the population. The US gets many of its resources from other countries, ignoring the poverty in the supplying countries by paying much less than what our resources are worth. This is a chain reaction, which also affects the population and shortage of resources in other countries. Overpopulation is a problem that needs to be taken seriously. The longer a country waits to take action, the harder it will be to deal with the impacts.

Policies Addressing the Problem of Overpopulation in US

(CB) The United States government has tackled the issue of overpopulation from the same angle throughout the years. However like stated above it continues to counter its efforts and instead promotes overpopulation through government based aid. The angle from which the United States government chooses to control its population is one that arose in 1912 by the pioneer Margaret Sanger, and has been used ever since. This angle includes the increase of contraceptive use successfully and therefore decreasing fertility. While this angle has been successful in decreasing population size, it is insufficient. To settle on such a plan alone would mean that we have exhausted all other possibilities. Before moving on to our proposal, let us take a look at some steps that the United States took in order to control its population.

Margaret Sanger’s aspirations, ideas, and struggles have come to influence the entire world. It is safe to say that she is the founder of the way population is controlled today. She worked to secure new human rights: the right of every woman to control her fertility, the right of parents to be free of the crises of unwanted pregnancy, and the right of every child to be wanted. Additionally, she provided the birth control methods and clinics necessary for the practical realization of these rights (Wardell, 736). Sanger defied all odds during her time and challenged the Comstock laws which prevented contraception deeming it illegal. Anthony Comstock would prove to be Margaret Sanger’s biggest rival at the time keeping family planning information from being public. She, with the financial funding from her friend Katherine McCormick, would however make it her life long duty to see that contraception and family planning information became available to all. She would later open up and along with her sister run the first contraception clinic and hold the first birth-control conference. She started the International Planned Parenthood Federation in 1952.

In 1951 under Planned Parenthood, Margaret Sanger offered the pioneer Gregory Pincus a grant that would later influence modern contraceptives and therefore population size. Pincus and John Rock worked together to innovate the first contraceptive pill, Enovid. In 1961 the FDA allowed for the drug company Searle to distribute the pill. Oral contraceptives would then become the number one used form of birth control in the United States. Women could now plan whether or not they wanted to have children, something that at the time was beyond taboo. (Dhont, 2010).
It was not until 1965 that the Supreme Court got rid of the remainder of the laws that prohibited the use of contraceptives and therefore successful family planning. In the 1970s family planning programs and aid supporting family planning became highly prevalent.

In 1970, Congress passes and President Nixon signs into law Title X of the Public Health Service Act, which makes contraceptives available regardless of income and provides funding for educational programs and research in contraceptive development. Later, Congress broadens Title X’s mandate to provide community-based sex education programs and preventive services to unmarried teenagers at risk of pregnancy (Planned Parenthood, History).

The number of patients in the clinics for contraceptives rose significantly from the 1960s to the late 1970s as shown in Figure 3. This is mainly due to the increase in support and funding of family planning services. The Office of Economic Opportunity, the Maternal and Child Health program, and Medicaid were some of the benefactors that made this happen. Figure 4 displays how different federal expenditures helped increase the number of patients.

Figure 1. Number of patients served by organized family planning programs in the United States, FY 1968-CY 1977

Figure 1 (Torres, 342)
The following years up until today have been the bouncing back and forth within the same issues. Abortion, birth control, and who they should be provided for have been the main issues at hand, and have been our only form of population control. Conservative President Reagan opposed abortion and made it difficult for teenagers to seek contraceptives. Reagan therefore implemented the gag rule which held information from patients about abortions and also took away funding as well as put a halt on research related to the matter. Such a barrier on family planning continued through the Bush years and did family planning services were unable to breathe freely again until Clinton was elected into office. This cycle has continued until today. Today Planned Parenthood’s mission is to “provide contraception and other health services to women and men, fund research on birth control and educate specialists and the public about the results, and advance access to family planning in the United States and around the world” (PP).

The United States government continues to revolve around the same debates which focus on preventing unintended children. Since the times of Margaret Sanger the United States government has debated upon a never ending cycle of birth control related to contraceptives and while the population growth rate has leveled off, it is still growing at a rate which is too fast for a developing country which consumes such a great deal of resources.

