

## CHAPTER I

### Introduction

#### A. Background of Study

The term “childfree” has agained increasing popularity in recent years, referring to individuals who choose not to have children.<sup>1</sup> Childfree became popular at the end of the 20th century. St. Augustine<sup>2</sup> as a follower of Maniism<sup>3</sup>, believes that making children is immoral, and thus (according to his belief system) traps souls in impermanent bodies. To prevent this, they employed methods such as calendar-based contraception.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Mohammad Rindu Fajar Islamy et al., *Fenomena Childfree Di Era Modern: Studi Fenomenologis Generasi Gen Z Serta Pandangan Islam Terhadap Childfree Di Indonesia*, Vol. 19 (2022), p. 81

<sup>2</sup> “St. Augustine” was a Christian religious philosopher. He is also a Saint in the Catholic Church whose theological thoughts were universally accepted in the Western Christian tradition from the Latin Middle Ages to the nineteenth century. His thoughts are about sin, grace, freedom, and sexuality in western culture. One of its influences on developments in the western philosophical tradition was the widespread merging of Greek philosophical traditions and religious traditions into Jewish-Christian scriptures.

<sup>3</sup> “Maniism” or also called Manichaeism is a dualistic school based on seminal teachings that were popular in the 3rd and 7th centuries.

<sup>4</sup> *Tanpa anak*, Indonesian Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia (2024), [https://id.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Without\\_children&oldid=25570646](https://id.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Without_children&oldid=25570646), accessed 16 Jul 2024.

The term childfree means a life choice between men and women who are married and choose not to have children.<sup>5</sup> Whether biological adopted children.<sup>6</sup> The Collins Dictionary defines “childfree” as a condition where a person decides to live without children, especially by choice.<sup>7</sup> In this case, childfree is different from childless. Childfree is a choice and decision, while childless is a term that refers more to the inability to have children due to physical or biological factors. This is a natural thing without intention.<sup>8</sup>

The childfree trend is starting to be popularized by developed and modern countries. For example, in Australia, approximately 9.1% of the 7448 women there chose not to have children.<sup>9</sup> In a survey in Canada in 2010, it was also recorded that 7% of the population representing 434.000

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<sup>5</sup> Rivaldo Alfi Nugraha, *Childfree Dalam Tujuan Pernikahan Perspektif Imam Al-Ghazali Skripsi*, p. 2.

<sup>6</sup> *Childfree, the Digital Era, and Islamic Law: Views of Nahdlatul Ulama, Muhammadiyah, and Gender Activists in Malang, Indonesia* | Zuhriah | *Samarah: Journal of Family Law and Islamic Law*, p. 1608, <https://jurnal.ar-raniry.ac.id/index.php/samarah/article/view/17753/8608>, accessed 15 Jul 2024.

<sup>7</sup> Collins Dictionary, “Childfree” accessed July 16, 2024, <https://collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/childfree>

<sup>8</sup> “Childfree: Pengertian, dan Pengaruhnya untuk Kesehatan”, *Childfree: Pengertian, dan Pengaruhnya untuk Kesehatan*, <https://www.siloamhospitals.com/en/informasi-siloam/artikel/apa-itu-childfree>, accessed 16 Jul 2024.

<sup>9</sup> Islamy et al., Islamy et al., *Fenomena Childfree Di Era Modern: Studi Fenomenologis Generasi Gen Z Serta Pandangan Islam Terhadap Childfree Di Indonesia*, p. 82.

peoples did not intend to have children for various reasons.<sup>10</sup> In fact, in essence humans are biological creations who should have the desire to continue their offspring.<sup>11</sup>

Various factors influence the decision to remain childfree, including economic problems, level of education, culture, etc.<sup>12</sup> Apart from that, this choice to be childfree also has impacts or consequences, individuals, families and society. For example, the current situation shows that the number of productive ages is decreasing compared to the number of non-productive ages. It is feared that this will slow down a country's economic growth because there are fewer and fewer productive people in that country.<sup>13</sup>

The childfree phenomenon has been examined from various perspective, including from a cultural perspective, childfree is a culture from

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<sup>10</sup> *Analisis Fenomena Childfree di Indonesia*, Bandung Conference Series: Islamic Family Law, vol. 2, no. 2 (2022), <https://proceedings.unisba.ac.id/index.php/BCSIFL/article/view/2684>, accessed 4 Dec 2023.

<sup>11</sup> Siswanto dan Neneng Nurhasanah.

<sup>12</sup> Ayu Wulandari et al., *Fenomena Childfree Terhadap Bonus Demografi Islam Di Indonesia*, *SOKO GURU: Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan*, vol. 3, no. 1 (2023), p. 43–54.

