

*The Uruguayan Abortion Debate:  
The Place of Conflict Resolution in the Negotiation over Reproductive  
Policy*

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*Abstract:*

*The debate to legalize abortion in Uruguay had been a long and heated negotiation that finally came to legislation in late 2012. The bill looked to resolve an historical debate that stemmed from tradition and values as well as human rights and health. Uruguay is one of the first countries in the region to fully legalize abortion. In this research study I look at both the pro-life and pro-choice movements through the negotiation frameworks of framing, interests, social identity and power dynamics. Through these frameworks I looked to dissect each campaign and find the source of the issues around abortion and what fueled this controversial debate.*

## **Introduction**

There is a long-standing global debate around reproductive rights and whether women should have the ability to access contraception and abortion. This difficult debate is rooted in different political, religious, and economic views, and has become one of the primary divisions between political campaigns in a number of countries. The issue has been particularly controversial in Latin America and Uruguay specifically, where efforts to legalize abortion and enable women to access health care and contraception have been met with widespread resistance from religious organizations.

How were conflict resolution skills and tactics pivotal in the negotiation around decriminalization of abortion in Uruguay? In this thesis, I analyze through the lens of negotiation theory the conflict over the legislative debate on reproductive rights and abortion in Uruguay, the negotiation around it, and its eventual resolution. I then discuss the broader implications of this debate on women's development in Latin America. The main findings in this study were that both parties ended up making some very difficult concessions to the point that both were unhappy with the final outcome. The difference being that the pro-choice group feels that this law is a good starting point and has potential to grow, where the pro-life group would rather not have the law at all. Instead they would like to put more energy and spending into adoption rights, contraception use, and maternal health care.

## **Research Question**

The implications of illegal abortions in Uruguay before 2012 led to extremely high abortion rates and accounted for 28% of maternal deaths nationwide in the late 90's

(Brizzo, 2006, p 222); regional estimates put 35 out of every 1000 live births as resulting in an unsafe abortion (WHO Stats, coha.org).

How was this intractable conflict resolved in such a way that a sufficient number of conservatives allowed the legalization of abortion? And what are the primary lessons for conflict resolution here? This research is important because of the human health and development implications of abortion rights as well as the investigation of how a conservative, developing South American nation addressed the conflict to successfully legalize abortions. Recognizing this as a conflict and bringing attention to how policy reform can change the way abortion is viewed will help shed light on this process if more states decriminalize abortion in an effort to reduce this profound health risk. In this study, I will analyze the negotiation from each side's standpoint to show the central perspectives on the conflict, and look at initial data on how the negotiation has changed women's access to family planning services in Uruguay.

This research will focus on the conflict over abortion, family planning, and reproductive public policy and contraception. There has been a lot of emphasis from pro-choice authors on the human rights violations and the health problems that women undergo because of the lack of access to health care for women. This is emphasized when looking at a woman's economic class, because reproductive issues become more extreme when a woman has no access to economic means and seeks abortions outside of the medical arena.

This paper creates an overarching look at the issues of women's reproductive rights in Latin America, from historical standpoints around abortion, to the transformations of policy reform over the past twenty-five years, current conflicts around

abortion, and how the negotiation, the sides of the debate, and final legalization of abortion in Uruguay have changed women's development and social identities within the region. This look at the conflicting relationships between conservative policy, pro-choice groups, and women's development will teach us how a controversial conflict can be resolved in a political setting while factors of culture, tradition, religion, development, and strong public opinion play a large and authoritative role.

This negotiation analysis of reproductive policy in Uruguay analyzes how women have contributed to this debate, why this debate has been particularly controversial, and the prominent platforms identified within this negotiation, including important background information from studies on the public health concern over unsafe abortions. My research has reviewed this debate throughout the region and specifically how Uruguay came to pass legislation in October 2012 that legalized abortion. Specifically, I examine negotiation formats and social identity as the main structure for reviewing this case. The Conflict Resolution theories used to unpack social identity and the negotiation in this case study center around interests, framing and power dynamics.

### **Drivers of the Conflict**

Reproductive health has been looked at for years in Latin America as a growing problem, with very little success at resolution. Looking at drivers of this conflict will give us a deeper look into the importance of the conflict and in analyzing the case of Uruguay. First I look at Morgan's reproductive governance theory to explore changes and actors surrounding reproductive policy. Second I analyze Shepherd's Double Discourse Theory on the disparity between economic classes and that private and public actions vary widely

around abortion. Lastly, both of these issues help us dive more into the human rights issues around unsafe abortion and how this contributes to the conflict and debate over reforming public policy around reproductive rights.

“Reproductive governance” theory (Morgan, 2011) provides a lens through which we can look regionally at the issues and norms around sexual and reproductive rights. According to Lynn Morgan, reproductive governance refers to the complex “...mechanisms through which different historical configurations of actors ... monitor and control reproductive behaviors and practices” (p. 243). Reproductive governance in the Latin American region controls and helps mandate public health around abortion rights. As Morgan suggests, there are many “actors” that contribute to controlling reproductive rights through reproductive governance. Morgan also goes on to explain how reproductive governance can shape the way the public feels about such issues as abortion. The Catholic Church and the more liberal leftist parties use the reproductive governance theory to remind people of their moral attitudes around “rights of life and being pro-family” (p. 247-9). The more liberal parties, on the other hand, have shifted their stance to the rights of reproduction and sexual health (p. 245). The idea of reproductive governance changes with “the context of neoliberalism and neoliberal economic policies” (p. 245). As shifts have happened in the stance and ways of coercing reproductive policy, it has opened the door to create space for a debate on the issue. Reproductive governance is a rubric for each party in this debate and a filter through which these views have been seen. In terms of Uruguay, looking at this model helps to both connect this debate with others in the region, and evaluate how the debate has changed over time within Uruguay.

Moreover, Morgan addresses the economic factors of these political ideas as well; for example, the fact that this reproductive governance affects wealthier women less than poor women. Morgan talked about how this is a social, political, and economic issue that impacts all aspects of the state (Morgan 2011).

Reproductive governance theory offers an analytical platform to examine each party as it creates a debate and helps to scope the public opinion on reproductive policy. This is done by bringing up several key issues such as poverty, access to health care, changing social dynamics, moral stances changing, and people's relationship to church and state. All of these factors greatly contribute to the debate because they give people reason for their cause.