We propose that the United States government shifts focus and incorporates the prevention of not only unintended children but also intended pregnancies for false reasons. Currently we seem to await some new form of miracle contraception that will save us from overpopulation, however in the mean time the government itself is ironically contributing to the increase in population. The areas that are highly overpopulated tend to be areas of low income. For this reason, family planning services have mainly focuses on such areas when providing education and access to contraceptives. While the lack of education and access to contraceptives puts such places at higher risks of overpopulation, we claim that it is insufficient.

Government aid has been an incentive for such poverty stricken areas. As Chris Hedges states, we are a society in which “reality is not considered an impediment to desire.” Therefore
when such families are presented with the opportunity of receiving more federal aid with an increasing household size, they are more apt to ignore their reality and follow the natural instinct of desire.

Federal aid therefore offers a portal through which the government can directly control birthrate. If federal aid was limited and did not depend on household size, then the United States government would be removing the incentive for underprivileged families to have families grander than they’re capable of supporting.

Methods

(A) A study has been conducted in order to test the theory that government aid serves as an incentive for Americans to reproduce more children. The study consisted of a cross-sectional survey focused on household size, yearly income, and government aid received (see Appendix A). Before the survey was conducted approval from the Human Subject Institutional Review Board was obtained (see Appendix B). Twenty random subjects over the age of 25 were surveyed voluntarily outside local supermarkets in New Brunswick, NJ. Each subject was provided with an information sheet prior to receiving the survey. The information sheet outlines why the study is taking place as well as provides the individuals with their rights as human subjects (see Appendix C). In order to encourage participation the subjects were also offered brochures containing factual information on government aid relative to household size (see Appendix D). Along with the above handouts, each subject was read the following:

This research study is being conducted as part of a class project at Rutgers University which has been approved by the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board under protocol #E12-324. The study involves only a survey to be filled out that is both anonymous and confidential. Your participation in this study is strictly voluntary. The student researcher has been approved by the Rutgers Institutional Review Board to conduct the research. The consent will be read, and your questions answered. By giving verbal consent, you will be agreeing to participate in the study and that you are over the age of 18 (see Appendix B).

As noted above the subjects’ confidentiality remained anonymous. After conducting the survey, the information was gathered, graphed and analyzed. After the information was collected the surveys were destroyed.
Results (HX)
The information gathered from the 20 surveys is shown below (Table 1).

Table 1: Summary of Population Survey Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>M/F</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Marital Status</th>
<th>Family Income</th>
<th>Children #</th>
<th>Household #</th>
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<th>Culture</th>
<th>Gov. Aid</th>
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<th>Overpopulated</th>
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A relationship was found between family incomes and the number of children in each family. Graph 1 below shows that the family income and the numbers of children in each family are positively related. A family that has more children tends to have a higher yearly income. However, the graph also demonstrates that some families have a high number of children even though they have a low income.

Graph 1: Comparison between Family Income and Number of Children

Graph 2 shows a household-income-versus-average-number-of-children relationship. In general, for the families that have incomes in the range of 0-40,000, the more income they have, the fewer children they have.

Graph 2: Average Number of Children Related To Household Income

The study also showed that families receiving government aid tend to have more children or in other words families with more children tend to receive more government aid. The research indicates that families receiving government aid have an average of 2.73 children per family exceeding the perfect fertility rate of 2 children per family. However families that do not receive government aids have an average of 1.85 children per family and therefore fall below the fertility rate of 2 children per family.
Third, 11 volunteers out of the 20 subjects believe that the United States is overpopulated and 7 of them think that the U.S. government should take a proactive step to control birthrate. However out of the 7 more than half stated that they would be upset if the U.S. government limited the number of children they were allowed to conceive.

Based on the study a relationship linking age or ethnicity to government aid or the number of children in a household cannot be deduced. The study was conducted in a diverse area and therefore shows diversity and proves to be random.

**Discussion**

(RA) Based on the results obtained from surveying anonymous individuals, we were able to conclude that there is a positive correlation between family size and the amount of government aid administered to low-income families. Our results prove to be in correspondence with our initial theory, that families have more children in order to receive more government aid. However while our survey shows a trend we cannot state that we have proved our initial hypothesis. For while there is a trend none of the subjects surveyed stated that their encouragement to have more children was their hopes of receiving more government aid.

