

**T.C.
KADİR HAS UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF AMERICAN CULTURE AND LITERATURE**

**A DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF THE ABORTION DEBATE IN
TURKEY AND THE UNITED STATES**

**M.A. THESIS IN AMERICAN STUDIES
BY
SULTAN KOMUT**

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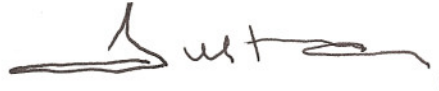
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BY
SULTAN KOMUT**

**ADVISOR
ASSIST.PROF. MARY LOU O'NEIL**

İSTANBUL, 2009

I hereby declare that all the information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.

Name, Last Name: Sultan KOMUT

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sultan Komut', with a horizontal line underneath the name.

ABSTRACT

The aim of this thesis is to observe and analyze abortion issue in the contexts of Turkey and America via various written and spoken discourses such as; religion, ethic, economy, social norms and women's rights and thus comparing these two countries. Throughout the representation of Turkish society's view on abortion, the predominant religion of the country; Islam and its regulations have been the main focus as they are the inevitable parts of forming the traditions, beliefs and behaviors of the society and thus affecting people's discourses on the cores of abortion issue which are mainly sexuality, virginity, honor killing and social codes. In the second part of the study, American people's views on the abortion debate have been examined through the opposing discourses of pro-life and pro-choice supporters who make abortion a hot issue throughout the country, which influences even the politics. This study does not mean to be a discourse analysis but an overview of the abortion debate in Turkey and America by means of various discourses prevalent in both countries. By this way, the main aim was to unearth what people mean by their individual utterances; how they reflect their behaviors and whether they live as the way they take a stand towards the issue of abortion. Despite all the differences American and Turkish people have, this thesis shows that, these two societies have similar discourses in the issue of abortion.

Keywords: abortion, women, Islam, sexuality, discourse, virginity, pro-life, pro-choice honor killings, birth control

ÖZ

Bu tezin yazılış amacı: Kürtaj meselesinin Amerika ve Türkiye'deki durumunu; din, ahlak, ekonomi, sosyal normlar, kadın hakları gibi farklı yazılı ve sözlü söylemleri kullanarak gözlemlene ve analiz etme yoluyla bu iki kültürü kıyaslamaktır. Türk toplumunun kürtaja bakış açısının anlatıldığı bölümde; ülkedeki hâkim din olan İslamiyet ve din olgusunun getirdiği yaptırımlar odak noktası olmuştur. Çünkü din olgusu toplumun gelenek-görenek, inanç ve tutumlarını oluşturmada kaçınılmaz bir etkiye sahiptir. Çalışmanın ikinci bölümünde ise Amerikalıların kürtaj meselesine bakış açıları; ülke genelinde Kürtajı ateşli bir tartışma noktası haline getiren, politikayı bile etkileyen seçim yanlısı ve yaşam yanlısı olarak kutuplaşan grupların söylemleri doğrultusunda incelenmiştir. Bu çalışma tam anlamıyla bir söylem analizi olmayı amaçlamamaktadır; ancak Amerika ve Türkiye'de yaygın olan farklı söylemler sayesinde kürtaj meselesine genel bir bakış açısı ortaya koymaktadır. Bu yolla, nihai amaç; kişilerin kürtaj meselesi hakkında bireysel söylemleri ile aslında neyi ifade ettikleri, nasıl bir tutum sergiledikleri ve söylemleri ile uyumlu davranış sergileyip sergilemediklerini ortaya çıkarmaktır. Ayrıca tüm farklılıklarına rağmen Amerika ve Türk toplumlarının kürtaj konusunda benzer hatta yer yer aynı söylemlere sahip oldukları bu tezin çıkarımlarından biridir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kürtaj, kadın, islamiyet, cinsellik, söylem, bekaret, yaşam yanlısı, seçim yanlısı, namus cinayetleri, doğum kontrolü

To my family,
*for having brought me up as an “individual” and
supporting me all my way...*

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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

“Things said say more than themselves...”

M. Foucault

“His,—his forever! That glory sweet and tender!

Ah, but he would love her! And she should love but him!

He would work and struggle for her, he would shelter and defend her,—

She should never leave him, never, till their eyes in death were dim.

Close, close he bound her, that she should leave him never;

Weak still he kept her, lest she be strong to flee...” (Gilman)

As Charlotte Perkins Gilman puts it in her “Proem” women have always been kept weak by the men in order not to be able to strong enough to be a free individual who can work, study, decide, rule, and defend herself. This is the main aim of patriarchy which has long been started to be criticized and ended by conscious and sentimental women.

As it was defined by Susan C. Bourgue and Kay Barbara Warren patriarchy means “the social organization of the family, the community, and the state in such a

way that male power is reinforced and perpetuated.”(57) We can talk about patriarchy more or less in every parts of the world despite the fact that more strict forms of patriarchy can be observed in some societies. This patriarchy shows up in almost every part of the life including women’s sexuality. Pinar İlkkaracan asserts that “The control over women’s sexuality through restriction, coercion, violence or more complicated forms of political and social manipulation remains the most powerful tool of patriarchy in the majority of societies.” (“Islam and Women’s Sexuality” 1)

Even though both men and women have some rights ‘in law’ in many parts of the world, the societies in which they live differ in valuing women and men. This is partly because men have the power in many areas of life in which men feel superior to women such as: business, administration, science. When this is the case in various societies, it is inevitable to see women as inferior to men, despite the fact that this is not actually the case.

Men have made the laws, they have conquered places, have become the rulers and as a result, they are thought to be the decision makers everywhere. They decide on what is wrong, what is right. Unfortunately, women mostly obeyed their rules and accepted their ideas without thinking about the rules, at first, they obeyed them. They fulfilled their would-be socially assigned roles; being a mother, looking after babies, pets, bringing up healthy, wise future generations. Doing these, they neglected their own ideas, their own preferences. This continued until some brave women tried to change everything. From that point, not specific in every society, something needed to be changed.

The history of abortion, also, lies between these time periods. It is important to define abortion. The real meaning of abortion includes miscarriage, but the word abortion is mostly used to refer premature expulsion of human fetus.(www.yourdictionary.com) We can shortly say that abortion refers to ending of pregnancy intentionally by a surgical operation. What abortion means, however, differs according to what you think about life, about pregnancy, motherhood, women's role in society, and so on. It is also about one's idea about when life begins and whether being a life or being only a cell. This is because if one considers human fetus as "life", for him/her abortion is taking life of a living. On the other hand, if one thinks that it's only a cell, it is only a small operation to get rid of something which will be a problem in the near future.

Abortion is of great importance not only as a health issue but also as a crucial factor in analyzing cultures' point of view on women. Notwithstanding having so many intricate items, abortion is mainly a women's issue. It shows us how certain cultures regard women, what their role is in society, how religion defines women, what women do for the purpose of gaining their rights and most importantly what women think. Abortion must not be considered as an ethical subject as some people do as it is about women's right to decide on their lives

This work is not a definition or explanation of some terms and incidents about abortion, but an exploration of discourses. The focus here is on how Turkish and American people discuss or talk about the issue of abortion. This is a study of their communication on the grounds that their ideas are given priority to the facts, events and /or surveys. As James Paul Gee indicates "When we speak or write we always take a

particular perspective on what the world is 'like'”(2)In this paper, my aim is to find out how people regard the relationship between women and society by analyzing spoken and written discourses about the issue of abortion and related issues with the former.

In his book “The Archeology of Knowledge” Michel Foucault defines discourse as “the group of statements that belong to a single system of formation; thus, I shall be able to speak of clinical discourse, economic discourse, the discourse of natural history, psychiatric discourse”(121) Louis de Saussure also states that “a discourse is an organized set of utterances reflecting or in relation with an organized set of thoughts.” (181) French Philosopher Michel Foucault, building on Saussure asserts that “Every discourse, no matter which one, is made up of a collection of statements which are each produced in their space and time, as so many discursive events.” (www.michel-foucault.com) Discourses on abortion can also be identified in the same way using various utterances whether written or spoken, my aim is to identify and compare the general discourses on abortion in Turkish and American cultures by using such aspects as; religious, ethical/moral and women’s rights which in the end form the specific discourse on abortion. It may be argued that according to Foucault discourse is so strong that even those who opposed to a specific discourse are also invaded by it. This is because, people are all surrounded by the same linguistic symbols which have to interact with each other, and thus, however opposing they may be, they constitute a specific discourse. As Karl Rogers in his article “Foucault’s Discourse” also indicates “until the discourse arises out of the silence of undifferentiated existence there is no distinction between "self" and "other", "signified" and "signifier", "subject" and "object", "sign" and "meaning", "true" and "false", or "different" and "same" - there are

no distinctions at all! Distinctions are manifest within the discourse and arise out of the discourse.”(www.lancs.ac.uk) Foucault focuses the idea of “silence” and he implies that there is an undifferentiated existence of discourse which remains “silent” and only after it becomes free of its cover, may there be real identifications of the discourses and we can distinct “true” or “false”, “subject” or “object”, “different” or “same” etc. In this study, by trying to uncover “the silence” of some individual utterances or written sources, the real discourses will be tried to be visible.

Despite the fact that people’s individual declarations are not discourses themselves, they, even so, may derive from different discourses and thus becoming indispensable parts of discourse analysis. People’s use of words while speaking is also important in that with the help of these, it is easy to see where they stand in a given case. Moreover, some issues that remain unarticulated speak as loudly as others. People choose to stay silent on those issues and their use of one specific word or sentence may reveal their idea on the matter. For example, by dealing with people’s ideas on women’s role in society or let us limit it a woman’s role at home, we can understand the person’s real views about women’s human rights. If one man talking about his wife chooses to say “I want my wife to look after her children” it means, though not articulated “Women shouldn’t work. Their work is to stay at home and look after children. This is her primary responsibility.” On the other hand, in public, he can say that “men and women are equal” or do not even share his own belief about equality of women and men, which bears a contradiction. Michel Foucault also puts it “Everything that is formulated in discourse was already articulated in that semi-silence that precedes it, which continues to run obstinately beneath it, but which it covers and silences.” (28) As

a result it can be said that discourse is also of great importance in the way it gives silences a right to speak.

As for abortion discourse, it is a very complicated issue with many related discourses involving sexuality, health, religion, economy, morality and women's rights. These areas, when considered alone, are also very debatable and complex issues since people may have different religious views, social norms, economical factors and different ideas about the women's case. Different issues surface in the different discourses that people employ to talk about the issue of abortion. We can talk about the religious discourse on the issue of abortion for example. When religious phrases of people are considered we see that people like to employ discourses such as "it is a big sin" or "it is a murder." Their use of "sin" is for people who believe in God, hell and heaven. It means that if you do this God will be angry, or you'll be sent to hell. Choosing the word "murder" is another way of saying that "you will be punished for your action; murder, though not in this world, because it is legal, in the hell." Apart from its field such as; religious or ethical, the place of the individual speeches which form the discourse in general is of great significance. Certain **paroles** are more prominent in certain places. *Parole* is the concrete use of the language, the actual utterances. It is an external manifestation of langue. It is the usage of the system, but not the system. (<http://changingminds.org>) For instance, in the east of Turkey, people are more traditional, their education level is lower and they are more religious than the people living in the west. These characteristics of the people living in the east affect their **paroles**, as well. This is because the very way people talk about the issue and the discourses they employ are culturally bound. This is also evident in the different ways

that people in the U.S. and Turkey. For example, while abortion is acceptable for many people in cities, especially people living in rural areas almost never regard abortion acceptable as they believe that they need more children to take advantage of their children's working capacity. Exploiting children, by making use of their working capacities is quite common in Turkey as can be seen the table below.

	<i>Working children</i>	<i>Working outside home</i>	<i>Working at home</i>
<i>male</i>	1.557.534	597.647	959.888
<i>female</i>	2.290.295	410.372	1.879.923
<i>total</i>	3.847.830	1.008.019	2.839.811

Table 1.1. Source: D.I.E – 1995 (4)

This means that children are considered as working force whether at home or outside the home. This tendency is more common in rural parts of the country, especially in the east of Turkey, where children work in farming or ranching.

The issue is also related to politics as the politicians have diverse speeches about the issue of abortion, which help them to gain support of specific groups. For example; Obama's being a pro-choice and employing discourses on *women's right to decide* and *choice* affected pro-choice supporters in the U.S. It can be argued that politicians' speeches on the issue of abortion reflect their idea on women and their rights, as well. Whereas we can observe the use of abortion-related discourses in the U.S, there aren't many examples of this in Turkey. This can be seen as an evidence of silent area in Turkey even though this silence implies that there is a discourse on the issue which most probably prohibits even the talk about the abortion issue.

While all these points of the issue have been discussed, maybe the most important part of the issue has been ignored in most countries including Turkey while it's one of the major issues in others such as the U.S; whose right it is to decide whether abortion is right, or wrong. As traditionally accepted decision makers, is it men who should decide about this or is it women having the sole right to decide about a new life? This is as a result of the fact that a great majority of people having right to change the laws have been men and there are not enough women trying to get their rights. Another issue is the perception of the fetus, whether it is a "life" or not. How do the main religions accept the issue? Do they support birth control and abortion or do they totally forbid them? These questions may be answered completely different in many parts of the world as they reflect one society's perception about given issues. For instance, if the context is a country which is ruled by Muslim Religious Law, the answers will be quite different to the ones in a country ruled by democracy as in Muslim Religious law women's free sexuality is forbidden by law, so people's behaviors about these issues are to be accordingly, even if they do not think in this way. As a country whose population is overwhelmingly Muslim but isn't ruled by Muslim Religious Law, Turkey is a perfect context to work on the issue of abortion with its related fields such as sexuality, virginity, women's rights and so on. I decided to choose my contexts as America and Turkey because attitudes are very different between the two countries and these attitudes are seemingly counterintuitive with the issue being so political in the U.S. despite quite relaxed sexual mores where the opposite is true in Turkey.

