Social Representations in Colombia of Women and Men Having Abortions

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Abstract

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This research aimed to investigate what social representations are held by people in Colombia of women and men who have abortions. The study is based on interview data material collected in Bogotá, Colombia, through semi-structured individual interviews and focus group interviews conducted by the author, with help from an interpreter. A total of 24 people were interviewed on issues around abortion, in 14 separate interviews. The study participants were female and male, ranging in age from 21 to 66 years old. The interview data were analyzed through a thematic analysis approach. Based on the participants' accounts, five representations of women and, to some extent, men having an abortion were constructed: "women as promiscuous", "irresponsible", "bad person", "murderer" and "autonomous decision maker". These are in this thesis discussed in light of social representations theory, including participants' statements on the societal context in which these representations exist. Representations held in Colombian society of people having abortions were perceived by participants to be generally negative. There was seemingly more negativity connected to representations of women having an abortion than men involved in an abortion. However, a contrast was found between the representations perceived to be dominant in society, and representations held by many of the participants. Views of people having abortions as independent and with right to their own decisions contrasted the negative representations held by some participants and perceived as dominant in society. These contrasts can be seen in connection with variations in social groups and communities in factors of religiosity and views on gender roles, as well as regional location in the country and knowledge of the country's abortion law. The study shows the presence of varying representations in Colombian society of men and women having abortions. These findings can improve our comprehension of the ways in which different social groups perceive and relate to people having abortions, as well as how people having abortions might understand themselves in this environment.

Keywords: abortion, Colombia, social representations theory, thematic analysis

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Introduction

Abortion is a highly debated topic all around the globe. Opinions and activism on the subject, as well as countries' legislation vary widely, from being very restrictive to highly liberal. There are also powerful movements working to push development related to this issue in both of these directions. This variation points to a difference in the understanding and representations of abortion in different contexts. Representations in society are defining for the way people think and act, for how individuals meet each other as well as for how they identify and define themselves (Moscovici, 1988). In an increasingly diverse world, exploring and investigating more about the way different groups understand and interpret situations and objects is valuable for advanced understanding of the social world. This is useful for enhancing communication between groups and communities, and for better comprehension of different perspectives and of different ways of relating to and handling various issues (Howarth, 2002; Rateau, Moliner, Abric & Moliner, 2012). Due to the worldwide variation in legislation and opinions, abortion is clearly one such topic that demands further investigation. There is a negative view of abortion in many places, and abortion-related stigma and shame exist worldwide (Singh, Remez, Sedgh, Kwok & Onda, 2018). It is of scientific interest to investigate what elements contribute to the understanding of the people who have abortions in different settings to further comprehend this negative perception. Moreover, abortion is a global health issue as it is estimated that approximately 22 million unsafe abortions take place each year worldwide and around 22,000 women die annually as a consequence of complications related to abortion (World Health Organization, 2017). To mitigate this problem, we must gain a better understanding of how abortion and the women and men who choose this are characterized in particular contexts.

Colombia is a pertinent context to look at in this regard. Abortion was partially decriminalized in the country in 2006, changing from being prohibited in all circumstances to being legal in cases of rape or incest, if the pregnancy is a threat to the woman's life or health, or if the fetus has severe malformations (Ceaser, 2006; Díaz Amado, Calderón García, Romero Cristancho, Prada Salas & Barreto Hauzeur, 2010). However, the legal right is not always recognized by providers of abortion services, and women can face many challenges in the attempt to obtain a legal abortion (Díaz Amado et al., 2010). A majority of women in Colombia still go outside the formal health care system to seek abortion care (Rodriguez, Simancas Mendoza, Guerra-Palacio, Alvis Guzman & Tolosa, 2015). This can imply that even though it has been partially decriminalized and is legal in many cases, the understanding

and opinion of abortion in Colombia is not necessarily as something acceptable, which then may have extensive consequences for those needing or wanting to undertake an abortion. At the same time, as the decriminalization occurred several years ago and as Colombia is one of the more liberal countries in Latin America when it comes to abortion legislation (see Guttmacher Institute, 2018), there could be more acceptance and different understandings of people having abortions that have developed in parts of the population over the years since decriminalization. The possible existence of contrasting understandings of this in Colombian society encourages further investigation.

More research must be done to explore people's opinions and accounts in Colombian society about the people who have abortions, to better understand the content of these opinions, and what these opinions are based on in this particular context. The purpose of the current study is looking at representations people in Colombia have of women and men having abortions. This wording is chosen with the obvious knowledge that women have an abortion, but just as wording such as "we are pregnant", this thesis includes the man as an actor in this process. This is done with the awareness that the choice and the blame is often left to the woman. However, also this varies with context in Colombia according to the data material here. In the material, the representations of women and men involved in having an abortion also varies, and this will be discussed further. This topic will be examined based on interview data material collected in Bogotá, Colombia, in the fall of 2018, and within the framework of social representations theory. Social representations refer to a common network of knowledge, made up of cognitive elements, that a social group has related to an object or phenomenon in the social environment (Rateau et al., 2012). This will be elaborated on further below. The study seeks to address the question "what social representations do people in Colombia have of women and men who have abortions?".

Background and Relevance

Abortion Worldwide

Abortion is, as mentioned, a highly debated topic globally. It is also a very current topic, with for example legislative changes related to the matter occurring in many countries in the last years. Chile's previously highly restrictive abortion laws were changed in the fall of 2017 to allow for termination of pregnancy on three grounds (Montero & Villarroel, 2018). Even more recently, in the spring of 2018, Ireland voted to amend the country's constitution so that legislation allowing abortion can be enabled, with 66.4% of voters in favor (Clarke,

Fox & Andone, 2018). Going in the other direction, there is the "Mexico City policy", also known as the "global gag rule", an order that blocks support from the USA given to any organizations that discuss or provide information on abortion as a form of family planning (Greer & Rominski, 2017). The order has been overturned and reinstated several times and was most recently both reinstated and expanded by President Trump in 2017 (Greer & Rominski, 2017). The Trump administration further expanded the order in March of 2019 to not only include organizations directly providing or discussing abortion, but also organizations giving support or funding to other groups involved with abortions (Borger, 2019). In Norway there has also been much discussion about abortion recently, as prime minister Solberg opened for debate on possible restrictions in the Norwegian abortion law in the fall of 2018 (Ertesvåg, 2018). There has been much public debate related to the proposed changes and many people are opposed to them, saying it is an attack on women's rights and would weaken women's situation (Stolt-Nielsen, 2018).

Abortion was illegal in nearly every country in the world at the beginning of the 20th century, but various countries passed laws allowing abortion in certain circumstances during the second half of the century (Marecek, Macleod & Hoggart, 2017). There is now a wide spectrum along which countries fall when it comes to legislation on abortion. There are 125 countries in the world where abortion is highly restricted by law, and approximately 6% of women of reproductive age live in a country where abortion is altogether prohibited (Singh et al., 2018). Despite abortion being highly restricted many places, it is a quite common occurrence all around the world. In the period from 2010 to 2014, 25% of pregnancies ended in abortion on a global basis, according to the Guttmacher Institute (2017).

Context-Dependent Understandings of Abortion

In addition to the worldwide variation in legislation on abortion, studies have demonstrated differences in understandings and conceptualization of abortion and people having them. Morgan (1997) studied understandings of the unborn and of abortion in Ecuador and found differences to the USA. Through interviews with Ecuadoran women, Morgan found that fetuses are not personified or individualized in Ecuador the way it is done in the USA. She pointed out the historical and cultural specificity of abortion debates, as this debate to a large degree has focused on the connection between fetal personhood and the (im)morality of abortion in the USA, while she did not find the fetus to be regarded as a separate person in the same way in Ecuador. While many of the women interviewed by Morgan (1997) characterized abortion as sin, it was not understood as a murder of the fetus as

an individual person, but rather a sin of self-mutilation and of the presumption of knowing God's will and interfering with divine plans.

Other studies have also shown different context-dependent understandings of abortion, and that these variations can lead to different forms of action in relation to the matter. Linders (1998) studied the perception of abortion as a social problem in the USA between 1840 and 1880, and in Sweden between 1910 and 1940. Abortion was in both these settings, at the time studied, constructed as a serious social problem which required taking action. However, the conceptualization of abortion in each setting was divergent and hence differing solutions to the problem were proposed. For example, there was emphasis on the abortions being successfully completed and of fetuses' loss of life in the USA. In Sweden, on the other hand, the focus was on abortions going wrong and the loss of women's lives. Furthermore, it was emphasized in both settings that abortion was increasingly a practice associated with married rather than unmarried women. Nonetheless, there was differing perceptions of who these women were. In the USA the characterization of women having abortions was as wealthy and frivolous wives, while it in Sweden was of poor and exhausted mothers. The goal in both of these settings was lowering the number of abortions, yet the action taken in the USA was prohibiting all abortions, whereas in Sweden the opportunity for legal abortions was expanded. The appearance of this problem in different contexts led to attachment of dissimilar meanings and understandings of the concept, and consequently also different action taken in response to it.

While legal status can affect perceptions of abortion, this is obviously not the sole influencing factor on this issue, and abortion can be represented in various ways independent of legislation. For example, while abortion is legal on several grounds in Great Britain (Singh et al., 2018), Purcell, Hilton and McDaid (2014) found largely negative representations of abortion in print media in Great Britain. Their analysis found use of predominantly negative language and the marking of women having abortions as distinct from "normal" women, associated with controversy and sensationalism. Furthermore, Purcell et al. (2014) found representations of these women as "irresponsible", "selfish" and "immoral", of them as "incapable" of taking care of themselves and managing contraception and their sexuality, and of abortion as transgressing the ideas of femininity and motherhood. Personal testimonies from women in the media that were studied suggested that they anticipated being stigmatized for the procedure, and abortion was rarely framed as a positive and legitimate choice.

Additionally, the analysis found that there was seldom mention of the men who co-conceived the pregnancies that were being aborted and their role.

Abortion in Latin America

Abortion has gained increasingly more importance on the political agenda of nations around Latin America in the last decades (Díaz Amado et al., 2010). There are six countries in Latin America, including the Caribbean, where abortion is altogether prohibited, and more than 97% of women in the region that are of reproductive age live in countries that have restrictive abortion laws (Guttmacher Institute, 2018). Nevertheless, between 2010 and 2014, the annual abortion rate worldwide was highest in the Caribbean, followed by South America (Guttmacher Institute, 2017). Only one in four abortions occurring in Latin America in this time period were abortions categorized as medically safe (Guttmacher Institute, 2018). Lack of access to legal abortions lead women to opt for clandestine procedures, and unsafe abortions are estimated to be the cause of at least 10% of all maternal deaths in the region annually (Gianella Malca, Sieder, Peñas & de Assis Machado, 2017).

People in various Latin American countries have been found to hold ambivalent opinions on abortion. A review of different studies done on abortion opinions in Brazil, Mexico, Argentina and Colombia found high levels of support being expressed for abortion in cases of rape and when the woman's life or health, or that of the fetus, is at risk (Yam, Dries-Daffner & García, 2006). There was generally opposition, however, against seeking an abortion for financial or social reasons (Yam et al., 2006). Furthermore, Shellenberg and Tsui (2012) conducted a study in the USA on stigma among women having abortions, and measured associations to sociodemographic, reproductive, and situational characteristics. They found significant differences between racial and ethnic groups, with Hispanic women being most likely to perceive stigma from their family and friends, compared to non-Hispanic black and non-Hispanic white women. It was also most common among Hispanic women to feel the need to keep the abortion a secret from close family and friends, compared to the other two groups. It is important to note that the study was conducted in the USA, meaning the larger societal context was not Latin American. However, people with Latin American backgrounds are likely to be in the participating women's closer context of family, and possibly also friends and social circles. This could be an indication of negativity characterizing opinions in Latin America of women who have abortions.

Abortion in Colombia

As mentioned above, abortion was partially decriminalized in Colombia in 2006 and the procedure is currently legal in three cases: if the pregnancy is a threat to the woman's life or health, physical or mental, when the fetus has severe malformations that are incompatible with life and in the case that rape, incest or unwanted semination led to the pregnancy (Díaz Amado et al., 2010). There can nevertheless be many obstacles to obtain a legal abortion, and these barriers can be things such as excessive pressure from health care professionals to continue the pregnancy, unjustified delays in the provision of the procedure and requests for documents of authorization that are not legally required (Díaz Amado et al., 2010).

To the best of my knowledge, no studies have been done on social representations in Colombia of people having abortions, but there are some published studies on aspects related to abortion. Grajales Atehortúa and Cardona Arango (2012) conducted a study in Medellín, Colombia, in 2009, on teenagers' attitudes towards sexual and reproductive health. The study included a sample of 1,178 adolescents between the ages of 12 and 18 years old and found that less than 30% of these agreed with the statement that abortion should be accepted when a woman is sure it is the best decision for her. The first poll of perceptions of abortion in Colombia, including over 2,000 women and men between 18 and 55 years of age, found 65% of the people polled to be in agreement with abortion in the three cases that are currently legal (La Mesa Por la Vida y la Salud de las Mujeres, 2017). These studies indicate that while there might be support for abortion in some circumstances, opinions are varied on this issue and there is seemingly disapproval of it in certain cases. Furthermore, little is known about how people having abortions are viewed in this environment. More research is necessary for understanding how men and women who have abortions are perceived and represented by people in Colombia.

