Reviewer’s report

Title: Global Abortion Policies Database: a descriptive analysis of the legal categories of lawful abortion

Version: 0 Date: 02 Jul 2018

Reviewer: Lucía Berro Pizzarossa

Reviewer's report:

This piece is interesting and processes some of the data available at the GAPD.

It is not clear to the reader what is the research question that guides the research and justifies the research design. It is also not clear to the reader what is the scholarly contribution intended with this piece.

Line 102 seems to indicate that the concern is the lack of readily accessible information for abortion providers and women.

In the background, the terminology needs to be improved. In domestic laws you can find the legal status of abortion (whether is criminalized, whether criminal sanctions are waived in certain circumstances but still regulated as a criminal matter, whether is a regular medical procedure, etc). These distinctions are important and need to be fleshed out.

The methodology needs to be discussed further. It is not clear why they focused on 158 countries and what was the inclusion/exclusion criteria. There should be a limitations section in which this is clearly stated. Furthermore, are the laws with abortion on demand counted in the other grounds? They would be as they include all the other grounds but this needs to be specifically stated.

The results need to be clarified. Stating "Thirty-two percent of countries permit abortion at the woman's request with no requirement for justification" may be misleading as countries generally have gestational periods in which abortion can be accessed on demand.

The authors state in lines 145-146: "All but one country (Viet Nam) impose gestational age limits on women accessing abortion on request. Typically, abortion on request is available up to 12 weeks of gestation; the range is 8 to 24 weeks." These two sentences contradict each other.
Also, in lines 254-255 the authors state "Women may access abortion in 72 of the 158 countries analyzed (46%) if their pregnancy is the result of ‘rape.’. Again here, this statement requires further information in order to actually reflect a nuanced analysis. Countries may require that the rape has been reported so the ground to access abortion services is not rape but reported rape. If the piece is committed to presenting the data in a comprehensive but nuanced manner, further work refining the results is needed.

In lines 345-346: what does this mean? "Access is typically permitted for girls between 13 and 18 years of age, and women over 40 years". Are you arguing that access to abortion has those age limitations? Between 13-18 and over 40? This needs careful attention.

The piece could be improved by presenting the data in a different manner (graphics?) or clarifying what is the purpose of this analysis.

The conclusions are very confusing. It is not clear to the reader whether the authors are criticizing the way in which the GAPD presents the data (lacking nuance) or claiming it improves access to information or both. As the research question or hypothesis that guided this research is unclear, it is difficult to assess the validity of the conclusions.

It is not easy to see whether the authors think the problem lies in the systematization done by the GADP, or in the many different ways a law can be formulated or the different ways providers, judges, women etc. can interpret them or the fact that they are not uniform grounds.

Lines 415-416 requires a footnote.

The authors omit the data provided in the GAPD on the regulation of conscientious objection that could have informed issues of access related to providers' attitudes.

There is extensive literature on human rights law and abortion laws and the UN treaty monitoring bodies (see i.e. General Comment 22) have done crucial work developing the state's obligations in terms of regulation of abortion. The piece could benefit from the considerations made by this literature. The piece will benefit from a clearer theoretical framework and methodology.

The authors should present numbers in a uniform way (158 or one hundred and fifty-eight). The article does not follow one criteria at the moment. Check the journal guidelines and adjust accordingly.
In many places the authors use "country laws": Should it say "countries'" instead of "country"? Perhaps use domestic or national laws to avoid confusion.

**Are the methods appropriate and well described?**
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

No

**Does the work include the necessary controls?**
If not, please specify which controls are required in your comments to the authors.

Unable to assess

**Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?**
If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.

No

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I recommend additional statistical review

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