



‘Proportionalism can never be clear about the issue of immigration.’ Evaluate this view

1.

This question is asking me to see whether or not proportionalism can ever be clear about the issue of immigration. I will do this by looking at how it may be so.

First of all, proportionalism upholds Natural Law. For protection of society or the ‘common good’ as Finnis suggests, we should protect our borders and make sure that no criminals enter our countries.

Secondly, we have conflicting messages from proportionalism because it says if there is a ‘proportionate reason’ and whether more good than evil comes of it. Well, it could be argued that we benefit greatly from immigration and therefore contradicts what it first argued. This is confusing.

Proportionalism is an ethical theory based upon Natural Law and that has been debated over the last 50 years within Roman Catholic theological ethics. Proportionalists have been referred to as revisionists or consequentialists. Proportionalists argue that an act needs to be considered carefully by considering all determining factors. Although it is not always relevant to Roman Catholics in general, and is mainly studied in theological colleges, the theory of proportionalism is considered highly controversial by the Vatican.

In addition, scholars as Richard McCormick argue strongly that proportionalism can work and address issues like immigration.

In conclusion, proportionalism can never be clear about the issue of immigration because it is too complicated.



Feedback

The first two sentences are of no value whatsoever because they repeat the question.

The first point has no evidence at all to support scholars. Finnis is used but it is not clear whether or not Finnis is associated with proportionalism.

The second point is potentially a good point but very simplistic. It could have developed exactly what was meant by the phrases, 'proportionate reason' and 'more good than evil' but these are left assumed and unexplained. The alleged contradiction, therefore, is very basic.

The third point is not really an evaluative AO2 point at all. It is just some information and, as accurate as it may be, it has not been used in any way to answer the question set.

Once again, a scholar is referred to but no supporting evidence given. It ends with a very generalised and one-sided conclusion for which there is no justification; it is merely an assertion.

2.

The issue of immigration throws up a number of concerns. In order to evaluate whether or not proportionalism can ever be clear about the issue of immigration, we will need to consider the issue of immigration itself in the light of Natural Law and proportionalist theology, and then some moral problems that may derive from immigration itself.

First of all proportionalism follows Natural Law as classically understood by Thomas Aquinas and through the theology of the Roman Catholic Church. This year, Pope Francis led a Mass for the Catholic Church's January 14th World Day of Migrants and Refugees. Afterwards, he stated that in regard to welcoming immigrants the sin is 'the fears to determine our responses, to limit our choices, to compromise respect and generosity, to feed hostility and rejection' and that we need 'to overcome our fears so as



to encounter the other, to welcome, to know and to acknowledge him or her'. The Pope clearly sees Natural Law as welcoming immigrants. Proportionalists would look at the issue of immigration and accept the Pope's response with a clear message of 'welcome'.

However, immigration in general is not a moral issue in itself. Immigration is a principle which in theory we accept or reject.

Dilemmas arise when we start thinking about whether we should accept immigrants when it strains the national economy or threatens the structure of society. There is another issue of a 'points system' in which people are valued and graded in accordance with what they can offer. Another issue may be accepting those with a criminal record. Asylum seekers are another issue. Here, proportionalists may have something to say about the reasoning. As Hoose comments, 'the need for proportionate reason is one of the most deeply rooted elements in the tradition of Catholic moral theology'.

Clearly, both Natural Law and proportionalism would advocate the Christian gospel message of love and forgiveness that underlie Aquinas' primary precepts. Hence, the points system may be refuted because it differentiates between rich and poor and values people according to education, social status and skills. This is clearly against the principal to 'do good and avoid evil', hence the Pope's message. In this respect the position of the proportionalist is clear.

There may be a different response when it comes to those with a criminal record. The Pope's open welcome and message of forgiveness may apply to those who are reformed criminals; however, proportionalism does allow for the possibility that the complete action of accepting a reformed criminal may result in discrimination for the former criminal or the possibility of them committing crime again, and so the principle of acceptance and forgiveness needs to be weighed up against the disvalues and principals of ontic evils possible. On the contrary, the disvalues may be so great in rejecting a reformed criminal that they could lead to un-Christian values that discriminate in the long-term.



Overall, it would be fair to say that on the issue of immigration that proportionalism does have clear guidelines in following Natural Law but that in determining individual issues or cases there can never be certainty.

Feedback

The second example is far superior. There is a very good introductory paragraph that gets straight to discussing the answer. It points out the way the question is going to be answered.

The second paragraph clearly links proportionalism to Natural Law and to Roman Catholic theology. A specific example and teaching is offered that both the Vatican and proportionalists would uphold. The next section highlight what moral issues may arise within the notion of immigration. It clearly explains that there could be varying responses here. The paragraph aims to indicate that, through proportionate reasons, matters are not always 'clear cut' and that circumstances may affect the way a decision is made. The conclusion is sound and clearly made. Although there are minimal quotes and references, the answer is focused and good evaluation skills are demonstrated.



‘Proportionalist would never turn away poor immigrants.’ Evaluate this view

The issue for debate here is that turning away poor immigrants is against Christian principles but is there ever a situation when it is justified?

One argument could be that it is every countries responsibility to look after their own poor.

In addition, if a country accepts of poor all the time then in the long-term that country may become poor. It will be a strain. This is one of the crucial things to consider. A proportionalist may suggest immediate food aid or an increase in foreign aid to be a more appropriate response in order to be fair for all. The basic precept of society being maintained would be used in conjunction with respect for life and then the longer-term values, goods and virtues generated

Nonetheless, proportionalists could also take the line that turning away is a last resort and as the poor tend to migrate towards richer countries, seeking a better life then that is better in the longer-term because it develops Christians’ virtues within the richer society.

I think turning away poor immigrants is a very important issue and that proportionalists need to explore all possible Christian responses carefully before deciding.

POSSIBLE QUOTES TO USE:

“There is no Christian joy when doors are closed; there is no Christian joy when others are made to feel unwanted, when there is no room for them in our midst.” (Pope Francis)

“Preference for a single country is both irrational and selfish.” (Stewart)

“It was not only that the primitive church was unpatriotic, it was violently anti-patriotic; the feeling called patriotism was boldly denounced as unworthy of those who had been



baptised.” (Stewart)

The Pope called on new arrivals “to know and respect the laws, the culture and the traditions of the countries that take them in.” (Pope Francis)

Pope Francis urged “to open themselves without prejudice to their rich diversity of migrants and refugees, to understand the hopes and potential of the newly arrived as well as their fears and vulnerabilities.” (Pope Francis)