<sup>13</sup> Ayu Wulandari dkk.

developed countries that is increasingly spreading to various countries.<sup>14</sup>

From a social perspective, childfree is a choice that is considered an inviolable right of every individual. This includes religious views, one of which is Catholicism, which the teachings explain the position and role of children in family life. Social expectations of childbearing are also required for a family.<sup>15</sup>

Based on the explanation above, the author is interested in knowing more about the Catholic view of the childfree phenomenon, because in this case childfree is a choice that deviates from the purpose of biological human creation and violates the values and norms that exist in society. How do Catholic social teachings and Catholic family responses view this trend? Is this trend acceptable in Catholic families according to Catholic moral and ethical teachings? This will be discussed a little bit in this paper.

## **B. Problem Formulation**

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<sup>14</sup> Islamy dkk., *Fenomena Childfree Di Era Modern: Studi Fenomenologis Generasi Gen Z Serta Pandangan Islam Terhadap Childfree Di Indonesia*, 2022, 81.

<sup>15</sup> Ezra Tari, *Pendidikan Anak dalam Keluarga Berdasarkan Kolase 3:21*, *Kurios Jurnal Teologi dan Pendidikan Agama Kristen* Vol. 5 No. 1, (April 2019)

Based on the preceding discussion, it was found that childfree lifestyle can be seen as a departure from the nature of human life. The presence of a child in a family basically gives its own meaning, in fact children have an important role in family life and also in community life.<sup>16</sup>

Consequently, this research aims to address the following question:

1. How does the Catholics perceive the childfree lifestyle?

### **C. Purpose of Study**

The primary objective of this research is to elucidate the Catholic's perspective on the childfree lifestyle.

### **D. Significance of Study**

After completing this research, the author hopes that this paper can provide theoretical significance and practical significance, and get a positive response from readers. The following are the benefits of this research, including:

1. Theoretical Benefits

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<sup>16</sup> Novier Katarina Halla, *Pandangan Yesus Tentang Anak (Studi Hermeneutik Injil Markus 10:13-16)*.

In theory, it is hoped that this article can be an effort to contribute to developing world knowledge and for students, especially at Darussalam Gontor University, Ushuluddin Faculty, Religious Studies study program in terms of increasing intellectuality.

## 2. Practical Benefits

The practical benefit expected from this discussion is that it can become a reference or companion in writing other scientific papers. Apart from that, it is hoped that this discussion can be a solution to the childfree problem which is currently becoming a trend in the world.

## E. Previous Study

Here is some literature that writes about the childfree trend.

*Fisrt*, Thesis "Paham Childfree menurut Hukum Islam" by Jalaludin, a student at the Faculty of Sharia and Law, Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University, Jakarta in 2022. This research is a qualitative research type with a descriptive-analytical method. The results of this research explain that

childfree is not in accordance with the goals of marriage and Islamic law<sup>17</sup>, and has not explained the views of religions other than Islam. Therefore, researchers want to explain the Catholic view of childfree.

*Second*, Thesis "Fenomena Keputusan Childfree dalam Perspektif Al-Qur'an 9 Kajian Tafsir Tematik)" written by Karunia Hazyimara, Al-Qur'an and Tafsir Science study program, Faculty of Sharia, Maulana Malik Ibrahim State Islamic University, Malang, written in 2022. This scientific work uses qualitative research with a bibliographic approach using descriptive-analytical methods. This scientific work explains the phenomenon of childfree in Indonesia, which is a life choice for various reasons. However, the Al-Qur'an does not explain childfree explicitly, only that there are verses in the Al-Qur'an that explain the presence of children and their position in a family. And in general, childfree is considered to be inconsistent with Indonesian pronatalist cultural values.<sup>18</sup> And in this work it is not stated how childfree is viewed according to books other than the

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<sup>17</sup> Jalaludin, *Paham Childfree menurut Hukum Islam*, (Faculty of Sharia and Law, Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University, Jakarta, 2022)

<sup>18</sup> Karunia Hazyimara, *Fenomena Keputusan Childfree dalam Perspektif Al-Qur'an 9 Kajian Tafsir Tematik*, (Al-Qur'an and Tafsir Science study program, Sharia faculty, Maulana Malik Ibrahim State Islamic University, Malang, 2022)

Koran which are also found in Indonesia. Therefore, researchers want to analyze the views of Catholic books on childfree.

*Third, Thesis " Childfree dalam Tujuan Pernikahan menurut Imam Al-Ghazali"* by Rivaldo Alfi Nugraha from the Family Law study program, Faculty of Sharia Law, Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University, Jakarta, 2022. This scientific work was researched using qualitative research, a normative approach, with descriptive methods -analytical. The results of this research show that the purpose of marriage according to Imam Al-Ghazali is to obtain and procreate offspring, fulfill desires of lust and love. This is the opposite of childfree, which is the choice not to have children. However, apart from that, childfree is not considered completely wrong if there is a reason that is considered detrimental.<sup>19</sup> However, this scientific work has not explained the law of childfree in religions other than the views of Imam Al-Ghazali. The difference between this article and scientific work is that the author wants to explain the Catholic view regarding the position of a child in a family.

