

# Case study on natural law worldview on population and contraception issues

[Sociology](#), [Population](#)



### 1. A world View that is not already addressed in the book:

The case study on Religion and the State by Christine E. Gudorf describes several issues that arise during the meeting among officials from agriculture, health and population departments. The largest part covered in the case study is the issue of health and population. The characters argue about what should be done to control the rising population. Nigeria is one of the highly populated countries in the region and the State feels that the state law should be used to prosecute those who decide to give birth to more than four children. However, some people felt that the Yoruba community must continue with their freedom of giving birth to as many children as they would want. They take the issue of giving birth as something they should decide themselves. According to their culture, a family takes prestige in the number of children that they have, and these children are taken to be a vital factor in offering the required labor for the community. The book already discusses the Christian and Yoruba views regarding the population issue, but it has not tackled the aspect of Natural law worldviews on population issues.

### **Background on the World View**

According to any natural law, every argument should be based on a teleological world view. Such views usually use phrases such as “ There is always a reason”, “ It happened for a reason”, “ Everything has a purpose, we may not understand just as yet”. The natural law has its own explanations of human life and procreation. When one takes a close look at all living things, it is easy to realize that everything that lives does so to form a continuity of its own existence. Hence, because of the deep connection with life as an intrinsically good thing, this natural law holds life in high

regards, and it implies that stopping life (either through murder or suicide) is outright wrong. This principle of thought further implies that reproduction should not be interfered with, because it is part of an intrinsically good life. This world view therefore shows that every human being has an obligation to reproduce as dictated by the natural law, and must rear the offspring as expected. People who believe in the natural law believe that human beings must not interfere with any processes that are geared towards reproduction and rearing of the offspring. In order to promote life, people are then expected to defend life and enhance their own health and that of the offspring.

### **The Natural Law's approach to issues**

The natural law view on contraception implies that there should be a certain way that must be used to approach the population issues. For instance, this law prohibits the issue of criminalization of uncontrolled fertility. As reflected by the characters in the case study, the state may prosecute any woman who does not consistently get family planning contraceptives as dictated by the law. The state may caution the people that population explosion can lead to economic down turns for the country, but the natural law shows that every life created is created for a reason and must be cherished as a gift of nature. Therefore, a woman who is willing to give birth to the fifth child should not be prohibited to do so by the government. Human beings are gifted with sexuality so as to procreate and produce offspring, and criminalization of a natural process should never be an option. Therefore, this world view approaches the issue of population from the perspective that nature dictates

that human beings must procreate and bring forth offspring.

The natural law on conception also has a unique approach towards artificial contraception. It implies that contraception deliberately hinders the natural ways that have been built for the human race's perpetuation of life.

According to this law, sex was designed for procreation and the pleasure that comes with it is just an added blessing that strengthens the couple's intimacy bond; thus increasing the chances of new life. Therefore, if sex is used for other purposes apart from the basic purpose (procreation), it makes the whole process unnatural. This means that people in Yoruba ought not to be introduced to contraception as it has been suggested by the characters. The natural law condemns the use of any forms of contraceptives including barrier methods and sterilization because they are all deemed to be unnatural. This approach to the issue of contraceptives is supported by Roman Catholics who strongly believe that God created man with a sense of self control, and therefore, married couples can use abstinence, rhythm method and body functions methods as natural family planning methods. This is because such methods do not interfere with nature.

### **Pros, Cons and consequences**

The natural law can be applied to the issues regarding population growth and contraception because it promotes what nature intended. The advantage of this world view is that it is not unethical. In the case study, the women are supposed to go through forced contraception and even the method used on these women is to be decided on by the health care providers. Furthermore, those women who do not adhere to the set laws and

regulations are to be reported to the authorities, meaning that their privacy and confidentiality are not respected. These issues form an unethical basis of dealing with population growth. The natural law can be used to apply ethical practices amongst community members. People would only require to be taught about principles of natural family planning.

However, this natural law world view may mislead some people into believing that they should not consider the number of children that they give birth to. For instance, some women may end up giving birth to too many children who they may not be able to take care of. This is a problem that has been witnessed in most under developed regions across the world whereby families are too large and the resources are very few. This kind of population explosion leads to depletion of resources and degradation of various basic needs such as shelter and education.

The consequences of the application of the natural law amongst such communities may spell doom for the whole country. For instance, it would be very hard to explain to the community members about the importance of education because already they would have a burden over their shoulders. Also, such important things such as education and healthcare may not be held in high regard because the people may be brainwashed to believe that children should only assist their parents and clans in the farms. For the people who understand how the natural law can be applied without causing population explosions, the consequences may be favorable for the community. Their sense of confidentiality and privacy would be respected and they would be trained on how to use natural family planning.

## **The Course of Action**

In order to apply the natural law in population issues and contraception, the government and health care providers must engage the community members in continuous training on how well they should handle natural family planning. The mere stating of the importance of natural family planning may not lead to a healthy community. People need to be educated that even as nature takes its course, they also need to take part in ensuring that they do not cause overpopulation. The same nature has provided limited resources such as food and land, meaning that people must share the little resources that are available. Therefore, the government, healthcare personnel and all stakeholders must work together to ensure a good implementation plan for the natural law.

