

### DEBATE:

"IF THE WIFE SAYS THAT SHE WANTS NO  
MORE BIRTHS, BUT THE HUSBAND DOES  
WANT ANOTHER BIRTH, CAN ONE  
NECESSARILY SAY THAT HER SUBSEQUENT  
PREGNANCY IS UNWANTED?"

YES OR NO?"

SUZANA CAVENAGHI

Independent researcher

November 8, 2021



WHAT IS

AT

STAKE?

"If **the wife** says that she wants no more births, but **the husband** does want another birth, can one **necessarily** say that **her subsequent pregnancy** is unwanted?  
Yes or No?"

Understanding the question:  
my point of view - 2 different angles

Her own desire "**now**"

versus

Her own desire "**later**"?

An issue for another debate

Partner would be out of the picture (and out of the question/debate)

Timing is an important methodological issue, but not the angle I consider important here (another debate).

Wife's desire

versus

Husband's desire

**YES**, her next pregnancy will be unwanted if she wants **NO MORE** births

FIRST:  
WE CAN NOT  
DENY

**Complex  
concepts for the  
respondents**

## The **concepts** around “wantedness” pregnancy are VERY complex

According to Barrett, Wellings (2002), what  
some women understand as:

“planned” and  
“unplanned”

Conscious decision,  
discussed with partner,  
measures taken

Accident, not discussed with  
partner, contraceptive  
failure

“intended” and  
“unintended”

Time dependent, wants  
more births (now or later)

Does not want to keep the  
pregnancy or the baby

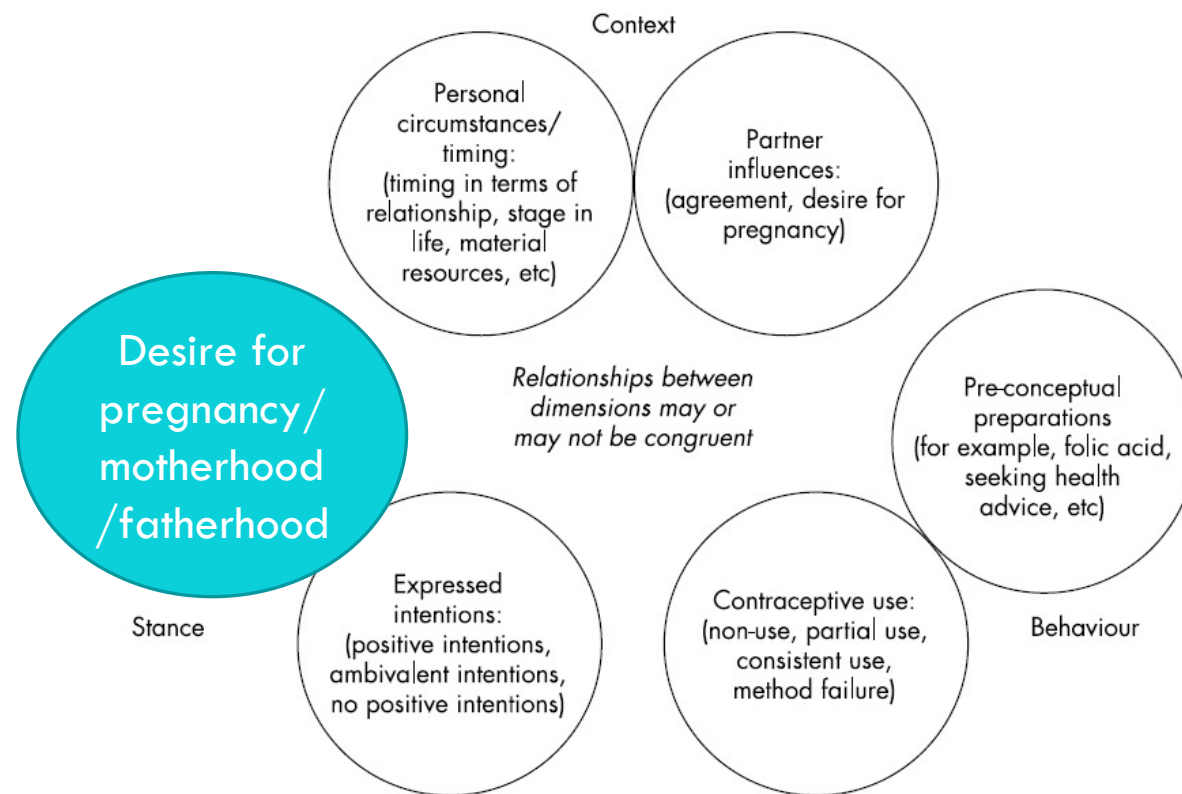
“wanted” and  
“unwanted”

There is a dislike with  
the term, related to  
abortion, or do not want  
the baby

# FULLY PLANNED PREGNANCY IS A PROCESS FROM A RELATIONSHIP

Source: Barret, Smith, Wellings (2004)  
“Conceptualisation, development, and evaluation of a measure of unplanned pregnancy”. *Epidemiol Community Health* 2004;58:426–433. doi: 10.1136/jech.2003.014787

Figure 1 C  
pregnancy p  
pregnancy.







TO MAKE  
MATTERS  
MORE  
COMPLICATED:

MEANINGS OF  
WANTEDNESS  
CAN VARY  
AROUND THE  
GLOBE


Lets' focus on the last stage of this process of plannig...

- A wanted pregnancy **is that one which has a desire** to become pregnant or desire to become mother/father (or to be once more)
- An unwanted is the opposite to that

**Unwanted pregnancy, definition**  
used here:

- A pregnancy that has occurred to the woman who does not want to become pregnant neither at the time of conception nor in the future.

Remember, here I am taking a micro level approach. My colleague from the “yes team” takes a macro level approach.



