Ethical and Legal Sides of Abortion

1. Is abortion ethical in general terms?
2. Is abortion moral in some circumstances?
3. Is abortion a legal action?

**Article 1. Is abortion ethical in general terms?**

**Objection 1.** It seems that it is logical to think that abortion is an ethical action without negative moral consequences. Human life begins when the consciousness comes. A fetus does not have any feelings, senses, and understanding. It is logical to think that as an embryo is not a human being yet, such act as abortion has no negative implications. Abortions committed in the first trimester of pregnancy do not have any moral implications as in that period a fetus is not conscious.

**Objection 2.** The statistics state that up to ninety percent of all abortions take place in the first trimester (Rowlands et al. 193). In that period, a fetus does not feel any discomfort as pain receptors do not exist in fetus’ organism until the third trimester. A fetus cannot feel pain until the twenty-eighth week of a gestation period. The fetus’ organism does not have nerve pathways that are necessary for the formation of pain receptors (Collett 1219). As the majority of women carry out abortions within first three months of the pregnancy, they do not feel any negative moral consequences. Hence, abortion should not be unethical.

**Objection 3.** According to bioethics and ethics of personal autonomy, a woman has a right to control her body and decide if she wants to continue her pregnancy or not. That point of view must be principal when talking about the free choice. If a woman has a right either to stop the
pregnancy or to give birth to a child, it means that society respects her personal autonomy. That pro-choice argument is an essential issue in the modern democratic world.

On the contrary, According to medicine and science, a fetus is a human being soon after the impregnation. In terms of religion, abortion is a destruction of someone’s life. It means that it is morally wrong to commit abortion.

I answer that, When analyzing if abortion is ethical or not, people should take into consideration not only religious approach but study this issue through the prism of the law, demographic policy, and ethics. There are legitimate and religious approaches to the ethics of abortion. People should not confuse them. In general, the doctrines of the church are not the basis for law. However, the religious views have to be the background for the civil law. Abortion is a difficult and controversial issue. It touches many ethical questions such as human relations, personal autonomy, and human rights.

Reply to Objection 1. In terms of religion, abortion is a destruction of a valuable human life. That is why people should consider it unethical. In Book of Jeremiah, God said that life begins at conception, not birth. A developing human is not a thing.

Reply to Objection 2. A fetus has a human DNA after the combination of the ovum and sperm. An embryo is a human being at the first stage of development. As a rule, a woman learns that a new life has originated inside her approximately two months after impregnation. In that period, the embryo is already a fetus. When committing an abortion, a woman is not dealing with cells but with developing organs and systems. The most important step in the inception of a new life is fertilization when a spermatozoon penetrates an ovum. This biological process, when two cells merge into a single cell, is nothing else than beginning of life (Singer 85).

Reply to Objection 3. The declaration of human rights claims that the value of humans must be above all. If people can consider an embryo a developing human being that has a right to
live, it has the same intrinsic value as the humans have. Every human being has a right to live starting from the inception of pregnancy.

**Article 2. May abortion be ethical in some circumstances?**

**Objection 1.** It seems that abortion is immoral in general. Is it ethical in the case of rape or incest? Despite the process of conception, a baby is not guilty because it has appeared. It is not the baby’s fault that it has started its existence. In the case of rape, the rapist is the offender. However, an unborn child does not cause any danger. It is innocent. It is the same victim as its mother. Hence, a woman should not commit abortion because the baby’s father was a scoundrel. The child does not cause any harm to the mother.

**Objection 2.** People interpret abortion as killing a new life. Those people, who are against it, consider that adoption should replace abortion. The special organizations carefully examine each couple, which is going to adopt a child, before allowing them to get a baby. Therefore, adoption is a much better decision for a woman than killing an infant.

**Objection 3.** Nowadays, women frequently make abortions because their career is more important than bringing up a child. Sometimes they justify their commitment saying that they are financially incapable or just unable to take care of a baby.