The work here will be a comparative study of American and Turkish cultures through examining competing discourses of these two cultures. Comparative studies are

important in that thanks to them one can not only have better informed about the issue but also may see the ideas of different societies. This results in understanding cultural differences and also similarities of the given societies. In spite of the fact that Turkey and America seemingly have a number of different discourses on the issue of abortion, there are actually a lot of similarities in the way Turkish and American people regard the issue except that abortion a widely discussed hot topic in America but a silence is observed in the part of Turkish people, which does not mean that abortion is not often performed_in contrast, it is performed quite as many times as in America. The aim of this paper is to show that even though the contexts and the handling the issue of abortion differs greatly in Turkish and American societies,, there are certain discourses which can be considered “the same” or at least they contain “the same ideas ad sentiments” such as; life, murder, necessity, rights and choice discourses.

In the first part of the paper Turkish culture will be examined in terms of sexuality, historical development of the issue of abortion and the discourses regarding the topic. On account of having a population whose religion is mostly Islam, only religious perspectives of different Muslim authorities, various interpretations of these perspectives and practices of Muslim people will be examined. The discourses will be on abortion’s being “sin” or “permissible”. Why do people accept abortion as a big sin? If it is permissible in some cases; what are these cases, which gives us “necessity” discourse. What is the reason some authorities accept “economic burden” and “cases of rape and incest” as “necessities” while others oppose them. Then the ethical/ moral side of the issue will be examined with the help of various sources such as books, chat rooms, soap operas and so on. The aim is to show the relationship between religion and

morality as Turkish people generally accept these as the same. In this section the discourse will be centered on “life” and “murder” as some people regard the fetus as “baby” and thus regarding abortion as “murder”. Then, social norms will be examined such as women’s acceptance in the society such as “being moral/ immoral” Women’s rights will be the next part of the Turkish culture analysis as in it men widely believed to be superior to women and hence, the power to control everything nearly only theirs. They are considered to be the authority in the family structure and women are the ones who have responsibilities towards her husband and her children, not rights. As a consequence, women’s rights are mostly ignored in Turkish culture including the right to choose an abortion. However, in recent years a “right” discourse has begun to appear in some spheres and this discourse will be examined as a final step.

The American part of the paper will be a bit different from the Turkish Part in that abortion is a highly debated issue in American culture and politics, and thus, it impacts every part of the life; in magazines, on TVs, in politics and so on. There are mainly two opposing groups in America; pro-life people who oppose abortion fiercely and pro-choice people who favor the idea that abortion must be legal. Because of these huge groups the issue is almost always a hot topic in the country. As in Turkish Part, the history of abortion will be examined initially and then the discourses on the topic will be given. There are so many religious groups in the U.S that religious perspectives will be a main part of the whole body. The discourses such as “sin” and “necessity” will be the focus of this part. After examining the discourse on “fetus” or “baby”, used by opposing groups in all kinds of discourses according to where people stand, pro-life discourses such as “life” and “death” will be examined as in Turkish context. Finally

pro-choice discourses including “choice” and “women’s right to decide” will be examined in detail using these groups’ internet sites and their publications.

At the end of the paper, in addition to an overview of the issue with its aspects, a comparison of these two cultures will be done in the areas of sexuality, birth control, religion, people’s perspectives and finally politics.

As explained earlier this study is an analysis which does not intend to draw conclusions or make recommendations, but to compare American and Turkish peoples’ perspectives using various discourses reflecting what people think and say about mainly the issue of abortion and related issues.

CHAPTER 2

A REPRESENTATION OF ABORTION IN TURKISH CULTURE

As a bridge between Asia and Europe, Turkey's population consists of multiple ethnic groups whose origin go back to Ottoman Empire and Byzantium Empire and therefore there are a great number of nationalities living in the same country. Even though, their nationalities vary, they mostly share the same religion and traditions. Seeing as abortion is a case related with people's perceptions, there are a diversity of view on the issue in this a rather homogenous population. While unearthing this complicated and problematic issue, it is crucial to state that abortion is an issue related with not only with health but also sexuality, economy, religion and morality and hence, these aspects of the issue increase its complexity.

One recent study done in Sakarya reveals that %25.4 of the women who took part in the study supports abortion, %61.9 of them think that precaution must be taken, %52.4 of them think that abortion is a sin, %23.8 of them think that "*abortion is unhealthy*", %15 of them think that it is a "*murder*" and %9.5 of them think that "*it is not suitable for the first pregnancy.*" One crucial result of this study is that: the women who took part in the study were the ones who got abortion before; nevertheless, they declare the operation as a *murder* or *sin*, which supports the idea that although Turkish people oppose the idea of abortion apparently, they do get the operation if they need it. (Şahin, Cevahir and Sözeri)

As in every other part of the world, patriarchy has significance in Turkish society. Women are considered inferior to men in all spheres of life such as family, work, politics etc. because of social norms. The issue of abortion can also be considered to be in the hands of men inasmuch as men are the ones who composes most of the discourses about women and abortion issue.

2.1. Sexuality in Turkey; an area, which has long been a taboo, now starting to crack

Sexuality in Turkey include various aspects of the issue such as the reason why the people have a tendency to have it a private discourse, the importance placed on women's virginity, the issue of "honor" and the lack of approval for women to have sex outside of marriage form the core of the issue.

In spite of the fact that it is a study which was conducted in Middle East, Evelyne Accad gives us a broad view of the silence of women about sexuality in the Muslim world. In her essay "Sexuality and Sexual Politics; Conflicts and Contradictions for Contemporary Women in The Middle East" she starts with the idea that women prefer keeping their silence in three major ideas: the feminine body, women's personal relationships and sexual identity. Accad reports the ideas by other Middle East women by asserting "silence reigns over the subjects of periods, virginity, masturbation, sexual pleasure in general, abortion, birth and feminine body as a whole." She suggests that almost all the problems in Middle East result from the repression of women and if these problems one to be handled, first one should be the women's problems (40). In her words "a sexual revolution" is needed. This example is about Middle East women specifically, however, this can be broadened to every woman in the world. This is

because issues related with sexuality and women in general are not very different from the ones in Middle East.

Given the fact that sexuality is mainly related with sex makes the issue of it a taboo one in societies such as Turkey where women prefer not to talk about their sexual preferences, their womanhood, their bodies and emotions. As for men, they believe that talking about sexuality is immoral and they do not talk about their serious relationships such as marriage, engagement or would-be marriage. On the other hand, they like talking about their sexual affairs openly if they do not love the woman they have sex with. As a consequence, it is a rarely spoken or written discourse subject. As a matter of fact, the issue is that sexuality is mostly not a public discourse but one that is often confined to private space. This is just about the silence which has been observed in Turkish society and only “this deliberate silence” says us that there is a discourse of prohibition. However, there are few examples of open discourses about sexuality with a few writers taking the risk of not being accepted by the society. In Turkey’s history of sexuality, the first writer to take this risk was Duygu Asena, who died in 2006.

When Duygu Asena, Turkish feminist writer, published *Kadının Adı Yok/ Women Had No Name*”, it became a best seller in Turkey.(1987) At the time of its publication it was hailed as one of the most discussed best sellers and most widely read books in the country. This is because it was one of the few books to openly discuss women’s sexuality and women’s rights. “It is a scream because it is rebellious. It is a whisper; because it’s womanly” as is written at the back cover of the book. Duygu Asena talked about women’s sexuality, abortion and many women related issues freely and the parts of these issues reflect perfectly the view of most women who were

silenced by their men in those years. This book can be considered the first written rebellion against male power, men's sexuality, men's ideas, in general against men in Turkey even if there might be some earlier ones which couldn't get public attention.

In one part of the book, she told about one of her friend's abortion experience and the difficulties she had because she is an unmarried woman. She described the attitudes of the doctor who performs the abortion and her boyfriend. Upon learning that the girl is pregnant, her boyfriend leaves her saying "Come on, you can't even prove this. We haven't done that totally" and even adding "I'm sure you have been having sex with others and you told me that you were a virgin" The manner of him and his words represents a good example of a coward man. After the girls go to the doctor to get an operation, the doctor looks at them with hatred and says "Don't you have your husband or your parents, come with them?" But, he accepts to perform the operation when he learns that they have enough money.(30) In another part, she wrote about sexual relationship with their husbands (49) and ironically she said "So they are the biggest, they are the most powerful ones, they will be sufficient for us forever, they will take care of us forever. And we have to put up with them." With these words Asena showed her opposition to patriarchy in Turkey which is still ca be observed in many parts of the country.

Among the many subjects, she also focused on women's motherhood role in the family. She fiercely opposed the idea that a woman had to give birth to a baby in order to fulfill her wifely role in the family. She wrote (103) "To make you a father, let me see if I want to be a mother? What are my ideas, my wishes, and my problems? Have you ever thought about them? You would like to be a father. I should fulfill my

first duty as a woman? I will get fat, you will cheat me when I am pregnant, I will be laid off from work, I will leave work, and I will look after the baby; his /her education, illness, problems. I will forget about myself... and you will experience the happiness of being a father and I will experience the sadness, problems of being a mother.” These can be considered as a way of representing Turkish Women’s not having a right to decide whether to have a baby or not in many circumstances. If the man- the alleged authority –thinks that they should have a baby, then, they have. This idea can also be evidenced by a survey about women’s not having birth control in one of the eastern cities of Turkey; Van. According to Şahin, Şahin, Zeteroğlu and Kolusarı’s survey; of the women not having a birth control method 55.2 % (rural), 57.9 % (urban) do not so because of not having approval of the husband and family leaders

In spite of the fact that all women in Turkey didn’t agree with her book and that she did not speak for all Turkish women, it can be said that she discussed many controversial issues in an open way that many women face in their lifetimes, thus, helping to break down the taboo around these subjects.

Duygu Asena and her book are vital in that Turkish people do not like talking about sexual matters in public even though as every other people in the world, they do have sexual affairs. It may be said that there are discourses meaning that sexuality is a private thing and must not be talked about. This may be considered as an obligation on the grounds that Turkish teenagers, especially girls, are brought up with the idea that sexuality is something which should not be spoken. As a result, when these teenagers grow up they do what they are taught to do and do not talk about sexuality in public. However, sexuality is an inevitable part of being a human so it can never be completely

ignored. In a society having a tendency to make people not to talk about sexuality, Duygu Asena's book was of great importance inasmuch as it opened the way through public discourse of sexuality freely without prohibitions. As a feminist writer her book was mostly about women sexuality and this was the other reason why it was a kind of breakout for women to express their sexuality thanks to the book.

Once being largely a taboo in media as everywhere else, cracks have started to appear about sexuality. This is, apart from Duygu Asena case, has been thanks to a doctor Haydar Dümen. After having served as a public doctor, he started to write about sexuality and started to appear on TV so as to inform people about sexuality and give answers to the people who don't want to give their names on TV, of course. Once he started to appear on TV, many people criticized him because he was talking about such taboo subjects as sexuality, women's sexuality, and orgasm which were rarely spoken in public before. He has been writing for newspapers, as well and mostly as a result of his success and fame Turkish people have started to talk about sexuality even if they do not write with their real names, but with nicknames. Even so, they are partly free about sexuality and thus Haydar Dümen may be considered to be one of the first and foremost people in Turkey to talk about sexuality and make the issue available for everyone.

Pınar İlkkaracan supplies us with the data that reveals the relationship between Islam and sexuality and difference of discourses in varied societies. She indicates that "Discourses on sexuality in Islam often fail to consider differences in practices in different Muslim communities as well as the spaces of negotiability created by social taboos and silences related to sexual behavior. Nonetheless, even discourses based on an analysis of the Koran and the literature traditionally accepted as establishing the

normative practices of Islam can lead to contradictory conclusions about the construction of women's sexuality". In her report she also expresses that contraception and family planning are not only legal but also encouraged by the state in Turkey, however, this case is true for only married women "As sex and childbirth is a taboo issue for the most unmarried women".

Moreover, Gül Özyeğin suggests in her article "Virginal Facades" that "Issues such as virginity, honor killings and domestic violence have been the main focus of feminist discourses and activism"(5) As explained previously Turkish girls are brought up with the idea "sexuality" is something which they must not talk about. One more rigid idea which is taught to teenage girls is that a girl must be virgin when she gets married. This is still a real "must" in many parts of the society. Furthermore, it can be regarded right if a man sends his wife back her father's home after the first night when he understands that she wasn't a virgin. As a result of this importance placed on women's virginity, a lot of girls have to get operations to have a fake hymen. Especially people who are uneducated and attached to their traditional values firmly are the ones who emphasize the importance of retaining the hymen. In those families not only talking about sex is prohibited but also women are not allowed to have sexual relationship before they get married. Moreover, they are punished by the males of their families unless they obey their rules. This punishment can even end in "death". Honor, tradition and unwritten laws/ mores are the social codes which support these prohibitions and honor killing. In Turkey sex is private and controlled by man; moreover, issues of honor are at stake that women represent the honor of the family. As a consequence, if one of the women in the family does not obey the unwritten laws, it

means that she deserves to be punished. On behalf of the family the brother or the father may kill the girl who is not a virgin anymore, and this violence is called “cleaning of honor”. What is more unfortunate is that “Although no provision in the Turkish Criminal Code explicitly refers to “crimes of honor”, the tradition of honor killing is supported by the law that considers an extramarital affair involving a husband or wife to be a “provocation” and reduces the sentence by one-eighth if such provocation is considered to have taken place.” as suggested by Pinar İlkkaracan. (10)

Discourses about virginity are also abundant on internet as it is easy to ask questions and give answers to them without revealing who you are. The first example is an internet site which gives the readers a chance to vote about different issues. To the question “Is virginity important?” 721 readers have given a vote. Of these, 524 people think that virginity is important and other 197 people think that it is not.(www.seninfikrin.com)This is surprising because most of the internet users are young and educated. If this is the rate among this group, what will be the rate of another group with older, more traditional and uneducated people? This survey indicates that most Turks give importance to women’s virginity. Among the many other sites about virginity, one is also very interesting. That site gives answers to women’s questions about sexuality in general. The writer Nesli San opens the issue as “most of the mails coming from young girls about virginity. There are interesting questions about hymen operation. Young girls who *lost their honor* are trying to learn how they can fix it” This introduction of the writer shows us that he/she is one of the people who think that virginity is important and if you are not virgin, you are faithless.

