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RESEARCH ARTICLE

The Childfree Phenomenon in Some Influencers

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Abstract: Decision to not have a child cause negative stigma social. The perspective of married couple that decide to not have child called childfree. Not having children is not a kind of new concept; many married couple in developed countries already make this choice. The married couple have a role from decision to not have child in their family life. It is because related to their reproduction things. Islam already discuss about rights of husband and wife to have a child. The author interested to conduct the research to study phenomenon about not to have children from the woman reproduction perspective rights in Islam from this phenomenon. Method used in this research was the library research with Juridical Normative approach. Data collection technique included documentation and the analysis used content analysis method. Decision to not have a child need to have deep consideration. One of the implementations of rights reproduction, especially rights to refuse pregnancy is a choice to not have a child. In order to implement this right, a household must adopt an idea about relationship between husband and wife. Decision to not have a child need to be discussed between husband and wife. Both of them, most important the woman, must be honest about the reason they do not want to have child. So as not to harm either party, the reason must be accompanied with convincing basic justification.

Keywords: Women's rights, childfree, marriage, and family.

1. Introduction

The culture of Indonesian people who usually uphold ethics and eastern culture is currently discussing with the topic of childfree. Even though this has happened before, the term of "Childfree" becomes popular in Indonesia after one of the public figures said on his social media account that he and his wife are "childfree" (Haecal *et al.*, 2022). The tendency to not have children has grown, especially among the Indonesian millennial generation. According to Ari Handayani's research, the percentage of married women aged 15-49 who choose not to have children has recently changed. In 2007, by 59% down to 56% in 2012, and then increase again to 58% in 2017. The percentage of men who decided not to have children increased from 52 % in the 2007 IDHS to 53% in 2012 and has not changed since then (Akbar & Umam, 2021). In accordance with previous information, population census data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) shows that the population growth rate decreased by 0.24%, from 1.49% between 2000 and 2010 to 1.25% between 2010 and 2020 ("Childless Phenomenon". in Indonesia," n.d.).

Tri Rejeki Andayani said that one of the most common concerns experienced by millennials who are in the process of getting married but choose not to have children or Childfree is a lack of confidence in one's ability to care for and educate children (Dwi Hastuti, 2021).



Towards the end of the 20th century, the concept of childless life began to appear. Couples who decide not to have children often assume that having children is neither a personal right nor an inalienable human right that can be enforced by anyone. People who decide not to have children most often mention the desire to reduce overpopulation (Tiara Hanandita, 2022). However, there is also an assumption that the "childless" movement is accompanied by a political "body" campaign that asserts that a woman's body belongs to her and no one else has the right to force her to get pregnant or have children (Fadhilah, 2022).

Further investigation revealed that the existence of the childless phenomenon is fundamentally detached from society's shift in perspective towards marriage, which is once institutional and now individual. People's opinion about having children or not is an important change due to this paradigm shift. Because of social expectations and demands, child ownership is considered significant in the institutional context of marriage. Otherwise, individual marriages do not prioritize having children because couples are more concerned with meeting emotional needs and growth as a couple (Patnani *et al.*, 2021). This situation is really strange when viewed more deeply the principal of the Indonesian way of life that accepts what it has children bring food, as described by the local saying "Many children, many fortunes." As a result, the author is very interested in learning more about the millennial issue of not having children based on a social perspective.

2. Research Method and Materials

This research used a qualitative approach with framing analysis or also known as content analysis or media text. According to Ryan (1991), the framing analysis method is a tool to collect information about how the general public feels about various issues. This approach employed Vablen Adorno's theoretical criticism and media studies as a data collection tool. Thus, the information was obtained as the text. This approach is often used to analyze mass media-focused research and is supported by Hoffman's (1973) theory of child value. This analysis research utilized social media platforms, such as TikTok and YouTube. The thought of this research came about for a number of reasons. Some time ago, a community leader stated that she and her husband had decided to uphold the freedom of children or not want to have children after marriage. This is quite interesting to observe because many people in Indonesia then speak up to support or reject the decision of its public figure. The research gathered this information from various public statements of figures and artists on news sites and social media. Like Cinta Laura, Gita Savitri, and culinary expert named Juna to have children or not have children. In addition, the study looked at some comments made by internet users regarding some of these artists choosing not to have children. As a result, the method used is thought to be able to trick the public into responses that become public discussion in various ways.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Result