Social Representations Theory

A fitting framework to use for looking closer at this issue is social representations theory. Social representations refer to common cognitions within societies or groups resulting from shared meaning making (Höijer, 2011). These representations are made up by a set of cognitive elements and can be seen as a system or a network of knowledge and opinions related to an object in the social environment that is particular to a social group or culture (Rateau et al., 2012). The concept of social representations is located in the interface of the social and psychological, that is, between individual cognitions and socially shared

perception, and it is of interest in various social sciences, such as anthropology, history and economy, among others (Rateau et al., 2012).

The idea of social representations, as discussed by Moscovici, is a further development of the concept of collective representations, a notion introduced in the late 1800s by the French sociologist Émile Durkheim (Rateau et al., 2012). Such collective representations are based on a society's shared conception, thoughts and evaluations of social reality (Höijer, 2011). Moscovici (1988) saw Durkheim's notion as too static and pointed out that while such collective representations might have been fitting for societies in earlier times, it is not suitable for the reality in which we find ourselves today. While claiming one and the same representation could be shared and believed by whole societies previously, Moscovici stated that this is not the case in contemporary society. Today, there exists a plurality of representations, and the concept has a dynamic character. Representations are in different ways generated and adapted, which was only something occurring extraordinarily in Durkheim's conception (Moscovici, 1988). It was therefore suggested to change the term from "collective-" to "social representations" (Höijer, 2011; Moscovici, 1988). Durkheim saw these collective representations as opposed to individual representations (Moscovici, 1988). Wishing for these representations to rather be connections between the individual and the social worlds was also a reason for the shift in terminology suggested by Moscovici. Cognition is within social representations theory described as inherently social and cultural, in contrast to there being a separation between individual cognition and social interaction (Voelklein & Howarth, 2005). The theory of social representations aims to determine how human psychology is linked with modern cultural and social trends (Moscovici, 1988).

An important aspect of this theory is then the social and cultural thinking that takes place in society, and the theory puts focus on how representations of social objects appear and change through communication (Höijer, 2011). Moscovici (1988) claimed that only a limited portion of our information and knowledge comes from the simple interaction occurring between ourselves and what we encounter in the outside world. Communication with the world around us is rather what supplies us with most knowledge, what affects how we think and what creates new ideas and notions. Certain ways of seeing the world around us is presented at a very young age, by family, institutions, media and society at large (Rateau et al., 2012). We grow up with a particular vision of our environment. At a later age this vision can be changed and is formed by groups and communities we become part of. Our reality and perception of the world is largely shaped in a social way, through communication and

interactions with others. This leads to a shared conception of our environment, that we as individuals also contribute to. Social representations theory is in this way concerned with the creation and establishment of "common sense" (Rateau et al., 2012).

Social representations are made up by communication and shared meaning making, and so they also continuously evolve and change over time and space (Moscovici, 1988). This change depends on the communication in the specific context, the speed and complexity of it, as well as the existing channels of communication. Furthermore, the same object can be represented in different ways by different groups (Rateau et al., 2012). For example, in the case of abortion there are different representations of the human fetus. This is by some groups seen as a complete human being, while others have a representation of it as an incomplete being or as being a cluster of cells. Moscovici (Voelklein & Howarth, 2005) proposes that there are three important dimensions to every representation, and these are the represented object, the subject undertaking the representation and "the social group towards whom the subject is positioning him- or herself in undertaking this representation" (p. 434). There is a dynamic interaction occurring between these three. In the case of abortion, these three dimensions could then be abortion or a person having an abortion, the person undertaking the representation of abortions, and the group relevant for the person when it comes to this representation, for example the person's strict anti-abortion fellows. Different social groups construct different representations of things, based on the particular values, ideologies and experiences of the individuals who are members of the group and who contribute to the representations (Rateau et al., 2012). Representations are closely linked with the establishment and defense of one's worldview and position in the social environment (Howarth, 2002). Social representations can be used as identity markers, identifying and labelling different groups. An individual can subsequently identify with a group they claim membership to, while also identifying and differentiating an outgroup (Kruse, Weimer & Wagner, 1988). This can be the case between pro-choice and anti-abortion groups where both mark a clear differentiation between themselves and the other. When such groups holding diverse representations interact, these differences can be expected to be a possible source of confusion or miscommunication between them (Rateau et al., 2012). Their perceptions of the same things are not corresponding and understanding for what one group is conveying could be limited by this. Studying differences in representations existing in different settings and groups can therefore be a helpful measure when it comes to improving communication

(Rateau et al., 2012), as well as for increased understanding of the groups themselves and of their understandings of their social world.

The development of social representations theory from the idea of collective representations gives more flexibility when it comes to the examination of varying contexts and of changes in society. Differences in representations between sociocultural contexts can be large, and it is therefore necessary to methodically and fully examine and characterize issues in various settings (Markus & Plaut, 2001). Furthermore, the theory is relevant when looking at new things appearing in society and how these come to be represented. The theory clarifies where representations come from, stating that they are both related to actual changes in the symbolic and material world, and to the social representations that already exist (Höijer, 2011). Through communication related to novel objects and phenomena appearing in society and with a basis in existing representations, new representations are promoted, and old ones are altered. When it comes to abortion, this is relevant. As abortion can be seen as a dynamic phenomenon in global society today, this can also be the case in particular societies. While abortions have been performed in Colombia for many years, despite illegality (e.g., Mora & Villarreal, 1993), the relatively recent legalization of abortion in certain cases in Colombian society could imply that it is a concept for which representations have changed over recent years. Social representations theory has been used in previous studies showing change in representations. Gaymard and Cazenave (2018) looked at social representations of AIDS among French teenagers and found that representations of HIV and AIDS have changed since their appearance over 30 years ago. Death was found to no longer be a central part of the representation, and there was a seeming decline in fear of the disease. Furthermore, current representations of the disease were found to be less stigmatizing and less centered around certain groups, with words as homosexuals and drugs having disappeared from the representational field.

Social representations theory's emphasis on the existence of plurality and variability of social representations, both between and within societies and groups, points to the importance of looking at representations existing in specific contexts. Research within social representations theory explores the participants' subjective understandings and how these can confirm and challenge wider cultural and social systems of knowledge (Howarth, 2002). Social representations are, as shown, dependent on communication and social settings. According to this theory it can therefore not be assumed that representations of abortion and of people having abortions are similar between different societies, nor within societies.

Looking at the matter in specific contexts is therefore relevant to discover potential differences or similarities.

Anchoring and Objectifying

Social representations serve a purpose, and that is to make something that is unfamiliar familiar (Moscovici, 1984). When unknown phenomena emerge about which people have limited or incomplete information, the need for social representations emerge as well. The unfamiliar object can arouse worry or disruption and leads to intra- and interpersonal cognitive activity in order to understand it (Rateau et al., 2012). Moscovici (1984) mentioned two mechanisms used to achieve this familiarization. These are anchoring and objectifying. Anchoring is a process of classifying and naming unfamiliar ideas, and in that way, setting them into familiar contexts and reducing them to ordinary categories (Moscovici, 1984). Moscovici (1984) uses the metaphor of "anchoring a stray boat to one of the buoys in our social space" (p. 29-30). New social representations are through communication incorporated into familiar and established ones, and subsequently also altering these existing representations (Höijer, 2011). Bringing an unfamiliar idea into a well-known paradigm allows us to interpret and compare it to familiar social representations. This can for example happen by naming, as the term terrorists can be applied to a new political group or a new disease or illness can be referred to as the modern Black Death (Höijer, 2011). Terms that previously have been applied to categorize women having abortions are for example poor decision makers and pitiable (Duerksen & Lawson, 2017). New objects can also be anchored through for example metaphors, as in calling the planet sick due to climate change, or they can be linked to familiar themes such as certain ideologies (Höijer, 2011). Anchoring related to abortion can occur in dissimilar ways in separate groups when it comes to for example fetal personhood. Prenatal life can be described and categorized differently by using the term fetus or the term child, and this can result in different understandings of it (Mikołajczak & Bilewicz, 2015). Naming and anchoring new objects in specific ways is not only important for the symbolic significance of the object, but it also provides people with a structure within which to elaborate meanings and identities (Augoustinos, Walker & Donaghue, 2014). This implies that both people trying to understand the object, as well as the object itself, is affected by the representation of it.

The purpose of objectifying is to turn something abstract from the mind into something more concrete and existing in the physical world, and objectification can be seen as materialization of abstract ideas into concrete reality (Höijer, 2011; Moscovici, 1984). An

example of objectification is when the media ascribe specific cases of extreme weather, such as heat waves or floods, to the abstract phenomenon of climate change, or showing pictures of glaciers retreating or of polar bears on ice flakes melting away from the polar ice (Höijer, 2011). An example of objectification of an abortion phenomenon is fetal imagery. Such images can make the idea of prenatal life being a child more concrete and contribute to this representation. Fetal imagery has been used as a significant feature in campaigning against abortion, attempting to strengthen the representation of prenatal life as a person and subsequently of abortion as murder (Hopkins, Zeedyk & Raitt, 2005). While anchoring occurs almost automatically when we encounter new phenomena, objectifying is a more active process requiring more effort (Höijer, 2011).

Hegemonic, Emancipated and Polemical Representations

A distinction is made between different forms of representations, depending on which social groups share it. These different types of representations are hegemonic, emancipated and polemical representations (Höijer, 2011; Moscovici, 1988). Hegemonic representations are representations that are shared by all members of a highly structured group or macro unit (Höijer, 2011; Moscovici, 1988). This can be for example a political party, a city, or an entire nation. These are representations not produced by the group itself, but reflecting homogeneity, and which "prevail implicitly in all symbolic or affective practices" (Moscovici, 1988, p. 221). Acceptance and preservation of the hegemonic representations of a group demonstrates affiliation to that group (Ben-Asher, 2003).

Emancipated representations are related to subgroups that are in contact with each other, where a particular version is created by each subgroup and can be shared with the others (Moscovici, 1988). Construction of these representations can arise when members of a society experience differential exposure to new information (Ben-Asher, 2003). Emancipated representations reflect differences existing between subgroups within a broader identity group but are not incompatible with the hegemonic representations existing on a higher level (Ben-Asher, 2003).

Polemical representations are related to controversies and social conflicts in society (Höijer, 2011). These are representations that are not shared by the whole of society, and they must be regarded in the context of an opposition existing between groups (Moscovici, 1988). When emancipated representations change into polemical representations that leave the

existence of the hegemonic representations impossible, social change occurs (Ben-Asher, 2003).

The distinction between these different types of representations underlines the change from the uniform view of collective representations to the variation contained in the concept of social representations (Moscovici, 1988). Abortion as negative, or at least only circumstantially acceptable, is seemingly a dominant hegemonic representation in Colombian society, particularly in certain communities. However, there seem to be groups that have different views on this, wishing to challenge the chiefly negative representations with representations of abortion as more acceptable. Studies have been done previously on how groups contest hegemonic representations and attempt to promote contrasting polemical representations. A study by Jaspal, Nerlich and Koteyko (2013) looked at readers' comments on a British newspaper website and how they challenged existing representations of climate change. Hegemonic representations of climate change in Western European countries is seemingly of climate change as having anthropogenic or human-made causes and that it is a genuine and serious issue of political concern (Jaspal et al., 2013; Olausson, 2010). The study done by Jaspal et al. (2013) found people employing various strategies, such as denigration of climate scientists and climate science and constructing a deceptive agenda for climate science, in order to contest these representations of climate change. This was also done to try to convince people of the legitimacy of alternative representations of climate change as a natural environmental phenomenon or as a scam executed by different actors for political reasons or financial gain. The study done by Jaspal et al. (2013) shows how groups can work in an attempt to affect and alter representations and points out how representations are created through communication and beliefs in society.

Cognitive Polyphasia

A concept within social representations theory is that of cognitive polyphasia, the co-occurrence of opposite forms of thinking (Höijer, 2011). Social representations are created and maintained through communication and social interactions between members of a social group. However, in everyday life people play multiple roles and are members of various social groups, and this can result in them also holding seemingly contradictory beliefs (Provencher, 2011). Cognitive polyphasia suggests the possibility for social representations that are dissimilar and incompatible to coexist within a social group or being held by an individual (Voelklein & Howarth, 2005). These representations can be used by the same individual, and thereby, conflicting representations can be employed depending on the setting

at a particular time. Seemingly contradictory representations may then instead of replacing each other, confront each other, and more traditional as well as modern representations can exist at the same time (Voelklein & Howarth, 2005). For example, one could hold representations of abortion as something that should be legal and accessible, yet also understand it as a morally wrong choice. Membership in a religious group might make the view of abortion as wrong salient, yet in settings where women's rights to autonomy or health issues following unsafe, illegal abortion procedures are discussed, abortion as a right and necessity might be prominent.