Our experience with the study and results made us realize the difficulty in proving our theory that government aid serves as an incentive for the underprivileged to reproduce more. The subjects had the freedom to answer each question in the survey willingly and their honesty could not be analyzed. Therefore as surveyors it was out of our hands whether they answered the question, whether or not government aid encouraged them to have more children, truthfully or not. For this reason we understand that the government is also unable to deduce the same information due to similar reasons.

In the survey we asked “would you have fewer children if you did not receive government benefit based on the number of members in your household?” (See Appendix A). We concluded that if we had worded this question differently then maybe we would have been able to better support our hypothesis. A refined question would be “if government aid were limited and was not based on household size, would this have made you reconsider the amount of children that you have today?” Along with this we also believe that we would have received better results if we conducted a verbal survey. People may be more likely to take questions seriously if they were asked them verbally by a surveyor rather than on a handout where they are more likely to rush through the questions without using much effort or thought. A verbal survey could also make discussion between the surveyor and the subject possible and this would allow for the surveyor to better know his or her subject and therefore be more likely to assess the results of the study.

It is unfortunate that we have neither the sufficient time nor resources to continue our study and well in fact prove our theory. However we hope that our information on overpopulation and government aid and the study we conducted open the door for more research to be done by others including our government. We hope that the least that we have done is opened a door of awareness so that others can take part in this discussion and maybe even seek to
resolve the issue. Overpopulation is an issue that affects us all and if limiting government aid can serve as a control of our population then it cannot hurt to try.
Works Cited


Appendix A

SURVEY ON THE EFFECTS THAT GOVERNMENT AID TO UNDERPRIVILEGED FAMILIES HAS ON HOUSEHOLD SIZE

Please be advised that this survey is anonymous and your identity will not be disclosed. Please answer the following questions to the best of your abilities.

1. Age: ____
2. Gender: F / M
3. Ethnicity:
   1. Caucasian
   2. African America
   3. Asian
   4. Hispanic/Latino
   5. Native American
4. Marital Status:
   1. Single
   2. Married
   3. Divorced
   4. Separated
   5. Widowed
5. Annual Family Income:
   1. Unemployed
   2. $0 - $20,000
   3. $20,000 - $40,000
   4. $40,000 - $75,000
   5. $75,000 - $150,000
   6. $150,000 - $300,000
6. Number of Children: ______
7. Number of Household Members: ______
8. Were all your children planned?  
   Yes / No
9. Has your culture affected the # of children you have?  
   Yes / No
10. Do you currently receive government-based benefits? (Welfare, LIHEAP, Taxes, Food Stamps, etc.)
Yes / No

If so which of the following do you receive? (Circle all that Apply)
1. Welfare
2. LIHEAP
3. Taxes
4. Food Stamps
5. Breakfast and Lunch Program
6. WIC
7. SNAP
8. TANF
9. Other __________

11. Would you have fewer children if you did not receive government benefit based on the number of members in your household?
   Yes / No

12. Do you believe that the United States is overpopulated?
   Yes / No

If so what negative impact has overpopulation caused for your country? (Circle all that apply)
a. Unemployment
   a. Inflation
a. Strained resources
a. Deteriorating environment
a. Traffic jams
a. Crowded residences
a. Crowded schools / lack of education
a. Nothing, overpopulation is great

13. Do you think that the United States should take a proactive step to reduce birthrate?
   Yes / No

14. Would you be upset if the United States put a limit on the number of children that you were allowed to have?
   Yes / No

Thank you very much for your time in helping us with our study.
Appendix B

Human Subjects Research Protocol

I. Title of the Project

The Promotion of Overpopulation by the US Government: Proposing a solution to overpopulation in the United States by limiting government aid based on number of household members (group #7)

II. Objectives

The purpose of this study is to shed light on the role which government aid plays in promoting overpopulation and proposing a solution to diminishing this positive correlation.

III. Background and Rationale

The United States government continues to revolve around the same debates that focus on preventing unintended children. While the population growth rate has leveled off, it is still growing at a rate which is too fast for a developing country which consumes such a great deal of resources. We propose that the United States government shifts focus and incorporates the prevention of not only unintended children but also intended pregnancies for false reasons.

