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Editorial: Gender and Deviance in Latin America

Welcome to a new issue of CROLAR -Critical Reviews on Latin American Research- this time focused on the intersection between Gender and Deviance. In this volume we approach from an interdisciplinary perspective the relation between gender and conducts that break the socially accepted norms and standards and are thus subjected to social scrutiny and regulation.

Our main objective has been to compile reviews of recent publications that approach from a critical perspective -both theoretically and empirically- conducts, values, lifestyles, sexualities, bodies and identities in the Latin American context. We understand the category of 'deviant' as a conceptual tool that distinguishes between what is socially acceptable (normal) and what is not (abnormal). This differentiation both creates and reinforces multiple forms of inequality and justifies symbolic, structural and physical violence against those that do not fulfill the social standards. As an example of this we can quote the murders of transgender people and working/poor women, the social exclusion and the justification of social control of sexual workers and migrants, the

persecution and imprisonment of the women that are partners of drug dealers, etc.

We consider that the relation of gender and deviance conjugates with other axis of power such as class, ethnicity, sexual preference and age. Guided by this perspective, we decided to include in this issue publications that approach the relation between gender and deviance from critical race and queer theories. We also tried to include publications that show how subjects strategically use identity positions marked as deviant -specially because of their gender condition- to demand citizenship and recognition for diverse social and cultural expressions, lifestyles and identities.

The issues of violence and gender equality, as well as the social movements derived therefrom, have gained momentum and influence in the public and academic agendas of Latin America in recent years. Proof of this are the implementation of laws against femicide, the legalization of marriage between same gender people, the decriminalization of abortion and the recognition of the rights of certain ethnic

and minority groups. Nevertheless, we are aware that there is still a long way to go. For this reason we believe that illuminating how gender combines with other social constructs (ethnicity, class or sexual preferences, to name but a few) to produce groups of individuals outside the norm -and therefore excluded and vulnerable- is not just a valid but also urgent effort to promote dialogues and debates about it in the region and a great reason to dedicate this issue of CROLAR to it.

The variety of topics and edges derived from this conceptual frame is exposed in the interview we conducted with Prof. Dr. Jennifer Burrell. Her research on migration, security and justice in the United States, Mexico, Guatemala and other Central American countries englobe both the category of deviance and the one of moral panics as well as the intersection between these and social constructs like ethnicity, generation, class and gender. In our conversation, the american anthropologist guides us through the historical processes marked by neoliberalism and transitions to democracy that have shaped one of the most violent regions in the world. In her research we find that the concept of waiting becomes very important, because it allows her to analytically approach the expectations of individuals created by transitions to democracy.

In the section "Focus" we englobe publications that came in the last two years. We divided them in five general categories. The first one is centered on the relation between gender and deviance in the areas

of politics, conflict and the public sphere. The book from Benedetta Faedi Duramy "Gender and Violence in Haiti: Women's Path from Victims to Agents" explores the relation between the experience of sexual violence, the participation in armed groups and the exercise of armed violence from women in that country. On the other hand, in her book "Libertas entre sobrados - mulheres negras e trabalho doméstico em São Paulo (1880-1920)", Lorena Féres da Silva Telles uses the categories of gender and race as a prism for historical interpretation of the jobs of domestic service in Brasil after the abolition of slavery. The last book in this section is also a historical research. David Carey Jr. Shows in his book "I Ask for Justice. Maya Women, Dictators, and Crime in Guatemala, 1898-1944" the productive function of right and its strategical utilization by maya women in Guatemala.

The second part explores the other face of legality to go deeper in the relation between gender and criminality. The book of Alicia Gaspar de Alba reflects on the way that women of color whose conduct deviates from what the patriarchy deems as good woman have been constructed in the hegemonic discourses of identity as the bad women -among these we can find Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz and Coyolxauhqui. This collection of essays includes a proposal from the author so that women can resist and move away from these narratives and construct new ones. Part of this section are also two other reviews of books that approach the relation between women, drugs and criminality in Mexico: Corina Giacomello's dissertation and the controversial book "Las Jefas del

Narco” edited by Eduardo Santamaría. This section promotes the debate and reflection on naturalist conceptions of gender and their relation with the “bad”, the criminal and the illegal.