Adding to the platform of reproductive governance is a disparity that exists between classes and their ability to access health care. Bonnie Shepard's Double Discourse Theory (Shepard, 2000) speaks to this disparity and provides a second lens for analyzing the Uruguayan debate. Double discourse is "...widely understood to signify the art of espousing traditional and repressive sociocultural norms publicly, while ignoring – or even participating in – the widespread flouting of these norms in private" (Shepard, 2000, p. 114). We see this common theme arising throughout the region and the literature. Morgan echoes this theory, observing that women of the upper and middle classes are exempt from the legal policy while women from the low-income class are undergoing serious health risks to be able to gain access to health care at all (Morgan, 2011). Morgan and Shepard collectively provide the groundwork for understanding the debate in Uruguay, not only through a discourse analysis but also through the lens of class and gender issues. As Shepard documents, "[t]he political climate surrounding sexual and

reproductive rights is characterized by a worldwide increase in religious fundamentalism on the one hand and cultural globalization on the other, which has exacerbated preexisting political and cultural divisions” (p. 113). The debate around reproductive rights in Latin America can be seen as the friction between liberal policies and cultural shifts and the retention of traditional values. When looking at the debate in Uruguay, Shepard’s Double Discourse Theory and the issues of gender and class in the debate that arise out of the discourse can be easily applied. Observations and analysis of Uruguay’s recent transition gives insight into why Latin America has chosen its current policies on reproductive health, the conflict and disparity it creates among classes, and how Uruguay was able to reform these policies.

The importance of resolving this long-standing societal conflict is best argued by Marge Berer in a bulletin by the World Health Organization, who suggests that disputes over abortion policy is not only a policy issue, but also a human rights issue. Berer argues that criminalizing abortion makes it a global health concern, and we need to move societies away from this impression (Berer, 2002). Latin America is a leader in the number of unsafe abortions performed every year, which is evidence to support this theory. The World Health Organization estimates that 35 per 1000 live births a year in Latin America, results in a clandestine abortion. Denying a group of people access to resources and rights that can directly lead to death qualifies this and is supported by the literature as global health and human rights issue. The impact of government policy on unsafe abortions was explored by John Paxman, who links government policy as the cause of the rise in unsafe abortions (Paxman, 1993). Collectively, he and others argue that conservative policy around abortion and reproductive rights increases the rates of

unsafe abortions leading to wide-reaching impacts on political and economic development, and social welfare (Billings, 2005).

These negative impacts to social welfare are derived from women lacking a major resource for social development. In particular, the absence of reproductive health care has three primary impacts on the family: 1) it leads to increased birth rates, which can dilute a family's resources, 2) in the event an abortion is sought, it is typically done in an unsafe manner which can lead to health complications, and death, 3) it leads to pregnancy at younger ages, which has widespread implications on development. This last point argues that without family planning resources, women are less able to go to work to help support the household, be primary care givers or otherwise manage an economically sustainable living situation. Those who are implementing family planning resources for women and their families argue that their establishments provide a healthier future because of this (Brizzo, 2006).

Morgan's reproductive governance theory can also help explain the arguments of conservative thought on abortion. The main arguments against abortion in Latin America are around morals and giving rights of life to the unborn child, and family rights, and divine rights. These views are generally looked at through the scope of religion, and reproductive governance helps to explain how these values and actions, through legislative and economic controls, guide the actions of the public (Morgan 2012, p. 243). Until recently, we have seen that conservative and religious views around abortion have been the dominant element of reproductive governance in Latin America, particularly as conservative parties and Catholic Church have a strong hold in the region. Morality has been the strongest argument for this side of the debate, where choices and actions are

judged moral and immoral by ethical rules, and reproductive rights are evaluated and governed through these moral ideologies and held to this standard. These ideas are the core of the campaigns of the pro-life groups and have helped to govern the choices around abortion rights not only in the past but also in the shifting future (Morgan, 2012). Reproductive governance, therefore, shows overall how both sides of the debate guide their views around reproductive rights politically, through the arguments of morality on the right or human rights on the left.

While looking at this debate around reproductive rights in Uruguay, it is important to include the positions of civil society. Civil society is created by strong social institutions that voluntarily back social concerns and promote the interests of social groups within a state (Kew & Wanis-St. John, 2008). Looking at social institutions in the abortion debate in Uruguay we can easily see that both the pro-life and pro-choice groups are made up of these civil society groups, with the Catholic Church and other religious organizations backing the pro-life position, and a consortium of feminist groups backing the pro-choice position. Civil society groups can move in and out of different debate mediums while influencing the social identity (see below) of their members; this is referred to as the fluidity of civil society groups and was a positive factor for Uruguay in this debate. The importance of civil society groups is best described by Kew and Wanis-St. John, who assert that civil society groups hold “the middle sphere” position in society and that they are able to “bridge that gap between the individual and the state” (p. 15). This analysis contributes to the overall debate because we can look at these groups through a new lens as voices of social change.

## **The History of the Uruguayan Abortion Debate**

The debate to legalize abortion in Uruguay stems back into the early 1900's, but the modern abortion debate in Uruguay began in 1985. That was the year that Uruguay came out of a 12-year dictatorship and started developing a democratic society. Women's organizations and the movement for reproductive rights were stifled under the dictatorship and when democracy was reintroduced to the country, the women's movement gained force quickly (Pousadela). We see the effects of the 1985 debate in the initial legislative attempt in 2008 and the successful passing of legislation in 2012, which fully legalized abortion for the first 12 weeks of pregnancy (Banfi-Vique, 2011). Even after the passing of the legislation in 2012, strong opposition to abortion remains. The deep divisions between the pro-life and pro-choice groups was clear during the 2012 voting on the decriminalization of abortion where "...the House voted 50 to 49 and the Senate passed the initiative by a 17 to 14 vote" (Romero, 2012). The bill stated that a woman who wanted to obtain an abortion within "the first trimester of her pregnancy was to be interviewed by a committee made up of a social worker, mental health specialist, and doctor. She is to have a five-day reflection period before a final decision is made" (Romero, 2012). The law also stated "only Uruguayan citizens or legal residents have access to the services and exempts health care professionals whose beliefs are contrary to abortion" (Pousadela, 2013, p. 9).

As was previously stated, this fierce debate is made up of two distinct camps: pro-life and pro-choice. The Catholic Church is the most influential factor in the pro-life camp in this debate. Being a very large political and social influencer for centuries, the Catholic Church has always taken a very strong pro-life approach against abortion.