Currently we seem to await some new form of miracle contraception that will save us from overpopulation, however in the mean time the government itself is ironically contributing to the increase in population. The areas that are highly overpopulated tend to be areas of low income. For this reason, family planning services have mainly focuses on such areas when providing education and access to contraceptives. While the lack of education and access to contraceptives puts such places at higher risks of overpopulation, we claim that it is insufficient. Government aid has been an incentive for such poverty stricken areas. There are many government official websites, which explain the various types of welfare programs offered to underprivileged families:

http://www.nj.gov/humanservices/dfd/programs/foodstamps/
http://www.in.gov/fssa/dfr/2684.htm
http://www.downsizinggovernment.org/hhs/welfare-spending

When families are presented with the opportunity of receiving more federal aid with an increasing household size, they are more apt to ignore their reality and follow the natural instinct of desire. Federal aid therefore offers a portal through which the government can directly control birthrate. If federal aid was limited and did not depend on household size, then the United States government would be removing the incentive for underprivileged families to have families grander than they’re capable of supporting.

IV. Procedures

A. Research Design

We will be conducting a cross-sectional survey of heads of households in the New Brunswick, NJ area that will be focused on the relationship between their household size (#number of family members) and the amount of government aid that they receive.
B. Sample
We hope to sample 20-100 heads of households.

C. Measurement / Instrumentation
Survey questions will be focused on household size, yearly income, and government aid received.

D. Study Site(s)/Location of Procedures:
The research will be conducted outside local supermarkets in New Brunswick, NJ. Permission to survey individuals outside the supermarket will be obtained prior to conducting any surveys.

E. Detailed study procedures
Surveys will be handed out on clipboards and dropped into a bin by the subject so that confidentiality is ensured. After the surveys have been collected, the information will be gathered and graphed in order to study the correlation of interest. The surveys will be returned to Dr. Julie Fagan, Ph.D. and destroyed once the information has been collected.

F. Consent Procedures
Participants will be read/asked to read this consent form, provided answers to any questions they may have about the study and offered the informational sheet below. The student researcher will say:

This research study is being conducted as part of a class project at Rutgers University which has been approved by the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board under protocol # E12-342. The study involves only a survey to be filled out that is both anonymous and confidential. Your participation in this study is strictly voluntary. The student researcher has been approved by the Rutgers Institutional Review Board to conduct the research. The consent will be read, and your questions answered. By giving verbal consent, you will be agreeing to participate in the study and that you are over the age of 18

G. Internal Validity
Subjects will be chosen at random and therefore we will not target individuals based on any distinguishing features. The screening of subjects based on study qualifications will not be done until all surveys have been collected.

H. Data Analysis
From the obtained data, we will be using the data focused on household size, yearly income, and government aid received in order to analyze our data and successfully survey the correlation between amount of government aids vs. household size. The data will be analyzed by constructing a graph, which shows a positive correlation between government aid and household size.

V. Bibliography
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. USDA. 2008 http://www.in.gov/fssa/dfr/2691.htm
Appendix C

Subject Information Sheet

SURVEY ON THE EFFECTS THAT GOVERNMENT AID TO UNDERPRIVILEGED FAMILIES HAS ON HOUSEHOLD SIZE

Julie Fagan, Ph.D with students Chifaa Bouzidi, Rania Abdelnaby, Heng Xiao

INTRODUCTION
You are invited to voluntarily participate in a research study that will examine whether government aid to underprivileged families ultimately affect the household size in the United States.

INFORMATION
You must be an adult, over the age of 25 to participate in this study. Your participation in this study will involve the following:
You will be asked to complete a brief survey that should take approximately 5-15 minutes to complete. The survey will consist of both multiple-choice and fill in the blank questions. Topics that include age, household size, approximate annual income, number of children etc., will be asked. This survey will remain completely anonymous and is totally voluntary. It is hoped that you will complete this survey in order to assist us in studying this particular issue. If at any point while filling out the survey, you are uncomfortable answering any of the questions, you are free to withdraw from the study.

BENEFITS
You will not receive any direct benefit for participating in this research. However, it is expected that the research will provide Americans with a better understanding of the long-term effects that government aid directly and indirectly has on household size in the U.S.

RISKS
This survey is completely anonymous and no individual’s identity or personal information is needed. There are no risks involved.

CONFIDENTIALITY
This research is completely anonymous. No information will be recorded that could identify you (you will not be asked your name, address, phone number).