The third part puts together publications that approach the relation between gender and deviance from performative sexual and identity practices that work as forms of resistance. “Global Beauty, Local Bodies” provides an analytical tour of different meanings of beauty in a context of transnational and global relations. The book from Laura Erickson-Schroth explores the trans question through a multiplicity of voices, ideas, theories and histories. “The Cross-Dressed Caribbean: Writing, Politics, Sexualities” is a compilation that analyzes the Caribbean from the vantage point of transvestism as a way of resistance, transgression and negotiation with the colonial/postcolonial patriarchal system. Meanwhile, the research of Juana María Rodríguez focuses, from the perspective of performativity, in the strategies of Puerto Rican activists and the utilization of their queer, feminine and radicalized bodies to display alternative forms of sexuality that have been ignored by the mainstream gay discourse. The last input comes from the text “Yemoja: Gender, Sexuality, and Creativity in the Latina/o and Afro-Atlantic Diasporas” that considers the intersection between religion and cultural practices derived from the cult of the goddess Yemoja as permanent negotiations of the categories of gender, sexuality and identity.

The fourth section explores how the issue of gender and deviance is presented in the media. With this we try to incite a dialogue on questions of representation. We find here the work of Kishona L. Gray that approaches the issue of gender and ethnicity based discrimination inside the virtual player communities of Xbox Live. On the other hand, “Reality Gendervision (Sexuality and gender on transatlantic reality television)” from Brenda R. Weber studies the omnipresent reality television programs and the visions of gender that they promote as acceptable and/or deviant. This section closes with the book from Jennifer C. Nash, “The Black Body in Ecstasy. Reading Race, Reading Pornography” that explores how racial fictions produced in pornographic movies can create spaces of agency.

Finally, the fifth section approaches the concept of deviance as the transgression of limits and borders -both physical and symbolic- imposed by the dominant order. Three books are reviewed here: “Cosmopolitan Sex Workers. Women and Migration in a Global City” from Christine Chin analyzes from the vantage point of the relation between city, creativity and cosmopolitanism how in the current neoliberal context migrant women can move between the big global cities to participate in the sexual industry. “Desbordes: Translating Racial, Ethnic, Sexual, and Gender Identities across the Americas” analyses the different meanings of the categories latino, queer and american have for the LGBT community in Washington, DC. San Salvador and Quito. Through this multiple acceptations the subjects resist in a creative way the dominant

discourses about migrant and queer communities in the United States. "Fires on the Border. The passionate Politics of Labor Organizing on the Mexican Frontera" within the framework of feminist materialism, traces the organizational development of female maquila workers in the North of Mexico. As an analytical lens the author uses *afecto* (affection) and the political impact that it has in the negotiation of sexuality and identities for these women.

This issue also has three recurrent sections of CROLAR. The first one, Interventions, goes back to the subjects of criminality and dissident sexual identities to once again think the relation between gender and deviance this time from the perspective of creative non fiction and cinema. We review here the book from Mary Ellen Sanger "Blackbirds in the Pomegranate Tree: Stories from Ixcotel State Prison" and the Mexico City-based documentary festival "Gay/DF: Comunidad LGBTITI".

The second one, Classics Revisited, presents "La dominación masculina". This, one of the most recognized works of the french sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, states that sexual difference is based on the presupposition that men and women are naturally different in their ways of being, feeling and acting. This division would be the basic principle of the masculine domination over women and the symbolic violence that permeates all social structures. This provocative text denaturalizes feminine subordination and proposes it as a symbolic structure, socially constructed accepted by both men and women.

Finally, the section Current Debates presents two books unrelated to our focus on gender and deviation: "La calidad de la democracia: perspectivas desde América Latina", edited by Sebastián Mantilla Baca and Gerardo L. Munck and "Subterranean Struggles. New Dynamics of Mining, Oil, and Gas in Latin America" edited by Anthony Bebbington and Jeffrey Bury, The first one provides both a state of art and a starting point for the discussion about the complexity of the quality of democracy in the Latin American context and the second explores the conflicting implications of resource extraction in the region.

The variety of books that compose this number of CROLAR shows the epistemic bridges that can be created between different disciplines -sociology, anthropology, communications, performance studies and literature- to develop critical perspectives to understand the intersection between gender and deviance, not only from social structures both also from the daily life experiences of the individuals. We are confident that these texts will offer our readers a solid introduction to the debate and reflection on the conducts of those that have been designated by hegemonic discourses as the others and also on their own conducts.

The challenge of trying to encompass such a varied universe as the one of the categories that give name to this issue meant a final selection of a body of works that is clearly not exhaustive and extremely heterogenous. We are aware of the existence of many other possibilities to approach and reflect on the

relation between gender and deviance, but we hope that this issue will help to actualize the debate and arouse the curiosity about the subject. We also faced the issue of the majority of the books that we chose being written in English. However most of them research Latin American cases. This, for us, justified the selection of books and, following the police of CROLAR to promote the exchange of knowledge between countries, the reviews are published in Spanish, German and Portuguese.

The editors of this issue and the whole team of CROLAR hopes that reading this magazine will stimulate the (re)thinking of the thematic and the critical debate about it. Enjoy!