

## A HOLISTIC ASSESSMENT OF THE DEATH PENALTY, ABORTION AND EUTHANASIA FACTS FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE RIGHT TO LIFE

### YAŞAM HAKKI PERSPEKTİFİNDEN ÖLÜM CEZASI KÜRTAJ VE ÖTANAZİ OLGULARINA BÜTÜNCÜL BİR BAKIŞ

Dr. Talip Yiğit,<sup>1</sup>  
Murat DİNÇER<sup>2</sup>

#### CORRESPONDENCE

<sup>1</sup>Asst. Prof. İstanbul 29 Mayıs  
University, Faculty of Economics  
and Administrative Sciences,  
Department of Social Work  
adige.talip@gmail.com  
yigitt@29mayis.edu.tr  
ORCID: 0000-0003-4195-9149

<sup>2</sup>Research Assistant İstanbul  
29 Mayıs University, Faculty of  
Economics and Administrative  
Sciences, Department of Social  
Work  
muratdincer97@gmail.com  
mdincer@29mayis.edu.tr  
ORCID: 0000-0001-7276-8738

#### ABSTRACT

In this study, the current situation of today's world practices and developmental trends are examined by evaluating cases of the death penalty, abortion, and euthanasia from the perspective of the right to life. A meta-analysis research method was used and the results of a total of 28 different analytical studies which are still relevant for each practice were interpreted as well. Meta-analysis findings have shown that the death penalty has no disincentive effect on criminal acts. This finding is interpreted as governments qualifying perpetrators who commit crimes corresponding to the death penalty as "idle person" or "dispensable person" and non-restorable in the foreseeable future. In the study, it was determined that abortion is not an 'arbitrary' act but has resulted from a 'need' in the context of social and economic factors. In the study findings were interpreted as euthanasia/assisted suicide practices have gained public acceptance recently.

**Key Words:** Right to life, death penalty, abortion, euthanasia, social work

#### ÖZET

Bu çalışmada, ölüm cezası, kürtaj ve ötanazi olguları, yaşam hakkı perspektifinden değerlendirilerek günümüz dünya uygulamalarının mevcut durumu ve gelişimsel eğilimler incelenmiştir. Çalışmada meta-analiz araştırma yöntemi kullanılmış ve her bir uygulama için halen geçerli olan toplam 28 farklı analitik çalışmanın sonuçları yorumlanmıştır. Meta analiz bulguları, ölüm cezasının suç eylemleri üzerinde caydırıcı bir etkisi olmadığını göstermiştir. Bu bulgular, hükümetlerin ölüm cezasına karşılık gelen suçları işleyen failleri "atıl kişi" veya "vazgeçilebilir kişi" olarak nitelendirdiğini ve öngörülebilir gelecekte rehabilite edilemeyeceklerini düşündüğünü göstermektedir. Çalışmada kürtajın 'keyfi' bir eylem olmadığı, sosyal ve ekonomik faktörler bağlamında ortaya çıkan 'ihtiyaçtan' kaynaklandığı tespit edilmiştir. Ek olarak çalışma bulguları ötanazi / yardımcı intihar uygulamalarının kamuoyunda giderek daha fazla kabul gördüğü şeklinde yorumlanmıştır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Yaşam hakkı, ölüm cezası, kürtaj, ötanazi, sosyal hizmet

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### INTRODUCTION

In a community, human beings have rights and responsibilities that enable them to exist in the correct way that is the most beneficial for them. It is possible for a person to fulfill their responsibilities to themselves and to the society they live in only by protecting their most basic rights. As for these rights, the regulations on human rights, which have been discussed from different angles until today, are determinative. The most comprehensive of these regulations are undoubtedly the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the European Convention on Human Rights. It is not accidental that the right to life in these contracts is addressed among the first few articles. Because existence, other rights and freedoms, and of course responsibilities will not make sense unless life, which is a prerequisite for existence as a living being, is presented as a right.

In the most general sense, the right to life, which can be explained as everyone having the right to live their life, and which must be protected especially by the public authorities, has reached its present position thanks to various developments throughout the history. Religions, which existed before international developments and regulations, and set decisive frameworks for human life and found a place in the lives of many today, have offered important perspectives on achieving this position.

In Christianity, where there is the belief that the greatest blessing that God offers to people is the human body, and that God exists in the soul of this body, great importance is given to the protection of this blessing (Romans. 13/8-10). In Islam, which describes humans as one of the valuable beings created in the universe, it is emphasized that a person, who has no influence on their birth, cannot have any will to end their life or someone else's (Maide 5/32). In the John section of the Torah, the Holy Book of Judaism, it was stated that Moses was born for reasons intended to protect people, and thus it was emphasized how important human life is (John. 10/10). In Buddhism, which has a large believer count around the world, the emphasis that nothing that is not suitable for humans and human well-being can have a place in the belief shows the value of life in this religion (Bagde, 2014).

The development of the first human rights in history is directly related to the development of the right to life. On this basis, it can be claimed that the right to life is the most prioritized human right in history. In legal texts, the right to life was first mentioned in the Magna Carta, published in 1215. Laws aimed at preventing arbitrary death penalties, and protecting the procedures and principles associated with it were included in the said document. After this, the understanding of human rights and the right to life developed further with the English Bill of Rights in 1628 and the Virginia Bill of Rights in 1776. The American Declaration of Independence in 1776 and the French Declaration of Human Rights and Citizenship in 1789 are also very important texts for the development of individual rights and, in particular, the right to life. As part of recent agreements, both the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the European Convention on Human Rights emphasize that the right to life should be protected by law (Donnelly, 2013; Amnesty International, 2021).