As people do not live in a homogenous world, but rather in many worlds requiring distinct forms of thought and discourse, the possession of contradictory representations both makes sense and is not uncommon (Wagner, Duveen, Verma & Themel, 2000). Modern society is constantly changing and transforming, thus the representations within it do so as well. Representations that were previously dominant within certain groups can suddenly change and become insignificant or be replaced. Seeing as social representations depend on communication speed and complexity, this change could be more relevant now than ever before, with communication occurring across oceans and country borders and in a rapid tempo. Social representations are elaborated by social groups to uphold stability in their particular social world (Howarth, 2002), and they are bound to specific settings and situations in these life worlds where specific modes of thinking are required. The contextual use of representations must therefore be taken into account, especially when it comes to seemingly contradictory narratives.

Social Representations and Attitudes

Social representations have a clear connection with the concept of attitudes, a link that has been emphasized various times (Moscovici, 1988). An attitude is an evaluation of an object or attitude referent, either something specific or abstract, that conveys how we orient ourselves to that object (Augoustinos et al., 2014). Social representations have an evaluative dimension themselves, but are more than just evaluations of particular objects, as they are theorized as more complex structures and frameworks of understanding (Augoustinos et al., 2014).

The connection between these concepts is clear, as the evaluation of an object requires a perception and understanding of that object. To have an evaluative response to an object, one must first have some information about the object at one's disposal (Moliner & Tafani,

1997). A representation is therefore a precondition for an attitude towards an attitude referent (Moscovici, 1988). The way someone evaluates an object is closely linked with the information they use to do it, and the representation one has of that object is therefore important in this regard.

While attitudes mostly are conceptualized as individual cognitive and affective states, it is increasingly emphasized by theorists that attitudes emerge from communication and interactions with other people (Augoustinos et al., 2014). Furthermore, some attitudes provide us with cultural meaning and help us to make sense of and orient ourselves to the social world, as they are widely socially shared. Cultural understandings contribute to shape and frame people's attitudes towards specific objects (Augoustinos et al., 2014). Attitudes towards abortion or people having them can also be seen as based on the social representations of them, that is, on the common understanding of them in the social group you belong to.

Criticism of Social Representations Theory

Social representations theory has received criticism, despite its popularity among researchers and theorists worldwide. That the theory is too broad and too vague is a significant criticism, with statements about the concept being overlapping with other theoretical notions, as well as being over-generalizing (Jahoda, 1988; Voelklein & Howarth, 2005). The theory has been criticized for being unprecise and for not having a proper definition of what social representations are (Voelklein & Howarth, 2005). Jahoda (1988) states that there is no clear definition of what is and is not a social representation, and that the term is applied too open-endedly. It is pointed out by others, though, that such criticism is based on misunderstanding of the concept, seeing as representations have a dynamic character and exist in relation to other things (Marková, 2000; Voelklein & Howarth, 2005). They can therefore not be captured and defined completely but should rather be characterized. It was also not desirable for Moscovici (Voelklein & Howarth, 2005) to define the concept too strictly as to not restrict it too much.

There have also been contrasting critiques (Voelklein & Howarth, 2005), with claims of the theory being socially deterministic and neglecting individuals' reflexivity (e.g., Jahoda, 1988), as well as it being cognitive reductionism and that social representations are an overly cognitive phenomenon (e.g., Semin, 1985). Voelklein and Howarth (2005) point out the necessity to include both of these elements of the theory, and not reduce it down to one. The

individual and the social environment exist in a dialectical relationship, and both elements are needed to make sense of the two of them.

As demonstrated in previous sections, this is clearly a flexible and useful theoretical framework that is applicable in various thematic and cultural contexts. Despite certain criticisms, social representations theory is a good framework for the current study as it emphasizes the importance of context and of the social creation of representations, as well as involving individual contributions to the matter. Both of these elements of the theory are taken into account in the present study. Furthermore, the theory's focus on dynamics and representational change is imperative in the study of a topic such as abortion. As the abortion issue is highly current and is moving in different directions in various settings around the world, it is important to look at accounts about and representations of it in particular contexts, what these representations are made up of and how they develop and change.

Method

This thesis is based on interview data from 24 participants, collected in Bogotá, Colombia. The data were collected through semi-structured individual interviews and focus group interviews conducted by me during a 3-week period in October and November of 2018. The interviews were conducted with the help of a research assistant native to Colombia. The interview data were subsequently transcribed and analyzed using a thematic analysis method.

Design and Epistemological Standpoint

The purpose of the current study was to explore accounts about and representations in Colombia of people who have abortions. Within qualitative research there is focus on meaning and on participants' ways of making sense of their worlds in their natural environments (Willig, 2013). A focus here can also be on the cultural resources people use in this sense-making (Willig, 2013). Wishing to investigate how the topic of people having abortions is made sense of and understood in the specific context of Colombia, it was fitting to use qualitative research methods.

This qualitative approach was combined with a social constructionist standpoint. Social constructionism is a theoretical orientation which challenges the thought that our observations of the world yield objective and unbiased information, and it is argued that our understanding of the world is culturally and historically specific and dependent (Burr, 2015). Our experiences and perceptions of our environment is never a direct reflection of it, but rather a particular understanding of the environmental conditions surrounding us (Willig,

2013). Social constructionism is contrasting to epistemological standpoints as empiricism and positivism, which assume observation can reveal the true and objective nature of the world (Burr, 2015). Social constructionists emphasize the need to not look at conventional knowledge of the world as based on objective observations. Rather than seeing our understanding of the world as derived from the true nature of the world, it should be viewed as constructed through social interactions between people, in specific settings at specific times (Burr, 2015).

Research done within a social constructionist perspective focuses on the ways a culture has of constructing social reality and what implications this has for the experiences and social practices of people (Willig, 2013). A thematic analysis conducted within this framework therefore investigates sociocultural contexts and the social production and reproduction of experience and meaning (Braun & Clarke, 2006), and is consequently a good fit for the present research. As demonstrated above, views on abortion are context dependent. Within the social constructionist framework, it is possible to look at how norms, and beliefs and knowledge about abortion and the people who have them is constructed in a particular context and shaped through social interaction in a certain community.

Semi-structured interviews give the researcher structure, while at the same time allowing flexibility (Smith & Osborn, 2015), and this interview approach was therefore chosen as fitting. Using two forms of data collection, individual interviews and focus group interviews, was decided on to obtain different sorts of information and so to cover the issue more extensively. Doing in-depth interviews was a suitable method, as it can allow for a "deep dive" into the topic of interest and can potentially give detailed and thorough information. As focus groups are more naturalistic than in-depth interviews and have more resemblance to everyday casual conversation (Wilkinson, 2015), this was a good additional data collection method for this research. Focus groups allow for a different dynamic that could reveal interesting aspects of the participants' thoughts and understandings of people who have abortions, as well as social consensus on these issues.

Participants and Recruitment

Participants.

The participant sample in the study consisted of 24 people. The participants were women and men, 17 and seven respectively, ranging in age from 21 to 66 years of age. Most participants were either in their twenties or above mid-fifties, and a few were between these

two groups. The approximate average age of participants was 40 years old. All participants were living in Bogotá at the time of the interviews. Most of them had grown up in either Bogotá or in other larger cities in Colombia, while a few participants were from smaller towns or villages in Colombia. The sample consisted of students, as well as people of different professions and occupational status. The group also varied in religiosity, with some explicitly identifying as being or not being religious. Some did not mention personal religious affiliation. Twenty of the study participants were members of the general public with no particular known connection to the subject of study. Four participants were people employed in organizations working with issues related to abortion.

Recruitment.

Most of the participants were recruited through my research assistant who also participated in the interviews as interpreter. As the research was conducted in a foreign context, it was seen as appropriate, as well as more efficient and practical for the recruitment to be done by her. Familiarity and existing relationships between recruiter and participants can act as a facilitator to successful recruitment (Archibald & Munce, 2011). The research assistant was more familiar with and had more knowledge of the context, and it was thought that she could be of great help for finding and contacting potential participants. The recruitment was done through her contacting acquaintances who gave her suggestions and contact information for people they knew who could be potential participants. The participants were, in other words, not directly associated with the research assistant, but were people with whom she had common acquaintances.

To get varied accounts on this topic, the desired sample was a diverse group of people living in Bogotá, Colombia. The study sample was a convenience sample (Saumure & Given, 2008) based on recruitment from demographically different segments of the population to obtain diversity. Criteria for recruitment of participants for the individual interviews was to have an equal amount of female and male participants, and for them to be varied in age. The minimum age for participants was set at 20 years old, and the maximum age was set at 85 years old. It was also desirable for the participants to vary on other demographic characteristics. However, no specific criteria for participation were set apart from age and gender. Rather, the research assistant attempted to contact a diverse group of people, varying on demographic characteristics, for participant suggestions. She asked them to suggest people of varying ages and genders or asked for suggestions for people of a specific gender or age group. It was in this way attempted to recruit participants who seemingly belonged to

different social groups, and it was anticipated that the resulting sample would consist of people differing at least to a certain degree. Due to limited time and resources for recruitment this was chosen as a convenient approach, though it holds clear limitations, mentioned further below.

The purpose in sampling for the focus groups was to have two groups that were intra-homogenous and inter-heterogenous. It was also desirable for the participants in each group to be acquainted with each other. McLafferty (2004) claims that homogenous groups work better for focus group interviews than heterogenous ones. Furthermore, Powell, Single and Lloyd (1996) suggest the formation of a supportive atmosphere to be more probable in groups of friends or acquaintances, as opposed to strangers, which is favorable for honest discussion. This is consistent with McLafferty's (2004) statement that data collection in focus groups is enhanced by positive group dynamics.

It was not perceived as particularly challenging to recruit participants, but recruiting female participants was found to be easier than males. It is important to note that using individuals for assistance in participant recruitment as done in this study can lead to recruitment of only people who are particularly open to participating in research or who have a particular interest in the subject of study (Archibald & Munce, 2011). A danger with this type of sampling is recruitment of participants who are very similar or who have similar opinions on the topic at hand. Potential participants for the present study were not asked what their opinions on abortion were as a criterion for recruitment, but it was attempted to get people from different social groups to hopefully that way get a sample with diverse opinions on the issue. As the purpose was not to find representations among people explicitly pro- and anti-abortion, but rather the representations held by the general public, this was accepted as a sampling strategy.

In addition to participants from the general public, it was desirable to speak with someone more involved in the subject matter to get an additional perspective on the issue. For this purpose, four people employed in organizations working with issues related to abortion were recruited. These participants were recruited by me. This was done with initial help from an individual employed in an organization in Norway that works with sexual and reproductive health and rights for women, among other things. The organization has partner organizations in several countries, including Colombia, and I was put in contact with two of these organizations that work with issues related to abortion (for simplification, these will in some instances be referred to as abortion organizations). After this initial contact, I could continue

dialogue with employees working in the two organizations, and four people were recruited for research interviews, two people from each organization.

Conducting Interviews

The study consists of 14 different interviews conducted with the 24 participants. This includes 10 individual interviews and two focus group interviews. One focus group interview was conducted with six university students aged 21 to 24 years, both men and women, and the other focus group with four women between the ages of 55 and 66 years old. In both focus groups all members where acquainted with each other before the interview took place. Additionally, two interviews were conducted with the four participants working with issues related to abortion. These participants worked, as mentioned, in two different organizations, and each of these interviews were conducted with two people at a time.

The interviews lasted between 35 minutes and 1 hour and 50 minutes. The average duration for the individual interviews was 1 hour, while the focus groups and interviews with two and two abortion organization employees generally lasted longer, with an average duration of 1 hour and 25 minutes. The interviews took place in various locations that were chosen by the participants themselves. The study was presented as a master thesis project about opinions and thoughts on abortion in Colombia, and contextual factors contributing to these views. Key questions asked were related to what people's opinions on abortion are in Colombia, what people think of a couple having an abortion, what consequences a woman and a man separately can experience after an abortion and what the most important reasons people have for their opinions on abortion are. The abortion organization employees were also asked on a more specialized level about the political environment and the current situation in Colombia when it comes to debate on the abortion issue (see Appendix A for interview guide). As suggested by Billings, Hessini and Clark (2009), participants were not asked directly about their personal opinions on abortion, but rather about that of their community and their social circle. All interviews were audio recorded, after receiving consent for this from all participants.

Three individual interviews, as well as the student focus group interview were conducted in English. This was done as the participants stated being comfortable speaking English and conducting the interviews without translation was then easier. The research assistant was still present, and participants were told they could shift to Spanish at any time if they wished to do so. Six of the individual interviews and the adult female focus group

interview were conducted in Spanish. This involved the questions being asked by me in English and translated to the participants by the research assistant, followed by the participants' answers in Spanish being translated back to me in summarized form. My proficiency in Spanish is good enough that I was able to follow the conversation but was translated to make sure that my understanding was correct and for the possibility to get more detailed information that I might have missed. One individual interview was done partly in English and partly in Spanish with translation, due to the participant being proficient in English, but preferring to sometimes express themselves in Spanish. Due to some practical reasons, as well as limited resources for research assistance, the two interviews with abortion organization employees were done in Spanish with only me, the researcher, present. The participants in these interviews could understand and speak some English, but interviews were done in Spanish as this was preferred by them. Some questions were explained to the participants both in Spanish and English to ensure clarity and understanding. My proficiency in Spanish was experienced as satisfactory for conducting these interviews alone.

