

## A Comparative Analysis and Discussion on the Morality of Abortion in the US and China

Ruofan Li

Nanjing Foreign Language School Xianlin Campus, Nanjing, Jiangsu Province, PRC 210023

angela@cas-harbour.org

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**Abstract.** The issue of abortion has always been a question of ethical and legal discussions in the United States. There are some arguments on the morality of abortion that under certain circumstances, abortion is sometimes moral. In this article, the author will give an overview of the discussions on the morality of abortion in the US. Besides, the author will also discuss the arguments on abortion in China under the trend of universal two-child policy, and discuss whether some suggestions toward abortion could be made to these two countries.

### 1. Introduction

Abortion has always been a controversial topic. In one state of America, the specific law is established to prohibit any abortions. However, some countries do not have legal restrictions on them, such as China. In addition to the legal constraints, abortion not only brings certain harm to the body but also makes those women who have abortions suffer moral criticism. Although this kind of behavior is restricted by law and morality, it has become an increasingly common social phenomenon, and the age of abortion also shows a young trend, especially in China, because there are no relevant legal constraints. The reason why so many people still choose abortion under different cultural backgrounds and different national laws and policies confuses the public. This paper aims to analyze the moral awareness of abortion between the United States and China and provide some suggestions on how to reduce abortion disputes.

### 2. Moral awareness of abortion in the United States

#### 2.1 Reasons for opposing abortion

For Americans, the moral conflict involves in abortion is mainly focused on the rights of women and the fetus. For those who oppose abortion, abortion is a violation of human rights. The United States is a country that attaches great importance to human rights. Every individual is endowed with the most basic rights by law, including the right to exist. Hursthouse, a moral philosopher, pointed out that abortion is a vicious embodiment of human nature and lacks respect for personality [4]. For those who oppose it, they support that the fetus is still a living individual. Abortion is a denial of their rights. According to Warren, there are three points that can be used to condemn abortion. It is wrong to deprive an innocent individual of his right to life [10]. Everyone is formed from an embryo. Every individual exists with moral significance, which means that the fetus is not only a symbol of life but also given the right to life. In addition, there is a special group that is firmly opposed to abortion. They are people with religious beliefs. The United States is a country of religious belief. They believe that all people are born equal. They are deeply influenced by religious dogma and respect every life. According to Gregory, the fetus is also a potential living individual before it is born, and under normal circumstances, it will be a completely independent individual [5].

#### 2.2 Reasons for supporting abortion

However, with the progress of feminism and the change of social concept, there are still more and more people supporting abortion. They support the legalization of abortion and believe that women should not be legally and morally condemned for abortion. Women make such decisions for a variety

of reasons. They may be accidentally pregnant due to inappropriate sexual behavior, or they have to terminate the pregnancy because of physical conditions, or they are harmed by someone else, such as being raped to pregnant. They choose abortion because of their subjective decision or forced to make such a decision, but there is no doubt that abortion will have a negative impact on their physical and mental health. In their view, people cannot only respect the rights of the fetus and ignore women's choice. Bordo thinks that in addition to the fetus having personality consciousness, women also have independent personalities. They are the masters of their bodies, and they should have corresponding legal status [1]. For them, if women cannot decide whether to have children or not, how can they say that all people are born equal? The reproductive right is a basic right of citizens. They believe that women have the right to decide their own fertility. The fact that they have to change their will according to other people's moral criticism and legal constraints is a sad thing. When these anti-abortion people ask them to give birth to children, these women may even face the situation of rape to pregnant or defect of the fetus. Who will really care about their future or even be responsible for their life? In their eyes, this is a very ironic thing. When people ask women to abide by moral standards and prohibit abortion, it is a fact that their human dignity is insulted. Groups that oppose abortion interfere with the lives and choices of others just to satisfy the so-called moral sense in their hearts. Such behavior is inherently immoral. The US Constitution gives everyone the same equal rights, which is strong evidence cited by those who support abortion.

### **3. Moral awareness of abortion in China**

#### **3.1 Reasons for abortion in China**

For China, the moral disputes involved in abortion are more acute than those in the United States, although there is no relevant law to restrict abortion. China is a nation with thousands of years of culture, but the concept of sex has always been a relatively obscure issue, even in the new era of highly developed civilization. It is hard to present sex education in China's education system. After the beginning of the Song Dynasty in the 10th century, sexual life was prohibited in Chinese culture. Although there are many books on this subject, they are prohibited by the rulers, and the people are never allowed to read [3]. It is the lack of this part of sex education that causes the abortion age to become younger. Based on the China Health and Family Planning Statistical Yearbook, more than 9 million women had abortions in 2017. Almost half of them are under 25 years old [11]. For most Chinese, abortion is disgraceful. According to the article, the increasing prevalence of abortion in China is due to the increase of premarital sex and the lack of understanding of contraceptive methods. Unmarried pregnancy makes their lives have a strong stigma; abortion has become the only choice of many unmarried women [2].

In addition, a large part of the abortion population in China comes from students. From September 2007 to January 2008, according to data analysis of 35,383 unmarried female college students, the incidence of unintended pregnancy was 31.8%. In China, about one-third of unmarried female students have sexual intercourse and pregnancy [3]. They are accidentally pregnant because of a lack of sex education and inadequate protection for themselves. In the eyes of Chinese people, it's a shame thing for unmarried people who choose abortion in case of unwanted pregnancy, especially for those elders who have deep-rooted traditional ideas.

