

Editorial

Despite an instigating article on the relations between clients and female prostitutes in Rio de Janeiro, and a reference to other countries (Mexico and Chile) in two of the book reviews, all the other articles and reviews in this issue of *Sexuality, Health and Society* concentrate on Argentina. Even if such concentration is due to the random influx of submissions, it is rather timely. With the approval of the so-called Equal Marriage Bill, Argentina has gone, over the past few months, over important transformations in the expansion of civil rights. This new law and the symbolic break it crystallizes have an impact in the whole region, especially to the social mobilization for sexual rights or, more appropriately, “gay-lesbian rights,” as Libson states in her article.

Several works included in this issue bring up LGBT rights and the cultural and activist practices in whose context they emerge. Like the text on Chile’s “queer [*marica*] nation”, and the one on Mexican “*draga*” artistic expression, Renata Hiller’s review of Rafael de la Dehesa’s recently published monograph, comparing the LGBT movement in Brazil and Mexico, lays a fertile ground for a dialogue on how the struggle for LGBT rights is carried forth in different Latin American countries. Focused on the Argentine context, and precisely on same-sex conjugality and co-parenthood, the two institutes established by the new law, Micaela Libson’s article addresses the ways gays and lesbians with children, or who planned to have them, dealt with that project at a time when those rights were denied to them.

The four articles on Argentina, as well as the review of a recently published book by Daniel Jones, reflect on the situation immediately preceding the passing the Equal Marriage Bill. If this makes them seem dated, their strength rests precisely on the fact that they still contribute to grasp the complexity of processes and social forces whose agency in Argentine society might be shadowed by the excitement around the new law. Besides the fact that forces and opinions contrary to LGBT rights are still active, some problems continue to exist. Among them is Aids prevention, in situations where identities seem to dissolve, such as cruising sites, or the silence that sexual morality imposes on the dialogue between gynecologists and their patients.

As a whole, the texts in this issue offer fundamental perspectives

to understand the dilemmas and conflicts (some of agonistic) woven into gender, sexuality, and reproduction in Argentina today. In them, different subjects and social worlds are brought to the fore: lower class girls in Córdoba, teenagers from Chubut, *porteña* middle class women, men who cruise anonymously in various sites for sexual encounters (hotels, porn cinemas, discos, public restrooms) in Buenos Aires.

When the image Argentina projects in the context of marriage equality is compared to the one emerging from anthropologist Gustavo Blázquez' piece, they may seem entirely disconnected and incompatible. Blázquez offers a revealing portrayal of a form of physical violence recurrently involving, as victims and victimizers, lower class girls. In the different layers of signification that the author unpacks from the gesture of "slashing a face," we see the emergence of new processes of social exclusion, in which the investment on beauty and the body from media society cannot be dissociated from the broader background of social pauperization also characteristic of Argentine modernity.

With the articles assembled for this issue, our journal once again seeks to meet its purpose of offering original approaches which, often challenging (even academic) common sense, open our reflection to the complexities of sexuality, health and society in Latin America.