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Sexual Citizenship

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Following the feminist motto “the personal is political”, this paper argues for the need of further analysis in the national context of Chile of what has been called more broadly “sexual citizenship”. The concept of sexual citizenship has proved to be useful as a descriptive and explanatory category that helps us understand and classify particular forms of identity politics that cohere around the recognition of differentiated citizenship (a form of citizenship that makes space for both particularism and universalism). Here we claim that this is a complex concept that works as a metaphor (Weeks, 1998) through the condensation of individual human experience from two different realms: sexuality (private) and citizenship (political, public). Drawing on individual interviews with people living with HIV and interviews with people from an organisation from the civil society, which defends and disseminates the sexual rights of people with HIV, the paper provides evidence that the concept of sexual citizenship is politically productive in terms of promoting the emancipation of sexual minorities and the radicalization of democratic social struggles that cohere around gender issues.

My name is Hernán Cuevas. I did my undergraduate degree in History and Aesthetics at the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile and an MA in Politics at the same University. I completed an M.Phil in Cultural Studies and Sociology at the University of Birmingham in 2004 and a PhD in Politics at the University of Essex in 2007. I have been working at different universities for many years. I am currently a lecturer at the Universidad Diego Portales in Chile. My main interests are political elites, democracy, emerging forms of citizenship and poststructuralist social theory.

My name is Isabel Pérez. I did my undergraduate degree in Philosophy and Psychology in Chile, at the Universidad Metropolitana de Ciencias de la Educación and Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile respectively. I worked for some years as a counsellor and psychotherapist at the Fundación Arriarán, an HIV-specialised centre, while I was completing studies on Ericksonian and Strategic Therapy. At the beginning of this year I finished my PhD at the University of Birmingham. My thesis explored the social aspects of AIDS from an interdisciplinary perspective. I am currently working on research in the areas of gender, sexuality and subjectivity.