Catholicism still has a strong presence in Uruguay and in most of Latin America and many highly influential people espouse a Catholic viewpoint that has long taken precedent in the region (Blofield, 2008).

The pro-choice camp primarily consists of feminist groups and organizations. These groups have long struggled to gain ground in the women's rights movement, and the legalization of abortion is a cornerstone to this effort. The pro-legislation movement also has its powerful influencers in politicians and very vocal organizational leaders, such as the head of the Frente Amplio party Monica Xavier and a leading feminist group MYSU. (Pousadela, 2013).

Public policy is designed to help with what public resources should be recognized and where these resources should go and the conversation over family planning policy is an extension of this (Weaver 1978). Weaver determined "...operationally, family planning as a government policy means granting public resources to or withholding them from programs designed to provide information, materials, or services to control fertility. Common examples include the dissemination of contraceptives, legalization of abortion and sex education" (Weaver, 1978, p. 417). Weaver's look at public policy and family planning is a very fundamental view, but the decision to either grant access to these resources or not is key to analyzing the debate in Uruguay. This is because there are so many parties that play a role in making this decision process.

The politics surrounding public policy decision in family planning for Latin America has many different influences. One of these main influences has been, and still is, the Catholic Church. The Catholic Church's role in public policy as an influencer of decision is key in its powerful role through politics and economics in Latin American

states. This is important because “Catholicism has been so entangled with institutions and symbols of power in Latin America that the line between religion and politics is easily blurred and in any case, difficult to specify or maintain with clarity” (Levine 2007, p. 20). Both Levine and Weaver have suggested through their articles that the public policy and the resources that are given through the command of policy is going through shifts both culturally and economically when put in reference to reproductive rights and the Catholic Church. In the case of Uruguay we can look at how this shift in social identity (explained below) is creating conflict and attributing to a heated debate around abortion. As the literature has suggested, looking at the fundamentals of public policy and how the Catholic Church has played a role in influencing it, can not only give us the historical aspects, but show the important shifts around opinion and give us a look into specific rhetoric for each side.

The Catholic Church and the pro-life movement have taken a strong stance against abortion, stating that they feel it is morally wrong and against the rights of family, life and the unborn child. The pro-life campaign is primarily focused on protecting traditions and values that have long been the center of Uruguayan culture. While looking at this campaign, we see great fear of legalizing abortion because it symbolizes a shift in culture and a move away from these values. These attributes are at the center of the pro-life campaign and strongly influence their protest against the legalization of abortion. Instead of legalizing abortion, the pro-life movement looks to enhance other options in order to solve the problems the pro-choice movement argues for, such as making adoption more open, creating better access to contraception, and supporting maternal

health, as well as putting more social resources in place for women who are struggling with children (sociedaduruguay.org, 2012).

The pro-choice movement has taken on the issues of reproductive rights as fundamental human rights. Clandestine abortions are at a high rate all throughout Latin America (Berer, 2002), and Uruguay contributes to 17% of women who die from clandestine abortions in the region (WHO, 2012). Of particular concern is the link between economic status and unsafe abortions. Women who are able to afford private sector abortions are in many ways above the law because they can afford private health care and seek out the procedure outside of Uruguay; on the other hand, women of lower economic status have to look elsewhere to find these resources, which often results in serious health risks or death (Banfi-Vique, 2011). As Blofield mentioned in her article, “in countries with lower per capita income and high levels of inequality the cost of a safe abortion can be a barrier to most women, who then resort to clandestine methods. This problem is most acute in Uruguay because of their lower per capita income and its unequal distribution” (2008, p. 403). The economic, political, and social issues around abortion run deeply within Uruguayan and most other Latin American societies. The constant battle between access, health and safety, choice, religion, and policy are all factors that each side in the debate takes on to make this a very difficult conflict.

### **Theories of Conflict**

Four negotiation analysis frameworks are most relevant to the Uruguayan debate over legalizing abortion: Social Identity, Framing, Interests, and Power:

- **Social Identity**– The role of social identity in the changing political, economic and cultural structure of Uruguay will be examined.

- Framing– Framing is used to show tactics and strategies in the negotiation, particularly debating.
- Interests – Interests help understand where party lines are, and why this debate is so controversial for Uruguayans. Interests will be used to help understand what each party’s core beliefs are on the topic and what they hope to get out of the debate.
- Power– The power components of this analysis are used in looking at what had strong influence on the debate. What were the power dynamics that contributed, and did this influence any aspect of the debate?

Social identity’s role in the analysis of this debate is to look at the cultural aspects of the 2012 change in legislation, and how social identity changed in order to create the space for this debate. Analyzing this question shows the shifting attitudes in Uruguay over reproductive health policy. Social identity aspects are important in looking at the structure and influencers of a debate. The Uruguayan negotiation was impacted deeply in this way and analyzing this through the lens of the negotiation will be vital in understanding roles, tactics and issues of the negotiation.

Social identity theory says that an important part of personal identity derives from groups, such as ethnic and religious associations, political groups, and other social groupings. Tajfel and Turner distinguish social identity as “people tend to classify themselves and others into various social groups such as organizational membership, religious affiliation, gender and age ” (Tajfel and Turner, 1985 as in Ashforth, 1989, p20). Ashforth and Mael also state that “social identification is the perception of oneness with or belongingness to some human aggregate” Ashforth, 1989, p21). With this understanding we can look at the pro-life and pro-choice groups as social constructions that people identify themselves with. The values, traditions, and ethics behind each stance are what attract people to identifying socially with this group. Social identity further explains that for our self esteem we will bias in favor of our own groups with which we

identify, even sometimes over our own interests. Social identity is thus a large factor in the negotiation analysis of the Uruguay case.

In analyzing negotiations, it is important to discuss the concepts and use of framing. As a vital tool in selling a position during negotiation, framing is a presentation of an object, resource, or stance in an attempt to either portray it as more positive or negative depending on the intended outcome of those negotiating. As stated in an article by George Wu “[f]raming is used by both parties to: 1. Emphasize the value of their concessions; 2. Provide a justification for the other party to make concessions; 3. Offer a standard of fairness for dividing the value created by negotiating” (Wu 1996, p. 2). These concepts of framing are important to pull out of each side of the negotiation, because using framing to help analyze the negotiation will outline party interests better as well as help us analyze concessions that were made in favor of each party.