This point of view reflects a great number of people's idea in Turkey. On the other hand, the writer of the site adds that "virginity is the most important problem of Turkish people. It is the *most vital value* which we have been taught since our childhood. At the first place you have to be virgin to get married." As can be understood from this section, the writer is a woman who has been taught about virginity, as well. Even though she starts with the idea that a girl who isn't virgin is faithless, then she accepts that these are taught to us, and not sensible. As she goes on, she adds that virginity is especially important in Anatolia and gives a tradition as an example which is showing the bloody sheet to the parents and relatives of the groom and says "despite being a gruesome view in at this era, in Anatolia people can not end this *taboo*." (www.kadinvizyon.com) Although there are a lot of women sharing the same idea with the writer of the previous example, there are also a lot of people who think that women mustn't be considered as "dishonored or faithless" if they aren't virgin before marriage.

Some may think that they think virginity is not important for them because they also have sexual affairs before marriage. As a refutation, they say that they do have sexual affair because they don't give importance to such matters as virginity and couples, both woman and man must be free about their sexual choices. Those who think so, give importance to faithfulness their partners and think that "honor of a person is in the brain- not in the body" One example is the chairman of CISED (sexual health institute) Dr. Cem Keçe. Having an organization about sexual health, he writes articles about sexuality in general and the problems of couple's about sexuality, ways to help them solve these problems etc. In one of his articles about hymen he says "virginity is in the brain, and a drop of blood cannot determine a woman's *honor* or virginity." He

concludes that the social pressure about virginity must end. In the same article, the secretary of the organization Physiologic Gülüm Bacanak agrees with Dr. Cem Keçe and adds that “Especially in countries where virginity is of great importance, virginity causes a social trauma” (www.cised.org.tr)

The issue of virginity is also related with women’s sexual affairs out of marriage in that it also includes the matter of honor for most people. If a woman is sexually independent, by which I mean she isn’t married now, or hasn’t ever married; having a relationship is immoral by most of the Turkish people. This is because, it is forbidden by religious rules, as well. Adultery, which means having sexual affair out of marriage whether married to another person or not, is one of the biggest sins ever and thus accepted immoral by people.

It is fairly relevant to add here that Turkish men most of whom are Muslim do not care the rights of women in a sexual affair, as the do in other case. In the book “Sex and Society in Islam” B.F.Musallam claims that in Islam a man needs to get the consent of his partner about his withdrawal. He supports his idea by the hadith “the prophet forbade the practice of coitus interruptus with a free woman except with her permission.” and adds that “woman had a right 1-o children 2-to complete sexual fulfillment, which withdrawal was judged to diminish”(49) this claim is very important because when it is considered, it shows us that Islam give importance to women’ needs and pleasure and her choices and this is absolutely what is called as “women rights” However, in Turkey, not only the freedom of women’s sexuality but also women’s use of their bodies is ignored by most of the society, especially by men.

It can be said that in Turkish society, sexuality has a limited written discourse which can be found abundantly on the internet, but spoken discourse and discourse in the media are scarce. This is because people are careful not to be seen immoral by other people thus avoiding making sexuality an issue in the society. Another idea that can be concluded is that sexuality is mainly in the hands of men when we consider the issue of virginity. When chat rooms and other sources are considered, it can be seen that especially men think women must be virgin before marriage and this is, I believe, is the result of their fear of being compared to another man. Finally, sex out of marriage is forbidden for women by religion and hence making especially women guilty and immoral for the others. On the other hand, according to the research “2005 Global Sex Survey” done by “Durex”, Turkey is coming in the first place when sex out of marriage is considered. According to the results “58 % of the respondents answered that they have sexual relationship out of marriage.” which sets forth a controversy between what they say and what they do, in fact. (www.bilgiportal.com)

2.2. History of Abortion in Turkey

In Turkey, the issue of abortion is grounded in the issues of population growth and family planning. The issue of population was first considered in the 1920's with M. Kemal Atatürk and pronatalist policy was adopted. Turkey was a new republic and needed a young population in order to become a successful country. As in the “Youth Anthem” “We created 15 million young at every age in ten years time”.

There are some reasons why Turkey Republic followed a pronatalist policy. According to Ersin Güngördü they: “Decreasing rates of male population, after World War I and Independence War, European countries’ following a rapid-growth population

policy as a result of negative effects of deaths after World War II, trying to compensate for the rapid-death rates increase with childbearing and the idea that high population is a means of political and military power and Turkey has to have high population in order to protect its freedom.”

As part of the government’s pronatalist policy, in 1929 parents with more than five children were free from travel taxes, in 1930 parents with six and more children were given medal by the government and in 1936 abortion was strictly restricted by Turkish law. (Güngördü)

Childbearing was a national policy in these years. The nationalist program exalting childbirth is of great significance when social codes that motivate this program are considered. It can be said that even though childbirth was motivated economically by the policy of the country, there were some other social codes at work which value having more and more children. First, being a father was regarded as the way of “being a real man” especially when the baby is a boy. Being a father of a boy was prized by the society and this caused women to be forced to give birth until the husband becomes “a real man”, that is, becomes the father of a boy. This fact can be considered as a social code which exalts child bearing; having sons who will be the next generation of his own race and thus helping to keep the surname of the family. Despite the fact that women are the indispensable “object” of child birth, their ideas have almost always been ignored on the issue. This was the case while the pronatalist policy was popular in Turkey. Women had to give birth to babies which harmed their physical and psychological conditions. This was the unavoidable result of not only man controlled society but also lack of population planning programs and mediums of birth control.

Güngördü also asserts that the childbearing policy continued until the years of 1950s when population rate increased to 3.0%. It was a very high rate and when living conditions and annual income per year was considered the situation was becoming more and more dangerous. The population of the country was increasing but annual income rates were the same which meant people were becoming poorer.

Under the 1961 Constitution a new plan for population policy was considered which was later accepted as the first population planning law in 1965. Prof. Dr. Erdener Yurtcan states that there were some essential precautions for new population policy in 1961 constitution. These precautions included:

- legalization of contraceptive pills and equipment as well as their importation and sale.
- legalization of information on family planning and abortion.
- in order to educate people about family planning and abortion, funding for some organizations would be provided.
- educating health officers as soon as possible. (7)

Although economic concerns were the most influential reasons for the legalization of abortion in Turkey, they were not the only ones. Medical reasons also played an important role in changing policy. The same as in the case of America, when it was illegal to get an abortion, women undertook enormous risks which sometimes resulted in injury and death. As a result of both countries' strict laws against abortion women not wanting to give birth to the child had to attempt illegal operations in order to end their pregnancies. According to some estimates, in that period of the 500.000 women who intended to end their pregnancies per year 10.000 of them resulted in deaths or badly injuries. (Gürtan)

In 1965 a new law about “population planning” was accepted in Turkey. According to this law, if there is a threat to the pregnant woman’s health it was legal to get an abortion. However, a woman needed permission from either her parents or the father of the child in order to undergo the procedure. This law was valid until 1983. Since 1983 under the Population Planning Law women have had a right to get an abortion within the first ten weeks of pregnancy. After this period, special reasons are considered such as mother’s health risk or fetal impairment. (Law Number: 2827)

1983 Population Planning Law kept the permission issue valid under this law, that is; a married woman has to get her husband’s consent and unmarried woman has to get her parents’ consent so as to get the operation. This law was accepted when under the laws, man was considered to be the head of the family, and even woman’s working was possible if the man agrees. This inequality between family members, man and woman, was resolved in many areas with new TMK Turkish Civil Law in 1st of January, 2001. Unfortunately, 1983 population planning role wasn’t adopted with this new TMK and there is still controversy about husband’s consent about abortion.

Since 1983, abortion has been performed in Turkey thanks to the Population planning law. A research of Turkey Population and Health indicates that “100 pregnancies for the year prior to 2003; 23 percent of pregnancies among ever-married women terminated in other than a live birth; only about one out of 100 pregnancies ended in stillbirth, where there were 21 abortions per 100 pregnancies, of which 11 were induced.” The research also shows us that abortion rates are higher among women living in big cities and having high school or higher education. (Turkey Demographic and Health Survey 2003)

2.3. Discourses on Birth Control and Abortion in Turkey

In examining the discussion of abortion in Turkey I have identified several major discourses including; religious voices, moral voices, and women's rights. Religious voices will be examined through the publications of The Presidency of Religious Affairs, religious organizations and speeches and/or works of scholars in the field. Newspaper columns, internet forums, literary works and cinema/TV will be the main sources for moral voices. The presidency of Religious Affairs which is called as "DIYANET" in Turkey is a government funded organization which acts as a ministry and has a huge fund. Even though it isn't called a Ministry as a result of Turkey's being a secular country in its constitution, The presidency of Religious Affairs and other ministries have nearly the same organization and working style. As for moral voices, articles on internet, religious teachings, chat rooms and other written materials are also essential in this part owing to the fact that both religious and women rights discourses also include moral voices. Finally, the women's rights section is an indispensable part of this work as the subject has been under consideration by many women organizations recently.

Much as Turkish people are, overwhelmingly, Muslim and most of them can be described as conservative about the issues related to religion, their conduct and inclinations seem to believe this especially when compared with other Muslim countries let alone the United States. Even if Turkish people would rather not talk about issues related with their sexuality in general, and specifically abortion and birth control, they have naturally developed an idea and conduct towards them. For women, the problem is not only being responsible but also having to be silent about these issues on account of

the fact that talking about these issues in public are considered to be taboo in Turkish culture and hence, women are to experience these behind closed doors.

There are great many women having had abortions, using contraceptive pills or other birth control methods. According to the results of the statistics done by Bayer Schering Parma, in 2007, almost all of Turkish women between 18-45 have a general knowledge about birth control, whereas of 50 %of them use a modern birth control method such as: pills, condoms, IUD etc. 38 % of them use no birth control method, the rest using traditional methods such as; calendar method or withdrawal. The interesting thing is that even though 50 % of the women use modern birth control methods, they don't share this even with their best friends or mothers. Especially for those who are unmarried admitting use of birth control methods may be difficult. Due to the need for women to remain anonymous in their discussion of sexual issues, using the written sources such as chat rooms, forums and media and books, through which people can express their ideas freely by remaining anonymous and thus without confronting a condemnation in the society, is of great importance.

2.3.1. Religious Discourses; the Influence of Islam in Turkish Culture.

In spite of the fact that Islam has one sacred book the Koran, there are various points of views about sexuality, birth control and abortion. This is in part due to the fact that there are no verses or specific chapters about birth control or abortion in the Koran and authorities use different sources to explicate and answer questions regarding this ambiguous issue.

2.3.1.1. The Importance of Marriage and Women's Roles

At the heart of the issue lie women, so an accurate understanding is only possible through clear insight about women's role in Islam. If the idea that women were created from men's body which implies that men are superior to women was ignored, it would be possible to say that women are given far more importance than men in Islam. This is mostly because women give birth to babies who are to preserve and expand the religion and its values so that Islam may exist for good.

Being one of the most important members in the family, women are regarded as very important in the family structure. In Islam, marriage, that is, forming a family is strongly recommended in terms of sexual relationships and bringing up Muslim children and thus maternal roles of women are emphasized.

Bekir Topaloğlu a former instructor at the Istanbul High Islam Institute asserts in his book "Woman in Islam" that women have four major roles in which she is incompatible. These are, in rank order, being pregnant, giving birth, suckling the baby and bringing up the children. (255) He concludes his comments on women's role with the idea that "A woman who also works in another place cannot fulfill these roles. Indeed, she wears herself out physically and mentally at work and thus she becomes in a position that she cannot carry out her most natural roles." (256) Dr. M. Osman also agrees with him writing that "For a woman, the most suitable and healthy job/work/role is being a wife and mother." (244) As can be seen this is the common idea about women's role in the society among most Islamic authorities. Although there aren't many sections about women's role in society in the Koran, one of them is actually controversial when Islam authorities' discourses about women are considered. It gives

women a right not to suckle the baby, though it is thought to be one of the major roles of women. It says “If the parents agree there is no prohibition about mother’s giving up suckling” (Bakara, 233) It adds that in that case another woman must be paid to feed the baby. This is interesting because one of the major roles of women, accepted in the society, is to feed the baby but the Koran gives women to have a right to choose in this case though she has to agree with the father about not suckling the baby. The Koran also gives women a lot of rights about divorcing, inheriting, and so on. Actually, these rights can be considered as protection to women as according to the Koran men are the responsible people in the family structure as they are superior to woman. (Nisa, 34) Given the fact that most authorities think that women’s roles are determined and a good wife has to obey his husband’s wishes, with the new generation things have started to change. Younger authorities assume a milder role as a result of the changing economic and social norms.

2.3.1.2. What Islam says about Birth Control?

When birth control methods are considered, it is not wrong to say that women and men are free to use birth control methods and there are no bans or restrictions. Despite the fact that the Koran doesn’t include anything directly about birth control, some hadith which mean *the verbal expressions of the utterances or the actions and approvals of Prophet Mohammed* reveal that it is not prohibited. In the time of Mohammed, the most prevalent and probably the sole birth control method Arabs used was withdrawal. As a result, when modern birth control methods are thought, it is not easy to decide what would have been the case with these methods.