Today, the right to life, which is considered indisputable in many ways, legally includes five basic qualities. These qualities can be listed as follows: the nature of immunity which is the inability to intervene even in cases of emergency, the property of superiority which means people must be protected above all rights, the property of jus cogens, which means the rights cannot be regulated outside of the international and domestic laws, the property of being an absolute right, in terms of being considered indisputable, and the property of indispensability, which forms the basis of the debates on euthanasia (Güngör, 2007). All these properties provide a framework for the right to life to be protected, and to be clear and understandable from many different aspects today.

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The right to life, which is protected by international agreements as well as constitutions in various aspects, and the necessity of protecting this right are the responsibility of governments. However, governments are far from the ideal situation in terms of how and by what methods they will give this responsibility to institutional structures. General approaches to the practice of capital punishment, abortion, and euthanasia examined in this study support this idea.

In order to understand the death penalty, which is one of the three factors that form the basis of our study, it is useful to briefly focus on the phenomenon of punishment first. In the most general sense, punishment can be explained as a sanction applied if actions defined as 'disorderly' or 'a crime' are carried out in the present situation and structure. Here, the assessment of punishment from a philosophical and sociological point of view is also necessary in terms of understanding the death penalty as a method of punishment. Accordingly, the debate about punishment in philosophy continues in general through the 'Utilitarian Approach', in which individuals avoid pain and turn to pleasure, so punishments should be given to the offender in order to cause pain, and the 'Deterrence Approach', in which the punishment given to persons should be of a nature to prevent both the individual and society from committing crimes.

The phenomenon of punishment has been an important field of study in sociology as well as in philosophy. Accordingly, in sociology, punishment is a tool used by the system to control and discipline the labor supply according to Marxists, while according to Durkheim, it is an important element in terms of absolute response to crimes. Weber considers punishment as the protection of authority by the law, and Foucault emphasizes the aspect of punishment as a disciplinary tool. Punishment, which has been addressed from many different aspects in the fields of philosophy and sociology throughout history, is nowadays explained as the rehabilitation of the perpetrator and a tool of deterrence for crime. In the literature, it is claimed that the types of punishment must be evaluated with the help of these two functions (Ellis, 2012; Türkmen, 2017).

Here, it can be said that the death penalty as a punishment has almost always existed in history with the influence of various senses of rule, social structures, and beliefs. According to various views among the literature, the death penalty was greatly preferred as a precise and rapid method of punishment, especially in primitive societies. Regarding the death penalty, which is also the subject of the scriptures of the beliefs and their practice in life, it can be seen that forgiveness is emphasized in general in the three great heavenly religions, but with 'major crimes' such as murder, the death penalty is considered acceptable (Greenberg & West, 2008). Unlike other religions, Hinduism and Buddhism do not have specific rules regarding capital punishment, but in some societies where these beliefs are common, it is observed that the death penalty is considered a method of punishment (British Broadcasting Corporation, 2009; British Broadcasting Corporation, 2009).

With its history, the death penalty is seen as a method of punishment that is gradually starting to disappear today as a result of modernization, which has gained momentum with the influence of some philosophical and social developments. This process, which began with The United Nations International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights in 1976, has improved even more with different decisions and conventions to date. The articles of this convention, such as being under the age of 18, being pregnant, being able to request pardon, and the death penalty being imposed only for very serious crimes, were the first major step towards abandoning this method of punishment. Following this, the additional electoral protocol number two of the same convention, which took effect in 1991, came with limitations such as the fact that the death penalty only being applied in times of war. In addition, an approach to the complete abolition of the death penalty has been developed in the additional electoral protocol no. 13 of the European Convention on Human Rights (Council of Europe, 1950). It is known that these efforts continue today, and around the world, people are trying to put an end to the practice of capital punishment.

As another phenomenon examined in our study, abortion means the termination of an unwanted pregnancy. Abortion, which has existed in many societies such as China and Egypt since the earliest times, is known to be interpreted in different

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ways by civilizations and beliefs. Having also been used by various societies as a means of population control, abortion is interpreted in a very similar way from the religious point of view.

In the early days of Christianity, there was the basic understanding that ending the life of a fetus or a child would be the same thing. In Islam, an abortion performed after the soul enters the fetus is considered murder. In the 'Exodus' section of the Torah, the emphasis that the person who causes a miscarriage will be severely punished shows the approach to abortion in Judaism (Exodus 21:22). Similar approaches to abortion can be seen in beliefs such as Hinduism and Buddhism. In Hinduism, it is the case that the woman who performs an abortion loses her caste or moves to a lower caste than her previous one. In Buddhism, abortion means that the conditions of murder will be ensured by the willful killing of a living being. These illustrate the approach to abortion in Hinduism and Buddhism. As can be seen, from the point of view of religions that appeal to the vast majority of the world's population, abortion is considered an unacceptable practice. But it is also possible to say that the uncertainty of at exactly which period of pregnancy the fetus can be considered a 'living being', in particular, leads to more flexible approaches to abortion (British Broadcasting Corporation, 2009).

Abortion is also an important area of discussion within philosophy. In philosophy, ethical approaches to abortion are generally formed within the framework of two views. The first is that the fetus has human potential, and the practice of abortion in the process from the beginning to the end of pregnancy cannot be considered ethical. The other view is that, depending on the woman's preference, abortion cannot be addressed in any ethical way at any stage of pregnancy. By acknowledging that abortion is an ethical problem, it has been seen that conservative people, who argue that the practice in question is not right, make evaluations based on the baby's right. On the other hand, some thinkers who argue that abortion is an acceptable practice have emphasized that abortion has a significant impact on family planning, and that women have the right to self-determination (Baker, 1985).