The use of framing in the case of Uruguay’s abortion law demonstrates the ways in which the pro-life and pro-choice movements revealed and manipulated their side to each other. As George Wu’s article stated “[h]ow something is framed can change the way we value that object. Of course, every description is a frame. What we are talking about specifically is how the active use of different frames can be effective in negotiation” (1996, p. 2). How this approach affected the debate and what worked and what did not was at the heart of the analysis and helped to understand the passing of the law to decriminalize abortion. This analysis did help to dissect these components to the debate, and showed framing as a component in the political relationships between parties. Analyzing the Uruguayan debate on decriminalizing abortion through a framing structure helped take a closer look at the conduct of each political stance as well as the negotiation

tactics that were created out of this debate. Looking at the dynamics of framing and conflict helped to take a deeper look into the real understanding of the negotiation and to dissect the meaning behind phrases of the law and statements of interest made during the negotiation.

Interests (Fisher and Ury 1981) within a negotiation are one of the most important factors in analyzing a negotiation, especially one as competitive as reproductive and abortion rights. Interests are values and desires that each party in this negotiation approach the table with, as well as used to challenge either side. Extracting the interests of both sides of the debate can show insight into understanding platforms and values that each party has. In the context of Uruguay, understanding what the interests and values are to each party may divulge the motivations behind their political stances, such as why each party feels so strongly on legalizing abortion or to keep it prohibited. As Lax and Sebenius concluded, a party's interests can value "precedent, relationships, reputation, political appearance, fairness, or even how the other side's self image fares in the process" (2006, p. 17). These are all important factors because they have potential to contribute to tactics and campaign efforts throughout the debate process. It also can decide how the debate is conducted. This conveys the win-win scenario that Lax and Sebenius's article brings to our attention. The win-win scenario as seen through this study is letting both sides' interests be a part of the final product of the negotiation. It is still possible for each actor in the debate to make concessions but they will walk away from the debate having a product that is not one sided. It is hard to look at political debates through this framework because in most cases there is an effort to make a clear winner and clear loser on political platforms. The win-win scenario, though, can be analyzed here because the debate and

final policy outcome was not so clearly one-sided, and it appears that both parties did not fully agree with the outcome (Lax & Sebenius, 2006).

Power is also a concept that plays a large role in negotiations, such as in Uruguay. Bernie Mayor defines power as "...the ability to act, influence an outcome, to get something to happen, or to overcome resistance. For the purpose of understanding the dynamics of conflict, power may be defined as the ability to get one's needs met and further one's goals" (Mayor, 2010, p. 50). Power dynamics in conflict work by influencing and structuring the outcome of the debate. Those who have the power, and know how to use it to their advantage, are more likely to gain the outcome they want. In bringing this definition back to the case study, I will be analyze power through this definition and through several other more specific aspects of power. When looking at power, it is important to evaluate what types of power are being manipulated. According to Mayer, formal authority power and moral power are both playing a large role in Uruguay. Formal authority is a form of structural power and is given to those who are defined as having leadership roles within a structure (Mayor, 2010, p 54). Formal authority within the state is being challenged by changing social norms and identity that is particularly supported by civil society groups. (Mayer, 2010, p. 54). In the context of Uruguay, it looks at policy makers, the Catholic Church, and civil society groups who are associated with power like the feminist movement. Moral power is the "power that flows from values, beliefs, and ethical systems" (Mayer, 2010, p. 57). In the Uruguay context, as Mayor suggests, because this power comes from value, beliefs, and ethics, the defense or attack of these systems can be the flow of moral power. Some parts of society in this case feel challenged whereas others feel this challenge is necessary. All of these parties

relate to these two types of power because they are coming from the structure of civil society or institutions or are defending and challenging moral behavior. They both gain power through leadership and the values they hold. Power is an essential part of a negotiation analysis and has contributed greatly to the Uruguayan struggle to legalize abortion. Mayer's article guides a more in depth look at the issues of power and how they contributed to the debate (Mayer, 2010).

There are many different aspects of organizing and examining power in a conflict. As Peter Coleman states, "power is abstract and ambiguous, but the images that we use to understand power also have important implications for how we relate to one another personally and as member of groups" (Coleman, 2000, p. 109). Coleman evaluated several different types of perspective on power, three of which have significant relevance to this case study: Power Over, Powerlessness and Dependence. Power Over is the idea that one group feels they have control over another group, enabling them to have more sway in actions and outcomes. Powerlessness and Dependence is the idea that one party does not have power while another does, which results in dependence of one group on the other (Coleman, 2000, p. 111). Both of these perspectives are derived from a competitive outlook for power and analyze the conflict within that competitive ideology. For example, this helps to analyze the changing political arena in Uruguay, as well as the referendum after the passing of the bill. This helps connect the social and political aspects of the debate while also deepening the analysis when looking at the actual negotiation. In the debate over abortion in Uruguay there are certain competitive components that encompass both of these perspectives. The use of these frameworks were helpful to pull

the power relations out of the debate and to answer what was helped to create these dynamics and create such a heated debate.

By looking at Social Identity, Framing, Interests, and Power, I will be able to analyze the debate in Uruguay around the legalization of abortion in a complex and multi-perspective manner. This is necessary in order to incorporate the many issues, tactics, and opportunities and to analyze what allowed for the legalization of abortion to pass in Uruguay.

## **Methods**

I used two main methods in order to gather data; media analysis and interviews. I will outline both of these methods and discuss the success of each and how this either strengthened or weakened the study.

### *Media Analysis*

For this research project I looked up the legislative documents online to understand the exact language of legislation on reproduction in Uruguay. This served as a guide to understanding the heart of the conflict. I conducted a significant amount of research on news media coverage of the conflict because this supported the understanding the discussion that occurred prior to the legalizing of abortion in Uruguay. Articles from neutral, conservative, and liberal sources were analyzed; I was able to find 42 key articles on the subject. A complete list of all of the articles is in the bibliography. In these articles, I looked for information on parties, the main areas of conflict, the negotiations, the stances of each party, and conflict severity before and after the legislation was passed. This helped me identify the themes and topics of conflict that existed, and how

negotiations for the legislation were able to happen successfully. The media study did provide a conflict resolution perspective, and helped me apply the basic principles of the negotiation to other countries in the region wrestling with the issue of abortion rights, such as Chile. This study allowed for a comprehensive examination of the issues around abortion within the region, specifically looking at negotiation around public policy.