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<sup>19</sup> Rivaldo Alfi Nugraha, *Childfree dalam Tujuan Pernikahan menurut Imam Al-Ghazali*, (Faculty of Sharia and Law, Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University, Jakarta, 2023)



*Fourth*, Thesis "Konsep Childfree Perspektif Pendidikan Keluarga dalam Islam" by Alda Ismi Azizah, Tarbiyah and Teacher Training Faculty, Ponorogo State Islamic Institute in 2022. This thesis uses the library research method with descriptive qualitative. In this article, it is explained that parents' failure to provide a sense of security and comfort to children is one of the causes of a child becoming individualist in thinking and then being afraid to start a family and have children, so he chooses not to have a family or not have children (childfree). However, this cannot be justified absolutely, because in educating children there are at least three domains, namely theological, biological and sociological.<sup>20</sup> In contrast to this paper, the researcher wants to discuss the role of a person's religious thoughts on childfree views, especially in Catholicism.

*Fifth*, Thesis "Pandangan Islam dan Kristen terhadap Fenomena Childfree" by Isnaini Umi Rasyida in 2022 with the Religious Studies study program, Ushuluddin Faculty, Darussalam University, Gontor Ponorogo. This thesis is a type of qualitative research using a theological approach and

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<sup>20</sup> Alda Ismi Azizah, *Konsep Childfree Perspektif Pendidikan Keluarga dalam Islam*, (Department of Islamic Religious Education, Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training, Ponorogo State Islamic Institute, 2022)

using a comparative analytical-descriptive method. This thesis explains that childfree is the product of a high-ranking Catholic Church official who was anxious about facing an environment that was not ideal in his view. This article also explains the errors of childfree nature in the Islamic and Cristian view.<sup>21</sup> However, this thesis has not included views on childfree from perspectives other than the Qur'an and the Bible.

From several scientific works, so far researchers have only found discussions about childfree from Islamic and Christian perspectives, and most of it explain based on theologically approach. Therefore, through this article the researcher tries to provide a discussion of Catholic views in facing the childfree trend in recent years by sociological approach.

#### **F. Theoretical Framework**

A marriage is one of God's commandments listed in the holy book. Marriage is a covenant between a man and a woman to form a life together. Based on the documents of the Second Vatican Council, marriage is a

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<sup>21</sup> Isnaini Umi Rasyida, *Pandangan Islam dan Kristen terhadap Fenomena Childfree*, (Religious Studies study program, Ushuluddin faculty, Darussalam Gontor University, Ponorogo, 2022).

sacrament whose purpose is the welfare of husband and wife, procreation, and education of children.<sup>22</sup> This will be realised in a family bond that at least consists of father, mother, and children. The family is the smallest group in society that has a strong and basic kinship, one of whose purposes is to fulfil biological, emotional, socio-economic, and educational needs in accordance with what is written in Kolase 3 verse 21.<sup>23</sup> However, not all married couples are able to produce new offspring in their marriage, for various reasons. Childlessness in marriage can be divided into two, namely intentional childlessness, and unintentional childlessness.<sup>24</sup> Unintentional childless marriages are caused by unforeseen circumstances, such as illness or a fault in a couple's fertility. This is commonly called childlessness. Whereas a deliberately childless marriage is a situation where the couple

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<sup>22</sup> Robertus Rubiyatmoko Pr, *Perkawinan Katolik Menurut Kitab Hukum Kanonik* (PT Kanisius, t.t.), 17–19.

<sup>23</sup> Ezra Tari dan Talizaro Tafonao, "Pendidikan Anak dalam Keluarga Berdasarkan Kolose 3:21," *Kurios* 5, no. 1 (30 April 2019): 24, <https://doi.org/10.30995/kur.v5i1.93>.

<sup>24</sup> Blasius Superma Yese, Alexius Poto, dan Noberta Nadia Waruwu, "Penilaian Gereja Katolik Terhadap Perkawinan Tanpa Anak," *Jurnal Magistra* 1, no. 4 (20 Desember 2023): 180, <https://doi.org/10.62200/magistra.v1i4.72>.

voluntarily, consciously, and refuses to have children even though they have the ability to have them. This phenomenon is referred to childfree.<sup>25</sup>

The choice to live childfree is a choice that is considered to deviate from social, religious, and cultural rules. It is often stigmatised by society because it is considered a selfish choice, violating religious rules by not fulfilling God's call to multiply offspring, and also a refusal to take responsibility for the presence of children. Also because God's commandments that have been clearly stated in His holy book have been violated by him, so that society also indirectly gives a negative view to this life choice, even though some childfree couples are based on various reasons. By analysing statements in various sources of books, journals, and other writings, researchers want to find answers to the existing problem points. A sociological approach that refers to the opinions and responses of society towards childfree is used in this research, which is then combined with the analysis of doctrines derived from Catholic social teaching.