Why am I sure  
the answer to this  
question is **yes**,  
the pregnancy will  
be “unwanted”?

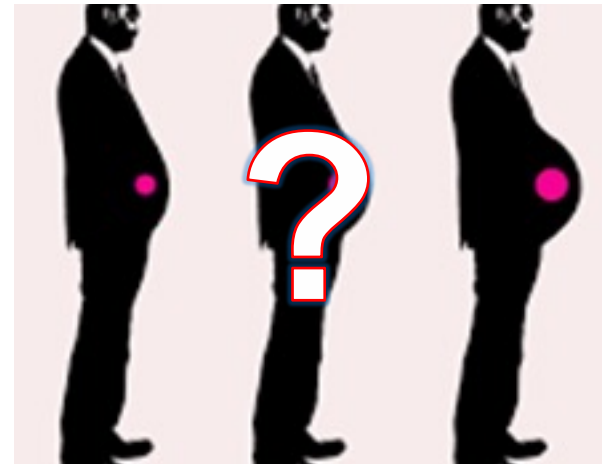
WITH THIS IN MIND:



WIFE'S DESIRE  
VERSUS  
HUSBAND'S DESIRE

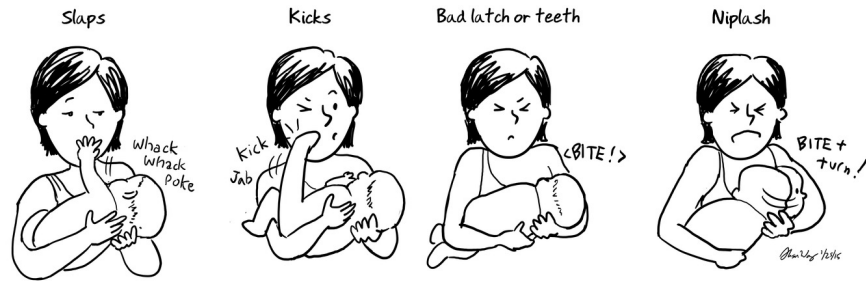
# PREGNANCY AND BREASTFEEDING **STILL HAPPENS IN THE WOMAN'S BODY**

- **Individuals' rights** for the woman should be above man's rights in this case
- **Reproductive rights** is a subset of human rights, and human rights are indivisible.
  - “Reproductive rights rest on the recognition of the basic right of all couples and individuals to decide freely and responsibly the number, spacing and timing of their children and to have the information and means to do so, and the right to attain the highest standard of sexual and reproductive health. They also include the right of all to make decisions concerning reproduction free of discrimination, coercion and violence.”





Let's not forget!



## BREASTFEEDING

- It takes a long period and a succession of both good and bad experiences...
  - “Breastfeeding is a journey with ups and downs”
- So...
  - It can and should be easy for some women
  - But also, it can be very difficult and become a nightmare for others



# NOT EVERYTHING ABOUT PREGNANCY IS A DREAM

For better or worse, most the “harder” consequences of a next birth will be on her not him.

**The list of bad outcomes of an unwanted pregnancy (by her or him) could have bad consequences for everyone, mainly for the child.**



# SUMMARIZING THE REASONS FROM A MICRO LEVEL APPROACH.. THE WIFE DESIRE MUST BE CONSIDERED UP FRONT

## 2 RELATED MAIN REASONS

### 1. Individual rights

- **Pregnancy happens in the **woman's body****
- In patriarchal societies women are expected/pressured to have children, thus **when she is able to say she wants no more, SHE MEAN IT!!**

### 2. Reproductive rights

- **Contraception is mostly on her shoulders/reach** - most methods are female
- If she wants no more births and gets pregnant, mostly will be due:
  - Contraceptive failure or
  - Contraception being denied

**Reproductive and sexual rights – ICPD 1994**

**UNMET NEED FOR CONTRACEPTION**

But still...

THERE IS A GAP  
IN DESIRED  
FAMILY SIZE  
BETWEEN  
SPOUSES.

SO, WE  
CANNOT  
IGNORE THE  
COUPLE.

- So, even considering women's desire upfront, we need to look more broadly to reproductive health and rights
- How can demographic surveys and analyzes deals with couples' desires and define the "wantedness" of a birth from the point of view of the couple?
  - ask to both of them and do the math



# DEALING WITH **COUPLES' DESIRES** ON A NEXT BIRTH HOW WOULD WE ANSWER THE QUESTION?

## Classifying couples' "wantedness" of the next birth

Wife's desire		Husband's desire		"Wantedness" of a next pregnancy/birth
Wants NO more	↔	Wants more	➡	UNWANTED
Wants more	↔	Wants NO more	➡	UNWANTED
Wants NO more	↔	Wants NO more	➡	UNWANTED
Wants more	↔	Wants more	➡	WANTED



“ So, even considering couple’s desires, I reaffirm the initial statement!

If the wife says that she wants no more births, but the husband does want another birth,

”



Yes



No

her subsequent pregnancy should be considered as “unwanted”

# CLOSING ARGUMENT BY OPPOSITION

## A PREGNANCY WILL ONLY BE “WANTED” IF...



- Despite all complexities of reality (relationships) and measurements issues, it only will be “wanted” **if both partners** want/desire/plan/intend the pregnancy and the birth.



THANK YOU FOR LISTENING!

OBRIGADA POR OUVIR!

¡GRACIAS POR ESCUCHAR!

GRAZIE PER L'ATTENZIONE!

感謝您的聆聽！

MERCI DE VOTRE ATTENTION!

ご聴取ありがとうございました！

شکرا على استماعكم!

СПАСИБО ЗА ТО, ЧТО ВЫ СЛУШАЛИ!

GET IN CONTACT:

SUZANA\_CAVENAGHI@UOL.COM.BR