

Women's Right for Abortion

Outline

THESIS: The rights of the expectant mother, logical scientific decisions, and the religious or social opinions on who has the final decision making power in this case, are the most significant aspects of the abortion debate in a broad sense.

- I. Introduction to the abortion debate and the pro-choice advocacy
- II. The origin of the prolife campaign and its progress into a wide social, religious and political debate
- III. The main areas of debate and the disciplines involved.
- IV. Arguments supporting the prolife ideology
- V. Arguments against the prolife ideology
- VI. Conclusion and analysis of the current state of the debate

Over a long time, abortion has been the centre of social debate and political rhetoric. This has even resulted in legal battles. The struggle is between proponents of abortion, the pro-choice activists, and the opponents of abortion, the pro-life ideologists. Many religious prochoice activists are baptized. That is why their religious affiliation does not stop them from supporting the prochoice movement, along with politicians, scientists and sociologists. On the other hand, the prolife activists use different forms of arguments to defend their anti-abortion position. However, the Bible and its particular interpretations support their main ideas.

The abortion controversy attracts much attention because of the social, humanitarian, and scientific considerations that the rivaling campaigners take. A special factor complicates the abortion debate since it involves the definition of life itself. In addition, the debate includes a dispute as to when life begins. Severity of the debate over the definition and the commencement of life transcend into the realm of science, which gives no uniform definition of life. In fact, scientists acknowledge that there is no proper or valid definition of life. To the scientific world, life is a set of conditions that the bearer of life must satisfy to attain the status of living. The problem is that even the most basic elements of a human being, such as the gametocytes bear all the characteristics of the scientific definition of life, and science considers them forms of living objects. Scientific perspective becomes invalid since its scope goes beyond the scope of pregnancy, the main subject of debates over abortion (Colker 131).

Another subject of the argument is the authority to terminate life. Should women have the final authority? Should a woman be examined and informed about the consequences of the abortion in order to deter her from it? These and other questions

are raised in the process. This also creates a controversy over the authority of professional medics to decide whether a fetus continues developing or whether its existence is over. Religious authorities have varying opinions about the issue of termination.

The most sensitive argument arises over the issue of determining who has the right to live in the case when the mother and the fetus are a mutual danger to each other. This debate touches upon especially sensitive issues when there is a proven fact of a genetic or physical disorder of the fetus. Furthermore, another perspective advocates for a fair approach where nature is allowed to take its course. However, this approach faces stiff opposition for potentially allowing fatal events to occur, when there is still a possibility to take control of the situation in order to save someone's life.

Narration

The pro-choice movement began in the early 1970s when an American court nullified some clauses of the law that completely outlawed abortion. The reaction to this was the pro-life movement, which emerged after the court decision. This legal action gave birth to the pro-choice movement, which campaigned for the woman's rights and her stake in the pregnancy. The movement later became stronger and gained political significance when it emerged as an issue of debate in American politics during the 1980s and the 1990s. Political campaigns were centered on the issue of abortion along with other controversial topics, which mobilized most of the society.

Religious bodies, sociologists and pundits voiced their opinion all along the debate. The religious and cultural authorities play a huge role in this debate. Most of the time, they do not have any scientific evidence to support their point. However, being

historically important pieces of social structure, they manage to attract many supporters. A lack of uniformity of religious and cultural orientation only complicated the quest for a solution and at least some common ground. The issue remains a hot topic, because the sides of the debate sometimes take a rather controversial and radical stance with no desire to abandon their logic and arguments (Colker 100).

Partition

Analysis of the debate can provide a number of universal arguments for or against the pro-choice movement. These are the authority of the expectant mother, logical scientific opinions, and the religious or social stance on the authority over life.

Pro-choice Arguments

1. Authority and opinion of the woman

Pro-life arguments have concluded that the decision to perform an abortion relies on the opinion of three parties, which include the unborn child or the fetus. However, the opinion of the expectant woman carries far more weight than that of either the fetus or the father of the unborn child. This is because the woman carries the burden of the pregnancy and faces the dangers that are involved. Although pregnancy may carry some negative consequences for the women involved, birth of a child, on the other hand, also poses an equivalent danger to the mother in case of any complications during the childbirth. In addition, the woman faces a burden of bringing up the child during the initial stages of development, a task that she might not have enough resources or will to accomplish. Imposing a mandatory condition that a woman should give birth to the child could bring suffering to both of them. These arguments point out that a woman should decide whether she is capable of delivering and bringing up the

child and whether she has the will to procreate (Luker 91). Considering the responsibilities of the expectant woman and the risk she faces in the process of procreation, the opinions of all other parties are negligible. These opinions should not be an obstacle when she decides, whether she should terminate the pregnancy or not. The abortion should be a matter of choice for the expectant woman.