Analysis

Transcription.

All the interviews were transcribed and written out in full. The study is content-focused and therefore only the words and significant non-verbal aspects such as long pauses were included in the transcription, as recommended by Willig (2013). With interviews done in English transcription was done by listening to the audio recordings and writing the content down word for word. With interviews done in Spanish the participants' statements were translated by me to English as directly as possible and transcribed. The recording of the research assistant's translation of participants' answers was used to check that the meaning was accurate and that my understanding and translation was correct. After all interviews were transcribed, all audio recordings were listened to again while reading the transcribed interview to check for accuracy.

Conducting thematic analysis.

Thematic analysis is a flexible type of analysis, used for finding, analyzing and reporting patterns across a set of data, and is fitting for analysis of most sorts of research topics and questions (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Clarke, Braun & Hayfield, 2015). The method offers a set of tools for analyzing qualitative data, and these tools are theoretically independent and can be used with a variety of research questions and types of qualitative data,

and also within an array of theoretical frameworks (Clarke et al., 2015). Based on my epistemological standpoint, this is a social constructionist thematic analysis. This means that the participants' accounts of the issue being studied are seen as subjective but valid portrayals of the studied phenomenon (Burr, 2015). The thematic analysis was conducted based on the six steps described by Braun and Clarke (2006). These steps are (1) familiarizing oneself with the data, involving transcription as well as active and repeated reading of the data, (2) generation of initial codes through identifying seemingly interesting features of the data, (3) searching for themes, which means sorting and collating codes into potential themes, (4) reviewing these themes by checking them against the coded data and the entire set of data, (5) defining and naming the themes which is the process of refining the themes both separately and overall, and finally (6) the production and write-up of the report.

Furthermore, the analysis in this study was conducted in two phases. Firstly, an inductive thematic analysis was done, looking at the accounts about abortion and people who have them in Colombia. This analysis resulted in various categories of relevant topics being constructed. One thing that was found particularly interesting was participants' accounts about and understandings of people having abortions, that is, of women having abortions and men being involved in an abortion. The material revealed tensions between different participants' accounts and various forms of naming and categorization, and analyzing the data using social representations theory was considered fitting and relevant. Looking further at the possibly varying social representations and what they could stem from and be built on in the specific context was deemed an appropriate focus. Consequently, a deductive approach to the analysis was applied, and an analysis based on social representations theory was completed. From a social representations theory perspective, it is important to look at both representations and the social backdrop for these. As mentioned previously, representations are situated in social settings and created through communication (Moscovici, 1988). New representations are connected to existing ones, and these existing representations are altered with the appearance of new ones (Höijer, 2011). The context in which this happens, and the representations present in that context is therefore relevant to gain an understanding of the issue. It was consequently relevant to look at social and cultural phenomena present in the studied context and used by the people in it, in addition to the representations that can be found there of women and men having an abortion. The analysis was therefore done by focusing on the representations accounted for in the material, as well as including participants' talk about the societal context and elements present there that could contribute to

the representations. As the participants' understanding of their context tells us what opportunities they have to understand and make sense of people having abortions, these narratives were important to include. This is included as a segment of contextual information in the analysis section below, as the analysis must be viewed from this contextual perspective.

Ethical Considerations

The research project was approved by the Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD) before commencement of data collection (see Appendix B for NSD assessment). Every interview began with each participant being given an information sheet about the study which was gone through in Spanish by the research assistant to ensure participants' complete understanding of the contents. The participants were allowed to ask questions or voice concerns, and they were informed of their option to withdraw from the study at any time. All participants then gave written informed consent to participation in either an individual interview or in a focus group interview.

The subject matter being studied in this project can be seen as sensitive. However, participants did not have to talk about personal experiences with the subject, nor where they asked directly about their personal thoughts. Although many did open up about aspects related to both of these things, they were not directly asked and so were able to choose themselves whether to include personal opinions or experiences related to the subject in their accounts.

Reflexivity

A vital aspect in research is reflexivity. Reflexivity concerns an awareness of how the researcher contributes to the construction of meaning throughout the research process and of the ways in which the researcher's social identity affects and shapes the research (Willig, 2013). It is in qualitative research widely believed that the researcher inevitably will have an influence on the research (Yardley, 2015). Rather than trying to remove this influence, the important thing is the acknowledgement and analysis of the ways in which the research findings are influenced by the researcher.

The social encounter between the researcher and participants will have an effect on the resulting material. Different relationships will be established between different researchers and participants, resulting in different dynamics and different social representations being brought forward (Howarth, 2002). An important factor to consider in the present study is the fact that it was conducted in a, to me, unfamiliar setting. A topic for debate among researchers has been researchers' ability to understand and convey settings that are different from their

own (Howarth, 2002). With this research being conducted in what was for me a new setting, my ability to correctly interpret and appropriately convey participants' accounts could be questioned. Due to the contextual difference in my and the participants' backgrounds, there is likelihood of us having different social representations of various things. This could possibly have had an effect on the communication occurring between us and in my understanding of this communication. Furthermore, I personally have a stance as an activist and have a liberal opinion on this issue. I had to be mindful of this in my approach as a researcher, to ensure openness to differing opinions, and fair and equal treatment of all study participants.

There is also a possibility that social desirability played a role in the participants' answers. Social desirability refers to an individual's impression management and attempt to present themselves in a positive light in social interactions (Krumpal, 2018). This could have had an effect on participants' answers becoming both more liberal and more conservative. As I am from a country with generally more progressive views when it comes to abortion, participants might have felt that they knew what my position on the topic was. This could have affected answers in that they presented themselves as more pro-abortion to be in line with what they perceived my perspective to be. However, they could also be affected by the presence of the research assistant who was Colombian, and therefore give answers more in line with an anti-abortion stance, as this could be perceived as the norm in their social context. Perception of me as a representative from a country with a liberal position on the issue could also result in a wish to more clearly portray their own country's generally conservative stance and therefore in taking a clearer anti-abortion position. While the participants seemed comfortable in talking about their perceptions and offered different representations on the topic, there is always reason to be mindful of the fact that this could have had an effect on the findings of the study.

Findings

Personal stands and opinions on abortion and people having them as well as perceptions of the opinions of society at large were both spoken about in the interviews. The personal stance of the participants when it comes to abortion made up a wide spectrum. A few participants stated they personally were absolutely against it, justifying abortion in few or no cases. Other participants, some more than in the previous group, believed that all reasons should be accepted, and that abortion should be completely legalized. Four of the participants in the sample were, as explained previously, working in organizations providing abortion services and information. These participants did not explicitly talk about their personal

opinions but are from context and from other information in the interviews assumed to also be in this latter opinion group. About half of the sample were between these two outer positions, ranging in degree of acceptance or support of abortion. Some participants expressed little information explicitly revealing what their personal opinion was.

The interview material revealed the perception of largely negative representations existing in Colombian society of women who have abortions, and to a certain degree of men who are involved in an abortion. Nevertheless, there was tension present in the material as a majority of the participants did not state having negative representations of these people themselves, but rather stated this as what they perceived the view of other people or of society in general to be. Their personal opinion was in some cases specifically stated to be different from the perceived negative societal hegemonic representation of people undergoing abortions, while some participants did not explicitly point out their particular opinion. A few participants expressed personally seeing women and men who have abortions in a negative way. There was seemingly much more negativity connected to women who have abortions than men whose partner have an abortion, according to a majority of the participants. Some participants mentioned negative labelling of men also occurs after an abortion. Many perceptions and opinions were stated most strongly when talking about women. However, when asked specifically about men, it was confirmed by some participants that they can be labeled negatively as well.

A thematic analysis of the interview material was conducted to attempt to shed light on the question "what social representations do people in Colombia have of women and men who have abortions?". As social representations are dependent on the setting in which they are created and maintained, the participants' understanding of their context must also be included to do this. The participants' accounts on four contextual aspects appearing to be related to this matter are therefore presented below. These aspects are the abortion law and circumstantial acceptance of abortion, religion, gender roles and expectations, and difference between rural and urban regions of the country. Furthermore, social representations are complex conceptual systems of knowledge and beliefs and can be thought of as networks of ideas (Höijer, 2011; Rateau et al., 2012). There are different views of what constitutes a social representation (Jahoda, 1988; Voelklein & Howarth, 2005). In the following, I refer to social representations in Colombia of women and men having abortions. Some might rather think of these as elements of an overarching social representation, but I here see them as a social representation within such networks of ideas.

The analysis resulted in construction of five representations in Colombian society of people having abortions that were interpreted as prominent in the participants' accounts. These were (1) women as promiscuous, (2) irresponsible, (3) bad person, (4) murderer, and (5) autonomous decision maker. The first representation is made up of a category of labels and accounts that only referred to women and is therefore seen as a representation only of them. The three subsequent ones are possible representations of both women and men having an abortion. The last representation is made up of statements and thoughts that also were expressed referring mainly to women, but also with a few instances of reference to the couple as a unit. Consequently, this is chiefly seen as a representation of women, but one that possibly can apply to men as well.

As the analysis covers five different representations, I have here combined the analysis with theoretical discussions as well as contextual reflections on each to be able to go deeper into the analysis. In the following paragraphs the participants' statements about the social context will be presented. Social representations are context specific and there can be much variation in representations between contexts (Markus & Plaut, 2001). Elements of the context are therefore relevant for understanding the representations in their current setting. Moreover, such contextual knowledge can be useful for further comparison to other contexts in later studies. Subsequently, the analysis and the representations constructed will be presented, along with discussion of these. After this section of analysis and discussion, I offer an overarching discussion of key aspects of this study.

Contextual Aspects of Colombian Society

I will in this section present participants' accounts of four aspects of their environment that are relevant for the studied subject. These are, as mentioned above, the country's abortion law and circumstantial acceptance of abortion, religion, gender roles and expectations, and difference between rural and urban regions of the country. These aspects were selected based on them being discussed by participants as influential in regard to this issue, as well as my interpretation of their significance. The context is what creates the participants' framework for their understanding of the social world, the social representations they hold and how these representations develop and change. Accordingly, the contextual aspects presented here can influence the existing representations in Colombian society of people having abortions. This information is presented as a background section where the participants are given agency to explain their understandings of their context.

Abortion law and circumstantial acceptance of abortion.

Questions of legality can be important for social representations, as something being legal or not can affect the communication and thoughts about the phenomenon. There was varied knowledge among the participants of the Colombian law on abortion. A few participants stated not having knowledge of what the abortion law was and that they believed abortion was not legalized in the country. A couple of participants expressed knowing it was legal in some cases, but not knowing specifically what they were. These two groups consisted of both people for and against legal abortion. A large majority of the study sample were aware of the existence of three cases in which abortion is legal. However, the detail of knowledge varied. Some participants had specific knowledge of the three legal cases, that is, the case of health issues for the mother, malformations of the fetus, or in cases of rape or incest leading to the pregnancy. This was the case for the participants working in abortion organizations, as well as some other participants. Others, while knowing there were three cases in which an abortion is legal, had the perception of the case of health as only allowing for abortion in the case of risk to the mother's life. This is narrower than the case of health in fact is in the Colombian abortion law. One of the participants from an abortion organization explained how the case of health actually allows for abortion in many situations:

> *In the case of health, the risk to the life or the health of the woman is left to be decided by the woman herself, it's the woman who evaluates the degree of that risk and who decides to accept or not accept that risk in her life. And health is posed as a complete state of physical, emotional and social well-being. Under that definition, the case of health goes much further than imminent danger of death. And also, it's not just the present risk, but the future risk the woman can have. All this is specified in a way that if a woman is informed, she can solicit an abortion under this case.*

There is seemingly a perception of a predominantly negative view of abortion in Colombian society, but with acceptance of abortion in "extreme cases". When asked if a certain opinion is more publicly accepted, a young pro-abortion male participant responded:

> *I think it is publicly accepted to say that you're pro-abortion in case of rape or in case of health problems of the kid or of the mother, but it is not accepted to say that you are pro-abortion in any case. Saying you are against abortion isn't so bad either, I think, because people know that that happens here in Colombia, that people think that.*

Approximately all participants stated their perception of abortion opinions to be that what is most widespread in society is to be in agreement with the three cases in the law or to be against abortion. However, the perception of acceptance in society was for many participants based on the understanding of the case of health as being more limited. Consequently, many

referred to acceptance for the case of health issues for the mother as acceptance for abortion in cases of risk to the mother's life. Due to this limited understanding, having an abortion in the case of health issues that are not perceived as posing a serious danger or a risk of death is said to be less accepted. An abortion in this case is then also assumed by some to actually be illegal.

The varying acceptance of abortion based on circumstances can indicate that representations of women and men who have abortions can be different depending on the situation around and reasons for the abortion. However, there were few comments made specifically on how perceptions would be different in the different circumstances. The representations presented below are therefore based on general opinions, but it must be kept in mind that they might not apply in all situations.

Religion.