The inability to develop a common approach to abortion in these discussions has led to the inability to form a common understanding in international law today. Indeed, as one of the most important human rights texts, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child draws attention to the necessity that a child must be protected before birth just as it must be protected afterwards, and indirectly chooses a side. Another agreement that is just as important is The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women, where it was emphasized that women are free to decide on the amount of children they want to have and when to have them, and have the right to access the necessary means to trainings and tools.

Another phenomenon that will be evaluated in the context of the right to life within the scope of our study is euthanasia. According to its most current definition, euthanasia can be expressed as the doctor's termination of their patient's life if the person is unlikely to recover from their disease despite medical interventions. In terms of its types, it is possible to say that euthanasia is divided these groups: active euthanasia, which can be explained as the direct application of a medical method to the patient during the act of killing, and passive euthanasia, which can be explained as the termination of the intervention that ensures the survival of the patient. Another distinction here relates to who made the decision of euthanasia. Euthanasia being demanded by the patient themselves is defined as voluntary euthanasia, while the family making this decision on behalf of an unconscious and unlikely-to-recover patient is defined as non-voluntary euthanasia (Perret, 1996).

As part of our study, the practice of assisted suicide will also be discussed within the scope of euthanasia. Euthanasia, which is defined as the injection of a life-terminating drug into the person's body by a doctor, is separated from assisted suicide, which is the doctor providing the patient with the necessary tools to help them perform the act of killing, as per the

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patient's request. In addition, assisted suicide practices do not have the requirement that a person must have a fatal disease. However, in practice, it is known that these two actions cannot be considered separately, and that assisted suicide was soon legalized in countries where euthanasia is legal (The World Federation Of Right To Die Societies, 2010; Perret, 1996). Based on this, it is possible to say that the two practices are quite similar in terms of historical development and their results in the current situation. On this basis, it can be said that the explanations for euthanasia in our study also apply to assisted suicide.

In terms of the most commonly practiced beliefs today, euthanasia is a generally prohibited practice. In the three great heavenly religions, euthanasia was not generally considered an acceptable practice in accordance with the understanding that life, which is a gift and trust of God to people, can again be terminated only by the will of God. As a matter of fact, the prohibitions on euthanasia and the prevalence of anti-euthanasia approaches in the Middle Ages, a period when Christianity and Islam became widespread on earth, reveal the approach to euthanasia in heavenly religions (Grigore-Radulescu & Popescu, 2018). In Hinduism, euthanasia has been considered an unacceptable practice as it causes the soul and body to separate at the wrong time, and undermines the principle of harmlessness (British Broadcasting Corporation, 2009). Similarly in Buddhism, the understanding that it is possible for a person to alleviate their pain with the help of appropriate medication and meditation, and that a person must protect and continue their life under any circumstances has led to the interpretation that euthanasia is an unacceptable practice (British Broadcasting Corporation, 2009).

Euthanasia, which dates back to the ancient Greek and Roman periods, was considered a suitable method by many philosophers, especially philosophers such as Socrates and Plato, for diseases that could not be cured at the time. As Christianity became widespread and the understanding that pain came from God, interest in euthanasia and approaches to its legitimacy decreased. This effect lasted quite long, and euthanasia only started to achieve a legal basis at the beginning of the 20th century in some European countries (Gesundheit, Steinberg, Glick, Or, & Jotkovitz, 2006).

As part of these approaches, today euthanasia finds a place in the legal systems of some countries, although the extent of it is limited. Euthanasia and assisted suicide practices have been adopted legally in countries such as the Netherlands, Belgium, and Luxembourg under certain conditions. Similarly, these practices, which require conditions such as the patient suffering from intense pain and obtaining the approval of different specialist doctors almost everywhere, were first legalized in the US in the state of Oregon and later spread to various states.

### **The Right to Life and Social Work**

Social work, defined as 'a profession that is based on human rights and social justice, and is a practice-based science' by International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW) and International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW-2014), has always put the well-being of people at the center of its practices.

The aim of social work is to increase the social functionality of people in life. Here, social functionality can be explained as the ability of individuals to perform the necessary work and activities to meet their most basic needs. The social functionality of the individual can be explained by as follows: social care in the sense of meeting basic needs, social treatment with corrective studies, and social development sub-studies with studies on it becoming a self-sufficient micro-system. The focus of social work in professional intervention is the environment that significantly affects the individual, groups, or the society, and where the applicant systems are in close relationship. In this sense, the emphasis on 'individual within their environment' is at the heart of social work practices. Therefore, the function of social work is to implement consulting, resource management, and educational services at micro, meso and macro levels (Sheafor & Horejsi, 2008).

Today, social work continues its practice in many different aspects and areas, from work carried out with individuals to policies carried out with society at the macro level. Professional ethics, which is shaped by the nature of professional

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interventions, is a guide to achieving what is 'right' in professional practices. The development of this ethical system reveals how social work treats people under the influence of some philosophical approaches. For example, Kant's philosophy, which emphasizes the need to create a system of rules based on the acceptance that every person is smart and free, excluding passions and tendencies, is associated with privacy and the applicant's right to self-determination. As another philosophical approach that plays an important role in shaping professional ethics, the teaching of Utilitarian Approach that what is right will make everyone happy is the basis of the emphasis on holistic realization of evaluations in micro, meso and macro dimensions. The emphasis on a working system based on harmlessness and loyalty in the Common Morality Approach, which covers both philosophical views, has led to the development of an understanding in which the applicant is at the center and the emphasis is placed on the fair distribution of resources (Hatiboglu, 2011). Social work ethics, which started to improve thanks to these discussions and continues to develop with the feedback it receives from its practices today, goes on with its development within the framework of universal principles such as the applicant's right to self-determination, and the meeting of basic needs by the development of empowerment-oriented and evidence-based professional interventions.

