



Abortion in Chile. The Long Road to Legalization and its Slow Implementation

Author(s): [Gloria Maira](#) [1], [Lidia Casas](#) [2], [Lieta Vovaldi](#) [3]

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Until as recently as September 2017, Chile was one of the few countries in the world that did not permit abortion under any circumstances. Although the Health Code had permitted therapeutic abortion on health grounds from 1931, this was repealed in 1989 as one of General Pinochet's last acts in office. It took more than 25 years to reverse the ban. Finally, a new act was approved allowing abortion on three grounds: when a woman's life is in danger, when there are foetal anomalies incompatible with life, and in the case of rape. Since the law allows abortion only in limited cases, most women continue to seek illegal abortions. In this paper, the authors explore the historical context in which Chile's 2017 bill was finally passed and analyze the legislative debate. They also present the results of a community-based participatory research effort carried out by feminist and human rights organizations. Despite the 2017 law, this research shows the persistence of various obstacles to women's access to legal abortion, such as conscientious objection by medical staff a lack of trained health care providers, and a lack of information for women.

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