Religion was talked about in some way in all the interviews. A large majority of the Colombian population consider themselves "believers", estimated at over 90% of the population, and the largely dominant religion is Catholicism (Beltrán, 2012). Slightly over a third of these "believers" consider themselves "not practicing" (Beltrán, 2012). Atheists and agnostics are estimated to make up only 5% of the Colombian population (Beltrán, 2012). Several participants claimed religion has a significant influence on various aspects of society. A female participant said:

> *I think that Colombia is very radical about these kinds of topics* (such as abortion). *It's the same thing with for example euthanasia, marriage between same-sex couples, adoption of children by homosexual couples, legalization of marihuana. There are many topics that are judged in a very radical manner and that, in the discourses of people, appear very mediated by religious beliefs, for example. And religious beliefs mix with political discourses. Because here in Colombia it's very common that a person who has a religious affiliation X, Catholic or what it may be, they get into politics and from politics they work with those narratives.*

Religious communities could be seen as a significant group within Colombian society, sharing specific hegemonic representations, and communication influenced by religious values can be seen as an important factor in the maintenance and development of social representations. Religion was mentioned by many participants as being a central factor when it comes to opinions of people who have abortions. This was mentioned both as important for other people's opinion, as well as for certain participants' personal view. A female participant in her sixties, seemingly personally religious, and against abortion, stated: *"Religion has a lot to*

do with it (people's opinion on abortion). *The Catholic religion has had a lot to say, because that has always been like a golden rule of religion, that abortion is not permitted."* For the most part, abortion is said to be something that is against religious rules and not accepted by religious communities, which then likely influences the social representations of people who have abortions held in such groups.

Religion was stated as playing a big part in societal norms and values. Nevertheless, some participants mentioned that the impact of religion is diminishing. A male participant in his thirties said:

> *Those who are older are less open. They are stricter and more rooted in their belief in God. And they see abortion as something you shouldn't do. Because culturally, they were raised like that. [...] But now, religion doesn't have the same dominance over the way to think, so younger people are more open-minded because they don't have that religious mindset.*

While this was stated as the norm, there were also a few participants who mentioned the existence of pro-choice religious groups, as well as young people who are religious and against abortion. These things were presented as being against the norm.

Gender roles and expectations: machismo and marianismo.

Several participants talked about gender roles, and of patriarchal values and machismo characterizing Colombian society, and influencing how people see those who have an abortion. While not explicitly mentioning the term marianismo, participants also mentioned aspects relating to this female gender role as being prevalent. The terms machismo and marianismo refer to traditional Hispanic gender roles, male and female respectively (Nuñez et al., 2016). The use of the terms machismo and marianismo are often linked especially to Mexico, but these concepts are widespread in other Latin American areas, such as in Colombia, as well (Falcón, 2013; Stevens, 1973).

The term machismo has traditionally mainly been associated with negative features of stereotypical male behavior, and the term has been characterized by researchers almost uniformly as a negative construct (Arciniega, Anderson, Tovar-Blank & Tracey, 2008; Herrera, Owens & Mallinckrodt, 2013). Traditional machismo involves characteristics as sexism, aggression, male chauvinism and hypermasculinity (Arciniega et al., 2008). This traditional form is what participants seemingly refer to when using the term machismo. However, the machismo construct has been reconceptualized and seems to consist of two dimensions, this traditional negative form and a more positive dimension (Arciniega et al.,

2008; Herrera et al., 2013). The positive dimension of machismo is called caballerismo, and refers to a form of male chivalry, characterized as family centered and nurturing (Arciniega et al., 2008). These concepts have been found to be two separate and not significantly correlated aspects of machismo, and it is possible to manifest characteristics that indicate high or low levels of both caballerismo and traditional machismo (Arciniega et al., 2008; Herrera et al., 2013). However, both constructs make up the male gender role of machismo (Arciniega et al., 2008). Both constructs are seemingly present in Colombian society, according to the participants' accounts, and can influence opinions on people having abortions. Related to the caballerismo construct there was talk of the man having a role as father and provider, expected to honor and sustain a family: *"In the countryside, having an abortion is to be a coward, the man who can't sustain their new family"*. However, there was most talk of the presence of traditional machismo in society. This was stated as connected to the issue of study as pregnancy and a potential abortion were pointed out as things that are the woman's concern, and not something the man is responsible for:

> *I don't think society in general will see him very badly* (after an abortion). *Because of the concept of machismo, the man is simply considered as that is not his problem, but the woman's problem. And they give all the blame to the woman, and many times families defend the man saying that he had nothing to do with it and that the woman is the one responsible.*

Related to traditional machismo, a few participants also talked about men being the ones in power in society, for example when it comes to law-making. Furthermore, men were emphasized by some participants as being womanizing and sexually forward.

Marianismo defines the ideal woman as a nurturing mother with respect for patriarchal values and as putting the interests of her husband and children first (Nuñez et al., 2016; Villegas, Lemanski & Valdéz, 2010). The role model within marianismo is the Virgin Mary, and for the "good" woman there is emphasis on virginity and non-sexuality (Marano, 2004). The perception of womanhood and the role of women was expressed by some participants to be seen as strongly connected to motherhood in Colombian society. A young female pro-abortion participant stated the following about gender roles and views of women:

> *If you're going to be a complete woman, you need to be a mother. There's no other way. And sometimes I surprise myself, because I see someone who's like 40 or something, and oh, she doesn't have children, how weird, yeah? I sometimes catch myself thinking that. But I mean, that's okay, she has her life, she's enjoying it and everything. But it's this idea about "la solterona" (spinster, old maid). She didn't get married, oh no, what's wrong with her? So, if you don't have a family as a woman then something's probably wrong with you. And if you're thinking about other things*

than motherhood and that, then you're probably a lesbian, or nobody loves you, or you're ugly.

This shows the presence of marianismo views as a guiding principle in society, and as a representation of women and what is expected of them. Though individuals can have different personal views, the marianismo ideal is a form of "common sense" related to a woman's behavior and character. Some participants mentioned that while it is happening slowly, this role and ideal for women is changing. The same participant mentioned above further stated:

I think it hasn't been much time since women didn't have choices about anything, like, economic choices and personal choices. I think this time is really weird, because our minds and our thoughts are way more ahead than morals, yeah? So, you're able to think about these ideas, but since it's been so little time since, for example, we've been able to vote, this doesn't match. So, yeah, we're probably going to have to wait more time to see women differently than mothers and caretakers and so on. And property. […] So yeah, I think this is a really weird transition between one way of seeing women and gender and stuff, and whatever lies in the future.

The significance of these traditional gender roles might vary between contexts and across groups, such as geographical regions and between generations. Nevertheless, these concepts are seemingly influential when it comes to general representations of "the man" and "the woman" in Colombia, and subsequently influence representations of "the man-" and "the woman who has an abortion".

Difference between rural and urban regions.

People living in specific regions can have their own shared representations of social phenomena. Almost all participants expressed there being a difference between rural and urban communities when it comes to opinions on abortion and people who have them. A female pro-abortion participant said:

I think there are many differences depending on the place where you are. In Colombia there are many places like for example the zone where I grew up. That is a very conservative zone in which there are religious practices that are very rooted. The symbol of the family is important, what the priest says is super important for everyone. So there, for example, one finds very negative attitudes towards abortion. And towards other ideas that are similar. While in cities, like Bogotá, that has a lot more people, where people come from the whole country, where people come from other places in the world, I think that people are more open towards those kinds of topics.

The participants expressed an apparent belief that people in rural settings were more conservative and more religious than in urban regions. Furthermore, they pointed out that the influences people experience and are exposed to in rural settings are fewer than in urban

communities, as well as those influences being colored by the conservatism and religiousness in these regions. A young male participant stated:

> *I don't think that Bogotá represents Colombia. Because it's a city, there's different influences and different cultures. And in little towns it's completely different. The political thoughts, the religion, the traditions, the concept of family. So yeah, I think that it's pretty different.*

These factors can indicate that the various communication processes occurring in rural regions are different from more urban ones, and hence that representations of people having abortions can vary between regions of Colombia.

The bodies of social representations that already exist in a society will impact the creation and appearance of new ones (Höijer, 2011). The four contextual aspects presented above contribute in shaping the social setting of Colombian society, of communities within it and the social representations held. An understanding of these will therefore prove valuable in the analysis of the social representations of women and men having abortions presented below.

Social Representations in Colombia of Women and Men Having Abortions

Presented here are the results of the thematic analysis, ending in the construction of five representations existing in Colombian society of women, and to some extent men, having abortions: (1) women as promiscuous, (2) irresponsible, (3) bad person, (4) murderer, and (5) autonomous decision maker. These representations are connected with the contextual elements presented in the previous section and discussed further in light of social representations theory.

Women as promiscuous.

Approximately half of the participants claimed women who have abortions are in Colombian society widely seen and treated as "sluts" and "whores" and assumed to be "easy". To a question of what people think or say about women who have abortions, a male participant replied: *"Well, it's regrettable to say, but there are stigmas that she's a slut, that she's promiscuous. What people do is degrade her, lower her value as a person."* Some participants expressed the existence of a perception that if a woman is single and she got pregnant, she is probably sleeping around with several people. A male participant in his mid-twenties said the following:

> *People tend to think about single women that they are somehow promiscuous or they're like…Society treats them as if they were whores. And I'm not okay with that.*

> *Because they are like, hey, you're having sex with a lot of people, that's* (getting pregnant and needing an abortion) *the consequence of doing it. People tend to think that a lot.*

The perception of promiscuity is pointed out by most participants as a perception that is common among people, but not one that they themselves share. There is a clear conflict present in the material here, with a demonstration of the existence of differing representations. As social representations are shared within groups, adherence to representations can also mark social group membership (Rateau et al., 2012). Especially related to socially controversial issues social representations are expected to be different and specific to certain groups (Kruse et al., 1988). Abortion can be classified as being a socially controversial issue. Social representations can then be used to identify with one group and distinguish another (Kruse et al., 1988; Rateau et al., 2012). Many participants talked about seeing women having abortions as promiscuous as the opinions of others. These "others" can be part of social groups that participants do not see themselves as members of and that they identify as different and other. From the two statements presented above, it is clear that these participants dissociate themselves from viewing these women as promiscuous, and in that also from the social groups holding this representation. Yet, they view this representation as prevalent.

There is also some mention of the loose, promiscuous elements when talking about people who have abortions in expression of personal thoughts. A female participant strongly against abortion said the following:

> *It's good to talk about abortion, because that is a way to create awareness in people. To raise awareness in them so that they don't have those abortions and commit those errors. That we have to be responsible with ourselves and with our bodies, and not have that ease to be with the one, with the other, and if she gets pregnant then get rid of the responsibility.*

Other studies have also found women having abortions to be categorized as promiscuous. For example, Duerksen and Lawson (2017) found this in interviews done in Canada with people with anti-abortion opinions, and Purcell et al. (2014) also found this in their analysis of representations of abortion in print media in Great Britain. These studies showed women having abortions to be viewed as being too sexually liberated and as being distinct and different from "normal" women.

Looking at this issue within the setting of Colombian society, the representation of women who have abortions as promiscuous can be seen in relation with the sexuality aspects of the marianismo ideal. In this perspective women should be virginal and asexual and

concerned about their family's well-being before anything (Nuñez et al., 2016; Villegas et al., 2010). Having an abortion means defying this, as you do not wish to have the baby and become a mother, and that the sexual relation was not for reproduction. Social representations are meant to familiarize what is unfamiliar by placing it in known settings and categories (Moscovici, 1984). A woman who has an abortion does not fit with the widely shared category characteristics of women, or at least not ideal and "good" women, due to this unfitting sexual behavior. She must consequently be understood in a different way. Women who have an abortion are then instead assumed to have casual sexual relationships in a careless manner and are connected to categories of sexual liberation and thoughtlessness. Kjeldgaard and Nielsen (2010) claim there traditionally has been no identity position within the marianismo ideal between the extreme positions of "virgin" and "whore", and people who do not meet the criteria for the female ideal consequently risk being characterized as the latter. This further explains the characterization and representation of women having abortions as promiscuous when behaving in a way seen as outside the traditional female role.

The influence of religion in representations of sexuality can also be seen as connected with this promiscuity representation. Sexuality can be a taboo and sensitive topic within religion. Two of the women in the adult female focus group discussed this:

> *Participant 1: "Religion and the taboo of sex helped to avoid having intercourse too early, it was a substitution for education when it comes to contraception and sex in that time."*
> *Participant 2: "Maybe one had a bit more fear of God in that time. That's been pretty lost. Young people don't see it the same way."*
> *Participant 1: "They don't think about that. On the contrary, they influence other girls saying you didn't do it yet, oh, how old-fashioned, I already did it with this one, with another one, with I don't know how many."*

Lack of religion can be seen as a reason for why a woman could be promiscuous and end up in the situation of having to have an abortion. As religion is a factor stated by many participants to be highly present and influential in Colombian society, it could be a contributing factor to prevalent representations of sexuality and appropriateness related to intimate relationships. Women having abortions are understood as having acted inappropriately in this regard and are represented as promiscuous. However, as mentioned, religion is stated as being less important for the current younger generations in Colombia. Social representations are built on the values and beliefs of a social group (Rateau et al., 2012), and this lack of religiosity can lead to young women having different representations

of where and how sexuality is to be expressed or experienced. As their representations are constructed from different knowledge, it can lead to them being more sexually liberated.