An incident at the time of Prophet Mohammed exemplifies the Islamic view on birth control methods. One day, during at war time Ebu Said el-Hudri and his friends wanted to have sexual relationship with hostages but they did not want them to get pregnant. They discussed the issue first amongst themselves then decided to consult the Prophet Mohammed who was with them. The Prophet Mohammed said “You are free to do this-(meaning withdrawal)- but every life being written/ decided by God will come to the world if God wants it to be created.”(1172) This quote is important because it informs us that at the time of Prophet Mohammed, withdrawal is accepted right by the prophet himself. On the other hand, his speech makes us understand that life is sacred and it is under God’s control, which raises another question of what is considered a *life*. This question is also one of the most controversial discourses about abortion and needs special consideration.

2.3.1.3. The place of abortion in predominantly Muslim Turkey

While birth control and having a desired number of children are accepted in Islam, abortion is generally regarded as a *sin* although there is some division among theologians. Despite being a controversial issue among scholars of the field, Islamic Catechism emphasizes that after ensoulment a fetus is actually a life, hence abortion is a *murder*. Moreover, murder is prohibited in many places in the Koran. According to the Koran God is the only Creator; he creates and takes the life back. God has made life sacred. Also another important point about abortion in Islam is about people’s bodies. As God entrusted the body to people’s safekeeping, *women are not free* to use it in any way they choose, there are restrictions.

According to the Islamic Catechism, “An infant receives *the right to live* not from its mother or father but directly from God. Even though parents have a right in choosing to be a parent or not, they do not have a right to end the fetus' life after fertilization.” (www.diyenet.gov.tr) Given that the Koran does not give any specific information about abortion, it is a matter of interpretation for scholars. They have to interpret the issue by examining all the chapters of the Koran about women, life, death etc. as well as the sayings of Prophet Mohammed in order to give an accurate interpretation about abortion. This also causes wide-ranging ideas and information as everybody has a unique understanding and there is no one to verify in the end.

Religious discourses about abortion can be categorized mainly into two parts; the issue of when life begins and the issue of necessity. This is because scholars generally agree that abortion is a *sin* with some exceptions but there are debates about when it is permissible and under which conditions it can be considered *necessary* to get an abortion.

Is it a fetus or a life?

“O mankind! If you are in doubt as to the Resurrection...

Consider that we have created you of earth;

Then of semen;

Then of a blod-like clot;

Then of a lump of flesh,

[which is] formed or not formed;

So that we may demonstrate to you [our power];

And we establish in the wombs that we will,

Till a stated term;

Then we bring you out as infants...”

(Hac, 4)

The previous passage, which is quoted from the Koran, gives us the development of fetus, which clearly indicates that God also says that there is a term until a *fetus* is considered to be an *infant*. As can be seen, it clarifies that first human is of semen, then, blood-like cloth, then flesh till a stated term, it says “then we bring you out as infants” This last part is actually the most crucial part of the passage because it contradicts the idea of some scholars who claim that life begins at the time of conception.

Despite the fact that there is a clear section about the development of the fetus, there are a great many opposing ideas on abortion among authorities on whether the fetus is a small *cell* or a *life*, what a life is and when it starts. The soul and life after death are two major items in Islam. If an unborn baby has a soul then it will have *life* after being aborted in the “other” world. As a result, there is a huge discussion among Islamic scholars about when an infant becomes a *human being* and, therefore, has a right to live, which is given by God. While some authorities insist that it is 40th day, when a fetus becomes a human being, some others indicate that God blows his soul to the baby on the 120th day. There is also a hadith revealing that a fetus is ensouled in 120th day. It says “each of you is constituted in your mother’s womb for 40 days as a *nufta*, then it becomes a *alaga* for an equal period, then a *mudgha* for another equal period, then the angel is sent, one who breathes the soul into it” (Musallam 54) Using these Koranic references and hadith, most Muslim thinkers agree that a fetus is not a

human being until the 120 day and thus, it is acceptable to have abortion during this period. Only after that time can abortion be considered as a murder.

What is meant by *Necessity* ?

The abortion issue is also debated from the perspective of absolute necessity that is whether abortion is really necessary in a case or not. While some authorities claim that abortion is *permissible* in some cases, others do not agree. It is possible to examine the discourses of necessity in three categories; economic necessities and maternal health, and rape or incest.

a. Economic Necessities

An economic necessity is the least common discourse among the theologians and Zekeriya Beyaz is one of the people who have added “economics” as an issue of necessity. His framing of the issue is important and different from many other authorities’ in that he says that economic burden may be considered as “a necessity” as well as in the cases of maternal health risk and rape. (www.haberler.com) In his book “Sex and Society in Islam” B.F. Musallow, also, supports the idea that “Economic reasons can be determinant about birth control” using the ideas of Ghazali an important Muslim authority Musallow declares that “Ghazali especially favored the economic motives for birth control”. (22)

Both preserving property or limiting the family size are economic reasons which were accepted as reasonable for the use of birth control, which strongly imply that the medieval Islamic authority Ghazali would approve abortion for economic reasons as well

According to the booklet published by Turkey Family Planning Organization “Every member of the society who can afford to marry should get married. That is because marriage prevents people from leering at others and provides morality in the society. But, if a person cannot afford it, he shouldn’t get married because these problems may make this institution a bad one” Keeping this hadith in mind, the organization claims that economy is an important factor in marriage, so having children is a result of marriage and can be restricted because of the economical problems. Thus it is right to apply birth control methods and even abortion for economic reasons. (38) We can consider this view of the organization as a combination of economic and religious view because they use religious ideas to convince that abortion may be permissible in case of an economic necessity. This is also because most people do not accept abortion a right thing owing to the religious reasons.

b- Maternal Health

Maternal health risk is the most important of all the discourses on necessity because even though it is legally restricted to get an abortion after 10 weeks of pregnancy, when maternal health is at risk, abortion is available anytime during the pregnancy. Furthermore, in such cases neither the father’s nor the parents consent is required As for the religious perspective, health risk is also considered to be a “necessity” and women are allowed to get the operation if there is maternal health risk. An internet site named “Islam with questions” agrees with the idea and adds that “the infant’s life isn’t complete but a mother’s is. A complete life cannot be sacrificed for an incomplete one.” (www.sorularlaislamiyet.com) This is the common idea on the necessity of abortion in case of maternal health risk.

In June 1971, 80 prominent representatives of different Islam denominations came together in the capital of Fas, Rabat and they discussed the issue of birth control and abortion. At the conference, the majority of the authorities were of the opinion that it may be *permissible* to obtain an abortion up until the end of the fourth month (120 day) but it is strictly forbidden after that period unless there is a risk to the mother's health. (Turkey Family Planning Organization 46) This also leads us to the point that mother's health is much more important than the infants and even after fourth month, Islam authorities accept the abortion as right when there is a health risk for the mother.

c- Rape or Incest

At the beginning of 2008 a theologian of El Ezher University in Egypt gave a fatwa explaining that "Abortion is religiously permissible in case of a rape" but he added that "It is urgent for a mother to get a doctor's certificate as soon as she learns of her pregnancy". This newspaper article is important because it gives us an explicit meaning of necessity. It explains that in cases of "maternal health risk, abnormality of the infant and rape composes *necessity* about abortion and in these cases abortion is *permissible* and legally *acceptable* in Egypt. It is forbidden to get abortion in Egypt if there is not a risk to maternal health and this fatwa helps women who are raped and do not want to have the baby from this experience. The reason of this fatwa is possibly the high rates of rape incidents in the country there are more than twenty thousand rapes every year in Egypt. (www.haberler.com) After this news, Turkish theologians and authorities began to debate the issue in terms of rape given that a fatwa is considered to be true and accepted among all Muslims. While Mehmet Kaya who is an authority of The Presidency of Religious Affairs claims that without a maternal health risk it is not

permissible to get abortion, Prof. Dr. Zekeriya Beyaz,, suggests that “This is an absolute necessity fatwa. Abortion is, of course, forbidden if there is no realistic reason but when there is a maternal health risk, baby’s health risk, and economic burden in the family and of course rape, the situation is also an absolute necessity and it is religiously permissible to get abortion.” (40)

There are, however, those who disagree with this attempt to frame abortion in the language of necessity. Theologian Professor Hayrettin Karaman, writing about this same issue in the newspaper Yeni Şafak, agrees with The Presidency of Religious Affairs on the subject of abortion in case of rape. He indicates that people claiming the permissibility of abortion in some extreme cases is totally wrong. He supports his idea giving a hadith about sexual adultery stating that “When a baby is born at the end of a sexual adultery, the baby belongs to the legal father if the woman is married.” Hayrettin Karaman explains this hadith and he adds that if the woman is unmarried the baby is under control of the mother again, not the father. Using this hadith as a reference he concludes that “Even in the case of a sexual adultery, Islam does not give permission to the mother to get rid of the baby, instead; it tries to determine a family for the baby.” Karaman thinks that abortion is a *murder* and there is no difference between killing a *baby* before or after birth. He also adds that thinking that the baby is unhealthy, it is again unacceptable and it is the same as killing a physically or mentally handicapped child. According to him, the only reason for abortion is maternal health risk and this must also be certified by a doctor. His final words are for Zekeriya Beyaz and professors of El Ezher University; “It cannot be religiously permissible to *kill an innocent baby* who doesn’t have any guilt with his/ her existence at the end of events

including sexual adultery and rape, even if all the professors of all universities in the world say the opposite.” (*www.yenisafak.com.tr*) It can be said that Karaman does not recognize rape or economics as a necessity—that he frames the issue in a different religious discourse. He only recognizes the one necessity and that is the threat to the woman’s life

It may be argued that even though Muslim authorities have different views about when or in which condition abortion is permissible, almost all of them consider abortion as a big sin without a sensible reason, which makes the operation obligatory for the women.

2.3.2. Ethical/ moral view of Turkish People on Abortion

Religion and morality can be used interchangeably in some contexts seeing that people who think that abortion is immoral generally hold this opinion due to its being considered as a sin for most authorities in major religions unless some obligatory reasons such as mother’s health risk is involved. In Turkey where there is a strong Islamic tradition and the majority of people identify themselves as Muslim, there is a tendency, at least in words many espouse, to follow the religious rulings on issues such as abortion and birth control. The interesting thing is that there is a sharp contradiction between what people say and what they do.

While using the term ethical discourse I mean the objection to abortion on ethical grounds. With a view to examining the discourse about abortion from the moral or ethical sides, some other means of communication are of great importance where people may feel more free to express their opinions such as the internet or via books,

films, stories etc. Although we cannot trace internet sources back over a long period they are valuable sources as they still display miscellaneous ideas.

It can be said that there are many different discourses and themes in this part. There are those who say abortion is taking *life*, thus, a *murder*. There are ones who say abortion is not ethical but they have to do it, thus, agreeing it's wrong but they have no *choice* as a result of social norms. Even though it is legal to have a child outside of marriage, it is not common and morally acceptable in Turkish society. This can be regarded as the inevitable results of the dominant religious beliefs which make sexual affair outside of marriage totally sinful. As a result, if one has a child outside of marriage, people in the society condemn the woman first, the number of her friends decreases and she starts to feel isolated. This is especially very common in rural areas where marriage is valued.

2.3.2.1 Abortion controversy; whether being “life” or “murder”

One of the sites the name of which is “a half freedom”, despite not being a special site about abortion but one that everybody can open a forum and people can discuss their ideas freely, has a video of abortion practice and infants. This source is of value because people generally express their opinions freely and both groups; opponents and supporters of abortion share their ideas there. The person who shares the video is called “yakaza” and he/she is an opponent of abortion. He/she says that “after watching the video, both my brain and my heart said “no” for abortion.” In his message he adds that even though there is only a tiny cell, it is “*life*” and thus, abortion is “*murder*”. Here they invoke life. Using the nickname “Wateress”, one person also writes “This is inhumanity. What kind of a mother can attempt to her own *baby's life*, her own life? Do

not kill babies. They are our future. The only people to blame are senseless, mindless, *murderer parents.*” As it can be understood that person regards abortion as a murder. It must be noticed that the person regards it as a “baby” not a fetus unlike the previous comment as referring to fetus as a baby is also a particular theme in the American discourse. Another one “Seyyah” writes “I don’t know what to say. What kind of a conscious do they have? I really wonder how they have a right to end a baby’s *life* even before he is born.” It is hardly surprising that those who oppose abortion use the word *baby*. Here we can see another perspective rather than blaming parents for being murderers. The person regards abortion as a violation of human rights, actually of baby’s life. There are thousands of messages on different websites like these and many others including insults, accusations and even curses. (yakaza.wordpress.com)

2.3.2.2. What is the influence of social norms in abortion debate?

On the other hand, the same forum includes messages which are written by supporters of abortion. They do not indicate that abortion is a way of birth control and ethical but they advocate that some people have those operations unwillingly only because they are forced to do it by society, economic problems or sometimes family pressure which can also be regarded as a kind of variation on necessity. One of these people, most probably a woman having had abortion “La Mano” writes “Be sure that nobody has abortion unless she has to. Abortion results from many different reasons except from having sexual relationship before marriage.” Here we see that she writes this as a reply to ones who blame people having abortion because of their sexual motives, only. She carries on “And those voicing that ‘Abortion isn’t a way of birth-control’ you think that you know more than others. Everybody knows that it isn’t but

you don't know that it is almost impossible to find 100 %successful birth control method. You can use condoms, morning after pills or contraceptive pills. These do not guarantee that you will not get pregnant 100. %” La Mano adds that it is better to get abortion than give birth to a baby who would be unhappy.