3.1.1. *Living Alone After Marriage*

A couple makes the decision to live without children after marriage through a series of steps. They started taking steps to delay having children, but after that, she changed her mind and decided not to have children for the rest of her life. According to Blackstone & Stewart (2012), couples may choose not to have children due to the impact of social and macro factors, such as increased female labor force participation. In contrast to the data on the real situation, the informant admitted that the couple choose not to have children for economic and financial reasons. According to interviews with informants, the couple decided not to have children due to financial and mental considerations. As a result, only one child will be born in poverty. Moreover, having children is not a short time, so that is one of the factors, monetary and mental status must be carefully regulated.

Field data also shows that marriage is not a decision taken with the intention of "wanting to have children", but with the intention to continue living with one's partner. According to informants, life after marriage is more than just a matter of "children". There are also career issues that must continue, daily household needs that must be met, and other problems. Informants in the field admit that marrying can prevent overpopulation after living childless. Indonesia's population will grow rapidly if the birth rate is maintained. Informants admitted that overpopulation can have a significant negative impact on the nation. In addition, when a country is unable to provide citizens with basic rights, large-scale international migration occurs every year.

According to Hintz & Brown (2019), the decision not to have children is seen as a move to avoid "pronatalist" social pressures that encourage women to conceive and promote parenthood as a universal goal. As a result of this statement, society interprets the decision not to have children as a form of rebellion on nature. Couples whose decision not to have children is considered bad for society. Given the lack of women becoming mothers, the pronatalist society's view of the childless phenomenon can cause moral panic (Verniers, 2020). For example in Europe that needs more babies to avoid a population crisis.

Pronatalist societies believe that birth can affect the quality of work in the future. Couples who openly discuss their decision not to have children risk receiving personal criticism as if they had a difficult childhood. According to Durham (Hintz & Brown, 2019), acceptance of the decision not to have children is influenced by two social factors. First, the depiction of social assessments of the conditions for couples to have children. Second, the feeling of emptiness experienced by couples without children.

The stereotypes that develop in society are closely related to the decision of spouses not to have children and the negative acceptance of society towards them. According to Ashburn-Nardo (2017), there are two types of stereotype drafts. While prescriptive stereotypes imply expectations that determine an individual's behavior, prescriptive stereotypes include behaviors observed as a typical social group. According to Chrétien 2019, the couple's decision not to have children is thought to alleviate suffering by reducing the burden placed on an overpopulated planet. It can be concluded that the growth of the local population has exceeded the currently available capacity, which led to migration.

Low society is a type of flourishing and ruling, but the choice of not having children brings a family necessity and individual status. One informant claimed that their husband and wife received many requests from the community to have children. They experience feelings of guilt for not being a perfect husband and wife as a result of these demands. According to Linuwih (2020), the fact that couples have more control over their environment suggests that gender bias persists.

3.1.2. *Unplanned Fertile Couple Decision*

People who are in a serious relationship need to consider their future, including about the children. Everyone has the right to make his own decisions. When a married couple encounters patent issues, such as having children, because the family highly values the value of children. The subject (human) also views the presence of children as a goal in marriage (Mardiyan & Kustanti, 2016). Dariyo (2007) asserts that the purpose of a couple's marriage decision is to have children. According to Dariyo (2007), most people view children as the hope of the future to carry forward the wishes of their parents. The presence of his children can also change the atmosphere of his wedding. This is because when someone gets married, they assume new responsibilities for the child (Mardiyan & Kustanti, 2016). Therefore, couples who want to have children with a partner who is the same age as him are considered fertile.

On the other hand, having a child is a gift from God. The child's height is measured as if the child is a gift, which is considered a very precious gift from God (Patnani *et al.*, 2021). One informant claimed that their husband and wife received many requests from the

community to have children. They experience feelings of guilt for not being a perfect husband and wife as a result of these demands. According to Linuwih (2020), the fact that couples have more control over their environment suggests that gender bias persists. However, happiness through presence goes beyond children. Besides, couple can do our favorite things, like get together with family, so there will be happiness (Aurelia, 2021). It's not easy to have no children because the family definitely disagrees.

