The access to abortion as a public policy: What happens when the governments doesn’t back up this right? The role of women organizations

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URL: https://tghncollections.pubpub.org/pub/khsu39i9

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The access to legal, free and safe abortions is a fight that has been fought for countless decades from multiple Latin-American countries. The right to get a safe and legal abortion was conquered in Argentina during 2020, in Ciudad de México in 2007 and in Oaxaca in 2019. Before the regulation of abortion, pregnancies were interrupted in unsafe environments, where pregnant persons put their life in danger while dealing with clandestine and illegal ways to access to abortion.

As a response to this situation, different kinds of feminists groups started to provide safe answers to unsolicited pregnancies. These were women organized as first responders networks with the aim to support people in need of abortion. In Argentina “Soccoristas en Red” and in México “Las Libres” were important activists during the push to change the illegal status to a legal one and to implement safe policies regarding abortion.

Because of the lack of policies towards reproductive health in Argentina and Mexico, women associations were the remedy to what the citizenship needed to do in order to get a safe abortion. These claim for a better public health system was also translated to manifestations in the streets and citizens’ debates all over both countries.

To evaluate and analyze the link between public policies in health issues and the role of civil associations we aim to investigate the part that these kinds of organizations had with the change in reproductive health policies. Furthermore, we aim to analyze the inference of civil associations in the design of public policies in this matter. Finally, in this essay we apply qualitative methodology employing interviews, data analysis and survey reports as the main method of research. The sources selected for the last two methods include reports from international organizations and official summaries from the countries selected. Also, we aim to take into account the voices of civil societies who fought for the right to abortion by giving consideration to the reports and documents made by them.

Key words: public policies – Latin-American studies – public health – abortion - civil societies - women’s rights