



ABORTION FIGURATIONS

Using Human Rights
to Change Abortion Law:
Involvement Patterns
and Argumentative
Architectures
in the Global Figuration
of Human Rights

Marta Bucholc
University of Warsaw

Abortion Figurations studies the communication processes that use human rights as arguments to change abortion laws. We analyse abortion debates in pairs of countries that represent three regional human rights systems: Mozambique and Senegal (the African Union), Poland and Ireland (the Council of Europe), and Argentina and Honduras (the Organization of American States). In these debates, human rights were used to argue both for more liberal and more restrictive abortion laws. We want to explain this ambivalence.

Using a mixed-methods approach that combines qualitative sociology, legal analysis, and corpus linguistics, we will offer a model for comparative interdisciplinary socio-legal research on human rights. We will study the structure, composition, and embedding of arguments used in abortion debates along with group perspectives, emotions, and circles of identification of arguing actors. Our goal is to arrive at a heat map that will show the distribution of involvement in argumentative architectures using human rights all over the world.

THREE DISCIPLINARY PILLARS

- Figurational qualitative sociology of law
(global figuration of human rights)
- Human rights law and legal
governance of abortion
- Corpus linguistics
(human rights vernaculars in abortion debates)

OUR CONTRIBUTION

RESEARCH DESIGN

Model for comprehensive, comparative interdisciplinary study of how binding meanings of human rights are created

PUBLIC COMMITMENT

Evidence-based, human-rights oriented understanding of abortion debates worldwide

DATA AND RESOURCES

Publicly available text corpora and multisource documentation of abortion debates with no geographical bias



Marta Bucholc

I am professor of sociology at the Faculty of Sociology, University of Warsaw. From 2015 through 2020, I held a research professorship at Käte Hamburger Centre for Advanced Studies "Law as Culture", University of Bonn. I was a visiting scholar at the universities of Cambridge, Munich, Jena, Graz, and Saint-Louis Bruxelles, and IWM Vienna. I am fellow of Norbert Elias Foundation. My main field is comparative historical sociology of law. My ambition is to understand the variability and volatility of human rights' meanings.