Both based on factors of religion and views on sexuality, as well as other potential changes in society, there can be a perception that young women now are more promiscuous than they used to be. If you have an abortion, this can be seen as showing that you belong to this group of people who have an ease of having sexual relationships, you "slept around" and that is why you had to have an abortion. A female participant in her mid-fifties pointed out a change in young women's experiences with sexuality:

> *Young people are starting to live their life in such an accelerated way. When they're supposed to be alone studying, they're already having sex with not one, but with all of their boyfriends. [...]. I don't remember that I even thought about that, it was not even in my mind at that time, having sex with a man. Without having gotten married.*

Understandings of appropriateness related to sexuality and of the ideal and expected behavior of women present in Colombia can contribute to a representation of women having abortions as being promiscuous.

Irresponsible.

The irresponsibility of getting pregnant and of having an abortion was talked about by approximately one-third of the participants. Irresponsibility was mentioned as a perceived common representation of people having abortions in society, as well as being stated as a personal opinion of both pro- and anti-abortion participants. A female participant against abortion said:

> *Well, some say that one has the right to decide what you do or not with your body. And I say of course. Then when they have sex, why don't they take care of themselves so that doesn't happen and the day after they have to end a life. [...] They have to think before, about the consequences of it. There is the irrationality of the people, thinking that it was an accident, but you could have avoided it.*

The wide array of possible contraception available is used as an argument as to why women who have abortions are seen as irresponsible, as this should have been enough to avoid getting themselves into a pregnancy. Approximately one-third of the participants talked about a perception in society that women are the ones responsible for aspects related to reproduction. That is, they are generally seen as responsible for contraception, for the pregnancy and for a potential abortion. As social representations stem from ones already existing (Höijer, 2011), this representation of gender roles in relation to reproductive responsibility can lead to the woman being represented as irresponsible and careless when not having these things in order,

and also to irresponsibility being mostly tied to representations of women in the situation of an abortion. However, some participants emphasized that this was a mutual responsibility, and within those accounts, men can also be labeled as irresponsible after an abortion. Also, some participants mentioned that the couple as one can be viewed as irresponsible in such a situation. Seeing the reproductive responsibility as shared can lead to representations of both persons as irresponsible.

Related to this representation there was not the same contrast present between participants' views as with the representation of women as promiscuous. No participants seemed to strongly distance themselves from the view of people having abortions as irresponsible, at least in certain cases, as some did with the promiscuity-representation. Some participants emphasized the importance of not being too quick to judge an abortion as irresponsibility, as it could be due to for example health issues one does not know about. Unequal attribution of responsibility between the man and the woman was seen as unfair and was a view several participants stated disagreeing with. However, it appeared as though the gender imbalance was the factor they disapproved of, and not the irresponsibility categorization in itself.

The gender imbalance when it comes to representations of people having abortions as irresponsible can be linked to the gender role patterns in Colombian society. Traditional machismo representations of male hypersexuality and sexual freedom (Stevens, 1973) might account for why the man involved in an abortion is represented as irresponsible to a lesser degree than women or not viewed as irresponsible at all. A male participant said: *"Men tend to think that having an abortion is her problem, like, oh, you got pregnant? That's your problem now. They are in it when they're having sex, but when consequences come, they fly."* Such irresponsible situations might even be seen as positive when it comes to men, as sexual conquests can be seen as a type of status (Villegas et al., 2010). This representation of the man can be especially prevalent in rural regions, according to some participants. One participant said the following about opinions of men after an abortion: *"Here in Colombia, no, there are no consequences for the man. Especially in villages, because he's seen as a hero afterwards, the more women he gets pregnant. It's like a trophy really."* With male sexual freedom not only accepted, but admired, this leads to the man not being represented as irresponsible after an abortion.

There were however also some contrasting accounts, stating the man would be viewed as irresponsible if involved in an abortion. A female participant strongly against abortion said:

Logical that they call him irresponsible, because it is the responsibility of the two. One procreates a child between two people, the responsibility of a child is for the two of them. Not for one, but for two. And both him and her are at fault.

This view could be connected with a caballerismo representation of men. In the caballerismo ideal, the man is expected to honor and provide for his family (Herrera et al., 2013), and so the reproductive situation might be seen as also being his responsibility. Representations of men based on these values and opinions will more likely lead to men being represented as irresponsible after an abortion. The presence of both traditional machismo and caballerismo in Colombian society could account for why there are seemingly contradictory representations of men both as responsible and not responsible in the reproductive situation. These male gender role constructs could be seen as a form of cognitive polyphasia, seemingly incompatible social representations, that are drawn on at different times depending on the setting (Voelklein & Howarth, 2005). Both representations can be held by a person or group. However, which representation is most prominent when communicating about and trying to make sense of the man involved in an abortion could lead to him being represented in different ways, as irresponsible or not.

Despite some accounts of men viewed as sharing responsibility in this situation, the reproductive role is nevertheless stated to mostly be seen as women's in Colombian society. The traditional machismo perspective of men as uninvolved is talked about as most prevalent when it comes to the representation of reproductive responsibility. These traditional representations related to reproductive responsibility and sexual behavior have been found in previous studies also. Hust, Brown and L'Engle (2008) analyzed sexual health content in different media popular among adolescents in the USA. They found that traditional gender stereotypes were reinforced across all the four types of media they analyzed. Boys were represented as being obsessed with sex and sexual performance, while girls were portrayed as responsible for contraception, for prevention of sexually transmitted diseases and for teen pregnancy. Another study was done on media representations of sexual health and blood-borne viruses in newsprint media in the UK (Martin, Hilton & McDaid, 2013). The study found an obvious gender imbalance in articles on reproductive health, with a majority of them focusing on women, and with the attribution of risk and responsibility being unbalanced. This indicates the presence of such gender roles in other contexts as well, and this view of reproductive responsibility, in the media and in the population, can reinforce negative representations of women in these situations.

Participants mentioned that it is assumed that someone who is having an abortion, either a woman or a couple, do it because they did not take care in advance and got pregnant by mistake, and that this leads to the irresponsibility-representation. However, some participants also followed a different line of reasoning, focusing on the irresponsibility of having a child if one could not take proper care of it. A female participant in the student focus group said:

> *I think if you're going to be a mother, even so by accident, that I got pregnant because I didn't take care of myself, for example, I think that if I'm going to be a mother, I have to be the best mother I can, yes? I have to be, even though I don't want to. For example, I know that if I get pregnant right now, I will probably think that I don't have the capacity to raise a child. So, I think that there are many people that are very irresponsible, not only for getting pregnant but also for having the baby. Because if you are going to bring a human into the world, you must give them the best you can.*

Despite claiming people who get pregnant by mistake are irresponsible for ending up in that situation, a few participants also talked about how having an abortion can be the responsible choice a person or a couple makes, as it is also irresponsible to have a baby without the proper resources to take care of them. It was also claimed by one participant that there are cases of people leaving their babies in trash cans or other places, and in that way, they end up killing the child. It would therefore be the responsible choice to have an abortion instead. Purcell et al. (2014) found one instance of abortion being presented as a responsible choice in their analysis of print media portrayals of abortion in Great Britain, where abortion was presented as being chosen due to taking motherhood seriously. However, the study largely found negative categorizations and terming of women having abortions as irresponsible.

Bad person.

Several participants stated that women who have abortions are seen as bad people or as having undesirable qualities. Abortion is claimed to be seen as something bad, and therefore women who have them are also bad. This is something mentioned as some participants' personal view, and also believed to be the general opinion of many people in society. A female pro-abortion participant said:

> *Usually, here* (in Colombia)*, abortion is something that is very bad, and you are a bad person when you do something like that. For example, five years ago or something like that, an actress said in an interview on TV that she was having an abortion. She said something like oh, it's really difficult and I have a lot of reasons to do that, but I'm so sad about it, and it was really, really, really commented on in the communication media and many people judged her very strongly for it. She's an actress and she was*

an idol here for many years and when she decided to say that on TV many people judged her very strongly and said okay, she's a bad person.

When asked what people might think about a woman who had an abortion, a response in the adult female focus group was the following: *"They would think don't get involved with that girl, because that girl has bad principles, she doesn't have moral principles"*. A woman who has an abortion is said to be someone people think one should stay away from and not get involved with, and they can experience rejection. Women having abortions are also stated to be seen as lacking moral values and principles. Moreover, people can even be viewed negatively for having a pro-abortion attitude. A female anti-abortion participant in her fifties stated:

I don't want to say that a person that agrees with abortion has to be a very bad person, surely they have good sides. But for me, someone that is in favor of abortion has something horrible inside them because they are in favor of killing someone.

If the man was in agreement with or part of the decision to have an abortion he can also be seen as a bad person. A female pro-abortion participant said:

Many times, this I've heard a lot of times, if the situation is that the woman is pregnant and with her partner, they think that that wasn't a part of their life project and for that they want to abort, well, it's judged strongly, very strongly, very strongly. And judged in a very negative way. Because they think of it as something very selfish.

Some participants stated that people having abortions are viewed as putting themselves before the fetus or child, which is seen as a bad thing to do. Furthermore, a male participant with moderate pro-abortion views was asked what consequences a man can experience after an abortion. He stated: *"If the family finds out, of course there are repercussions for the man. Of rejection, they would push him away and they would question why he did that"*. After an abortion, the man can also experience rejection and being pushed away by people. Additionally, a man suggesting an abortion can also be perceived as lacking moral principles, according to some participants.

In the material making up this representation there was again tension present between participants' views, as with the representation of women as promiscuous. Participants stated that it is common for people in Colombian society to see men and especially women having abortions as bad people, and some also stated being of this opinion. However, there were participants who distanced themselves from this view and who stated clear disagreement with factors contributing to this representation, which highlights the existence of a distinction between groups holding different representations.

In contrast to how religion may influence a representation of women having abortions as promiscuous due to views on sexuality, the link to religion in terms of being a bad person is instead focused on religious moral. Representations of people having an abortion as bad people is said by many participants to be linked with religious moral principles. A male participant in his thirties with liberal abortion opinions and seemingly not personally religious said the following:

> *Abortion goes against the religious principles, the Catholic ones to be explicit. So, it's not socially acceptable, it's an immoral act, therefore you're excluded. Because you don't belong to that class of community who maintains those moral principles.*

As mentioned above, acceptance and preservation of a social group's hegemonic representations demonstrates group affiliation (Ben-Asher, 2003), and the importance of this is pointed out here. Understanding abortion as an unacceptable and immoral action is seen as a significant representation in the social group that Catholics make up. A person who has an abortion is identified as not belonging to this group and is represented as separate from them. Furthermore, social representations help people from different social groups to uphold positive ingroup- and self-identities (Joffe, 1995). Representing people who have abortions as bad people can contribute in maintaining the view of oneself and one's own group as good people. Joffe (1995) studied social representations of AIDS, a disease which was strongly linked to homosexuality when it was first discovered. Joffe pointed out that in Western medical settings, media and interpersonal communication, AIDS became anchored and objectified as the "gay plague". This social representation limited the disease to only affecting a specific type of identity and group, leaving people outside of this group viewing themselves as good, natural and feeling safe from contagion (Joffe, 1995). In this way, social representations serve a defensive function and allows people to positively represent themselves (Joffe, 1995). This can also be done with representations of people having abortions. By representing women and men having abortions as immoral and going against God, religious groups can strengthen the view of their own group as good, as morally correct and as following God's will.

Furthermore, in connection with marianismo and caballerismo gender roles, representations of people having an abortion can be specified to the representation of women having abortions as "bad women" and men as "bad men". This is linked to the expectations of parenthood entailed in these roles. From a traditional machismo perspective, the man might not be viewed as bad, as the representation of him is as not having responsibility in the reproductive or the abortion situation. This again points to the cognitive polyphasia aspect of

machismo and seemingly contradictory representations of men, mentioned above, leading to distinct representations of men involved in an abortion.

As women are expected to be mothers and caretakers, they are seen as "bad women" after an abortion, because abortion goes against what is natural for them. A young pro-abortion participant stated:

> *I was hearing an interview that took place on W Radio, and they brought in a woman that had had 5 abortions, but 25 years ago. And those were forced abortions, because she was in an abusive relationship. But she was saying no, I feel terribly about it, I don't understand how any woman could do this, because it's kind of taking away your womanhood. But I really disagree with that, I don't think that being a mother makes you a woman. So, yeah, I think that among conservative women that's something common. They think that that makes you less of a woman and more of a monster, like you're denying your nature or something.*

While the participant here points out having a different opinion, she states motherhood to be seen as an essential part of womanhood. A female participant with strong anti-abortion opinions connected abortion to lack of womanhood: *"Well, the truth for me, I've dealt with people who have had abortions. And I tell them no, it is terrible to me, you don't seem like you are a woman. Because you don't do that."* Women might also think themselves that they are less women if they do not have children, according to some participants. How a phenomenon is represented provides specific structures within which to construct an identity (Augoustinos et al., 2014), and this can evidently affect how women having abortions identify themselves. In Joffe's (1995) study on social representations of AIDS she interviewed 20 homosexual men and found over half the sample to indicate that the representation of AIDS being linked to homosexuality was intertwined in their identities. Some of the men she interviewed showed an expectation that they would acquire AIDS due to their identity as gay, not on account of their sexual practices. Similar things can occur with abortion, as the social representation of women being strongly linked to motherhood can lead to women having abortions also classifying themselves as "unwomanly".