It is interesting that there aren't many messages supporting abortion but people mostly say that they are forced to do it because of *social pressure* as in the case a woman with a nickname Esma says clearly “I had to get an abortion and I still feel guilty. The problem is with the people, with the society.” (yakaza.wordpress.com) As can be seen clearly here, Esma says that she was obliged to get an abortion because of the pressure of the society which can be given another real example of necessity.

Another example of ethical discourse is a film called directed by Biray Dalkıran called “Araf”. Notwithstanding being a horror film, it, genuinely, reflects the traits of psychological films in that it focuses on psychological problems of a woman having experienced abortion. Even though having an abortion voluntarily, when she wants to get pregnant again, she starts to see the reflections of her dead baby even the reflections of it as a 3-4 year old a girl. The film is important owing to its plot as this is the first Turkish film the main concern of which is actually abortion and therefore needs to be observed carefully. It does not express openly that abortion is wrong and ethical, but the implied discourse is that if you kill your own *baby*, you'll be punished by God and may not have another chance. Thus, it gives viewers the idea that she deserves what she lives because she didn't behave according to the social norms and became pregnant while she was unmarried and now being a married woman even if she wants to have a baby, she can not.

Another interesting example of fictional works is a soap opera called “Annem” which is still on TV once a week. This soap opera can be used to display the changing way Turkish people view the subject of unmarried mothers and of course abortions. It is highly interesting to see that this soap opera does not reflect the way many Turkish people would behave in a case of unmarried mother or relationship 17 year old high school girl, Gonca gets pregnant and the her family learns about the issue. Here the problem starts, when an unmarried woman gets pregnant; she almost never gives this news to her whole family in Turkish society. In rare conditions, mother can learn it, and this is true only if she has a perfect relationship with her daughter or would- be mother really needs her mother’s assistance whether economically or psychologically. Even if the mother knows the truth, other family members hardly ever learn it as pregnancy of an unmarried daughter may be an adequate reason for most mothers to hurt their daughters in some cases even to kill them in real life. In our example, after learning about the pregnancy, there is a discussion about “abortion”, some of the family members including the father and the uncle thinks that she should get abortion and continue her education, some others disagree. The astounding thing is that the father of the girl and uncles of the girls support the idea that she should get an abortion and there is no “bad” thing about it. On the other hand, Gonca and her mother say that it is her *baby* and must *live*. The grandmother, a representative of older religious Turks, thinks that it’s a big *sin*, and she should give birth to the *baby* and be a good mother. At the end, they decide that Gonca is going to give birth to the baby. Here we can see an encapsulation of a lot discourses, indeed. This is because they handle the issue in terms of being a mother, getting abortion, having to finish education, having a baby out of a marriage and so on. It can be said that a combination different discourses can be seen

here such as; sexual relationship of unmarried couples, having a baby outside of marriage, life and baby discourse and religious discourses.

In a society like Turkey's, people are not used to seeing such events on TV although these kinds of pregnancy cases are common. The difference is in the way the family handles the issue in the soap opera. One of the most read newspapers; Sabah had news about the soap opera and the reactions to it. Yüksel Altuğ, in his 11th December 2008 dated article, indicates that the readers are highly agitated by the story line of the pregnancy of a 17 year old high school student as a result of a sexual affair with an older man and her insistence on giving birth to the baby. (www.sabah.com.tr) In his writing Yüksel Altuğ uses *illegal affair* while asserting that the readers' biggest objection is to the support of the family to Gonca in her "illegal" pregnancy. He adds that the parents are afraid that this will be a bad example for their daughters and they will think that this is normal and they can be supported by their own families, either. Here two different aspects of the case can be observed. Firstly, according to what Yüksel Altuğ writes, readers of him who are also viewers of the soap opera think that a 17 year old girl cannot be supported to give birth to a baby outside of marriage, which also indicates that it is interesting to see these kinds of cases on TV because most people regard these as violating what is considered acceptable in terms of women's sexuality. The discourse does not imply that she should get abortion but an unmarried girl shouldn't even be portrayed as pregnant in a TV series. The second and much more interesting thing about the news is that Yüksel Altuğ who is a journalist of a famous Turkish newspaper, Sabah uses the term "illegal" and "immoral" for the love affair between Gonca and her lover, and so, he not only gives his readers opinion but also

shares the same opinion, in a way. He finishes his writing by urging producers that the soap opera is on the dangerous paths. As can be seen, his focus is on the affair and not on abortion, which is also interesting. He avoids focusing on abortion although it should be big issue. It may be argued that his reason not mentioning about it is that as a journalist he does not want to show where stands, as it includes quite a lot of subjects such as religion, women's rights, economy and family planning.

As evidenced by the soap opera and its reflections on the society, it can be said that Turkish society has a long way to accept the truth that women can have sexual relationship without marriage. The responses to the same newspaper article are also of great importance because they help us to understand Turkish society better. One of the respondents Barbaros⁷³ writes that; "When I first watched the soap opera I wondered if I was too narrow minded or the scenarists were very forward looking. I don't think that there are such kinds of families in Turkey. Even if, there are, I don't think they are Turkish or Muslim." Barbaros, like many other Turkish people, thinks that these don't reflect normal Turkish families and he also associates the events with being Turkish or Muslim, thus, employing another popular discourse that non-Muslims are out of the norm and may even be polluting for good read Muslim families. Barbaros's speech also shows us that people do not like facing the truths. They think that Muslim Turkish girls cannot have sexual affair outside of marriage, which brings us to the idea that Turkish people have a tendency to mix up religion and morality, and most of them assume that if you experience this you are immoral. Abortion of an unmarried girl is for them *a double immorality*. As a matter of fact, the soap opera and the comments about it, proves us

once more that there is a strict discourse on female sexuality and virginity before marriage and abortion is generally issued with this strict discourse in Turkey.

Another responder Tamertamertamer writes about the abortion issue by saying “In soap operas they make women give birth to babies only because of the objections to abortion. It is possible to see a kind of neighborhood suppression in soap operas.” This is a realistic approach to the situation. This can also be accepted as an example of necessity discourse even though this necessity does not result in abortion as in the example of the girl having had to get abortion because of social pressure, but the social pressure, the necessity, makes the producers not show examples of abortion on TV. The reason why they choose not to allow abortions on TV is partly that it is a *sin* in Islam and people think it is *immoral* to get abortion. However, this is a progress in Turkish society in that it doesn't hide the situations which can be observed in the society even if the plot doesn't reflect common responses to such a situation.

In brief, ethically/ morally abortion and related issues are accepted as wrong in Turkish culture because they mostly assume religious and social norms as the indications of being moral or immoral and if one has an abortion, especially an unmarried woman, there is no way she escapes condemnation, which obliges women not to share this experience with other people. However, there has been a progress at the perception and demonstration of the issue; in other words, people have started to look with a different perspective to the ideas of once rigidly taboo issues.

2.3.3. Abortion from “Women Rights” perspective

According to a “Women Rights” perspective, no matter what men say about the issue, abortion is primarily about women on the grounds that it is the woman who carries the baby, who has physical and mental differences, whose life is wholly affected by the whole process, from pregnancy to the end of her life. Thus, the issue is very important for the women and it is commonly discussed as a women’s right perspective by most pro-choice supporters. Sexuality, virginity, and abortion are to be examined with regards to women’s rights. .

Despite the fact that abortion is mainly a women issue , they are often not left alone to decide to get an abortion or not. If they want to have an abortion, they have to obey the country’s laws in order to have the operation freely and safely. According to the law in Turkey, a woman can get an abortion up until ten week’s into her pregnancy and after that it is illegal to get abortion. If she is married, however, her husband’s content is also needed. Moreover, if she is unmarried and under 18 both parents’ consent is necessary. Most feminist groups who think that it must be a woman’s decision to have a baby or not claim that it is women’s human right to choose whether or not to have an abortion. While In Turkey the number of women’s organizations concerned with the issue of abortion alone is limited general women’s organizations include abortion in their agendas. It can be said that the primary discourse that they employ when discussing the issue of abortion is one focused on rights. Women should have control over their reproductive ability and this includes their right to choose abortion

Women organizations have spread in Turkey for the last ten years but they aren't much known by public, and being aware of this, these women are on the way of making the issue considered by majority. There are indeed many organizations most of which are run in İstanbul searching the abortion and women's rights relationship, and trying to make Turkish Women sensitive and conscious about women's rights.

Pınar İlkkaracan asserts that “to decide about one's own reproductivity is one of the main human rights of a woman.” (Belge) The issue is also discussed among medical doctors and Dr. Yeşim Islegen, Women Rights Working Group member of İstanbul Doctors Organization, says that “Whether a woman will end up pregnancy or not is not a decision a woman will make by asking opinion of the embryo. Embryo is a woman's offset. The right to decide is of woman.” (Özcan)

The official website of the WHHR indicates that “Our Reproductive Rights! underlines the fact that women's rights related to her reproductivity and body are human rights. The text is comprised of information on methods of birth control, abortion and infertility, and cautions women on the need to be aware of and to demand information about their potential effects on their health.”(Celik)

Biray Dalkılıç's film “Araf” can also be examined as an example of the speech on “women's rights”. It was on the screen October 2006 but even 3 months after, it was getting criticism from women organizations. The Filmmor Women's Cooperation, in January, 2007 released a statement and criticizing the film severely for being a supporter of anti- abortionist and depicting women experiences by men. They indicated that film gives a “*do not get an abortion*” message to the women and added the criticism that “experiences peculiar to women are explained by men.” which implies

that men aren't capable of displaying women's experiences on the grounds that they do not live in the same conditions. "In the film women having abortions are shown as if they were *criminals, bad and evil*"(www.bianet.org) They had one more criticism about the film's name; Araf which has a religious origin and thus a reminiscent of religious perspectives and sin. According to The Presidency of Religious Affairs's Religious Concepts Dictionary Araf is a place between hell and heaven where people hoping to get into heaven will be able to talk to people of hell and heaven. (www.diyenet.gov.tr) It can be said that Araf is similar to Purgatory in the Catholic belief which also means a place people will stay for a while and be punished for what they have done as a sin before they are able to go to heaven.

Even though mostly educated people in society such as the writers, doctors and lawyers have the idea that "it is a woman's human right to have an abortion", general Turkish women do not share the same view as evidenced by "A research of Turkish women awareness of human rights and their behaviors" which is a recent survey conducted by KONDA. To the proposition that "every woman has a right to have an abortion" %19 of the respondents answered "absolutely correct", % 30 of them answered "correct" while %31,2 of them answered "wrong/ absolutely wrong" This result indicates that most Turkish women do not think that it is their right to have an abortion. It can be argued that their idea is the result of their religious perspective and social norms.

The ones who form woman rights discourse on the issue of abortion generally criticize the idea that a married woman should get her husband consent in order to get an abortion. They also claim that it's an operation to woman's body" and "if the woman

doesn't want to have a baby, but her husband doesn't approve the operation, it is wrong to make the woman have the baby as it is woman's body and it must be the woman's self choice. Unfortunately, as a result of patriarchy which is still of great value and acceptance, even the laws concerning a woman's her body are defined by men and hence, not protecting women in general. The laws are written by men, they're composed according to men's will, they are implemented by men, and consequently women are still owned by men in one way or another.

To sum up, it can be said that neither women's right of having the baby or not nor women's other sexual rights are given enough importance by Turkish society, but there are struggles of women organizations and some individuals to make men understand that they, as women, do have the same rights as men do and the discourse about women's right to decide about abortion has started to shape.

CHAPTER 3

A REPRESENTATION OF ABORTION IN AMERICAN CULTURE

The abortion debate in the U.S is an old one and can be traced back to 1900s when abortion became illegal in most states. It is also very polarized as it is related with women's rights, religion, politics and economy, as well. The supporters and opponents of the idea that abortion should be legal are so many and determined that the debate has even led to violence several times in the U.S. According to the statistics of NAF(National Abortion Federation),in America 7 murder, 17 attempted murder, 41 Bombings, 175 Arsoning, 96 Attempted bomb-arson, 384 invasion, 1353 vandalism cases have occurred since 1992. As for clinic blockades, 755 incidents have happened and 37718 people arrested because of these incidents. (www.prochoice.org) It is interesting for many people how a person can kill another while working hard to support "life". Pro-life activists' violence cannot be explained in terms of logic as they do something against their claimed aim; to protect life. Linda Gordon asserts in her book *The Moral Property of Women* that "killing one to save the lives of many, they said" (309)

FAVOUR ABORTION IN ALL, SOME, OR NO CIRCUMSTANCES

	<i>1985</i>	<i>1993</i>	<i>2005</i>	<i>2009</i>
<i>Favor permitting abortion in</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>
<i>All circumstances</i>	<i>26</i>	<i>30</i>	<i>23</i>	<i>23</i>
<i>Some circumstances</i>	<i>53</i>	<i>55</i>	<i>55</i>	<i>53</i>
<i>No circumstances</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>21</i>
<i>Not sure</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>4</i>

Table.3.1. SOURCE: Harris Poll-2009

But why is abortion such a big issue? Can it be considered as a medical procedure? What is the intensity of the situation in the country? According to the results given by the Guttmacher Institute in 2006; there are approximately 6.4 million pregnancies in the U.S.A. Among these % 51 are intended and %49 are unintended pregnancies which are often seen on women between 18- 24 and generally Hispanic, unmarried and black. These unintended pregnancies resulted in abortions in many cases. K. Henshaw and Kathryn Kost assert (1996) that;

The risk of unintended pregnancy leading to abortion varies widely among demographic subgroups. The factors associated with high risk are relatively young age (18–24), being separated or divorced, cohabiting while unmarried, being Hispanic or of a minority race, having a low income, being covered by Medicaid and having had four or more births.