Of course, as a profession whose subject is humans, it is difficult to say that the ethical system that draws the boundaries of social work in practice is capable of responding to human needs at an optimal level. At this point, it is clear that some impasse may be encountered in professional practice. These are called ethical dilemmas in the literature. The ranking of rights in ethical dilemmas in social work ethics, prepared by Dolgoff, Lowenberg and Harrington (2005), is a guide for practitioners in solving these dilemmas. These are listed as meeting basic requirements (every person has the right to life), fair and equal treatment, free choice and freedom, not to be harmed and to be harmed as little as possible, to live a quality life, privacy and confidentiality, and obtaining the truth and accessible information. These rights guide practitioners of social work in situations of dilemma that are often encountered in practice, and determine the limits of their responsibilities. At the same time, these provide clues about what a person's position is in the practice of social work (Dolgoff, Loewenberg, & Harrington, 2005). is a guide for practitioners in solving these dilemmas. These are listed as meeting basic requirements (every person has the right to life), fair and equal treatment, free choice and freedom, not to be harmed and to be harmed as little as possible, to live a quality life, privacy and confidentiality, and obtaining the truth and accessible information. These rights guide practitioners of social work in situations of dilemma that are often encountered in practice, and determine the limits of their responsibilities. At the same time, these provide clues about what a person's position is in the practice of social work.

### Method

Meta-analysis is a research method based on combining and interpreting the results of different studies on a subject in accordance with a specific research purpose. The meta-analysis method, which provides an emphasis on causal correlations between the combined studies, is highly preferred, especially in the fields of health and social sciences.

In general, meta-analysis, which can be explained in this way, was chosen as the method of our study due to needs. As a matter of fact, more than one large-scale study is needed to understand and interpret each of the death penalty, abortion, and euthanasia cases, which were examined in our study, separately. For this reason, measurements and assessments for a specific group of samples to be carried out in a single study suggest that these cases would create an inability to evaluate them holistically from the perspective of right to life. In this context, the aim of our study is to understand the repercussions of the death penalty, abortion, and euthanasia practices in social life from the perspective of right to life, and to present the studies carried out so far on these phenomena in a certain fictional framework with the help of the meta-analysis method.

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### Analysis

#### The death penalty

**Table 1: Meta-Analysis Findings on Capital Punishment**

META-ANALYSIS FINDINGS ON ABORTION					
STEP	SOURCE	YEAR	DATA	RESULT	
1	Center for Reproductive Rights	2007 - 2017	Death Sentences Imposed around the World	The countries that impose the death penalty the most are Iran, Saudi Arabia, and the United States, respectively	
2	Amnesty International et al.	-	For What Crimes does the Death Penalty Apply in These Three Countries?	Common crimes that result in the death penalty in all three countries are murder, rape, and drug trafficking	
3	UNODC	2000 - 2016	Murder Rates in Iran, Saudi Arabia, and the US	Within 16 years, homicide rates have doubled in Saudi Arabia, and decreased by 0.15 in Iran and by 0.18 in the USA	
4	The death penalty Information Center	2008 - 2017	Homicide Rates in the USA by States	Homicide rates are always lower in states where the death penalty is not applied, while in states where the death penalty is applied, there is an increase	
5	Woman Stats Project	2018	The Equivalent of Rape across the World	Rape is a 'major' problem in Iran and an 'important'	
6	Statista	2017	Rape Rates in the USA by States	Rape rates are about 3 points lower in states without the death penalty.	
7	Our World in Datal.	1990 - 2016	Drug Use and Related Deaths in These Three Countries	he increase in drug use and related deaths in all three countries shows that the drug trade cannot be prevented.	
8	Amnesty Internationa	2007 - 2017	The Trend Towards the Death Penalty around the World	Around the world, the trend towards a complete ban on the death penalty is developing.	
9	The death penalty Information Center	1996 - 2017	The Trend Towards the Death Penalty in the USA	There is a trend in the US states to abandon the death penalty, as is the case around the world.	

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The death penalty is a method of punishment beyond all associated controversy. In this context, in our study, we will first try to understand whether the death penalty corresponds to the qualifications of the punishment described above. From this point of view, it is clear that the rehabilitation of the perpetrator cannot be provided via the death penalty, which is one of the two most basic functions of punishment. It is argued that this practice is used for deterrence, the second main function of punishment. It will be possible to test this approach by comparing the governments around the world that implement the death penalty the most with the proportional change in crimes that are punished by the death penalty in said countries. In this context, the countries where the death penalty was applied the most in the world between 2007 and 2017 were Iran with 4,686 people, Saudi Arabia with 1,129 people, and the United States with 408 people (The Death Penalty Information Center), respectively. The crimes that are punished with the death penalty in these countries in common, excluding crimes related to witchcraft, prevention of practicing someone's religion, etc. which depend on cultural influences, are murder, drug trafficking, and rape (Cornell Law School, 2004). In this context, first, the change in the rate of murders committed in all three countries over the years will be examined. As a result of this review, the change in murder rates for every hundred thousand people are as follows: in Iran, from 2.62 in 2003 to 2.47 in 2014, in the United States, from 5.53 in 2000 to 5.35 in 2016, in Saudi Arabia from 0.83 in 2000 to 1.5 in 2015. The fact that these rates are below the world average of 8 suggests that deterrence is provided by the death penalty in these countries. However, it can be seen that homicide rates in the geographical regions where these countries are located in do not differ significantly. As a matter of fact, the murder rates for every hundred thousand people between the mentioned years are 7 in North America, 2.4 in Northern Europe, and 2.7 in the Middle East. But here, the main point of attention is independent of these. For all three countries, there was no significant decrease in murder rates between 2000-2016, and in fact, as it was mentioned above, Saudi Arabia's murder rates increased by almost 100%. In fact, this is proof that the death penalty cannot have a deterrent effect on the crime of murder, and on the contrary, the increase of rates cannot be prevented (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime). Another finding may differ across the states in the USA. As a matter of fact, in the United States, in the states that do not apply the death penalty, the murder rates for every hundred thousand people was 3 in 2008, and 4 in 2017. In states that apply the death penalty, this rate reached 5.6 in 2017, compared to 5.2 in 2008. As can be seen from these data, the death penalty has not been a deterrent to murder in the US states, just like it has been the case around the world (The Death Penalty Information Center).

