

## From the editors

The ensemble of articles in this issue of *Sexuality, Health and Society* explore life, labor, and identity itineraries unforeseen/unforeseeable vis-à-vis current gender and sexuality conventions. They discuss various situations of displacement or rupture—commercial sex; infertility and its derivations; Viagra recreational use; gay and travesti protagonism in state-sponsored folk festivities; and couple *swinging*—all of which seem to impose on their subjects (as they do on researchers) the delicate reflexive work of actively constructing lived experience from new meanings, significations, and values.

The “unexpected” break in the lifecourse of middle- and middle-upper-class women in the Buenos Aires metropolitan area who meet reproductive challenges would require, as Lucía Ariza shows, resignifying infertility itself. While that narrative constructs the experience of infertility both before the women themselves, and before their significant others, it re-articulates gendered normative commands, whether they sought assisted fertility treatment or not.

Another situation which seemingly requires “explanation” would be that of the women engaged in various modalities of commercial sex (on the street, at cabarets or whiskey bars, at apartments, as escorts) in Santiago Morcillo’s article. Based on observations and interviews conducted in the Argentine cities of Buenos Aires, San Juan, and Rosario, the author addresses frictions between the meanings related to “work” and sexuality in the practice of prostitution. The article also focuses on the discourses of women (members of organizations or without activist commitments), to capture the production of meanings on the margins of the debate among feminists across academic and activist worlds, not only in Argentina. A topic as sensitive to Latin American feminisms as sex work is that of voluntary abortion, discussed in Rafael Blanco’s review on the politically engaged reflexion by *queer* activist and writer Mabel Bellucci, in her recently published volume (in Spanish) “History of a disobedience. Abortion and feminism.”

The article by Rafael da Silva Noleto focuses on the Miss *Caipira* Gay and Miss *Caipira* Mix pageants, sponsored by different government agencies in Belém do Pará, during Saint John’s festivities. Once again, the break with what is expected from beauty pageants—since

their protagonists are gay men, travestis and trans persons—displace expectations not only about what is considered female beauty, but also how the state addresses the LGBT population, incorporated in this context as a part of “tradition”. This article also cites ethnographic perspectives and analyses by Marcia Ochoa, who studied female (including trans) pageants in Venezuela, and their implications in the conformation of a national ideology of femininity which, thanks to their media repercussion, has and international impact. Noletto’s dialogue is replicated in Aureliano Lopes’ review of Ochoa’s recent volume *Queen for a day. Transformistas, Beauty Queens, and the Performance of Femininity in Venezuela*, in which the Colombian-American anthropologist looks at the practices, technologies, and ideologies through femininities become intelligible.

Other hinges or instances of inflexion are addressed by Maria Silvério in her description of how sex-gender identities are replicated, re-signified or denied by *swingers*. Masculinity and, particularly, feminity and its supposedly defining traits are reformulated in the universe of a *swingers* club. Couples—for whom nothing would be either prohibited or mandatory, if we were to abide to that world’s claimed ideal—recreate traditional hegemonic values linked to hetero-normativity, while they try to combine contemporary conjugal practices with the ideology of romantic love.

In this issue we celebrate the publication of a first article from and about Costa Rica. The text by Paula Sequeira Rovira (re)presents another break within prescriptive expectations regarding masculinity; in this case, the power attributed to penile erection, and the predictable clientele for medications such as Viagra. Their recreational use by young men in Costa Rica shows experimentations, traced mainly in narratives of users about the experience of using the medication without a prescription. In view of conceptions of the penis as a potentially tired worker—whether one suffers erectile dysfunction or not—Viagra would reinforce the control over bodies and new understandings of health, masculinity, and female expectations.

We finally hope that the narratives that researchers construct on, and about, the stories told by the protagonists of the multiple social situations addressed in this issue may, in turn, motivate readers to further reflexions and developments.