#### **3.2 Reasons for opposing abortion**

Under the background of Chinese special traditional culture, people who are strongly opposed to abortion believe that those children have souls, and those people who have abortions will be punished by children. There is a strong feudal superstition in it. In addition, the idea that male children only in the traditional Chinese concept also affect the abortion rate, although this concept has been rejected with the progress of the times. In mainland China, the traditional preference for boys and selective abortion and the implementation of family planning policies have resulted in 115 boys per 100 girls born since 1994 [9]. According to China's family planning policy, it is illegal for a pregnant woman to have an abortion because the pregnancy test indicates that it is a girl, not a boy. That's why

pregnancy tests in China are generally not informed of the gender of the fetus. This is not only an illegal act but also a manifestation of gender discrimination.

### **3.3 Policies that affect abortion**

China's family planning policy is often adjusted according to the domestic social situation. When the one-child policy was fully implemented in China, almost all families could only raise one child. If they were pregnant accidentally, they would either be forced to choose abortion or face huge fines. This is a national policy factor affecting abortion. With the increasing trend of aging, China has implemented the two-child policy in recent years. It should be challenging for China to decide to implement the policy of "allowing" women to have two children. The loss of forced abortion caused by the one-child policy is intolerable, and the cruel treatment of women with second and now third children is still a reality [7].

## **4. Discussion**

### **4.1 Main problem of abortion for the US**

There will be different understandings of abortion in different countries. No matter the restriction of law or the judgment of morality, different social environment, and cultural background will give birth to a group of different group consciousness on this matter. People do not have a clear criterion to judge the correctness of abortion. Tooley points out in his book that abortion involves not only moral issues but also philosophy, biology, and psychology [8]. It is necessary to take corresponding measures to avoid and treat abortion properly. For one thing, for the United States, the social phenomenon of abortion is not prominent in some areas because of the enactment of laws. However, some hidden risks cannot be ignored. The clear provisions of the law do not guarantee the occurrence of some unwanted pregnancies. Under such conditions, some unqualified private abortion clinics will emerge. This is not a legal, medical system. It is a product of satisfying the abortion requirements of others. This is a dark industrial chain. Why is this kind of industrial chain not a healthy development system, and so many people will still choose? Most of the reason is that the law is too strict. For those who choose to have an abortion because of rape or even because the fetus is not well developed, it is too harsh for them to ban any abortion. Appropriate legal adjustment is not only for the protection of the fetus but also for the protection of pregnant women.

### **4.2 Main problem of abortion for China**

For another, in China, people will find a very strange phenomenon. There may be a lot of abortion ads on social media and even on the street walls, but there are not many ads about condoms. Chinese people pay more attention to how to reduce the harm of abortion to women's body, but ignore the appeal from the source to protect women and reduce the occurrence of abortion. There is a lack of sex education in China, which is also an urgent need to adjust the internal education structure in China. When people have enough knowledge of sex, they will learn how to deal with it correctly to a great extent. In the abortion rate, the proportion of students will be greatly reduced. The Chinese government and parents can take the initiative to talk with their children about how to treat sex correctly and how to learn to protect them. That is the right solution, rather than avoiding it out of embarrassment. Although with the progress of the times and the progress of abortion methods, women's health in China still has a negative impact because abortion is the main way of birth control. China makes national policies based on different social environments to restrict women's fertility [6]. In addition, China needs to establish a sound legal system to regulate random abortion disorder. Abortion should not be allowed because of sexism or unwanted pregnancies, except in the case of termination due to fetal defects and the protection of pregnant women. Comparing the abortion phenomenon in the United States with that in China, it can be found that too strict legal constraints and no legal constraints cannot really reduce the abortion phenomenon, nor can they resolve the moral disputes caused by abortion. A reasonable combination of them would be effective in reducing abortion. The state should vigorously strengthen the concept of gender equality, gradually remove the

patriarchal thoughts in traditional Chinese thoughts and thoroughly implement policy control over any abortion due to gender discrimination.

#### 4.3 The author's idea

In a nutshell, when some people hold high the banner of morality to attack and hurt the abortion women, it is a kind of pseudo-moral performance. No matter people live in which country with different cultural backgrounds, abortion will inevitably hurt women's bodies and minds. Abortion is a social phenomenon, it will reflect many problems, and morality is only one of them. When people repeatedly argue about the moral disputes caused by abortion, perhaps learning how to take measures to reduce the occurrence of abortion can reflect people's awe of life. Abortion is becoming more and more common in a country, apart from the individual factors, the country and the whole society should reflect on whether they should take responsibility for it. Procreation is the most basic right of an individual. When the state and the law increase restrictions on it, people should cherish this right even more.

### 5. Conclusion

The situations and reasons for abortion are quite different in the US and China. In this article, the author discusses the reasons and problems of abortion in these two countries. However, the author only analyzes the reasons and problems, but does not give suggestions or rise action plans that may solve the abortion problems in these two countries. In the future, the author will do more research on the action plans to make the study more comprehensive.

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