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Reading Review 3

For this reading review, I focus on De Janvry and Sadoulet's *Poverty and Vulnerability Analysis*. The article first notes that the world's population is rapidly increasing; then, the article focuses on family planning resources in developing countries -- an effective way to control population growth. De Janvry and Sadoulet point out that around 40% of pregnancies in developing countries are unintended, so access to and information about contraceptives should, in theory, reduce fertility rates. Experimental evidence supports this claim: Matlab's experiment in Bangladesh dropped fertility rates by 1.5 births per woman. Additionally, comparing fertility rates between Bangladesh (a country with a strong family planning program) and Pakistan (a country with a weak program), Bangladesh has fertility rates of 1.7 births per woman lower despite the original similarity of fertility rates. Additionally, De Janvry and Sadoulet note that family planning programs are most effective in countries with an improving socioeconomic environment; in particular, educated women are important to an effective program. Finally, the authors suggest that developed countries invest in family planning programs where it is needed -- particularly sub-Saharan Africa.

Overall, this article convinced me that family planning programs can be effective in developing countries. However, the article did not convince me that family planning programs should be implemented in sub-Saharan Africa, for De Janvry and Sadoulet did not present any concrete evidence for Africa, focusing on Pakistan and Bangladesh and only briefly mentioning some countries in Africa. Additionally, the article compared Bangladesh and Pakistan under the premise that the two countries were originally the "same country". But, perhaps this falsely portrays how similar these countries are, for there is still a geographic difference between them being on opposite sides of India. Finally, I am curious on what the theory of demographic transition has to say about this family planning approach. The theory

predicts that death rates will fall; then, birth rates will fall. But, family family planning programs alter birth rates without changing death rates. But, the family planning program only decreases unwanted births and the theory of demographic transition predicts that birth rates fall because societal standards change, so there is a decrease in wanted births. So, perhaps this distinction between wanted and unwanted births reconciles the theory of demographic transition and the evidence from family planning.