As part of the study, proportional changes in rape, another common crime that results in the death penalty, will be examined. According to the rape report published in 2011 by the international organization Woman Stats Project, Iran and Saudi Arabia are among the first category countries where 60 out of every hundred thousand women are raped. According to a report published by the same organization in 2018, the assessment of rape as a 'major' problem in Iran and as an 'important' problem in the US, resulting in the application of the death penalty, does not provide a deterrent to rape crimes. In addition, in 2017, 46.8 out of every hundred thousand women were raped in states that imposed the death penalty in the US, compared to 43.9 for states that did not impose it. However, if the state of Alaska, which differs significantly from all other states in the list in terms of rape rates, were excluded, the rate would be 39.6 (Statista). These findings show that the death penalty does not serve as a meaningful deterrent to rape crimes, just as it is the case with murder.

In all three countries, statistical findings on drug trafficking crimes that are punished with the death penalty are similar to those of other crimes. Although data on drug trafficking has not been available here, it is believed that the use of data on drug use will be sufficient to conclude the discussion. As a matter of fact, between 1990 and 2016, the ratio of people using drugs to the total population increased from 2.99 to 3.31 in the United States, from 1.23 to 1.31 in Iran, and from 0.77 to 0.86 in Saudi Arabia. During the same time period, drug-related deaths increased in every hundred thousand people as follows: from 2.25 to 9.74 in the United States, from 3.26 to 3.27 in Iran, and from 0.67 to 1.05 in Saudi Arabia (Our World in Data, 2018) (Our



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World in Data, 2018). Here, it is understood that drug use and drug-related deaths are increasing in the said countries, and thus the trade of related substances continues to become widespread. This indicates that the death penalty does not provide the expected level of deterrence in the drug trade, just like it is the case with the crimes of murder and rape.

All these findings show that the two main functions of punishment, the offender's reclamation and deterrence, cannot be achieved via capital punishment. Although, despite all these statistical findings, the death penalty is still applied as a punishment method around the world, it is understood that the number of countries where the death penalty is completely prohibited has increased from 91 in 2007 to 106 in 2017. Among the US states, this number increased from 12 in 1996 to 18 in 2017. This indicates the development of worldwide awareness of the death penalty.

### Abortion

**Table 2: Meta-Analysis Findings on Abortion**

META-ANALYSIS FINDINGS ON ABORTION				
STEP	SOURCE	YEAR	DATA	RESULT
1	Center for Reproductive Rights	2014	Legal Provisions of Abortion around the World	Only about 40% of the world's population can perform abortion on d
2	WHO	2018	Approach to Abortion according to Levels of Economic Development	As the level of economic development increases, the approach to abortion shows flexibility.
3	Sedgh et al.	2017	Prevalence of Abortion around the World	From 1994 to 2014, abortion practices decreased proportionally, falling dramatically in developed countries.
4	Sedgh et al	2017	Prevalence of Abortion by Region	Between 1994 - 2014, abortion rates have decreased in Asia, North America, Europe and Ocenia, meanwhile they increased in Africa and Latin America. This suggests that the legalization of abortion has no increasing effect on its prevalence.
5	WHO	2012	Deaths related to Unsafe Abortion	Across the world, deaths related to unsafe abortion are highest in Sub-Saharan Africa. This is followed by the African region.
6	WHO	2008	Deaths related to Abortion Deemed Unsafe by Legal Regulations	Deaths related to unsafe abortion decrease in the case of more libertarian legal regulations
7	The Journal	2016	Abortion Tourism: Departures to the UK	In 2016, 3,550 people went to the UK to perform the practice, where it is allowed to get abortions for up to 26 weeks.
8	Chae et al.	2017	Reasons Why Women Have Abortions	According to a study conducted in 14 countries, socioeconomic concerns are the leading causes of abortion.
9	Chae et al.	2012	Women's Attitude Towards Abortion	Women decide according to the conditions they are in, and although they have resorted to abortion, they do not approve of the practice afterwards.

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As mentioned in the study, abortion as a phenomenon that has been discussed for centuries is treated with approaches that differ from each other as a result of these discussions. It can be seen that abortion is legal -depending on the restrictions regarding the weeks- in 61 countries that make up 39.5% of the world's population today. It is also known that abortion can be accepted depending on socio-economic conditions in 13 countries, which make up 21.3% of the world population, 59 countries which make up 13.8% of the world population allow abortion for the purpose of protecting the health of the mother or child, and 66 countries which make up 25.5% of the world population completely prohibit abortion or allow it only to save the life of the mother (Center for Reproductive Rights, 2009).