### *Interviews*

I also conducted interviews on the topic. The interview process was a part of the mixed methods to help support and gain additional information about the conflict in order to gain further insight into the motivations of the actors in the conflict that were not obvious from the review of newspaper articles above. I conducted interviews with people who worked in the field and who are active members in the negotiation of change in reproductive policy. These interviews were with members of the feminist movement from Uruguay that belong to organizations like Cotidiano Mujer, MYSU, Mujeres de Las Piedras, and CNS women. I primarily focused on directors and coordinators within the organizations. Also, I facilitated interviews with other international organizations such as the Center for Reproductive Rights, the Ford Foundation, and International Planned Parenthood. I focused on country directors to interview who had a good political knowledge and of the situation in Uruguay. Questions focused on their fieldwork and their assessment of the conflict (where they have seen the conflict, why they see the conflict occurring, their assessment of the main conflict issues, and barriers to resolution). Due to Catholicism's strong presence in South America and its being a key component in the conservative stance against family planning, I also looked to conduct interviews with religious leaders in the Catholic faith, ideally from the region, but this was unsuccessful. I

was able to obtain 4 interviews overall. These interviews came from representatives from International Planned Parenthood, Marie Stopes International, Ibis Reproductive Health and Health Initiatives based in Uruguay. Overall the questions that were asked were about the 2012 debate and legislative negotiation that resulted in the legalization of abortion (Appendix A). The main weakness that occurred from conducting these interviews was that I was not able to locate anyone who was strongly against the legalization or a representative from the Catholic Church. This made the study slightly biased and I tried to accommodate for this through the media analysis.

### **2008 Harm Reduction Model & 2012 Legalization of Abortion**

The 2008 attempt to decriminalize abortion was passed in the House and Senate but came to the former president with a promise that he would veto it. For many years prior, health care professionals in the field of reproductive health had noticed a very high mortality rate among women who underwent self-induced abortions. This stirred interest and concern in those who worked closely in the reproductive health and medical fields, which started the push to implement a harm reduction model. The risk reduction model that Uruguay started implementing was modeled after the HIV risk reduction strategies that have taken place globally by the UN (Brizzo, 2006). According to one researcher, “[t]he strategy of risk reduction aims to minimize the negative effect of certain social behaviors that are known to be dangerous, but are practiced by a group of people that are particularly vulnerable to engaging in such practices” (Brizzo, 2006, p. 222). The risk reduction model that was implemented before the decriminalization in 2012 was an

attempt to lessen the damage that self-induced abortions can inflict on women, and also provide a chance for the Ministry of Health to impose a political stance and send a clear message that the impacts caused by abortion in Uruguay cannot be ignored.

A report that was issued by the Ministry of Health and several partners captures the essence of the harm reduction model and the observed effects of applying this model. Because abortion was still illegal in Uruguay at the time of the implementation of the harm reduction model, the actions that were taken were only for pre- and post-natal care. The hospitals and health clinics did not facilitate or oversee any abortions. Key findings from the implementation of this policy are best summarized by:

First, we found that some women were not even pregnant, which may have made clandestine interventions to evacuate the uterus even more dangerous. Second, some women had embryonic or fetal death; which justified in-hospital emptying of the uterus. Third, some women met the requirement for pregnancy termination within the law, which could be carried out safely in the public hospital. Fourth, after counseling some women took the free and voluntary decision to continue their pregnancies. (Brizzo, 2006, p. 225)

As a result of this legislation, many women's lives were saved and greater care was given to women's health throughout the country. The model as it is implemented here was the only section of the 2008 proposal that was signed into law. The application of this policy is believed to have been a major turning point for Uruguay within reproductive policy and also believed to be a major part of the success of the 2012 law. This was because the pro-choice movement was able to break ground on getting a more liberal law around reproductive rights in place. The use of framing is a key element in the 2008 law. The shift of framing the law from being a women's rights movement to a public health concern was a main reason why the harm reduction model was passed into law. The framing tactic for this pivotal moment was able to convince a very conservative

president that the government should hold more responsibility to women's health. Even though power dynamics are seen in 2008 by not being able to fully legalize abortion with a conservative president, 2008 was a key win for the pro-choice movement to be able to continue their arguments for full legalization in 2012.

Following the 2008 law, abortion was decriminalized in Uruguay in October 2012. The 2012 law states that women can receive an abortion within 12 weeks of conception. They must approach their doctor, who then refers them to a panel made up of a gynecologist, a mental health specialist, and a social worker. They must present their case in front of the panel as to their reasons for wanting an abortion. The panel is then meant to advise the patient medically and discuss their options and support systems. The patient is then given a five-day reflection period. If they still want an abortion after the reflection period they approach their doctor again and the procedure is carried out (nytimes.com, 2012).

There are explicit criminal sanctions if the abortion is carried out after a 12-week period unless done by one of the exceptions in the law. To wit, “[m]inors are not allowed to terminate pregnancies unless advised by a doctor or a judge. The procedure and recuperation are fully covered under Uruguay's universal health care” (ibtimes.com, 2013).

“Concession objection” is allowed for individual medical practitioners who do not believe in or are comfortable carrying out abortions. Institutions cannot claim concession objection; it needs to be done on an individual basis and given in writing to the Ministry of Public Health. If an individual does claim concession objection they need to be able to provide a referral to a doctor who will preform the abortion.

By employing the harm reduction model from the 2008 law, Uruguay moved quickly into being able to provide safe and legal abortions for women around the country (Stapff, 2014). This has helped dramatically in reducing the mortality rates from abortions and helped to open the conversation around women's development and right to safer health care, as seen with the application of sex education and advising on post care contraception methods that accompanied the law to decriminalize abortion (worldabortionlaws.com).

## **Discussion**

To help us organize our discussion and analysis around this debate I am looking at the 2012 negotiation that led to the final legalization of abortion in Uruguay. I will first start out by discussing the basics of the negotiation and pull general conclusions from the negotiation analysis. I will then break down the negotiation into the pro-life and pro-choice campaign stances during the debate. I will then break down each party's campaign into the four frameworks: social identity, framing, interests and power, to give a more comprehensive analysis on the negotiation.

### *Negotiation*

The 2012 negotiation to legalize abortion in Uruguay was a heated debate. After 14 hours of congressional debates, both parties finally reached a decision that was passed by three votes in the Senate and one in the House. Many concessions were made on both sides, particularly with the wording of the bill and certain criteria (New York Times, 2012).