### 2. Personal World View and response

## **Protestant's Worldview on contraception and population**

Nigeria has been one of the highly populated countries in the region and as a Christian protestant; I feel that the population need to be controlled appropriately so as to achieve the country's goals. According to the case study, the Christians believe that human beings have been commanded to give birth and fill the world. However, this command must be handled with caution because God did not intend to give people too many children that they cannot handle. Each family should be given the choice to give birth to the number of children that they will be comfortable with, meaning that families need to be responsible for their own families, but that should not give the government the green light to force contraception on them.

## **Background on the Protestants' View**

In the early days, contraception and population control methods were equally prohibited in the Christian domain. The basis of this prohibition came largely from church teachings rather than the biblical teachings, simply because the scriptures had little to say about the issue. Therefore, each Christian denomination has continued to create its own teachings about contraception based on their interpretation of issues related to sex, marriage and family unit. Before the beginning of the 20th century, all Christian domains taught against the use of artificial family planning methods. However, time has continuously influence liberal protestant churches such that most of them have embraced the use of artificial birth control. These religious groups have started accepting that birth control methods are meant for the betterment of the humankind. Also, all these churches have different views on whether this issue should be used only in marriage set up. For instance, some less liberal churches believe that contraceptives should also be availed to unmarried couples who are in sexual relationships. In the case study, the issue of population and contraception is only discussed in the marriage context. The views of most Protestants usually vary from the Roman Catholics, who usually vie this issue in a very conservative way. For instance, Catholics do not compromise on the issues of sex before marriage and therefore they do not discuss contraception regarding unmarried couples. In the same way, they do not support contraception even in married couples. This is a clear difference between Protestants and Roman Catholics.

## **Protestant World View approach to issues:**

Protestants do have different approaches to issues as compared to other church affiliations. For instance, Protestants believe that contraceptives are a good option for controlling population in all regions of the world. The Protestants' approach to the issue can be said to be quite realistic. This is because they do understand that people may find abstinence difficult to achieve in the contemporary world. In the current world, people engage in sexual activities before marriage and this practice always has dire consequences such as unplanned pregnancies and various STDs. Therefore, the Protestants' approach the underlying issues cautiously, and in most cases, they support the use of contraceptives in all cases.

Furthermore, Protestants approach the issue open-mindedly. Even though religious groups are more inclined to the natural law, Protestants believe that the use of contraceptives is more reliable than natural methods of birth control. Therefore, instead of dealing with population explosions caused by unplanned pregnancies, it is better to use contraceptives, bearing in mind that contraceptives are also not 100% reliable. The reasoning that is used by Protestants to make this decision is that God has given human beings the power and knowledge to devise the best ways of survival. In order to survive, human beings have in turn found appropriate methods of birth control and Protestants' worldview supports them.

Protestants approach these issues with some limits. For instance, they support the need for contraceptives to control population but they also recognize some strict conditions upon which the decision should be made. In essence, this view does not support promiscuity or unethical practices



associated with population control. Promiscuity is sometimes encouraged by the leniency found in contraception permissiveness. This is why the Protestants condemn the issues of promiscuity and unethical practices that maybe done under the shadow of contraceptives. This approach promotes good morals among Christians and the community as a whole.

## **Pros, cons and Consequences**

This approach is advantageous in that it eases people's lives by permitting the use of contraceptives. This is more so beneficial to women because they are the ones who have the burden of giving birth and rearing the children. By using contraceptives, couples can easily manage the number of children that they would be able to handle. It also offers the community members an opportunity to make their own decisions on issues related to marriage and family life. The permissiveness of contraception in the society leads to manageable economic life for the people in a particular region. This is because the government does not need to strain its limited resources as is the case in over- populated areas. Therefore, Protestants' view on contraception and population is very crucial in the management of all aspects of life- economic, social and religious.

However, this permissiveness still has some disadvantages. The liberal Protestants' view allows the use of contraceptives even in the cases of unmarried couples who could be in a sexual relationship. As much as they argue that their stand is a realistic approach to solving population issues in the contemporary world, this practice also permits a level of promiscuity and immorality. This is because people no longer look at marriage as a sacred

union whereby sex should only be permitted. Young people end up engaging in immoral activities simply because they can control their fertility.

Furthermore, married people also commit adultery because they do not feel restricted by anyone. Contraception may, therefore, become a hideout for immoral persons whose only worry is to become pregnant or catch a disease.

The consequences of this world view can be both positive and negative, depending on how it is interpreted by people. For instance, it may lead to the betterment of lives in a country through family planning and management. It may ease the burden off the region's women because they do not have to constantly worry about giving birth to too many children who may become a burden. The lives of people would improve because they would not scramble for limited resources as it happens in over populated places. However, it would lead to degradation of values and morals among people who interpret it wrongly. Simply because the Protestants approve the use of contraceptives, it does not mean that they permit immoral behavior in the society. Therefore, moral decadence would lead to broken marriages and spread of STDs.

### **The course of action**

The government, the church and health workers would need to work together so as to implement the use of contraceptives among the people.

They should devise ways that would ensure that the process is well implemented and that ethical procedures are used to handle the matter.

Implementation of the process should not include forceful administration of

the birth control methods. Community members would also need to be educated and trained on contraception usage and any problems associated with it. This would ensure that everyone uses these birth control methods is fully aware of the issues surrounding family planning.