Abortion as a Legal Crime: Analytical Essay

“It is a poverty to decide that a child must die so that you may live as you wish” said Mother Theresa of Calcutta. Abortion is the intentional termination of unborn human life. The number of abortions is increasing enormously over the years. And so the importance of such an issue is rising. In 2016, in the Presidential elections of the United States of America, the election of President Donald Trump was affected by the fact that he opposes abortion: 81% of white evangelicals, a group that is against abortion by 61% or more, voted for Trump. When is abortion acceptable and what do religions say about it? In this paper, we will talk about people’s opinions regarding abortion. We will also explain the points of view of the Christian church and Islam regarding abortion.

First of all, some people say that abortion is acceptable when a baby is diagnosed with Dawn Syndrome. We all know that not only children with Down Syndrome face limitations and challenges, but also their parents. Thanks to the development of medicine, a pregnant woman can know in an early stage whether she is carrying a normal baby or not. Unfortunately, most of them decide to end their pregnancy because they don’t want to bring to life a baby who is going to suffer and who is going to make them suffer as well.

Second, people think that is okay if woman who got pregnant after being raped abort their child. They say that women do not need to be reminded every day of that painful memory. So they get rid of their child hoping to forget the tragedy they lived and also to avoid having a child who would suffer from many psychological and mental problems. But this is not necessarily always true. Let’s take few examples: Eartha Kitt, Zahara Jolie-Pitt, Jesse Jackson, Kelly Wright were all conceived by rape and they were all fine. Also, Layne Beachley, Nell Carter, and Oprah Winfery fell pregnant after being raped, but still, they kept their babies.

Third, the most unhuman reason is that the parents do not want the child. Some women conceive by mistake. Then, they feel that they are not ready to handle such a responsibility. They are ready and mature enough to do a sexual act for the pleasure they feel, but they are not capable of dealing with the consequences. Is this the type of culture and education that we want our children and future generations to inherit? Do we really want to tell them that you can do whatever you want and not worry about the consequences, even if this means that they are going to commit a murder?

Just like other ethical topics, religions try to spread awareness and impose some rules. In general, the Christian Church and Islam oppose abortion.

In Islam, any intervention in God’s role is unacceptable, especially when it comes to life and death. The power to procreate belongs to the God, since God forms the fetus in the womb and gives the spirit to the fetus, not the womankind. This is why women do not have the right to end their pregnancy according to their own will. However, this does not necessarily mean that Islam is against abortion. On the contrary, there are different views among Muslim authorities regarding the ethical acceptability and timing of abortion. The Qur’an says no explicit words about abortion, nor do the Hadith and Sunna. Therefore, the prohibition or allowance of abortion emerges from the interpretations and analogies of hadith applied to Quranic verses, particularly

the ones prohibiting killing humans. “And do not kill your children for fear of poverty. We provide for them and for you. Indeed, their killing is ever a great sin.” (The Qur’an 17/31)

There are different views in Islamic ethics about abortion. The first difference in opinions is about when the fetus is to be considered alive. Some authorities put forth that ensoulment takes place 120 days after conception and ensoulment is the concrete sign of life. This indicates that abortion after 120 days of conception is banned. However, it is not plausible to say that abortion is allowed by Islam before 120 days. Only the Hanafi school of Sunni Muslims find it allowable in the first trimester. Other schools are not positive about abortion, since they consider the formation of fetus as a continuing reflection of God’s creative process. Therefore, they do not agree abortion includes the stages before ensoulment.

In Islam, fetal life is regarded as a good among other valuable things such as the life of the mother and the well-being of the whole Muslim community. God’s creation of life is only a part of God’s complex ruling on earth. The casuistic inclination of Muslim ethics to discuss ethical issues on case base indicates the belief in the complexity of God’s ruling. This view makes each case unique to be handled in its particular web of relationships.

As for the Christian Church, abortion is also not mentioned neither in the Old Testament nor in the Bible. A great deal of variation exists in terms of how contemporary Christian denominations view abortion.

Though nobody can scientifically prove when life actually begins, Christians believe that God is the creator of all things, and He is the source of all life. When God created the first man Adam, he was not alive until God “breathed into his nostrils the breath of life”, when he “became a living being” (Genesis 2:7). In the same way, it is not a certain chemical combination that makes an unborn child live, but the breath that God has breathed into him, and nobody can know when that takes place. Throughout the whole Bible it is clear that God knows all things, also that which is to come, and has known this from eternity. In this way He has also always known each person, each life – even before conception. Not only does God know every individual before they exist, but He even has a purpose with each of these lives. This is expressed clearly in the book of Psalms:

“For You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother’s womb. I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvelous are Your works, and that my soul knows very well. My frame was not hidden from You, when I was made in secret, and skillfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in Your book they all were written, the days fashioned for me, when as yet there were none of them.” (Psalm 139:13-16)

In conclusion, abortion is generally refused by religions. It is an intervention in God’s will and a violent crime against an innocent human life. I personally am against abortion, in all cases. Abortion is murder, just like killing any human being, since no one can prove when ensoulment takes place. You, woman, whether you are carrying a child with Down Syndrome or after being raped, it’s your child. Don’t give up on him! He is part of you. I know many people with Down Syndrome who are extremely happy and they are considered as blessings to their families. Being raped is definitely a very hard experience and living with such a memory is not easy. But we should not solve such a tragedy by committing a bigger sin. How would a woman live with the guilt feelings of killing an innocent human being? And you, people running after your

instincts, control yourselves if you cannot take full responsibility of your acts. Abortion is never a solution. To all women, give your children a chance to live, if by the time you give birth you feel that you cannot do it, then maybe adoption would be a good choice. What do religions say about adoption? Isn’t it better than abortion?