The major concession for the pro-life vote was that they were going to discuss the potential of passing a bill to legalize abortion. The pro-choice side had to agree to change the legislation to say “decriminalization” instead of “legalization” and to several pages of fine print that made clear that the bill was a decriminalization under certain conditions (Montevideo.com, 2012). There was also the agreement that women would have to sit before a panel when requesting to have an abortion. This was widely criticized by feminist groups who openly opposed this section saying that women have already gone through the decision making process on their own, and going before a panel is not only like a judgment but also takes away a woman’s autonomy of a woman (republica.com, 2012).

After the law passed, the debate continued with a referendum in October 2012, an attempt to overturn the abortion law. There needed to be a 25% popular vote to show support to bring the legislation back for a vote but only 8% of the public turned up to vote against the new law and bring it back to a negotiation. This was clear confirmation that the majority of the population did support the bill and that the legislation would remain and move forward with some stability (ibtimes.com, 2013).

As this debate continued in Uruguay, we saw many complicated debates and trials to pass the bill in 2012. To help us organize our discussion and analysis, I have several lenses through which to explore the debate: social identity, interests, power, and framing.

Social identity has played a significant role in the debate and decriminalization of abortion in Uruguay. The many articles and interviews that were conducted for this study alluded to the idea that Uruguay is ready and able to take on this development in its society. The public identifies strongly with being able to liberalize their reproductive

rights laws, and also makes the conscious choice to separate moral beliefs and issues from political rights. Social identity is a strong component to finally passing the bill, and the public has expressed their views very openly around this issue.

The role of power in this debate was used by both parties as a way of furthering goals for both parties and also to influence a final outcome. The impact was what we see in the final 2012 law. The pro-choice group gained power since the 2008 bill and with these significant shifts in power, the dynamics during the debate changed. We see power used by both parties, in the specific power structures that are explained as follows. The dynamics of power over and powerlessness and moral and formal power here show the shift of power dynamics within the House and Senate since the last debate in 2008 and contribute to why the bill was passed. Because of the shifting power dynamic, the majority that wanted the bill passed had a clear advantage and therefore those who didn't were dependent on those in control. We see many concessions, and fine print around the law, such as the right for conscious objection, wording of the bill, and use of the panel contributed to the bill in an attempt to make it more acceptable to both parties and even out the power dynamics.

Using framing as an analysis structure in this research helps us take a detailed look at the negotiation and the concessions that were made by each party. An important part of the policy negotiations for this bill were the concessions that each party made. The framing structure that we are using to analyze this negotiation is primarily useful in understanding these concessions and understanding the cases that were made. The pro-life group framed its position based on protecting the rights of family, the unborn child, protecting moral decisions, and protecting tradition and religious rights. The pro-choice

framed its issues as health, and women's autonomy and rights over their life and body. Both campaigns used these frames to try to gain different areas of public support by pulling from the areas of rights, and what values should be instilled in the future of Uruguayan culture. After looking at several detailed media accounts of speeches for and against the new abortion law, we can see that framing and reframing was a substantial part of the debate.

When looking at interests, the pro-choice movement's main interests were to legalize abortion for health reasons, and fight for the passing of the bill on the grounds of morals and the right to human life. There are some opinions in Uruguay that former President Vasquez will be reelected in 2014, and if he is then, there may be potential for abortion to become illegal again. There are some who do follow this belief and don't want to be seen in opposition to his cabinet and are therefore reluctant to be cooperative in implementing abortion.

### *Pro-life Campaign and Negotiation Tactics*

Even though Uruguay has declared itself a secular nation since the separation of church and state in 1917, religious traditions and rights still play a strong role in Uruguayan life. For this reason we see the strong pro-life campaign rise out of these religious views. Much of the pro-life movement's campaign works from the standpoint that abortion is morally wrong and an inhuman way to deal with an unwanted pregnancy, and that killing a child and denying him or her the right to live is unconstitutional and is on the same level as killing any other living human being. The pro-life campaign wants to

preserve the values that underpin the view that abortion is illegal, and feels that abortion is the easy way out of what might not be ideal circumstances for some women.

Many delegates from the National Party of Uruguay were among those who opposed the bill on either moral or constitutional grounds. They were supported by other organizations such as the Christian Legal Institute and the Templar Order of Uruguay, who both openly spoke against the law at the debate, as well as several Catholic bishops in Uruguay.

The main belief that is held in the pro-life movement is that of the moral issues around having an abortion, that the bill is unconstitutional and goes against the protection of the right to life, and that women should not be allowed to decide the fate of their unborn child. Many supporters of the pro-life movement suggested throughout the debate that there is an increase of options for women other than abortion, such as better and easier adoption laws, sexual education, and more readily available contraception.

We can see the framing method used in the pro-life movement, particularly when drafting the 2012 bill. The most significant was the statement that abortion will be decriminalized under certain regulations, and not legalized. In this particular example of the way framing was used to the advantage of the pro-life movement, we see a very clear message being sent to the public. That message is that abortion will never be an accepted practice in Uruguayan society but if abortion is to become illegal, the circumstances must be significant and tightly regulated. Even with the current final bill around abortion, the pro-life movement doesn't agree with a significant part of the language saying that it is too broad and could be interpreted too loosely which allows for less restricted use of the law (Sociedad Uruguayaya, 2012). Another example of framing during the negotiation

was the argument that the legalization of abortion would be unconstitutional because the law directly violates the right of life and the right of a child. This framing was used in order to gain more concessions and tighten the regulations on the bill (Sociedad Uruguaya, 2012). How this method of framing was useful in this circumstance was that it hindered the full legalization of abortion. This framing of the legalization of abortion as possible but only under stricter guidelines sought to place the bill closer to conservative traditions in Uruguayan society (Wu, 1995). The specific wording around the bill opened up the possibility to have legal abortions but under very regulated guidelines and with the general message that abortion should be the last possible resort.

The party interests for the pro-life movement were made very clear and are also very similar to our own debate within the U.S. The main interests of the pro-life movement are to protect the right of the child, the right of life, and human rights (180.com, 2012). The main interests and concerns of the pro-life movement were to highlight these discrepancies in the law and be the main supporters and voice of life and the unborn child. They gained these through having conscientious objection, which stated in the law that 1) any doctor who was morally or medically against abortion for personal reasons would be allowed to not perform the procedure, and 2) having women go through a panel to have an abortion. What the interests here show is the main motivation for the pro-life movement in the debate. It also makes clear parties that contributed to this side of the debate. Pro-life is supporting a very traditional and religious approach to the feelings around legal abortion. Their interest is to protect these traditions and values that they feel are a very integral part to their society. In essence the pro-life movement sees the legalization of abortion as a threat upon ethics and chooses to challenge the stance back

in the debate by reminding society around who they are and the reasons for why abortion has not been legal in the past (180.com, 2012).

