

Abstract

This thesis explores the multifaceted issue of the demonisation of women's health and the criminalisation of abortion, highlighting its profound implications for health security and human rights violations. The study focuses on the cases of the United States and Poland, analysing the waves of liberalisation and repression of access to abortion and the persecutory methods resulting from criminalisation. Starting with a comparison of the abortion waves in the two countries, which originated in the mid-20th century and triggered opposite reactions, the research explores the subsequent ebb and flow of abortion rights. Recent events, such as the Polish Constitutional Court's ban on abortion for foetal harm in 2020 and the reversal of *Roe v. Wade* in the United States in 2022, highlight contemporary challenges to abortion access.

Analysis of maternal mortality rates reveals significant differences between the case studies. Poland's top-down approach fostered a robust anti-abortion movement that led to prolonged restrictions. In contrast, U.S. legislation was achieved through feminist struggle, leading to a more gradual but steady approach to restrictions. These differences in legal frameworks manifested themselves in different trends in maternal mortality and access to reproductive care.

The study also explores the interface between the criminalisation of abortion, digital surveillance, and health security. In the United States, the illusory nature of online privacy increases vulnerability where law enforcement agencies seek digital evidence of abortion intent. In Poland, the centralisation of health data raises concerns about privacy violations and the marginalisation of pregnant people.

The wider effects of criminalisation affect women's healthcare choices and accessibility. Fear of legal repercussions inhibits seeking medical care, affecting prenatal services, and complicating cases of pregnancy loss. This climate of fear negatively affects the health of pregnant women, beyond abortion concerns.