It has been found that the practice of abortion is available on demand, especially in countries considered to be economically developed, and that the governments' approach to abortion on legal grounds is directly proportional to their level of development (World Health Organization). At this point, the argument that the prevalence of abortion will increase with the legalization can be evaluated. Regarding this issue, when data on abortion practices performed around the world between 1990 and 2014 were examined, while the number of women having abortions per thousand women in developed countries was about 45 in the first period, it was less than 30 in the last period. In developing countries, the rate, which was 40 in the first period, has recently again went near 40. Another finding from the same study shows that between 1990 and 2014, abortion practice decreased proportionally in Asia, Europe, North America, and Oceania, the countries where it can be performed on demand, and increased in countries in Africa and Latin America, which do not offer flexibility on legal grounds. These findings show that although abortion is not prohibited by governments, it is practiced in real life, which does not support the view that abortion will become widespread by getting legalized (Sedgh, et al., 2017).

Another important consideration regarding life-saving abortion is unsafe abortion-related deaths. Accordingly, it can be seen that there is an inverse relationship between the prohibition of the practice of abortion or its permission only on certain conditions, and unsafe abortion-related deaths. In fact, it is known that unsafe abortion-related deaths are the lowest in countries where abortion can be performed on demand, and that a woman dies as a result of unsafe abortion every eight minutes due to the generally more restrictive approach to abortion in developing countries. Here, unsafe abortion-related deaths in developed countries are thought to occur on the basis of factors such as women's place in domestic decision-making, access to health services and safe abortion services, legal time constraints where the act can be performed, etc. (World Health Organization, 2012).

Another important situation regarding abortion, which develops depending on the legal regulations in the country where there are women who request the practice, is related to 'abortion migration'. Indeed, in 2016 alone, 3,550 women from many countries like Ireland, where abortion is illegal, came to the UK, where abortion can be performed until the 26th week of pregnancy (Ryan, 2018; Murray & Khan, 2020).

With these statistical findings, it can be seen that abortion, which is a practice that exists one way or another in all societies, cannot always be determined by legal regulations, and despite various prohibitions, has serious effects in and on life and cannot be prevented. Here it can be seen that it is necessary to understand why, despite such intensely prohibitive/ restrictive conditions, women still insist on receiving an abortion; in other words, to understand how the conditions that make women resort to abortion are formed in order to develop a knowledge-based approach to the issue.

In relation to this, the results of a study conducted in 14 different countries are quite explanatory. The findings of the study, which examined women according to the categories of married or single, under or over the age of 25, rural or urban residents, show that various factors lie at the heart of abortion practice. According to the results of the study, socioeconomic

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concerns are seen as the main cause of abortion for almost all women. In addition, it is likely that not wanting to have more children, which is seen to rank second after socioeconomic concerns in general, may also be related to socioeconomic concerns. At this point, it is believed that concerns regarding the care of the child who will be born will not be provided - that the care of other children, if there is any, may be disrupted, etc., may be effective in making an abortion decision (Chae, Desai, Crowell, & Sedgh, 2017).

In another study conducted in Turkey on the reasons why women prefer the practice of abortion, the following statement explains that women act on a certain causality when resorting to the practice of abortion. *"Interviews show that although women themselves have considered or even chose this practice, they are afraid to take a position approving abortion when asked about their thoughts on this issue. Since decisions about fertility are not shaped by values alone, it is clear that women make decisions based on the conditions they are in"* (Cavlin, Tezcan, & Ergöçmen, 2012).

The fact that the reasons why women from different countries resort to abortion are quite similar shows that abortion actually has a universal equivalent, and that the concepts of 'arbitrary abortion' or 'optional abortion', which is considered more moderate, in the literature are not the appropriate equivalents. As a matter of fact, as mentioned above, abortion is a practice in which women decide according to the conditions they are in, and they risk going beyond the related legal framework due to the severity of these conditions. Here, it can be said that abortion, which is a practice that might cause serious issues such as the socioeconomic costs of traveling to a different country, or working on one's body in unsafe conditions at the cost of their life, is beyond simply being 'arbitrary' or a 'want', but stems from the 'need'. Therefore, it is believed that the use of the concept of '**need-based abortion**' rather than other concepts related to the subject in subsequent studies is necessary for a more accurate assessment of the issue from the point of view of women who are the direct subjects of the practice of abortion.

There is no doubt that more comprehensive and detailed studies, in which abortion will be examined in all its dimensions, are needed. However, all these findings and assessments show that 'need-based abortion' still has a place in life, despite many different obstacles. Therefore, these findings show that it is necessary to try to understand the socio-economic factors that create the need for abortion by getting rid of all preliminary admissions.

### Euthanasia

**Table 3: Meta-Analysis Findings on Euthan**

META-ANALYSIS FINDINGS ON EUTHANASIA				
STEP	SOURCE	YEAR	DATA	RESULT
1	Buiting et al.	2012	Changing View of Euthanasia among the Elderly	Interest in euthanasia is growing among the elderly.
2	Kara	2017	Factors Affecting Opinions on Euthanasia	The increase in level of education and bodily pain affects the opinions on euthanasia positively.
3	Tufan	2009	Factors Affecting Opinions on Euthanasia	The increase in level of education and bodily pain affects the opinions on euthanasia positively.
4	Seagull	2014	'Suicide Tourism'	It seems that there is a case of suicide tourism to Switzerland from countries where assisted suicide is prohibited.