This interests-based argument leads us straight into the social identity aspects of the debate. These two frameworks relate because interests can derive out of social identity and the need to protect both culture values and traditions but also being able to maintain them. These actions are particularly seen by the Catholic Church in the pro-life movement and a lot of the social identity interests within the debate are brought out by the culture and tradition of religion (noticias.com, 2012). Those who socially identify with the pro-life movement, and with the Catholic Church, are looking to find connection, empowerment, meaning, and self-esteem (Ashforth, 1989). The pro-life groups main platforms are to stand for tradition, the right to life, family and individuals. Those who identify with this group are looking to also protect these desires. We see social identity theory here help explain how individuals express their concerns through the filter of identifying with the pro-life movement. They are able to identify directly with a group to validate and protect the values they hold as important. (Sociedad Uruguaya, 2012).

The last framework, power dynamics, lets us take a closer look into dynamics between groups; for this section we will look at how power dynamics supported the debate for the pro-life campaign. In revisiting the discussion around power dynamics we are looking at this campaign through formal and moral authority, also incorporating the components of power over and powerlessness and dependence. Power dynamics are used to obtain outcomes and influence the other side. In the 2012 debate, we see the pro-life movement substantially lacking in power since the 2008 election. This was because of two things. Public support had increased to 63% in favor of abortion (NYTimes, 2012)

and the newly elected president was very open that he stands for legalizing abortion and would pass the bill into law. An increase in public support has happened since the 1980's and particularly since the harm reduction model was put into play in 2008. Uruguay started feeling a great sense of urgency to legalize abortion, which resulted in the pro-life movement becoming more powerless throughout the negotiation (SociedadUruguaya, 2012). In this analysis we can see most prominently the powerlessness theory and the moral power concepts come into play. Powerlessness is shown by the lack of public and political support, and moral power through being able to use ethics and tradition to try and convince the public and the other party that legalization is morally wrong. Because the pro-life group started losing so much political and public support, they turned to their religious affiliations to gain the most power. We see from the outcome though that the Catholic Church couldn't gain enough power to win the debate (sociedaduruguaya.org, 2012). Power dynamics worked against the pro-life campaign and was ultimately a large part of why there were not as successful as they wanted to be. The campaign approach, however, worked to modify the bill to the 12-week gestation period and have other concessions made just as the conscious objection clause (180.com, 2012).

### *Pro-choice Campaign and Negotiation Tactics*

An important distinction that is deeply embedded in Uruguayan culture is their strong sense of collective identity and collective rights (Freedman, 2014). Because of this there has always been a strong human rights movement in Uruguay (Freedman, 2014). The pro-choice movement for abortion grew out of these sentiments and made it a natural next step to promote the passing of a bill that legalized abortion.

The main support for the bill to legalize abortion came from the Frente Amplio party as well as one National Party Deputy, Ivan Posada. The Frente Amplio were not only major supporters of the bill, but, because they are currently in power, they brought the bill to the forefront of the legislation. Other feminist groups such as MYSU, and organizations like Amnesty International, Department of Gender and Equity of the PIT-CNT, and the Ministry of Health were very big supporters the bill to fully legalize abortion.

The main belief behind the pro-choice movement in Uruguay is the belief that women have the right to have a safe and healthy abortion without finding another means of obtaining one that may cause a risk to her own health. Uruguay has, for a number of years, had a significant number of abortions. The pro-choice movement's goals in getting the 2012 bill passed was to try to regulate abortions to help bring down the rate of abortions performed each year, and to show that the government and medical institutions have a responsibility to women's reproductive rights ([ladiaria.com](http://ladiaria.com)).

The framing method used by the pro-choice campaign looks a bit different from that of the pro-life campaign. Whereas the pro-life group used framing in the creation of the bill and the fine print that was necessary to come to an agreement, the pro-choice group used framing to help gain support for the health implications that have arisen because abortion was illegal, as well as in demonstrations and protests. Framing was used by the pro-choice movement in numbers, statistics, and estimates of how many women die or are seriously injured by the implication of clandestine abortions. This was also a main method used in the 2008 bill when signing in the harm reduction model for abortion, which also gave fuel to the 2012 campaign. The pro-choice movement framed their side

of the debate as necessary for the state to regulate abortion. Before the 2012 bill, hospitals were not responsible for the healthcare of a woman who had had an abortion. Both the 2008 bill and the 2012 bill was framed in such a way that it made health care providers take responsibility for a woman no matter what her situation or reason for an illegal abortion (Stapff, 2014). This framing to some extent did gain support from the public overall and the pro-life movement as well, particularly the attempt to show that women's health is a priority and that regulation around abortion would help to control it. The pro-choice movement used the health argument and the women's rights argument to frame their case in a way that the pro-life campaign could see that it was not only necessary for health purposes but was also necessary for Uruguay to join the 21<sup>st</sup> century of developed nations. This frame was somewhat successful in gaining votes for the full legalization but didn't close the divide fully (Stapff, 2014). The millennium development goals are mentioned quite frequently in media sources that discuss the pro-choice movement. A major point that was made was that Uruguay should be thinking about what it is to be a developed country and are these goals reachable by 2015 (180.com, 2013).

The use of framing by the pro-choice movement is similar to what their interests in the negotiation are. The main interests for the pro-choice movement are to protect women's health and rights, and this was largely advocated for during the negotiation. They gained these interests in 2008 through the harm reduction model, that forces health care providers to give pre and post care to women who want abortions. Legalizing abortion through the first twelve weeks and allowing women to legally obtain abortions in a medical environment also achieved this. These interests helped create the tactics and design for the campaign as it moved through this negotiation, which helped their

campaign gain further ground on fully legalizing abortion. As stated earlier the current bill is not fully satisfactory to the pro-choice campaign but their interests were addressed in the final draft of the bill, and as most representatives feel this is the best bill for right now (Montevideo.com, 2012).