As evidenced by the report of the Guttmacher Institute, cases of abortion are great in number and the groups having the operation are also varied. These facts lead to

society to form different discourses about the issue of abortion. The reason why they use opposing discourses is that America is a society which includes varied ethnicities with own religions, traditions, and cultural differences. This, however, does not mean that people from the same origin share the same discourse as individuals have their own visions, as well.

3.1. History of Abortion in America

Abortion is not a new practice and its roots date back to medieval times. Women used various ways such as herbs and other concoctions in place of modern abortion in the U.S as other women throughout the world did. Laws about banning abortion started to appear in the U.S in 1880s and it was restricted almost in every state of America by 1900s. However, women had illegal abortions under risky and unhealthy conditions. Although there were some prior fought against its being illegal, Barbara Hayler indicates that the issue wasn't political until 1960s reform movements. (307-323) Only after this movement, it became primarily a political issue as well as being a social and religious one.

In America the most important and remembered case on abortion is *Roe v. Wade*. It can be referred to as a key in U.S. abortion law. In 1973 the U.S. Supreme Court decided that (by a vote of seven to two) abortion should be is legal and the right to have an abortion is a personal choice which is protected by the 14th amendment of the U.S. Constitution. The court ruling included the "trimester" framework which meant that women could get an abortion within the first three months of the pregnancy without any interference from the state. The system also gives women right to get abortion in the second trimester under some risky conditions and finally only if there is a maternal

health risk that is certified by a medical doctor. The importance of the case lies also in the discourse they chose; they used the discourses of personal *choice*, women's *rights* and *maternal health risk*, which later composed the discourses in the country and also very similar to the ones in Turkey

The first dissent was written by from Mr. Justice White. This dissent was the beginning of new era of debate about *Roe v. Wade*. After repeating the reasons of abortion in such cases as; when there is no maternal health risk, convenience, family planning, economics, dislike of children, the embarrassment of illegitimacy, he concluded that "With all due respect, I dissent. I find nothing in the language or history of the Constitution to support the Court's judgments" (qtd. in Norton and Alexander 463)

Roe v. Wade became a starting point for a hot debate on abortion as Woolford and Woolford suggest in their article Abortion and Genocide: The Unbridgeable Gap "In response(to *Roe v. Wade*), antiabortionists mobilized intensively and spent the next decade persuading politicians to make state Medicaid Funds unavailable to pay for abortion." And they were successful in their aim. Since 1973, there have been some important changes about the rules and regulations concerning the issue. The Hyde Amendment is one of the important changes. With the passage of the Hyde Amendment in 1976, women, in a way, lost their right to get abortion inasmuch as it prohibited governmental medical coverage for abortions except the cases of rape, incest and threat to mother's health. Although the Hyde Amendment wasn't applied by all states, the regulation caused conflicts among women as low-income women's access to abortion became in danger with Hyde Amendment. They had to travel to other states which

included funding for abortions or pay money to clinics. In other words, low-income women's access to abortion was restricted and they lost their constitutional right to end their pregnancies.

Planned Parenthood v. Casey is also a significant case in abortion history. In 1988 and in 1989 Pennsylvania amended its regulations on abortion. According to this new legislature, a woman had to wait for 24 hours before getting an abortion, had to get her parents consent if she is a minor, and her husband's if married. These were criticized by abortion clinics and the case began. The court decided to uphold all these regulation except the husband's consent.

Today, required counseling and mandatory waiting periods still form an important part of abortion debate. According to current laws in most states a woman who wants get an abortion has to be given information about the abortion process, the fetal development, alternatives to abortion and available state and private programs if she chooses to give birth to the baby. Some states also have mandatory waiting process which is 24 hours after counseling. As Guttmacher Institute's report "Counseling and Waiting Periods for Abortion" indicates "The woman is effectively required to make two trips to the health care provider in order to obtain an abortion, a requirement that could constitute a hardship for some women." Linda Gordon in her book "Woman's Body Woman's Right" also asserts that these restrictions on abortion show that "How governments can construct an anti-abortion policy while unable to prohibit abortion." She accepts these restrictions as "a punishment" to the users of abortion.(411)

Another important regulation is more recent, the Partial Birth Abortion Ban of 2003. As Guttmacher Institute states "The definition of what constitutes a "partial-

birth” abortion varies from state to state” However, According to the medical dictionary; “Partial birth abortion is a method of late-term (after 20 weeks) abortion that terminates pregnancy and results in the death and intact removal of a fetus. This procedure is most commonly referred to as intact dilatation and extraction (D & X). It occurs in a rare percentage of pregnancies. In the definition “medical procedure” is used while referring to partial birth abortion, which in a way shows that it is a procedure being fulfilled in purpose of health issues and saving the life of mother is prized. Even though this is the general idea in medical society, there are, unsurprisingly, a number of medical doctors who opposes the operation and refuse to perform it claiming it is a murder, not saving a life.

According to the U.S Code;

Any physician who, in or affecting interstate or foreign commerce, knowingly performs a partial-birth abortion and thereby kills a human fetus shall be fined under this title or imprisoned not more than 2 years, or both. This subsection does not apply to a partial-birth abortion that is necessary to save the life of a mother, whose life is endangered by a physical disorder, physical illness, or physical injury, including a life-endangering physical condition caused by or arising from the pregnancy itself. This subsection takes effect 1 day after the enactment. (Title 18, Part I, Chapter 74)

As can be seen the discourse of “maternal health risk” is used as an exception to the ban of Partial birth abortion, which is also the same for Turkey about the ending of pregnancies after 10th week.

After signing the ban on April 18, 2007, Bush, defined the operation as “abhorrent” and stated that “The partial birth abortion ban, which overwhelmingly bipartisan majority in Congress, passed and I signed into law, represents a commitment to *building a culture of life in America.*” (www.whitehouse.gov) In his statement he also concluded that they would work for the day every fetus is given *life* and protected by the law. As can be seen here, he employs the life discourse which is very common and strong among pro-life supporters.

In spite of the fact that “Partial Birth Abortion Ban” restricts only one way of abortion; intact dilation and extraction doctors may use other ways, people who oppose abortion thought they had a victory over people who favor it. They took it as a step to their original aim; making abortion illegal in all cases. The director of Pro-Life activities Kathleen Gallagher after the case told that; “It's a historic event, because it is the first federal restriction on abortion ever passed by Congress. It really takes the mask off of *Roe v. Wade.*”

It is a fact that most Americans support the “Partial-Birth Abortion Ban” and they think that intact dilation and extraction must be illegal according to the current results of survey organizations such as; ABC Polls, PEW, Gallup, CNN polls and NBC polls. Because of the fact that these surveys were applied to different groups their results may differ. In order to get a better result, all of them are used in Figure 1. It can be argued that people who answered PEW, Gallup and CNN polls’ questions are more conservative about Abortion than the others.

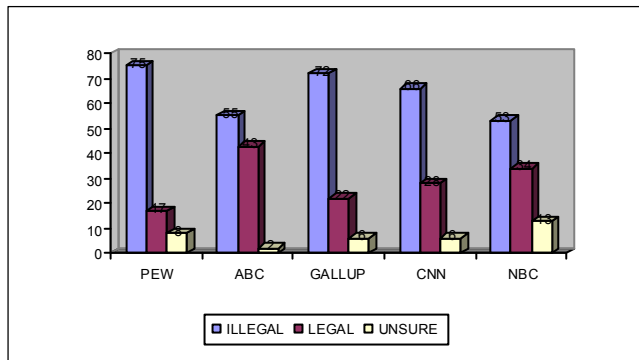


Figure.3.1 Polling Reports on Partial-Birth Abortion Ban

SOURCE: <http://www.pollingreport.com/abortion.html>

Aside from the requirements most states have, another issue to be addressed is that even though abortion is legal a lot of places do not have abortion provider and thus women have to face hardship in order to get abortion. As a result of all these controversial laws, requirements and hardships, political, religious and feminist moves, the issue of abortion is always a hot one in the U.S.

3.2. Discourses on Abortion

There are mainly two groups forming the discourses on abortion; pro- choice and pro- life. Pro-choice supporters are the ones who think that abortion should be legal and it is a woman's private *choice* to decide to get an abortion or not. The other group, pro-life supporters, is the ones who think legalization of abortion is wrong and the baby has a life and a right to live. Their views on fetus also differ in that Pro-choice supporters believe "a fetus is human being only if it is viable" but most of pro-life supporters believe that from the moment of conception a *fetus* is a *human being* and abortion is a way of *killing a person* not a simple operation. As a result the discourses on the issue of abortion are shaped by these words such as; life, choice, killing and so on.

Discourses about abortion can be varied according to people's religious perspectives, as well. For example; if women take part in religious activities and have traditional views, they are more conservative in the issue of abortion (Fowler and Hertzke) As a result of this; religious organizations and religious discourses are very much included in debates about the subject because abortion is restricted by God in almost every religion and thus abortion is considered to be *a sinful act*. Among the major religious groups in the U.S, Catholics are said to constitute the most important one which opposes abortion in U.S.A but in fact evangelical Protestants and also blacks are stronger supporters of antiabortion movements. (Wald)

The growing number of Muslim identities has diverse discourses inasmuch as killing someone is a big sin in Islam but some Muslims believe the issue of *necessity* as an open door for abortion. As for Jews only a small portion of them strictly oppose abortion, but the majority think that abortion is not bad if necessary, as in the argument of Islam authorities.

As well as including discourses about life, murder- killing and religious ones, the issue is also debated as a women's right issue, a *choice* of women. This is because pregnancy is about women, and it is the woman who is to deal with all the responsibilities. There is a great of material about its being a *right* or not for the woman to have the control of her body and her reproductivity.

To sum up, much as their behaviors and discourses may change, people use some discourses which help us determine where they stand in general. These discourses, though not limited with these, include; religious discourses, baby or fetus discourse,

pro- choice discourse such as; choice and women's rights and pro-life discourses such as life and murder.

3.2.1. Looking at the issue from the various religions' perspectives; the discourse of "sin"

As a result of American's being a multi-cultural country, there exist a number of religions which have huge believers living in the same society, thus forming different discourses on the issue of abortion. The surprising thing is that however different they are, the discourses formed by these religious groups also have similarities such as; life, murder, sin and necessity discourses.

One of the earliest views regarding abortion can be found in Didache "You shall not murder a child by abortion nor kill that which is born" (www.earlychristianwritings.com) Didache is considered to be an early Christian writing, which was also accepted as a part of New Testament for some of the Catholic Church Fathers. This quote is of significance in that it uses the word "abortion" clearly and regards it as a *murder*.

To start with Catholics, we can say that since the earliest times the Church has opposed and condemned abortion. Catholics believe that we were given right to live by god and life starts at the moment of conception, As a result; when a woman's egg is fertilized, the fetus has a right to live and it can't be taken away, which is also used in Turkey by most Muslim authorities. Many Catholics think that abortion is *murder*. As a result it can be said that their position can be considered inside the discourse on the idea of life and it is a baby, and therefore, killing is a *murder*, which is a common

discourse in Turkish society, as well. This is also stated in the code of canon law, 1983. “A person who procures a completed abortion incurs a *latae sententiae* excommunication” Roman Catholics today assert that “the first right of a human person is his *life*” and it can not be taken away by abortion.

One of the Catholic Organizations which is working for ending both abortion and euthanasia is Priests for Life . In their internet site, there are a number of pictures and videos of aborted fetuses which try to make people affected psychologically and make them also opponents of abortion. They claim that their aim is “To raise up priests well-equipped to lead the Fight for *Life!*” by merging all the priests and pro-lifers in the same place and thanks to this they aim to reach more people. (www.priestsforlife.org) They give special importance to use the word *baby* as opposed to pro-choice supporters’ word *fetus*. In the site, the *choice* is used on the brochures of aborted fetuses which are bloody, deformed and actually terrible. The use of word *choice* is an irony to make people what they choose to do when they get aborted. Here it can be seen that they attack women’s right to choose by exploiting the word *choice* with the brochures they use. It may be argued that they employ the same discourse with Catholics that relies on the idea of it is a baby, therefore, killing it is a murder and women do not have a choice to kill the babies. (for the brochures http://www.cbrinfo.org/Store/choice_signs.html)

I find the speeches and writings of Fr. Frank Pavone, who has a blog on Priests for Life, very challenging in that he does not hesitate to name pro-choice people as *devils*. In his blog of 13th October, 2009 he says he wants “to be delivered from the influence and power of a real person, the devil”. He chooses these words in order to affect people with their religion. He adds that “We are praying that we will not be

deceived by the false promises of the evil one, who presents abortion as a solution to a problem, though it is no such thing.” (www.priestsforlife.org) As can be seen clearly, he uses the discourse of its being a “sin” and can not be religiously permissible, which is also a prevalent discourse in Turkish culture.

Another important religious group is Protestants who have diverse ideas about abortion. According to the article “The Protestant Churches on Abortion: Complex, Contradictory, and Challenging” by Kathleen Sweeney, Protestants shared the same discourse which indicates that it is life and thus to be protected until the contradiction started in the late 1960s. Till that term they unanimously accepted Presbyterian Church’s statement that “The fetus is a human life to be protected by the criminal law from the moment when the ovum is fertilized.... [A]s Christians, we believe that this should not be an individual decision on the part of the physician and couple. The decision should be limited and restrained by the larger society.” Since 1960s a change in their idea has been seen in Protestant Churches. Today the Presbyterian Church (USA), the United Methodists (1970), the Lutheran Church in America have policies which permit abortion.

We must consider social movement called “Christian Right” to talk about Protestants’ discourses on abortion. Christian Right activists’ main concerns are: abortion, same sex marriage and education. Clyde Wilcox (1996) claims that “Christian Right activists generally seek to limit sharply and eventually ban access to legal abortions” As it also stated by Kenneth D. Wald (1997) fundamentalist Protestants strongly oppose abortion as well. He states that: “Catholics cannot be depicted accurately as the sole source of opposition to liberalized access, and in fact are not the

most intransigent opponents of abortion: that status fell to evangelical Protestants, white and black alike.” To sum up; evangelical and fundamentalist Protestants mostly oppose the case but there are some Protestant Churches having the idea that it is a woman’s right to choose abortion.