### **G. Methods of Research**

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<sup>25</sup> Baron Frederick von Gagern, *Kesukaran-Kesukaran dalam Hidup Perkawinan*, translated by P. Soewito (Ende: Nusa Indah), 89.

## 1. Kind of Research and Approaches

The discussion presents the findings of a qualitative descriptive<sup>26</sup> analysis of various sources, including books, journals, and previous research. While the approach used in this research is a sociological approach<sup>27</sup> that sees the problem in terms of social views on it.<sup>28</sup> Furthermore, the theoretical analysis is systematically aimed at describing the main problem of this discussion.<sup>29</sup>

## 2. Source of Data

### a. Primary data

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<sup>26</sup> Qualitative method is a research method that stems from an inductive mindset based on objective observations. While descriptive is intended to understand and interpret an object by providing an explanation of the symptoms that appear and what is behind these symptoms. And analytical is a method of observing an object whose results can be in the form of a description or description which becomes the interpretation of the research. (*Metode Penelitian Kualitatif Jenis, Karakteristik dan Keunggulannya*, Dr. J.R. Raco, M.E., M.Sc., 7)

<sup>27</sup> The sociological approach is a discipline based on symbolic interaction studies. This study focuses on something and the understanding of it circulating in society. This approach is aimed at observing human actions in their daily environment towards this matter. (*Penelitian Kualitatif*, Dr. Nursapia Harahap, M.A)

<sup>28</sup> Dr. J. R. Raco, ME., M. Sc, *Qualitative Research Methods Types Characteristic, and Advantages*, (Jakarta: PT. Gramedia, 2010)

<sup>29</sup> Jurnal Ahmad, *Content Analysis Research Design*, (Jakarta: UIN Syarif Hidayatullah, 2018).

Primary data is data used as the main source of information in completing this thesis, including:

i. "Childfree by Choice", by Dr. Amy Blackstone, Dutton, New York, First edition, 2019. This book explain story of childfree in foreign.

ii. "Childfree & Happy", Victoria Tunggono, Buku Mojok Group, Sleman: Yogyakarta, 2021, xxii+150 pp which provides the experiences and happiness of people who choose not to have children and a positive perspective on childfree life.

iii. "How To Be Childless", by Rachel Chrastil. This book published in United State of America by Oxford University Press, 2020. This book provides the history and philosophy who chose to live without children.

iv. "Katekismus Gereja Katolik", a book compiled in connection with the Second Vatican Council. This book contains quotations and explanations of the teachings believed by Catholics in the form of life points which are then analysed by researchers to find answers to problems.

v. "Kompendium Ajaran Sosial Gereja", this document offers a comprehensive overview of fundamental framework of the Church's

doctrinal collection of social teachings. This overview allows us to examine precisely the issues.

#### b. Secondary Data

Secondary data in this research was obtained from several previous studies with the same theme as the discussion in this research. This data was obtained from a number of books, journals, articles, e-books, magazines, etc. related to the theme of childfree according to Catholics.

### 3. The Technique of Data Analysis

In examining the problem, researchers used qualitative-literature research by taking many sources from books, journals, and existing data. From these sources, the researcher then analyses in terms of explanations related to the topic, and then presents them in the form of descriptions to explain the content of this research writing.

#### H. Systematic Discussion

To facilitate the discussion and is designed systematically based on the rules of writing, the researcher divides the discussion into four chapters which are structured as follows:

Chapter One: Chapter one is the introductory of the problem which consists of background of study and problem formulation, then the purpose and benefits of study, theoretical or practical benefits which on researcher expectation can be applied in daily life. Followed by literature review from several research before, theoretical framework that is in accordance with the research steps, and methods of research till systematic discussion.

Chapter Two: Chapter two explains the definition and basic understanding regarding the title variable which is the main problem, including Catholic in terms of history, teachings and holy books. This chapter will also discuss a general overview of childfree from the perspective of its meaning, and also the history of childfree.

Chapter Three: In this chapter the core of the problem analysis will be discussed, that's on the Catholic view of childfree by looking at Catholic social teachings about the family according to Catholicism and considering to the stigma of social, also looking at the views of society in response to childfree. In addition, analyses of Catholic statements on marriage, family, and children will be discussed. In this chapter, analysing Catholic social teaching and social views about that will answer the questions.



Chapter Four: Chapter four becomes the final chapter in this discussion, which includes research results that can be taken from the description of the previous analysis. This chapter also provides suggestions and a bibliography for this research.

