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Abstract

The paper documents the effect of supply-side restrictions to abortion access on violence against women. Limiting access to abortion implies higher rates of unintended pregnancies and subsequent lower bargaining power for women. Starting from the evidence of a sharp reduction in the abortion rate and an increase in fertility after the implementation of state laws regulating abortion in the U.S., I evaluate the impact of these restrictive policies on violence against women of reproductive age by implementing a generalized difference-in-differences model. A 25-mile increase in distance to reach the nearest abortion clinic is estimated to increase the number of reported cases of gender violence per municipality up to 2.6%. This negative impact decreases as the initial distance from a clinic rises. The effects of the policies were persistent at least up to one year after they were implemented. This effect is particularly strong among Black women. For them, a 25-mile increase in distance is estimated to increase the number of reported cases of gender violence per municipality up to 6.6%.