**On the contrary,** In some cases, abortion can be the only ethical decision (for example, after the rape). Killing without any reason is the murder. However, when it comes to rape, abortion is not unethical. It is immoral to force a raped woman to keep a child — a fruit of a crime. In particular circumstances, abortion is ethical as it is the single correct option.

**I answer that,** Many people do not support abortion. However, each case is individual. There are some situations in which abortion is the only decision. This procedure can be ethical if the woman’s life or the baby’s health are in danger and also in the case of rape.

**Reply to Objection 1.** Not many women commit abortions groundlessly or recklessly. It does not mean that it is logical to consider abortion unethical in any case. Unfortunately, life
is not perfect, and unpredictable accidents happen. People should not blame a woman, who is a victim of rape, that she has made an abortion. It is her life, her body, and her choice. However, there is another issue where a fetus endangers its mother’s health or even life. In the case of the tubal pregnancy, a woman must commit abortion.

**Reply to Objection 2.** Some people argue that instead of committing abortion a woman should give birth to a baby and then give a child for adoption. However, a woman cannot be sure whether a baby will feel well with the new parents or a child will suffer in an orphanage. Isn’t it even worse thing than abortion? As each situation is individual, in some cases, it can be worse.

**Reply to Objection 3.** Even if it was ethical to force a woman to carry her pregnancy to term, it could not be ethical to force the birth of the unwanted baby. A woman, whose choice is to commit abortion when she cannot be a good mother or take care of a child, is making the most ethical choice (Kero 34).

**Article 3.** Is abortion a legal action?

**Objection 1.** It seems that it cannot be legal to make a choice between killing and having mercy. Besides speaking about the moral side of abortion, people should also realize the legal side of this action.

**Objection 2.** No person should have the right to take someone’s life. Regardless of rape, incest, or just one night, a baby is not lesser a human being. People deceive themselves if they believe that abortion is not killing. It is difficult to recognize that this action, which has become commonplace in the modern world, is nothing else than murder.

**Objection 3.** A large number of couples all over the world cannot have children but want them so much. Adoption is an alternative to abortion. In some countries, the taxpayers openly fund abortions. Funding the abortion clinics should be illegal.
On the contrary, Abortion is legal for two reasons. Firstly, women have the right to make decisions about their reproductive systems and their life at all. Secondly, they have a right to implement it regardless of the government policy.

I answer that, On one hand, abortion is killing in its essence as it is a termination of life. On the other hand, according to the law, it is legal. Therefore, it cannot be a crime. According to the law, abortions are legal. There are two kinds of situations when the abortions can be unlawful. In the first case, it is unwarranted if a woman commits it in an unsafe manner or unsanitary conditions. The second case is when a woman makes it in the third trimester of pregnancy without the unpredicted, life or death circumstances such as the threat to mother’s life or malformations in the child’s development.

Reply to Objection 1. In 1973, abortion became legal in the United States by the Supreme Court decision in Roe v. Wade (Greenhouse & Reva 257). The government programs for low-income pregnant women started funding abortion. Abortion should be legal in some cases as the government should respect the women’s rights. According to the law, embryos and fetuses do not have any rights until their birth. On the contrary, women have the right to make decisions about their bodies. Abortion cannot be a homicide as, according to the law, a fetus is not a person.

Reply to Objection 2. Could the prohibition of abortions reduce their amount? According to the World Health Organization’s study, abortions are more frequent in those countries where they are illegal (Sedgh et al. 225). Unfortunately, such procedures are unsafe as they are made in unhygienic conditions. It means that making abortions illegal does not solve the problem. Moreover, performing such a procedure aggravates it and makes it worse.

Reply to Objection 3. People should respect the personal autonomy and the women’s rights. Understanding and identifying abortion as a moral issue is incorrect. It is strictly individual.
There are certain situations that allow people to judge abortion as ethical or immoral actions. However, according to the law, abortions are legitimate.
Works Cited