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5	Parliament of Canada	2015	Euthanasia and Assisted Suicide Rates	Euthanasia and assisted suicide rates are increasing year by year.
6	Canadian Parliament and Office for National Statistics (Switzerland)	2009 – 2015	Reasons for Euthanasia and Assisted Suicide	Those who perform both practices suffer from fatal and/or physically or psychologically painful diseases.
7	OECD	1929 – 2013	The Effect of Assisted Suicide on Suicide Rates	When assisted suicide rates are added to overall suicide rates, there is a slight increase in suicide rates in these countries.
8	Chae et al.	2017	Reasons Why Women Have Abortions	According to a study conducted in 14 countries, socio-economic concerns are the leading causes of abortion.

The demand for euthanasia and assisted suicide practices, which have been the subject of numerous debates in the context of the end of human life and the right to self-determination throughout history, is increasing day by day. In Buiting's 2012 study, the findings on the rise of preference for euthanasia around the world prove this statement (Kara, 2017). In addition, in the studies of Tufan (2009) and Kara (2017), it was concluded that there is a linear relationship between the level of education and the demand for euthanasia due to increased bodily pain (Kara, 2017). Furthermore, in addition to Switzerland, The Netherlands and Belgium, where these practices are the most common around the world, the legalization of these practices over time in Luxembourg, Canada, and various states of the United States is the clearest indicator of increased interest in euthanasia (Parliament of Canada). In addition, it is known that between 2008 and 2012, 600 people from Europe, mainly Germany, and the US have traveled to Switzerland with the aim of committing assisted suicide. This activity, defined as 'suicide tourism', shows the growing interest in euthanasia and assisted suicide (Seagull, 2014).

Euthanasia and assisted suicide are rapidly increasing practices worldwide, both in prevalence and quantity. Euthanasia practice in Belgium in 2003 was shown as the cause of 2 out of every thousand deaths, while this rate increased to 17 in 2013. In the Netherlands, 14.46 out of every thousand deaths were the result of euthanasia in 2007, while this rate increased to 31.87 in 2013. The proportional rise in assisted suicide-related deaths among total deaths is also similar to the rise of euthanasia among the total amount of deaths. For example, for every thousand deaths, the ratio of assisted suicide to total deaths in 2003 was 1.36 for the US state Oregon and 2.96 for Switzerland, while in 2013 these rates increased to 2.19 for Oregon, and 9.04 for Switzerland. Likewise, in the Netherlands, these rates increased from 1.26 in 2007 to 2.02 in 2013 (Parliament of Canada; Federal Statistical Office, 2016; Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft; Statista).

Statistical data reveal the need to understand euthanasia / assisted suicide practices, and the processes that lead individuals to choose this practice. Statistical data show that all individuals who resort to these practices either suffer from a fatal disease or are in pain physically and/or psychologically. As a matter of fact, in Switzerland, The Netherlands, and Belgium, where euthanasia/assisted suicide practices are frequently performed, and data on the subject can be accessed, it has been observed that the vast majority of people resorting to these practices consist of cancer patients, followed by those suffering from heart, liver, and muscle diseases (Federal Statistical Office, 2016; Parliament of Canada).

It is possible to say that the tendency to commit euthanasia is increasing today, and that the factors affecting this increase differ from society to society. But another important aspect is that it is not possible to predict what consequences the growing trend will have in societies. For example, one of the most basic arguments of the opponents of euthanasia is that, if euthanasia is legalized, the understanding of 'death' in the society will change, and people who do not have any physical

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ailments or are not in pain will consider death as a right, and as a result, will practice such actions, leading to a drastic increase in suicide rates. When the suicide rates per every hundred thousand people in countries that these practices are in effect are examined, the results can be seen as follows: in Switzerland, where assisted suicide has been practiced since 1942, 24.2 in 1960 while 12.5 in 2015, in Belgium, where euthanasia was legalized in 2002, 16.3 in 1960 while 15.8 in 2015, in the Netherlands, where euthanasia was also legalized in 2002, 8.9 in 1960 while 10.5 in 2015, and in Luxembourg, where euthanasia was legalized in 2009, 14.2 in 1967 while 11.1 in 2015. It is understood that euthanasia/assisted suicide rates in these countries did not increase directly in connection with the legalization, have experienced periodic fluctuations since 1960, and suicide rates have tended to decline, especially in the last 35 years. Also, the fact that the European Union member countries the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg have the EU average of suicide rates between 1960 and 2015 refutes the claim that euthanasia/assisted suicide rates in these countries have become uncontrollable due to the legalization of said practices (Organization of Economic Co-operation and Development).

It is not that euthanasia and/or assisted suicide are already a common, acceptable phenomenon for all people around the world, and will not cause any social problems. However, it is clear that serious trends in the acceptance of euthanasia have been becoming widespread on earth, and this situation has also been affecting practice. At this point, we are reminded that both public authorities and professionals must observe these discussions with utmost care and attention, and have a people-oriented approach regarding these issues instead of trying to control such processes by suppression and prohibitions that will not work most of the time.

### Discussion, Conclusions and Suggestions

Social work considers a person to be a unique, valuable, and honorable asset. The belief in a person's capacity for change, under any circumstances, separates social work from other professions and disciplines that focus on helping people. The scientific orientation and professional interventions of social work are based on human capacity for change. Therefore, it would not be wrong to say that the main purpose of social work is to bring people and societies to a self-sufficient contingency. In this sense, in the process of social work intervention, a person is not passive, but rather is assumed to be an active subject of the process. In addition, social work paradigms are based on human trust. In this context, it is not possible to foresee a social work intervention despite, and independent of, human beings.