A female participant working in one of the abortion organizations was asked in the interview about the significance of the feminine ideal in relation to what people think of women who have abortions. She stated:

> *The man has an idea that the good woman is of X form. And she makes certain decisions. So, the decision he doesn't agree with and that he judges as morally negative is going to blur that image of her as a good woman, ideal woman, of the woman that's kind, submissive, that they prefer, no? When a woman makes those decisions, it can affect her future, she is labeled as bad. Not only her actions, but this*

> *is a bad woman. […] So, for example, there are places* (in Colombia) *where people say that woman* (who had an abortion) *isn't good enough. She's not good enough for anything. She's not even capable of having a child. […] The woman loses her social reputation. So, then you no longer deserve a good man, a hard-working man, a man who is committed to you in a relationship. Practically, you are a woman of bad reputation is what they think. You're not recommended to be anyone's wife.*

Other studies related to marianismo gender ideals have found women being scared of not deserving a man if they are not a certain type of woman. This is also related to the presentation above of women as promiscuous, as this is connected to this fear. In a study of gender negotiation in young women related to their consumption of a Mexican telenovela, Kjeldgaard and Nielsen (2010) found informants to be critical of a series character's promiscuous behavior and wanting to distance themselves from this. The informants also stated that this character would be popular among boys due to her being "easy", but that such a girl would not be desirable as a future wife. Going against marianismo ideals can bring fear of being seen as promiscuous and of being devalued by men when it comes to being seen as a "good woman" (Kjeldgaard & Nielsen, 2010; Villegas et al., 2010). Women having abortions transgress traditional gender roles in several ways, by their presumed liberated sexual behavior and rejection of motherhood. These transgressions lead to them being familiarized and categorized differently, and in more negative categories. This representation of women having abortions as bad women can affect how women having abortions are viewed and treated by others, as well as resulting in the women also identifying themselves as bad or lesser women.

Men can be judged as bad men within a caballerismo perspective, as the representation of the man there is as the family father and provider. A male participant in the student focus group interview said:

> *People will start thinking about the guy differently after an abortion. They will start saying why weren't you responsible, why would you do that (*get a woman pregnant*) if you didn't have the money. They'll start looking at the guy differently, like he's not going to be able to support his family and all this. Because, like we've said before, Colombia is a very patriarchal society. So, if the guy can't have a baby, they'll look at him like what's wrong with you? You should be able to sustain a family, pay for his bills, food, everything.*

While only mentioned in this one focus group interview, several participants in this interview agreed that a man can be seen as failing in his role as the provider for the family in the case of an abortion, and that he could be seen as not being "man enough". Also here the participants said this might specifically be the case in rural parts of the country, where these

representations are more widespread. While seeing the man as a bad man after an abortion can occur, representations of women as bad women after an abortion due to transgression of their gender role is seemingly more prevalent.

Murderer.

Several of the participants also stated representations of people who have had an abortion went further than as being bad people, and a woman who has an abortion was by several participants described as a murderer, as having killed someone and being a criminal. About half of the participants in the study talked about abortion being or being seen by others as murder. Similar to the first and the previous representation mentioned, tensions between groups and representations was also present here. People having abortions being murderers was mentioned as a personal view by some participants, while others took clear distance from this. The representation of people having abortions as murderers was talked about as a common perception among people in general, and as the perception of people some participants knew personally, particularly family. A female participant claimed being pro-abortion herself but said her family's views were not the same as her own: *"In my case, my family is a very conservative family. And for them, abortion is a horrible idea. If you think something about that you're something like a potential killer."* Some participants also expressed seeing it this way themselves. One participant was asked what reasons people could have to be in favor of legalization of abortion. She responded:

> *Well, that many women die in clandestine clinics. Because the abortion is illegal, so, there is high mortality among the women who have abortions in places that aren't adequate. I would think that's the only thing. Nevertheless, I think that a woman that is taking a life doesn't deserve to have it either.*

The participant specified in the interview that it is the fact that the fetus is defenseless that makes abortion a bad action in any circumstance. The perception of the man as a killer also exists and it was mentioned by some participants that the couple is seen as killers. When asked about what consequences the man can experience after an abortion, a female anti-abortion participant replied: *"Well, also weight on the conscience for him, because if it was a decision of the two of them, he also has the death of that infant on his conscience."* Taking part in the decision to have an abortion leads the man to also be represented as a murderer.

Viewing people who have abortions as murderers can, similar to the representation of them as bad people, be connected with religious moral values, and this representation might

be particularly prevalent within religious communities. A female anti-abortion participant explained:

> *When it comes to religion, I'm Christian. And in Christianity they have taught us that one should first respect one's body and secondly, learn to take responsibility for one's actions. And they have taught us the fear for life. We have to respect a being that is living, someone who is already grown up and is walking in the street, we shouldn't take their life, and we should help if they need it, right? Much less can we attempt to take the life of an infant that is starting to grow there in the belly of someone, because it is a crime. It's an infant that cannot defend itself, it's a crime. That is what they have taught us, and I have the same opinion.*

As explained previously, different social representations are created by different social groups based on the values and experiences of the group members (Rateau et al., 2012). Religious values of life being sacred and something human beings have no right to decide over may contribute to the perceived immorality of abortion, and people having abortions being represented as criminals and murderers in religious communities. In in-depth interviews with 17 women who had had an abortion in Bogotá, Colombia, 14 of the participants said their religious beliefs made them feel conflicted regarding having an abortion, and many of them experienced preoccupation in regard to the fate of the fetus' soul, as well as that of their own soul for having gone against God (Brack, Rochat & Bernal, 2008). Furthermore, the participants in the study referred to religion as the chief driver of beliefs, attitudes and cultural action in Colombia related to abortion.

The representation of women as mothers and as caretakers also contributes to the representation of the woman who has an abortion as a murderer. In a marianismo perspective, the woman is supposed to be a nurturing guardian concerned with family and the well-being of her children (Villegas et al., 2010). Abortion is an issue coming in conflict with this representation of women and cannot be understood as an action she would perform. Unfamiliar phenomena are familiarized through anchoring them to known concepts, and as presented previously, Moscovici (1984) describes this as "anchoring a stray boat to one of the buoys in our social space" (p. 29-30). Women having abortions cannot be seen as "normal" women as abortion goes against their role as nurturing and as desiring motherhood. Rather, the stray boat of abortion is anchored to the buoy "murder", and women having abortions are consequently anchored and categorized as "murderers".

The seeming lack of knowledge of the law on abortion in Colombia among some people could also be a factor contributing to this representation. As the information then used

to understand and familiarize abortion is of it being illegal (even in cases it is not), the representation of people having abortions results in being as criminals and murderers.

Autonomous decision maker.

Around half of the participants explicitly expressed a more neutral personal view of men and women who have abortions than those presented above. They stated holding a representation of people having abortions constructed as autonomous decision makers. Many of the participants saw women who have had an abortion as someone who made a difficult and personal choice about their own lives, and that they should not be judged for that. In the adult female focus group, a participant stated her opinion of women who have abortions to be the following:

> *I would think she had her reasons. She had her reasons for why she decided having an abortion. I don't know the reasons. So, I don't have any reason to judge her, criticize her. She's a person who made her decision like any other person makes their decision in any other case. I, for my part, I don't think I'm the one to judge. I would see her as a normal person, I would see her as the same normal person, because I'm not one to say she's a sinner or that she went against the law of God or what do I know, I'm not of that opinion.*

While no disagreement to this statement was expressed among the other participants in the focus group, only one other participant in the group explicitly stated being of the same opinion. The participant here also clearly separates herself from groups holding representations of abortion as sinful, a representation she perceives others to hold. This again demonstrates tensions and the awareness of deviating representations in society and relates to the way social representations can be used for identifying outgroups and manifesting ingroup membership (Kruse et al., 1988).

Several participants in the study pointed out that abortion is a complex issue where one should not get involved in others' lives and criticize. They stated that as one does not know the situation of the person, their reasons for having an abortion should be respected and they should not be rejected for it or be treated differently. A male participant said: "*The only one who can judge if that was convenient, necessary and valid is yourself as a woman or you as a couple.*" Some participants stated that their view of someone who had an abortion would not be any different from before they had an abortion, and that they would see her and the abortion as normal.

Most participants who expressed having this more accepting and neutral view of women who have abortions also, not surprisingly, had moderate to strong pro-abortion

opinions. Some participants stated there should be some regulations and restriction on abortions but believed it should be more accessible than they perceived it to be now. However, one participant in the student focus group expressed being against abortion, yet she did not think women who have abortions should be judged.

> *Well, you can see that I am against abortion. It's clear. But I have a friend that practiced an abortion, and she knows that there are some reasons I do not accept, those are my values or morals. But as I said, and I am always going to say, I can't judge her because I have never been in that situation. So, when she told me that she practiced it she was a little afraid. But I told her that, well, I don't want to say that it's not my problem, but it's not a reason for me to stay away from her. So, I went with her to a medical control and I also go with her and talk and all of this stuff. I don't think that they* (women who have abortions) *need to be treated differently.*

Even though the participant stated seeing herself as against abortion, she emphasized during the interview that abortion could be a good option in some situations.

The view of women having abortions as autonomous decision makers entitled to their own choices could be connected to a changing view of women's ideals and rights. Several of the participants pointed out that this opinion was held among certain segments of society, particularly younger generations, people living in urban regions, and less religious groups. This could be seen as a shift from the more traditional representations of women and of gender roles. A male participant in his late thirties said the following:

> *An important reason for being in favor of abortion is the right to express your personality and to decide over your body and your emotional health and the things that affect it. […] There are more people in favor of making abortion legal now because women have more power over their decisions, they're empowering themselves in social decisions. They no longer have just a reproductive and domestic role.*

People of this opinion see women in a different way than as what the traditional gender roles prescribe and emphasize people's right to decide for themselves how to live, rather than following society's more hegemonic norms and expectations. As shown above, hegemonic social representations can in several ways be challenged by groups holding contrasting representations, in an attempt to establish new meanings as dominant (Jaspal et al., 2013). This is seemingly happening with representations of women as having power and right to independence that are challenging dominant views of women as self-sacrificing mothers and wives. Different female ideals globally, seen as more modern and liberating, and representations of this depicted for example in foreign media, can contribute to such developments (Kjeldgaard & Nielsen, 2010). There is also here an attempt to contest the understanding of traditional and modern views of women as an opposition between the virgin

and the whore, as found in marianismo (Kjeldgaard & Nielsen, 2010). By anchoring new understandings of for example sexuality to the common category of women rather than to categories of deviant or unwanted behavior, the hegemonic marianismo representation is challenged and new representations appear. A participant working in an abortion organization also spoke about a change in the view of women in current society:

> *Today there's more awareness of the inequality in which we women have lived, and people see an opportunity for women to have rights to decide over their life, that that decision over their body* (abortion) *is a decision over their life also. So, I think people in favor stand for that idea of legitimizing the rights of women, supporting them in decisions that lead them to live in equality. [...] And I think a reason to be in favor is also evolving as a society, no? Of knowing that problems that presented themselves before can be handled in a different way today, and going with the rhythm of social, economic and political developments. And that this also implies starting a development for people, that begins by them having control over their own body, over their own paths, over their own decisions.*

Social representations are formed by both constancy and change, and the connection between the history of the past and the reality of the present can combine to make alternative or new representations for the future (Jovchelovitch, 1996). Challenging previously dominant representations of women based on information available in current society, can lead to new representations taking hold, at least in certain groups.

While several of the participants said they would not judge women who have abortions, such neutrality was also presented in a different way by one female participant with strong opinions against abortion. When asked what people think about women who have abortions, she replied:

> *Well, I would think who am I to judge her? She has her own motives, even though they're not justifiable for me. They would be her reasons, not mine. But equally, I'm not the one to judge. There is the one that will judge her one day. And I think that one who participates in an act like that, life will make you pay sooner or later. Sooner or later, one pays the consequences for doing something like that. So, I'm not the one to judge.*

Though stating she is not the one to judge, the participant is saying that abortion nevertheless is something to be judged for and that it is something that will have consequences for any woman who does it. In this way, she puts herself in opposition to some of the opinions making up this representation and she makes evident her representation of abortion as something it is not acceptable for someone to have. This again shows the tension present in the material between different social representations.

General Discussion

The purpose of this study was to explore social representations held in Colombian society of women and men having abortions. The participants claimed these representations are chiefly negative. People having abortions were stated to be represented as possessing undesirable qualities and as being judged strongly by society at large. Furthermore, these negative representations were found to mainly be of women having abortions. Representations of men involved in an abortion can be negative but representations of them were also found to involve a lack of consequence after an abortion. Nevertheless, there were obvious tensions in the material of the current study, with several participants holding representations that clearly contrasted those of other participants and the social representations stated as being dominant in society. While there was a perception of the hegemonic representation in Colombian society of people having abortions as negative and as being bad people, as murderers and women having abortions being promiscuous, this was not found to be the view of the majority of the study participants. Many seemingly held differing representations themselves, of people having abortions as independent individuals allowed to make their own decisions and perceived as normal people. There was here a contrast between what was perceived by these participants as the wider social and cultural understanding and their own representations of people having abortions.