2. Scientific support

Scientific evidence has shown that some pregnancies pose a definite danger to the expectant women. Incorrect implantation of the embryo in the uterus is the most common case causing danger. In other cases, the development of a fetus results in a severely abnormal imbalance of hormones that may be a danger to the expectant women's health. As for a consideration of professionals, abortion is the only logical solution in this case. The law and religious doctrines should be flexible enough to allow abortion if such situation appears to avert a bigger fatality. Restricting abortion in such situations does not have any advantages to the society or the expectant woman, but actually adds to the problems in the society since the pregnancy may result in further disability or death. In addition, sometimes observation of the fetus reveals that it has severe malformations that leads to a severely impairs of a born child. A severely disabled child is likely to suffer during lifetime and may cause difficulties for the guardian who is most likely to be a mother of the child. Scientific advice is that termination of a pregnancy is the best solution in this case. This perspective advocates that decision about making an abortion should be based on results of scientific and medical observation, which enables the woman to make a choice (Bailey 22).

3. Moderation of cultural and religious doctrines

Pro-choice opponents base some of their arguments on the social and religious doctrines of the mainstream religions. However, some of these doctrines are not wholly against the practice of abortion. Prolife argument is absolutely against termination of pregnancy at any stage of the process of procreation. Most of the mainstream religions believe that fetus can be considered as alive only in three months from the moment of conception. Terminating a pregnancy within these three months period is not considered a murder as prolife ideology depicts it. Liberal Islamic sects allow abortion for logical reasons. These positions of the religious authorities suggest a mild approach to the issue of abortion. Consequently, the general idea posed by religious authorities support the pro-choice campaign rather than the radical pro-life ideology (Colker 91).

Arguments against pro-choice campaign

1. Authority over abortion

Conception of a child involves a man and a woman or at least using a male's gametophyte and a female's gametocyte. There are several authorities that have a stake in ensuing proper development of a fetus and hence the human being, those are: the expectant mother who is the bearer of the burden, the fetus that is the bearer of life and a newly born baby, and the biological father of the expected child. Unless the three parties agree on whether to conduct abortion, the procedure is unjustified. Religious and cultural authorities have varying opinions over the issue on whether to conduct abortion or not. For those who believe in a supernatural power beyond our complete understanding, such as religious people, only the deities of nature should terminate pregnancy. This argument proposes that life should be left to take its natural course since we still do not understand its composition or its commencement. Most religious

doctrines oppose abortion more so during the latest stages of pregnancy. It is only fair that people do not practice abortion at all on any grounds (Luker 93).

2. Scientific opinion

It is scientifically proved that the procedure of abortion, no matter how technologically advanced it could be, causes trauma to the reproductive system of a woman. Apart from religious doctrines, science observes that it is better to let life and natural processes take their own course governed by the conditions of the environment. Moreover, abortion causes psychological problems to the woman who has undergone the procedure. It is very important to realize that failed abortion attempt may result in infertility and even death. These certain dangers and risks of carrying out an abortion are not worth of undergoing (Bailey 7).

3. Cultural and religious doctrines

Many cultures and societies consider abortion to be a taboo and a result of western decadence, while in the west, religious establishments and the conservative ideals oppose the idea of abortion for unjustified causes. Most religious fraternities are against abortion particularly during the latest stages of pregnancy. Moreover, most religions are against elective abortions since they violate some of the fundamental doctrines of these religions pertaining life. In addition, most of the Christian denominations are completely opposed to tampering with the natural course of pregnancy. Majority of Islamic sects are opposed to abortion and most forms of contraception. Considering the position of the mainstream religions, it is fair to conclude that abortion goes against the will of the society in general (Colker 102).

Conclusion

Debates over the authority of the expectant mother, logical scientific decisions, religious view or social opinion in decision-making process over abortion, in a general sense, are taking place around different societies. Major contests over the issue of abortion have revolved around this statement. Pro-Life ideology seems to put into consideration all the parties that have a stake in a woman's pregnancy, including the society and the fetus. However, this ideology and campaign do not evaluate the consequences of completely outlawing abortion. In addition, the right for woman's responsibility and opinion in the abortion affair is being ignored.

Substantial scientific evidence supports the prochoice campaign. At some point, opinions of professionals revert depending on the situation. Abortion is recommended in case of distress and in case women's life is in danger or any risk appears and the medical professionals are certain of surpasses the need to preserve life whose presence is not yet assured. This renders the pro-life ideas limited in terms of their practicability.

Most religious and cultural authorities are against causing any harm to any form of human life. On the other hand, these authorities differ on the issue of definition of life and the exact point at which life begins. The result of this merited reaction is that the decision to perform abortion is dependent on the situation and the conditions of a particular case, professional opinion and the choice of the woman.

Works Cited

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