Social work, just like other practice-based, humanitarian professions, defines ideal human situations that are appropriate to the nature of professional relationships and interventions. Just like a doctor restoring their patient's health, or a teacher helping their student become competent using certain learning methods, social work aims to develop minimally ideal situations in the environment of a person. In other words, social work focuses on associating 'a person who has the potential to be self-sufficient' with adequate situations. Potential ideal (desired) situations or problematic issues in this relationship are the result of the interaction between a person and their environment. In fact, this tendency can be expressed in the form of an existential acquaintance of a person with what is in themselves. Social work initially examines the level of interaction (adequate/insufficient) with its environment and its nature in order to understand certain situations that a person faces. Because of this, social work works with individuals through small groups, communities, and the society. The aim is to create conditions that will reveal this potential, which is natural in people, and to improve conditions that are insufficient. In other words, the relationship between a person and environment creates two contingencies. The first is the person's own contingency, and the other is environmental contingency. In both of them, a state of inadequacy caused by one or any other falls within the professional practice of social work. But no matter what situational intervention is caused by, the two contingencies are evaluated together, and the intervention is performed for both of them. In this sense, the focus of professional intervention

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is to establish a balance between a person and their environment. Thus, a person begins this process in the name of realizing their own potential. However, this process can take place in certain conditions and atmosphere. At this point, the main function of governments and public authorities is to build and develop the social, economic, and cultural climate that helps realize the capacity to be good in human nature and its natural characteristics. The reverse of this situation means situations that are not initially understood from the point of view of people, and that cannot be managed afterwards. It is inevitable that these situations will create problems that will require governments to intervene. Governments can identify these problems as elements that periodically threaten social order and sustainability in some conjectures. Naturally, in order to eliminate these problems, they make reactive, and sometimes knowledge-based decisions at certain time periods. In this context, the attitudes of governments regarding the practice of capital punishment, abortion, and euthanasia, which are the subjects of our study, can be evaluated.

In our study, it will not go unnoticed that practices such as the death penalty, abortion, and euthanasia are considered together with the government phenomenon; because how governments define and evaluate these issues determines the difference in practices. In addition, the decisions of the ministers and state officials, and the response found in society by such practices are largely correlated.

First of all, it should be clear what the death penalty means for governments that implement it as a method of punishment, and it should also be explained what disadvantages it will lead to from the point of view of the society if the death penalty is not applied. For example, when death sentences are not applied, is social order under threat, or does an anomie arise in the society? The answer to these questions can actually be found in the fact that the crime-related deterrence function, as presented in our research, is not related to the severity of the punishment. Due to the nature of the practice in the death penalty, it is not possible to rehabilitate the perpetrator. Thus, it is concluded that the two basic functions of punishment do not apply to the death penalty. However, public authorities develop an attitude and stance in the face of such situations. If an act that will result in the death penalty is committed, the public authority can position the perpetrator as an 'inert person' or a 'discarded person'. This also means that the public has neither the time, nor the resources for the perpetrator. The second important question is whether there is a relationship between social order and the severity of punishment. Or should this be understood as calming the society's anger, or getting a rematch? Regardless of the rationale, it appears that the rates of crimes that would lead to the death penalty are lower in different governments and the US states where the death penalty is not applied, as presented in the study. These findings indicate that criminal behavior is an individual act, but a result of the environmental conditions the individual is in. The environmental conditions of people, and the inability to access their own potential for goodness are not only the responsibility of the perpetrators, but also the responsibility of societies and governments. For example, it is known to everyone that running a red light is a criminal sanction, but people still do it. Increasing the severity of criminal sanctions corresponding to the reasons that constitute this criminal act will not eliminate the criminal situation. No matter how much a person obeys the red light rule, they may violate this rule for an urgent job, health-related issues, or due to a moment of carelessness. Even if this person commits a red light violation only once in their life, they may face severe consequences after said violation. Millions of people face such situations in all aspects of life. Therefore, it is possible to say that the basis of the criminal act is the result of individual and environmental incompetence. However, these inadequacies can turn into adequate situations to the extent that investment is made in people and their environment. In this sense, it is clear that criminal practices, or practices such as increasing the severity of punishment alone cannot ensure social order. Thus, it seems unlikely that governments can prevent undesirable situations in public life by simply increasing the severity of penalties.

Abortion can be performed in various forms in different societies and cultures. In addition, today there are societies where abortion is completely prohibited. In countries with high levels of social welfare, the approach of public authorities to abortion in accordance with demand will not be restrictive, while in countries where abortion is completely prohibited, it is

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Research findings on euthanasia / assisted suicide indicate a growing preference for relevant practices in today's world. In the study, these findings show that euthanasia/assisted suicide practices have recently started to be accepted by societies in general. However, the number of countries that have policies to meet the demand for relevant practices, and to understand human needs is quite limited. In fact, this situation shows how much relevant policies need to be developed.

As a result, integrated research is needed for practices related to the right to life, such as the death penalty, abortion, and euthanasia, which are subjects of research. Governments develop attitudes that are directly related to their socio-economic and cultural levels towards situations arising from such social reality and needs. In addition, governments support reactive, irreversible practices such as the death penalty in order to maintain social order while developing restrictive attitudes to practices such as abortion and euthanasia. As can be seen from the research findings, prohibitive and restrictive practices do not reduce the preference for euthanasia and abortion, but rather increase it. In summary, the research findings conclude that governments are inefficient in developing human-oriented models and practices in dealing with such social realities.

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