In diverse societies, as Moscovici (1988) pointed out, there can be great variability and plurality in the social representations that exist in different social groups. This variability and the existence of different social representations of the same object is shown in the findings of the present study. Construction and change of social representations depend on the characteristics of the social group that elaborates the representation (Jaspal et al., 2013). Differences between groups, for example historical, generational, cultural or educational, result in different ways of making an object familiar. The different settings of groups restrict or extend the potential space for experiences, and this in turn affects the available alternatives for constructing representations (Wagner & Kronberger, 2001).

Four aspects of Colombian society were found to have a significant connection to representations of women and men having abortions. These aspects can be understood as factors contributing to the existing representations in society, and therefore also to the variation, development and change of representations in Colombian society. Study participants claimed the perceived dominant negative representations were held especially by certain social groups. These included religious groups and people with conservative and

traditional views, for example related to gender roles. Furthermore, it included people in rural regions of the country, as conservatism and religiosity were seen as particularly present in such regions. Another group mentioned was older people, perceived to also be more religious and have more conservative values. In contrast, younger people were perceived as more open-minded, attributed as possibly due to them being less religious, and therefore having different representations. Additionally, more liberal representations involving more acceptance were seen as being found in urban environments due to the presence of several different social groups and more varying influences. The participants recognized that there is variation across these categories but presented this as the general perception. Knowledge of the law was also found to be a contributing factor, as there was varying and somewhat limited knowledge of the circumstances in which an abortion is legal or illegal, and this knowledge can be used in elaborating social representations.

Social representations can change and develop in a variety of ways. Hegemonic representations can be challenged by questioning or contesting the legitimacy of their source or the power or authority of it (Jaspal et al., 2013). This could potentially be what has happened in younger generations or in urban environments when it comes to religious influence on this issue. Religious leaders or figures can be seen as being powerful and as a source of credible and important information for people's meaning-making and formation of representations. However, this power may be lessening in certain social groups. According to participants, the church and religious figures do not have the same power over ways of thinking in all groups and this leads to the appearance of contrasting representations among members of these groups. Religious influences in representations of sexuality, morals and of the beginning of life, as well as the sanctity of it, might be weaker in certain groups. However, religion still has a clear presence in society, and can affect the formation and maintenance of existing representations.

The gender role patterns of traditional machismo, caballerismo and marianismo are an aspect that also influences social representations in this context. Representations of gender may lead to specific expectations and interpretations for behavior and action. Straying from this could create disorder and need for familiarization of the unknown occurrence (Moscovici, 1984). How this phenomenon comes to be familiarized and represented is then different depending on the representations that are most prominent in that social group when it comes to gender roles. In some groups, the concept abortion might for example be anchored to and incorporated into the existing representations of normal women. Abortion is perceived as a

choice a woman can make and representations of women allow for abortion to be a possible course of action within this representation. A woman who has an abortion is consequently represented simply as a normal woman. Some rather anchor women having abortions to other categorizes, as it is not seen as fitting with the social representation of women, or at least not ideal women, and other representations are instead seen as more appropriate categories, such as promiscuous woman or murderer. Women having abortions are linked to these categories in order to be understood. Religion can also affect representations in the same way, that is, how an object or phenomenon is familiarized can be dependent on the presence or importance of religious values and ideals in one's social setting.

This study found the presence of varying and contrasting social representations in Colombian society of women and men having abortions. The perceived dominant negative representations were contrasted by several participants' more accepting opinions, and this shows the variation in society. The study also points out possible factors contributing to these representations and that could account for some of this variation. These findings can contribute to a better understanding of the ways in which different people and groups view and make sense of women and men having abortions in Colombian society. It provides insights into how people's group identities can be manifested through social representations, how individuals could relate to people having abortions, and how people having abortions might understand and view themselves.

Limitations

Some limitations of the study must be mentioned. The study was done in a bilingual manner and involved the assistance of an interpreter. Translation can alter meaning slightly and some things do not translate directly between languages. Furthermore, work with an interpreter can involve various problems, as you cannot know how the meaning changes in translation from one language to another. As I have a reasonably good understanding of the language of the participants this was not perceived as being a significant issue. Nevertheless, that several interviews were conducted in Spanish, my third language, and some of them without an interpreter can be seen as a weakness due to some limitations in understanding and meaning taken from the interviews. Due to limited financial resources I also had an untrained interpreter. The interpreter was educated in and had experience in the field of psychology, in addition to being familiar with the research context, which is a strength for the research (Kapborg & Berterö, 2002). However, using an interpreter who is not professionally trained in translation can be seen as a weakness.

I was not personally familiar with the study context before the initiation of this research project. The interview guide for the study was created prior to arrival in Colombia. Furthermore, there was no pilot testing of the questions, which can be disadvantageous in cross-language research (Squires, 2009). Limited time in the study location, in addition to limited time and resources for the project, resulted in this not being feasible. The interview guide was deemed appropriate for use in the research context by the research assistant who was familiar with this setting. Nevertheless, pilot testing the questions in the interview context and in the participants' language could potentially have led to a more appropriate interview guide.

Further Research

This study was conducted in the city of Bogotá where people are assumed, at least by participants in this study, to be more liberal, be influenced by more varied sources and by various representations. A majority of the participants also had a background from an urban setting, having grown up in Bogotá or in other larger cities in Colombia. This could have had an effect on the opinions they expressed. Conducting a study in more rural regions would be necessary to see what representations are present and expressed by people there. It would also be valuable to investigate specific social groups and the representations held by them more profoundly, such as particular religious communities or groups of varying age. Moreover, acceptance of abortion is seemingly largely circumstantial with greater acceptance of it in specific situations, such as rape or risk to the mother's life. The representations found in this study might therefore not always apply, and more research must be done to investigate how representations vary depending on the circumstances in which someone has an abortion.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Interview Guide

Introduction:
- Presentation of the study
- Gender, approximate age and urban or rural background

Interview questions:
- Could you tell me something about what opinions people have towards abortion here in Colombia?
- What do you experience is the general opinion of abortion among people you know?

- If there was a couple and the girl got pregnant and the couple decided to have an abortion, what would people think about them?
- In the case that a girl is pregnant, who do people think should make the decision about having an abortion or not?

- What do people here think about women who had an abortion?
- What would people think about a girl or woman who had an abortion if…?
    - her pregnancy was the result of rape?
    - she was young, (e.g. 16), or she was older, (e.g. 35)?
    - she was single or in a relationship?

- How are women who had an abortion treated?
- Are they viewed or treated differently than before the abortion?
    - In what way?
- Are there any other consequences for women who have abortions?

- Are there any consequences for the man after an abortion?
    - What are they?

- What are the most important reasons people here have for being for or against abortion?
- What do you think affects people's opinion on abortion?
- Are people affected by:
    - the opinions of society at large
    - the values in society
    - traditions
    - the people around you (in closer circles)

- Do you think different people generally feel differently about abortion, for example people of different ….?
    - age
    - gender
    - religion
    - people in cities or in rural zones

- Do you get the impression that people have strong opinions and beliefs about abortion here?
- Is abortion a topic it's OK to talk about?
  - with friends
  - in public
- Is it OK to talk about regardless of what your opinion is?
- Would a friend tell you about it if they had an abortion?
- How would you feel if someone you know told you they had an abortion?

- Do you know what the abortion law is in this country?
  - What do you think about these laws?
- How would you change the law if you could?

- Have you noticed any changes in people's opinion on abortion in the last 10 years?

Closing:
- Is there anything you would like to add?
- Do you have any questions for me?
- Thank you very much for participating!

Additional questions for employees in organizations working with abortion-related issues:
- Could you tell me something about the current situation of the abortion issue here?
  - in politics
  - compared to other countries in the region
- Which are the strongest forces that are part of this discussion on a societal level?
- Are there legal consequences for illegal abortion?
  - for an individual
  - for a provider/clinic
- What do people think of the work you do?
- How do you see the path forward here in Colombia when it comes to this issue?

Appendix B: NSD Assessment

NSD NORSK SENTER FOR FORSKNINGSDATA
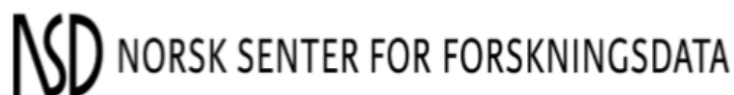
NSD sin vurdering

Prosjekttittel

Attitudes towards abortion in Colombia

Referansenummer

464473

Registrert

07.09.2018 av Live Grimstvedt Lystad - livegl@student.sv.uio.no

Behandlingsansvarlig institusjon

Universitetet i Oslo / Det samfunnsvitenskapelige fakultet / Psykologisk institutt

Prosjektansvarlig (vitenskapelig ansatt/veileder eller stipendiat)

Sigrun Marie Moss, s.m.moss@psykologi.uio.no, tlf: 22845150

Type prosjekt

Studentprosjekt, masterstudium

Kontaktinformasjon, student

Live Grimstvedt Lystad, livegl@student.sv.uio.no, tlf: 47885797

Prosjektperiode

22.10.2018 - 15.05.2019

Status

17.10.2018 - Vurdert

Vurdering (1)

17.10.2018 - Vurdert

Det er vår vurdering at behandlingen vil være i samsvar med personvernlovgivningen, så fremt den gjennomføres i tråd med det som er dokumentert i meldeskjemaet med vedlegg, samt i meldingsdialogen mellom innmelder og NSD, den 17.10.18. Behandlingen kan starte.

MELD ENDRINGER
Dersom behandlingen av personopplysninger endrer seg, kan det være nødvendig å melde dette til NSD ved å oppdatere meldeskjemaet. På våre nettsider informerer vi om hvilke endringer som må meldes. Vent på svar før endringen gjennomføres.

TYPE OPPLYSNINGER OG VARIGHET

Prosjektet vil behandle særlige kategorier av personopplysninger frem til 15.05.19.

LOVLIG GRUNNLAG
Prosjektet vil innhente samtykke fra de registrerte til behandlingen av personopplysninger. Vår vurdering er at prosjektet legger opp til et samtykke i samsvar med kravene i art. 4 nr. 11 og art. 7, ved at det er en frivillig, spesifikk, informert og utvetydig bekreftelse, som kan dokumenteres, og som den registrerte kan trekke tilbake.
Lovlig grunnlag for behandlingen vil dermed være den registrertes uttrykkelige samtykke, jf. personvernforordningen art. 6 nr. 1 a), jf. art. 9 nr. 2 bokstav a, jf. personopplysningsloven § 10, jf. § 9 (2).

PERSONVERNPRINSIPPER
NSD finner at den planlagte behandlingen av personopplysninger vil følge prinsippene i personvernforordningen:
- om lovlighet, rettferdighet og åpenhet (art. 5.1 a), ved at de registrerte får tilfredsstillende informasjon om og samtykker til behandlingen
- formålsbegrensning (art. 5.1 b), ved at personopplysninger samles inn for spesifikke, uttrykkelig angitte og berettigede formål, og ikke viderebehandles til nye uforenlige formål
- dataminimering (art. 5.1 c), ved at det kun behandles opplysninger som er adekvate, relevante og nødvendige for formålet med prosjektet
- lagringsbegrensning (art. 5.1 e), ved at personopplysningene ikke lagres lengre enn nødvendig for å oppfylle formålet

DE REGISTRERTES RETTIGHETER
De registrerte vil ha følgende rettigheter i prosjektet: åpenhet (art. 12), informasjon (art. 13), innsyn (art. 15), retting (art. 16), sletting (art. 17), begrensning (art. 18), underretning (art. 19), dataportabilitet (art. 20).
Rettighetene etter art. 15–20 gjelder så lenge den registrerte er mulig å identifisere i datamaterialet.
NSD vurderer at informasjonen som de registrerte vil motta oppfyller lovens krav til form og innhold, jf. art. 12.1 og art. 13.
Vi minner om at hvis en registrert tar kontakt om sine rettigheter, har behandlingsansvarlig institusjon plikt til å svare innen en måned.

FØLG DIN INSTITUSJONS RETNINGSLINJER
NSD legger til grunn at behandlingen oppfyller kravene i personvernforordningen om riktighet (art. 5.1 d), integritet og konfidensialitet (art. 5.1. f) og sikkerhet (art. 32)
For å forsikre dere om at kravene oppfylles, må prosjektansvarlig følge interne retningslinjer/rådføre dere med behandlingsansvarlig institusjon.

OPPFØLGING AV PROSJEKTET
NSD vil følge opp ved planlagt avslutning for å avklare status for behandlingen av personopplysninger.

Lykke til med prosjektet!

Kontaktperson hos NSD: Kjersti Haugstvedt
Tlf. Personverntjenester: 55 58 21 17 (tast 1)