The social identity aspects of the pro-choice campaign stem from social change, unlike the pro-life movement that stems from tradition. Those who socially identify with the pro-choice movement believe that abortion should be based on a woman's choice and should also be regulated by the state for safety and health concerns. The pro-choice movement represents those who stand for giving women the right to have autonomy over their own body, and believes that this is more important than the life of the child. Going back to Ashforth and Mael's concepts of meaning, connection, empowerment, and self-esteem, the pro-choice movement also gives these attributes to its members (1989). The need to express a change in societal norms, and be vocal about wanting more open rights for reproductive health, are key to making members of this group feel that they belong to the group dynamic. The social identity aspects of the pro-choice movement are to guide the desire to vocalize social change and development that is a move away from tradition. This group wants to show its identification with a more liberal way of thinking for the future of women's reproductive rights (Munoz, 2012).

Power dynamics played an integral part in the pro-choice movement. The main focus of power dynamics for the pro-life movement was the components of moral power and dependence. For the pro-choice movement the flow of power was formal power and power over. The impacts power had on this side of the debate was to finally get a bill passed legalizing abortion to some degree. The reason for this was again because of

major public support for the bill, as well as politically gaining the last few votes and a supportive president to sign the bill into law. From 2008 the House and Senate didn't have enough support, particularly through the former president, to make the bill a full law. We see now that the power of this debate has greatly shifted since 2008; the current president has openly supported the bill and demonstrated such by signing the bill into law in 2012. The role of power in this campaign and on this side of the debate was based on two things. The first being that they had the support and power of the president, so when the bill was passed it would not be vetoed, which is a demonstration of formal power. The second was public support and political support in the House and Senate are examples of power-over: They had gained the strength both politically and publicly to move forward with passing the bill, and were able to use these power dynamics that have been discussed to fully legalize abortion in Uruguay (Rey, 2013). The reason why this was successful this time was because not only did the pro-choice movement gain the power for this election but also they were able to wield the power to their advantage. They did this by willingly making concessions that allowed the pro-life group to express their needs in the bill as well.

In using these four analytical frameworks to analyze the negotiation in terms of social identity, framing, power and interests, we are able to take apart a heated negotiation. We can see that some areas worked to the advantage of one group over the other, and to their disadvantage as well.

Using the definitions of framing and power that have been stated earlier, we have been able to look at both the pro-life and pro-choice campaigns and dissect tactics, compromises and wins from this negotiation. The core components that we can take away

from this analysis are that both sides of this debate used both framing and power dynamics somewhat successfully. We see this in the specific results from the negotiation such as the use of decriminalization instead of legalization and the clause for conscious objection by the pro-life movement, as well as the frame of health concerns and a few key political leaders that shifted the power dynamics for the pro-choice movement. Even though the successful implementation of these tactics for both sides didn't sway either campaign, they were able to successfully chip away at a bill that encompasses both sides values, even if it doesn't represent fully what either sides' interests were.

It was the combination of power and framing that decided the negotiation of 2012. With these two frameworks the pro-choice group changed the law around abortion in Uruguay, the law is now seen as a starting point for potential development (Stapff, 2014).

## **Conclusion**

This research has attempted to create an all-encompassing view on the legalization of abortion in Uruguay, take a specific look at the negotiation, and answer the question of how and why a country of strong identity and cultural values negotiates and successfully implements reproductive policy. The 2012 law that officially decriminalized abortion in the first 12 weeks was a long-debated legislation. Uruguay has gone under several tumultuous political administrations and reproductive rights in the country have been equally unsettled. The 2012 bill does not promise to be the resolving regulation, but a majority of those in Congress, as well in the public, hope it to be a step towards better development for the country.

One of the main conclusions that we see resulting from the 2012 law comes from the discussion around win-win. There were a lot of concessions made to make the 2012 bill pass and because of this we see that both sides to the debate had some gains and losses. The interesting factor in this debate is that neither party is very happy with the bill at all. The pro-choice movement believes it is too restrictive to accomplish any goals or values they brought forth in the debate, and the pro-life movement doesn't believe that the bill should exist at all because of the concerns for life (republica.com, 2012). The conclusion that we see come from this debate is that it may not be an ideal bill for either party but that it is the best bill for the time (Stapff, 2014). The 2012 legalization of abortion can be considered a good starting point for both parties to debate the bill further and modify as Uruguay's social structure changes with this new development.

The research and analysis here tries to answer the research question of how frameworks and tactics of negotiation were pivotal in the negotiation around decriminalization of abortion in Uruguay. I have attempted to show the process it took for Uruguay to decriminalize abortion and to be the first South American country to do so, and third in Latin America overall.

Implementing rights and policies that give freedom to reproduction is an important step for Uruguayan culture and many people believe this is the right step for their future. Other facets of this study have been how passionate people feel about their rights, beliefs, and values whether they are in line with the pro-choice movement or pro-life movement. This is brought to our attention by noticing how complicated the debate was, how hard it has been to pass a bill over abortion in the last 25 years, and looking at how complex the current policy is. Even though the policy is involved and far from being

exactly what both sides want, Uruguay has come a long way in realizing that they cannot ignore a substantial health problem such as abortion, and will hopefully be able to find a policy and structure that works with all sides and issues at hand.

The true teller of the future for Uruguayan's reproductive policy will be with the 2014 presidential election. This will determine whether or not Uruguay will move forward with this bill and possibly more progressive form in the future. There is no doubt that Uruguay has become a leader in its region and among the surrounding cultures. Uruguay has taken a huge step in this direction, and it has not gone unnoticed by the global powers.

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## Appendix A – Interview Questions

Abortion was legalized in September of 2012, what has this meant for you and your organization? How has this changed your life and work?

What is the current status of this debate? What are you doing now, how stable do you feel this resolution is?

What is the conservative party’s public platform on women’s rights and specifically abortion? / What is the liberal party’s.... What are the resources and mediums that each party used in order to make their platform on reproductive rights known?

How have your efforts and motivations changed in the debate around abortion in Uruguay? What different tactics did you employ?

Where have you met resistance in trying to achieve your mission? How have you dealt with and resolved this?

What was the turning point for the debate, which made it possible to legalize abortion? What concessions did you make on this issue? Where do you feel you gained success?

### Follow up Questions

Do you feel the Uruguayan debate around legalizing abortion is different than the debate in other countries? How so? Do you see any lessons from the debate and result in Uruguay that can be applied to struggles in different states?

How did your organization participate in the debate and did you have a role in the eventual legalization of abortion in Uruguay?

The voting of the legislation came to a very close margin in both the senate and the house. Does this accurately reflect the division in the country? Is this an indicator of how difficult it may be to pass women's rights reforms in Uruguay in the future?