Even though the views of American Muslims are not so many to be discussed here, abortion in Islam like in other religions is prohibited as explained in detail in the Turkish part and thus, the discourse they form, nearly the same with Catholics’ discourses. As for, Jews only a small portion of them restrict abortion, but the majority think that abortion can be permissible if necessary.

There are exceptions of course such as Catholics for free *choice*, Evangelicals for *choice* in spite of being religious, they are pro-choice supporters.

Although the general ideas of these religious groups differ and most of them employ the discourse of “sin”, women from all groups have abortions everyday. According to An overview of Abortion in the United States which was developed by physicians for reproductive choice and health the Guttmacher Institute (2006) from 100 women getting abortion a year, 27 are Catholics and 43 women are Protestants. This statistics is important for us to know because it is an example of people saying one thing and doing another, as the same in Turkey.

3.2.2. “Necessity” Discourse in America

Necessity discourse, which forms an important aspect of the abortion issue in Turkey, is also of great importance and forms a similar discourse in America. Especially

the ones who think that abortion should be legal when there is a maternal health risk form this discourse. It also includes the discourse on rape or incest.

The idea that *without legal abortion women are not safe and they risk their lives* can be considered one form of necessity discourse which gets shape with health of a mother. It may be said that this is also one kind of “life” discourse which focuses on the mother’s life, not the fetus.’ This discourse, in fact, was used by the court of *Roe v. Wade*. While giving their final view on the case, the court reviewed several reasons of having made the operations illegal. Defining the procedure as hazardous for women the court stated “It has been argued that a State’s real concern in enacting a criminal abortion law was to protect the pregnant woman, that is, to restrain her from submitting to a procedure that placed *her life in serious jeopardy*.” (Roe v. Wade. 410 US 113) And they added that now that technology has changed the situation it is safer to get the operation in early pregnancy period. The important and surprising thing is that even though it was beforehand well known that abortion procedures might be dangerous, the state and legislators had forced the women to get these operations even more hazardously by illegalizing the operations.

There are other examples of this idea among pro-choice supporters naming the time before *Roe v. Wade* as “deadly” and suggesting that women got access to safe abortions considering the fact that before the case “Nearly one-fifth of all maternal deaths in the United States were due to illegal, unsafe abortions”(89) This idea has always been put forward and has become one of the most important discourses of people favoring *Roe v. Wade*. As it was stated repeatedly by supporters, before the legalization of abortion women had no/ little access to healthy operations, and

consequently *they had no choice but putting their life at risk*. Much as they knew the dangers of these risky operations, they risked their lives at unhealthy and illegal clinics when they chose not to be a mother. In fact, while arguing that women had unhealthy operations and risked their lives, pro choice supporters employ a blend of both life and necessity discourses as making abortion legal was necessary to protect women's life.

With the *Roe v. Wade* case, abortion became legal but it ended neither problems of women nor the controversy on the subject. In the teeth of being pro-choice there are some feminists who welcome *Roe vs. Wade* in general but still have some objections to it. One of them is Lucinda Cisler with her article about the case "Abortion: A major battle is over: but the war is not" In her article, she strongly opposes the idea that government still had some rights to decide on the abortion, especially focusing on the "viability" term of the judge's decision finding the definition of the term used in the case as "fuzzy and time-bound". She also adds that these time period restrictions also show that "We are still owned by the state."

The pro- choice Protestants generally choose to emphasize woman's body and her sacredness. They agree that *life is sacred; thus, a woman's life is sacred, as well*, which can be considered another variation on the life aspect of the discourse. They believe the passages in the bible do not mean that fetus has a life, and it is the woman's life which comes first in sacredness. This can also be evidenced by their discourses about pro-life and pro-choice. According to Dr. Paul D. Simmons "The pro-life position is really a pro-fetus position, and the pro-choice position is really pro-woman. Those who take the pro-fetus position define the woman in relation to the fetus. They assert the rights of the fetus over the right of the woman to be a moral agent or decision maker

with respect to her life, health, and family security.” It is not surprising that Dr. Paul D. Simmons use the term “fetus” not baby”, which is an indication of that they employ “fetus” discourse over “baby” and it is the woman’s “life” that must be cared at first place, which is an equivalent of necessity discourse in Islam when there is a maternal health risk

Abortion in the cases of rape or incest forms a necessity discourse, as well. The ones who accept abortion permissible when pregnancy results from rape or incest think that the woman may not want to be with a reminder of a terrible experience and therefore may get an abortion. On the other hand, pro-lifers claim that it’s the rapist who is guilty, not the baby and they add that there are other ways such as adoption. Stephen M. Krason asserts that “to make it as easy as possible for her to give up her baby for adoption, if she desires. Dealing with the woman pregnant from rape, then, can be an opportunity for us—both as individuals and society—to develop true understanding and charity.” (284) Even though there are “pro-lifers with exceptions”, most pro-lifers claim that “the ‘pro-life with exceptions’ philosophy always contradicts itself. It is as irrational as saying, ‘Everyone has a right to be free, but slavery should be legal in certain situations’.”(www.deathroe.com)

3.2.3. An Indispensable Right of a Woman; to Choose

As far as “abortion” issue considered, women’s rights are of great importance because a woman’s right to use her body however she wants, and make her own choices without the consent of anybody neither the state nor the parents or the husband cannot be ignored. However, both in Turkey and America, women’s rights have always been overlooked and their desire to be the sole source of their bodies and their choices hasn’t

been paid attention by the ‘very’ men. Despite this fact, some people most of whom are women have been able to form the discourses of “choice” and “women rights”

Women’s right to choose discourse which is very common in America does not just mean that women must have a right to choose about their reproductivity. ChoiceUSA, the group which makes its main theme “choice” advocate that women must decide “when and whether to have sex, when to be pregnant and when and whether to have a child”. When we restrict the discourse to abortion itself, the choice discourse evokes the idea of self decision of women who are pregnant about abortion as it is their own body, thus, it’s their choice.

Women’s right to choose discourse is as prevalent as baby or fetus in the U.S. seeing that the ones who think that abortion should be available generally approach the issue as a *choice*. They believe the woman must be the only person to decide about her body. Hence, the discourse is prevalent among pro-choice groups. There are many organization and groups known as; pro-choice. The Main examples of these pro-choice groups which campaign against restrictions on abortions are; “Planned Parenthood, NARAL Pro-Choice America (National Abortion & Reproductive Rights Action League)/ Pro-Choice America, National Organization for Women, American Civil Liberties Union, Physicians for Reproductive Choice and Health, and most organizations that label themselves as feminist.” When these organizations are considered it must be noted that Turkey has along way to keep up with America in that there are rather few organizations about women and their rights

The terms that pro-choice organizers generally employ include “*individual liberty*”, “*reproductive freedom*” and “*reproductive rights*” as a result of the fact that

they advocate the idea that that if the woman is not ready to have the responsibilities of growing a child whether economically or psychologically or with some other reasons, she should have individual right to decide herself about her own body. On the internet site of NARAL, the President, Nancy Keenan calls people into action by using saying “If you believe that government and politicians should not interfere in our personal lives – and that people should be empowered to make the right decisions for themselves....” (<http://www.prochoiceamerica.org/>)

In her book “Woman’s Body, Woman’s Right” Linda Gordon asserts that 1960s were the years when “Pro-abortion-rights lobby fixed on *choice* as a slogan” she adds that “This language called upon civil-libertarian commitments, with the category women as subject, and emphasized autonomous decision-making rather than abortion itself” (406) However, the term pro-choice, not pro-abortion-rights, is generally used deliberately as *pro-abortions* by pro-lifers. Choice is something that American believe in and this is not only limited to the abortion issue. The fact that pro- life organizations advocate the right to choose abortion doesn’t mean that they are pro-abortion; this is far away from the case. This is because pro-lifers claim that people thinking that *abortion should be legal* are the supporters of abortion and accept it as a way of birth-control. By using “pro-abortion” instead of pro-choice, they gain the support of anti-abortionists in general. As opposed to what pro-lifers claim, pro- choice supporters do not advocate that abortion is a way of birth control. On the contrary, they also work on the issues of birth-control methods, and try to increase use of birth control methods and make sex-education available to everyone but they also believe a woman must have a right to abortion if she decides to do it as can be evidenced by “Our primary goal is prevention,

reducing the number of unintended pregnancies, especially the alarmingly high number of teenage pregnancies, in the U.S. At the same time, to protect their health and the health of their families, women facing an unintended pregnancy must have access to safe, legal abortion services without interference from the government. Decisions about childbearing should be made by a woman in consultation with her family and doctor — not by politicians”. (<http://plannedparenthoodaction.org>) They think that abortion must be legal and Medicaid funds must cover the process. They claim so partly because they believe it is a woman’s self decision to have power on her own body and reproductivity but mostly because the only way of abortion has never been a medical process and when the medical one was illegal, it didn’t mean that women didn’t have it, it meant that only the wealthy did have to chance to obtain it under healthy conditions. The others not being able to going places abortion is available had to use other traditional and risky methods or had the operation illegally in dark, filthy, and unhealthy places. That’s to say, while poor and uneducated women had the operation by themselves or under risky conditions, the rich ones went other places to have it.

Women’s right to choose discourse is also common in politics as abortion is included in most political parties’ agenda. Before 2008 elections, the issue of abortion - as traditionally- became an important debate issue between the leaders of political parties and both Obama and Mc Cain indicated their explicit ideas about it before the presidential elections. New American President Obama is one of many *choice* discourses. Before his election, he stated that; "I think that abortion is a very difficult issue and it is a moral issue....But what ultimately I believe is that women in

consultation with their families, their doctors, their religious advisers, are in the best position to make this decision."(Lowen)

Former U.S. Senator and Republican presidential candidate Barry Goldwater indicates that; "A lot of so-called conservatives today don't know what the word means. They think I've turned liberal because I believe a woman has a right to an abortion. That's a decision that's up to the pregnant woman, not up to the pope or some do-gooders or the religious right. It's not a conservative issue at all."(www.liberallikechrist.org)His explanation is important in that he figures out that his ideas about being a pro-choice make people think that his ideas do not correspond with his being a republican. He believes that it is a woman's self choice to be a mother or not and a religious authority cannot determine whether it is right or wrong. Hence, it can be said that being a conservative does not mean being a pro- life and not accepting women's rights and individual choices.

As a consequence, it can be said that "women's rights/choice" is a prevalent discourse in American society which is especially assumed by Pro-choice people, and those who assume themselves as democrats but it does not mean that any person who is conservative has to neglect the choice must be women's not anybody else's.

3.2.4. What is considered "life" and "murder"

If we are to examine the scientific development of the fetus, we see that the first stage is conception or fertilization which lasts 0-22 hours. After that, implantation period which marks the consideration of the fetus as clinical begins. Between 12 and 16 weeks the fetus starts to be seen as a human being and in this period quickening

(movements) starts. As a final stage “viability” must be considered as it is one of the most discussed parts of the pregnancy period. Viable means being capable of living outside the womb, and this period is between 24 and 28 weeks. (Steinbock 1-4)

One of the well-known discussions of opposing groups is *fetus* vs. *baby*. The term *fetus* is used by pro-choice supporters; on the other hand the term *baby* is used by pro-life supporters. Their use of words on the same thing differs because that affects people’s perspectives. When ‘fetus’ is considered, those using this word accepts the idea that *the fetus isn’t life*, which also leads us to another discourse, thus, it doesn’t have a right to live as claimed by pro-lifers. The laws also use the term *fetus* while giving women a right to decide about their reproductivity as can be seen by the case documents of *Roe v. Wade*. As for using *baby* term, the same idea of life makes pro-lifers use the term *baby*. Using this term whenever possible they exploit the emotionality of people and make people thinks that it is *life* of a living *baby* which is taken, so it is *murder*, which can also be considered as a single discourse. Pro- lifers also use the terms unborn and child in place of baby. On the internet “Pro-Life.AMERICA.COM” to the question “Why should a fetus have more rights than the woman?” The answer starts “It shouldn’t. The pro-life position has never been that the baby’s rights are superior to the mom’s, but that they are equal.” As can be seen here, in the question *fetus* is used, which means that it is asked by pro-choice supporters but in the answer the word chosen is certainly *baby* not *fetus* as given by a pro-lifer.

The reason why pro-lifers use *baby* can also be understood by one of pro-life supporters’ internet site, National Right to Life. It says “When a woman is pregnant, science tells us that the new life she carries is a complete and fully new human being

from the moment of fertilization.” As a result they name it as “as distinct and unique a new person/human being” and they, thus, claim that it has a right to live.

In brief, it can be argued that using the terms “fetus” or “baby” are different ways of representing the issue. “Fetus” is something that can not be visualized and therefore, it doesn’t evoke emotionality, it is a medical term. On the other hand, a baby is a different kind of representation that can be identified and visualized. It brings certain images to mind and thus, evoke such emotions as; sympathy and affection. It can be said that using the term “baby” instead of “fetus” causes to unearth the concepts of innocence and purity of babies’, children’s and makes people think that a baby is a person that needs to be protected, and therefore has the right to life and cannot be murdered

Despite the fact that the term *pro-life* is broadly used to cover also movements against euthanasia, human cloning, death penalty and such controversial issues, they are most widely known for their actions against abortion. As explained in *Fetus v. Baby* discourse, Pro life advocates believe that it is a *baby* and therefore *has a right to live*. Their movement can also be considered as ‘pro-family’ movement and as Rosalind Pollack Petchesky indicates this movement “promises not only to save fetuses but to save ‘the family’ itself and the moral foundations of ‘Christian Civilization’.”