Not having children also requires mental and psychic preparation if someone is not ready and decides to do it. Therefore, respecting the choices made by others is essential. It may be our horrible thought process turned into a great option for that individual. Therefore, should we value neutrality and value differences? Do not treat them unfairly; Instead, think about society's knowledge of childless life after marriage. Demographic growth is due to changes in economic and ideological structures. The demographic shift toward delaying having children is driven by current economic constraints, such as demand for higher levels of education and concerns about future employment (Koropecj-Cox *et al.*, 2018). The increasing number of childless couples by women's groups indicates a related ideological shift in women's identity behaviors and decisions about having children influenced by social, cultural, and ideological norms. Having children signifies women's identity as mothers and the desire to love and care for others (Ruegemer & Dziengel, 2022). It can improve a person's social status while increasing continuity and immortality. Women, as mothers intrinsically, give the internal importance of life.

Because it is considered to interfere with the dominant construction, not having children after marriage is highly stigmatized in society, especially among women, who are central to motherhood. The stigma they face is often associated with an assumption of being above normal gender, they have far fewer explanations for their position in society than men. Based on the interviews conducted, the informant realized that not having children after marriage is a personal choice of the couple. They claim to have just learned about childless options. Influencers who share their decisions on social media become a source of informant knowledge about this decision. The decision not to have children is a strange one, the informants admitted. Our society upholds the "norm of parenthood" and believes in the fairness of having children without incurring personal costs, resulting in this oddity. According to Morison *et al.* (2016), pronatalist societies foster a discourse of hostility towards people who do not choose to have children. The standard describes both parent and child as high-value assets, making it possible to choose not to dismiss the child as a viable option or even considered a deviation.

Evidence from the field shows that society's knowledge of children as carriers of fortune for the family is incorrect. According to the sources, there is no problem of poverty in Indonesia if children are the bearers of fortune. According to the informant, to achieve a balance between income and expenditure, the family's economic burden increases and income must also increase. Since many of our societies are still entangled in a cycle of poverty, deciding to have children under such circumstances is a significant and regrettable choice. Although the children are underage, there are still parents who often hire them. Based on research (Hintz & Brown, 2020), it is argued that having children is related to reproductive functions that go beyond personal fulfillment, such as fulfilling family responsibilities with successors. To maintain the white race in America, one family must have children.

3.2. Discussion

3.2.1. Construction in Society

The process of habituation occurs in every set of human activities. The habituation that leads to reproduction is when people marry and have children. As Peter L. Berger argues in his book (Gergen, 2019), he affirms that humans are actually influenced by their environment. The process of habituation then produces an influence. Berger in his book (Gergen, 2019) stated that although the meaning embedded in actions that become habits is



embedded in them as routine things in common knowledge, the habits will still maintain them. Options have specific meaning as a result of habitual behavior.

The data supported Berger's argument that living without children should be an option, but that habituation is growing in our society, where marriage requires children. This suggests that habituation is beginning to limit human decision-making. In fact, the data collected shows that the absence of children in developing country societies is one form of development of people's mindset.

4. Conclusion

According to interviews with informants, the couple decided not to have children due to financial and mental considerations. As a result, only one child will be born in poverty. Moreover, having children is not a short time, so it is one of the factors, monetary and mental status that must be carefully regulated. Field data also shows that marriage is not a decision taken with the intention of "wanting to have children", but with the intention to continue living with one's partner. According to informants, life after marriage is more than just a matter of "children". There are also career issues that must continue, daily household needs that must be met, and other problems. Informants in the field admitted that marrying can prevent overpopulation after living childless. Indonesia's population will grow rapidly if the birth rate is maintained. Informants admitted that overpopulation can have a significant negative impact on the nation. In addition, when a country is unable to provide citizens with basic rights, large-scale international migration occurs every year. People who are in a serious relationship need to consider their future, including about the children. Everyone has the right to make his own decisions when a married couple encounters patent problems, such as having children.

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