COMPENSATION
You will receive no monetary compensation for participating in this study.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS
If you have any questions regarding the study, you may contact Dr. Julie Fagan at 848-932-8354 or email her at Fagan@rci.rutgers.edu
SUBJECT RIGHTS
If you have any questions about your rights as a research subject, you may contact the IRB Administrator at Rutgers University at: Rutgers University Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects
Office of Research and Sponsored Programs
3 Rutgers Plaza
New Brunswick, NJ 08901-8559
Tel: 848 932 4058
Email: humansubjects@orsp.rutgers.edu
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There are many government subsidies available to assist low-income families; some of which include:

**TANF:** (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) Joint Federal-state cash assistance program for low-income families with children

**SNAP:** (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) New food stamp program, changes include a focus on nutrition and an increase in benefit amount

**LIHEAP:** (Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program) Federally funded program that provides support to needy low-income households pay for utility bills

**VARIOUS GOVERNMENT SUBSIDIES**

Government aid is not rare in America. Government aid is based on household size. Therefore the larger the household, the more aid a family receives.

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Letters to the Editor/Editorials

Editorial #1

Star-Ledger
1 Star Ledger Plaza
Newark, NJ 07102

Dear Editor,

I am a Rutgers University student conducting research on the correlation between government aid and overpopulation in the United States of America.

While America’s population growth rate has leveled off, it is still growing at a fast rate for a developing country which consumes too many resources. We propose that the U.S. government shifts focus and incorporates the prevention of not only unintended pregnancies but also ones intended due to false rationalizations. In the meantime, the government itself is ironically contributing to the increase in population. Family planning services have mainly focused on underprivileged areas by providing education, awareness, and access to contraceptives; however, we claim that it is insufficient. Because federal aid increases with increasing household size, such families are more apt to ignore their reality and follow the natural instinct of desire. Federal aid therefore offers a portal through which the government can directly control birthrate. If federal aid was limited and did not depend on household size, then the American government would be removing the incentive for underprivileged families to have families grander than they’re capable of supporting.

I have brought this topic to your attention so that you may hopefully consider it as one of your topics in future publication.

Sincerely,

Chifaa Bouzidi

Editorial #2

The Washington Post
1150 15th Street Northwest
Washington, DC 20071

Letter to the Editor
OVERPOPULATION IN THE UNITED STATES

The United States is the third most populated country in the world reaching nearly 300 million individuals and exponentially growing by 2.5 million each year. The issue of overpopulation is slowly affecting various aspects of the economy. As families grow, financial strain increases. A solution to aid families who are economically struggle is government aid. Government aid is
available in various forms such as direct cash, subsidies and vouchers. Underprivileged families receive this welfare based on many different reasons. Families may apply and receive government aid if they have less than or equal to $1500 in assets, depending on which state they live in. The most common reason why a family would receive welfare and other types of government subsidies is based on number of family members and income. Some may think this leads to planned over-reproduction in order to be eligible for more financial aid. According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, the total family member size is taken into consideration when assessing eligibility for housing vouchers. In conclusion, overpopulation is a serious problem that the government as well as many Americans needs to be aware of.

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Editorial #3

The Daily Targum
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Dear Editor,

I am a student from Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey. Two partners and I conducted a research about the governmental promoted overpopulation in the United States.

Overpopulation is not only a regional problem but also a global issue nowadays. There are reasons of population growth rate increase, such as an increase of birth, a decline of morality, an increase of life span, etc. Since the end of the Middle Age, global population has been increasing continuously, especially in these fifty years. However, the carrying capacity of the environment cannot always support the increasing population. Therefore, sometimes the birth control may need to apply.

China reduces its fertility rate from over three to 1.54 (in 2011) via its Policy of Birth Planing. Due to some cultural, legal, political concerns, it is hard to apply similar policies in US. However, we found that the current policies of welfare are actually promoting reproduction. The calculation of many government aid programs is based on the number of family members, which means, a family that is getting government aids may receive more if they have more people.

We conducted a survey about number of children, government aids and income. The survey shows that for the families that have an annual income below 40,000 USD, the less income they earn, the more kids they seem to have. Also, for the families that get government aid, they have 2.73 children per family in average; but for the families that do not get government aid, they have only 1.85 children per family. These results show that current government aid policies are promoting overpopulation problem.

Although the population of US is not yet very large compare to the land we own, population
growth is exponential. When the population grows to some point, it becomes very hard to control. In order to prevent overpopulation in the future, it may be necessary for us to review our family-size-based government aid policies.

Heng Xiao