The term *pro-life* is used in order to make people understand that it is *life* they are talking about, and a discourse of *anti-abortionists* does not make the same effect as *pro-life* did. When they use *anti-abortionists*, it is a movement against women, actually, women’s right to decide about her body in a way. On the other hand, using *pro-life* they claim they value both woman and child’s life.

As can also be understood from the following quote from the internet site of United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, pro-lifers use a different view which is more constructive. “Three decades have passed since *Roe v. Wade* unleashed on America a new, violent norm. And while the abortion debate often seems to be stalled at the impasse between “*women's rights*” vs. “*the baby*,” the basic needs of women are often ignored. We have forgotten to ask women the questions, “What do you need? What do you really want?” It is hardly surprising that just as pro-lifers choose to use *pro-abortion* instead of *pro-choice*, so do *pro-choice* supporters, which can be given as an evidence for the importance of discourse.

Whatever they are called pro-choice or anti-abortionist, these people who are opposing the idea that abortion should be illegal, and it can be argued that most of their discourses are on *life* and on *murder*. Inasmuch as they believe that it is a *baby* or a *child*, they claim that it is a *life* taken by abortion. There are a great number of examples which can be found on the internet, newspapers, and magazines and of course brochures of pro-life organizations.

National right to life organization claims that the woman “faces a life and death decision” while deciding to have abortion. The way they choose to talk about the issue reflects almost all the other pro-life supporters’ view on the matters of fetus and abortion, life for the former and death for the latter.

The first example is taken from a site which does not have a side on the issue as can be understood from the name itself “Why can’t we love them both?” It uses all the ideas combined in the same place. You start with your side “I am a pro-choice” or “I am a Pro-life”, then you see so many articles, pictures, stories about abortion according to

your side. In the part of pro-lifers one can see “This living being is dependent upon his or her mother for shelter and food, but in all other respects is a to-tally new, different, unique, and independent being.” As can be seen here as well, pro-lifers use independent being as a *life* here.(ch.11)

The second example is taken from lovematters.com. The site has held an essay contest about abortion and the winner defines abortion as “deadly”. The writer of the essay Elizabeth Chapin, high school student, asserts that “It steals *life* from the *baby*, and it takes a life from the mother – either her unborn child's – or the mother’s own” This reflects another perspective of the issue which emphasizes that “women” also loose their lives by abortion. This idea of the writer can be argued to be result of campaigns claiming “Abortion hurts women”

Except for the actions and writings on the internet, there are a lot different ways of pro-life supporters’ actions most of which are held with a group of people in public. One of these well-known actions is life chain which means a public demonstration. The people stand in a row and carry signs of anti-abortion messages. They generally include messages such as “Abortion kills *children*” and “I am a *child* not a choice”, which clearly show us they use these especially in public, to make the issue more dramatic.

It is almost obligatory to refer to Randall Terry and Operation Rescue as a specific example of life and death discourses on abortion. Being a conservative religious activist, Randall Terry found Operation Rescue in 1986. Although their main aim was to close down all the abortion clinics, they used sidewalk counseling, truth display, the rescue etc. Their actions caused important civil disobediences as being examples to

other groups, as well. Woolford and Woolford inform us that “Other conservative Christian activists emulated Terry’s “in your face” strategies and claimed the symbolically potent mantle of victimhood in narrativizing their justice claims”

Religious organizations are also very important users of the terms *life and murder*. Their use of these is much more effective than the ones on the internet and others. This is because they have a ready audience in front of them and they take advantage of their positions while sharing their ideas. This can be evidenced by Randy Alcorn’s post on an internet site “Eternal Perspective Ministries”. He writes that “The following are my message notes from the Good Shepherd Community Church services of January 18 and 19, 1997. Pastors and all others communicating on this subject are welcome to use this material” The material is a pro-life view on abortion which includes even pictures of aborted fetuses and biblical references to the importance of life such as “This day I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you *life and death*, blessings and curses. Now *choose life*, so that you and your children may live.”(Choose life, Deuteronomy 30:19) By using this chapter of Bible, he tries to impress people with the power of bible as if the life bible mentions is what he means by “life”. His final words are also dreadfully impressive when he says; “God is a lover of children; Satan is a hater of children. When we care for little children, we do the work of God. When we destroy little children, we do the work of Satan.” Using this words he blames people taking stand on the right to choose for doing work for Satan, which may be very effective for the ones who are exceedingly religious. (www.epm.org)

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION; COMPARISON OF BOTH COUNTRIES

America and Turkey are two different countries having varied cultural heritages, religions and citizens with different opinions and life styles; nonetheless, when the issue is something complicated including religion, morality, law, economy and life styles, it may be argued that these two different countries have a number of similar discourses along with some differences. It can also be argued that the abortion discourses, the set of sentences which forms the overall idea about abortion, are the results of the same patriarchy which is still dominant throughout the world, so it is hardly surprising to meet similar discourses in Turkey and America such as; necessity, sin, life, murder, etc despite some differences in two cultures.

4.1. Differences

As regards to sexuality, two countries can be viewed different in that they have opposing tendencies in handling the matter. Sexuality is not an openly spoken public discourse in Turkey and if you are among the ones who talk about it freely, you are most probably to be considered as “*relax, bad and even immoral*” especially if you are unmarried. On the other hand, American society is different from Turkish one in the way people perceive sexuality. It can be viewed in every form of media such as; TV, newspapers, movies, plays, songs. It is much normal to have a sexual affair with your partner before marriage and partners can move to their homes and have children before they get married. It is, consequently, very weird that seemingly such a sexually liberated

society in fact has a great many people having opposing ideas about birth control and abortion which are consequences of sexual relationship.

Along with sexuality, discourses on birth control show differences in Turkey and America. Birth control isn't a big issue in Turkey and it is considered as a natural way of family planning, as a result, there is no specific discourse on the issue of birth control apart from the commercials and advertisements emphasizing the importance of it. In Turkey one can see a condom commercial on TV easily. However, except from condom commercials, other things such as; mornings after pills or contraceptive pills are not advertised on TV, but on newspapers or magazines. The fact that these commercials are free to be run on TV or published on magazines constitutes an opposition with public discourse. Most parents are not happy about these kinds of commercials even though they, too, learn about the new products and buy them. The reason why they are restless about these might be that; they remind the whole family a taboo subject; sex, which they don't like being face to face in everyday life. Because of people's disapproval of these, TV authorities prefer putting these commercials, mostly, at late hours. One thing should be noted here; when the actions such as commercials, advertisements or programs do not contain any sexual reminder, people's attitudes become softer. Especially if the issue is –only- family planning, not mentioning about sex or related things, that is to say, when the issue is concealed, it is more acceptable in Turkey. However, in America, mostly because of the religious diversity in the country, there are different views and regulations on the issue of birth control and it is not common to see commercials of birth control methods in the U.S. In her book "Woman's body, Woman's right, Linda Gordon gives a full history of birth control in USA. She

starts with the idea that “Birth control wasn’t controversial in pre-agricultural and nomadic societies” (4) and it was assumed to be “natural” for women to control this. Only after agriculture’s rise, did people begin to talk about birth control aggressively owing to the fact that they needed people. Gordon states that while Jewish banned the birth control at the outset, Christianity made it prohibited in time. Thus, the religious beliefs of people, also, shaped people’s attitudes. As Gordon indicates “the Christian hostility to sex is true and.... the only justifiable purpose of sexual intercourse for “respectable” women was reproduction.”(21) It can be argued that because of the role given to women by society-especially by men, the use of birth control methods have always been regarded as bad for some people, thinking that a woman’s primary role is to give birth to a baby and raise him/her. However, especially pro-choice and feminists groups have been working hard to make birth control devices available for women who are in the need.

When politics is considered Turkey and America are different in that The “Abortion issue” plays a crucial role in American politics but the issue isn’t related with politics in Turkey. As a matter of fact, the discourse on abortion in Turkey is in the control of religion and economy. The Presidency of Religious Affairs can be viewed as a means of political structure and thus forming some discourses such as sin, life and murder, and necessity. Economy is another factor that makes the issue of abortion political inasmuch as family planning is used to control economy and birth control is an important factor in family planning. Except these, there are hardly any political discourses about abortion as it is not a political issue in Turkey. Parties do not include the issue of abortion in their agenda as opposed to American political parties. On the

other hand, in America abortion is a hot issue in politics and it forms discourses especially on women rights and choice along with religious discourses. It is known that many conservatives oppose the legalization of abortion while liberals think that it should be legal. As a result, two leading parties in America; republican and democratic party have been using this issue for their benefits. Conservative republicans strictly oppose the idea because of their religious background and their discourses are generally on *life* and *murder* while democrats have the idea that abortion should be legal and a woman has a right to decide on getting an abortion or not and thus, their discourses are on *women's rights* and *choice*.

Women's rights form a significant discourse in America on the other hand its equivalent in Turkey does not have the same prevalence. This is because women organizations in Turkey are not as common as in America and thus the discourses they form, though being similar, are less common, as well. In America "right" discourse is used on many issues apart from abortion. It can best be viewed as a way of defending one's individual freedom and in this context; it can be assumed that "rights" discourse on the issue of abortion is the result of women's desire to be free to decide what to do about their own bodies, which can also be viewed as reproductivity rights. It is a fact that patriarchy has always been a dominant social event in almost all countries including America and Turkey, but it can be said that American women are more successful than Turkish people in fighting for their "rights".

4.2. Similarities

Despite the fact that discourses on abortion may differ according to people's religious preferences along with their personal views, it may be concluded that American and Turkish people share similar discourses such as; sin, murder, and necessity. The main religion in Turkey, Islam has a lot of codes of law and doctrines; nevertheless, the people who accept Islam as their religions may differ in applying/fulfilling these rules. Ayesha M. Imam writes that "What Muslims (human fallible people) make of Islam is an arena opens to social scientific inquiry" (121.) This is absolutely true when we consider the issues such as: sexuality, marriage, birth control and of course abortion. For example, it is strictly forbidden to have sexual affair with women without marriage connection but many Muslim people do not obey this rule. As regards to birth control and abortion, there aren't any certain sure or paragraph in Koran, but some Muslim authorities forbids these. Ayesha M. Imam explains this by saying "The text of the Koran is not mentioned. Nonetheless, interpretations of what the message of the Koran means in the daily life of Muslims-are- and always have been" (122) However, the rate of abortion cases is high in Turkey, where a lot of Muslim live. As a result, the behaviors of people are also changeable as regards to their interpretations of the text. As a result of American people's diverse religious preferences including. Christianity, Jewish, Islam, and Buddhism and so on, it is not easy to say abortion is religiously right or wrong in America without referring to specific religions. Many sources indicate that Christianity condemn contraception whatever the reason for it, and so do Jewish Law codes. But they "permitted the

restricted use of contraception- when there is a mortal danger to woman in case of pregnancy.” (Musallam 23)

The most significant of the religious discourses which shows similarity in Turkey and America is “sin” discourse. Abortion is considered as a “sin” in different religions and thus forming a discourse of “sin” in both countries. This is because life is sacred in almost all divine religions and fetus is considered to be a “life” by some people who take a stand in the opposition part and they believe that abortion is a kind of murder; that is “a big sin”

Necessity is also a noteworthy discourse in both cultures. In Turkey there is a prevalent necessity discourse which derives from religion and economy. According to some authorities of Islam, it is permissible for women to get an abortion in cases of rape, incest, and maternal health risk. Especially, maternal health risk exception is acceptable in many areas especially in the western parts of the country. Most people living in the eastern parts of the country have more children than those living in the western part of the country as they make use of their children’s working capacity. For those, maternal health risk is a reason to get an operation. Maternal health risk exception is also common in America especially Jewish population forms necessity discourse. Pregnancies resulting from rape and incest can also form a necessity discourse in both countries. Even though it is widely accepted that a woman can get an abortion freely in these cases as it is unfair for the woman to be have to remember this event for at least nine months, there are a number of people in both countries opposing abortion with the idea that there are places for these children can be brought up without real family and be given up via adoption. Most Pro-lifers in America believe that “It is

the rapist who has already *forced* this woman to carry a child, not the pro-lifer. The pro-life advocate merely wants to prevent another innocent human being (the unborn entity) from being the victim of a violent and morally reprehensible act (abortion), for two wrongs do not make a right.” (www.christiananswers.net) It can be argued that despite the different religions people have, the discourses on abortion are similar in that in both, abortion is considered as a *sin*, “*life is sacred*” and *murder* is prohibited. However, the discourse of *necessity* can be observed in both countries, which makes abortion permissible in cases of rape, incest or maternal health risk when Turkey and the U.S are considered.

Having been a complicated and important issue, abortion is one of the 21st century’s debatable subjects. As can be seen what has been discussed thoroughly, if we consider the issue of abortion as a trunk of a tree, we can accept sexuality, birth control, religious, ethical, economy, family planning and so on as the big tree’s branches. That’s because these are indispensable parts of the issue while discussing people’s perspectives and practices about abortion. Hence, a change in one of them for instance the countries economic situation may lead a change in people’s perspectives and discourses about the issue. Considering this fact in mind, it is likely that discourses about abortion are subject to changes in the future, as it has been so far.

Even though it seems to be a woman-related issue at first sight, when we consider the context as America, abortion is a very hot topic and has resulted in so many different discourses as being not only a woman related issue but also a social, religious, economic, politic and moral issue. Although it is a very hot topic in America and other developed countries, in Turkey with almost %99 percent

Muslim population, abortion is an issue that is occasionally discussed. As it was also stated by Boonstra in 'Abortion in Women's Lives'; "It is likely, given experiences throughout history and from around the world, that abortion will always exist".

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