

components analysis. In case the reader misses the instructive parallel, Relethford explicitly connects the interpretive debates over modern human origins, Polynesian colonization ("express train" vs. "slow boat"), and demic diffusion in Europe. Following John Terrell's "entangled bank" interpretation of prehistory, Relethford contends that populations are rarely isolated for extended periods, and that population expansions interdigitate with, overlap, and reshape the previously existing genetic constitution of indigenous populations.

The book concludes with a series of examples from Ireland (ch. 9) and a final chapter on recent admixture (Mexico, the United States, the Jewish diaspora). These examples serve well to highlight the complexity of ancestry and the distinction between cultural identity and genetic relatedness.

The text flows well, being uninterrupted by references; four pages at the end connect the numbered notes with the ten following pages of references. The production quality of the volume is good. The illustrations and maps are very helpful and generally well positioned. There are few copy-editing errors, none of which create difficulty in interpreting the text. My paperback edition did contain some minor printing errors that should be corrected in subsequent printings.

While any interested individual will profit from reading the volume, the primary audience for this book is undoubtedly college students (and their professors). I suspect many will borrow useful examples or effective forms of presentation for lectures. The book would be an ideal supplement for a population genetics class, adding palatability to what some see as dry topics. More broadly, given how well Relethford integrates information across the branches of anthropology and illustrates the action of evolutionary forces, some will choose to use the book in introductory courses. For students with some background, or for help in lecture, selected chapters could be used alone or in a variety of combinations. There are a myriad of possibilities for putting the book to good use, and we owe Relethford a debt of gratitude for its creation.

**Political Violence and Trauma in Argentina.** Antonius C. G. M. Robben. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005. 467 pp.

#### MARTIN EDWIN ANDERSEN

Senior Latin America Analyst, Freedom House

Contemporary analyses of the at times monstrous fratricide that wracked Argentine politics for nearly half a century generally fall into two categories. The first mirror an author's own personal preferences and social commitments, injecting the personal "I" into the ordering of recollections, facts, and theories that are mustered to explain, for example, how as many as 30,000 people, including hundreds of elderly and children under 16, were secretly abducted, tor-

tured, and killed by the Argentine military during the 1970s and early 1980s. The second category substitutes the "I" with the "Eye," meticulously providing new information, insight, and careful synthesis to an already much-studied topic.

*Political Violence and Trauma in Argentina* straddles these two approaches. Antonius C. G. M. Robben convincingly challenges conventional wisdom that violence alone engenders more, and often more vicious, violence. He argues that social trauma played a mediating role, aggravating the downward spiral into mass murder in what was once called the most "civilized" country in Latin America. Unfortunately, the book—whose dust jacket boasts of "combining history and anthropology"—itself does some violence to the former, while making real, important contributions to understanding how the repeated traumatization of political adversaries helped create a counterinsurgency strategy and a military regime whose methodology was, as Robben notes, "inadmissible by any moral standard, and especially by the Western values they claimed to defend" (p. 232).

Robben is at his strongest in addressing the group dynamics of Argentine civilian and military politics. He convincingly relates how, after the ascension of Juan Peron to power in the 1940s, both the myth and reality that grew up around the role of street crowds as a bellweather of Argentine politics ended up contributing to the Peronist versus Peronist vortex that ripped apart the strongman's last presidency in 1973–74. The harsh military repression of Peron's followers after his overthrow in 1955, as well as the exiled *lider's* own violent rhetoric, are correctly portrayed in the book as stoking a culture of grievance borne out of individual and group traumas. As a result, Argentina's most important political force moved into shadowy resistance in which mass politics was replaced by subterranean political warfare that included antiregime sabotage and other violence. However, after more than a decade of military rule and elected minority governments, previously antagonistic working-class, middle-class, and university sectors pushed politics back into the street, traumatizing the military with not only the specter of Peron's return but also of growing armed resistance.

Robben ably depicts how the decades of military rule and repression, political disenfranchisement, revenge killings, armed combat, and state terror irrevocably changed Argentine society. "The mediation of massive violence by social trauma explains why state terror brought the increasing political violence to a halt in the late 1970s," Robben writes. "The spiral of violence burned itself out because one party out-traumatized the other . . . The guerrilla forces had been decimated and demoralized, while the political opposition became paralyzed by military repression" (p. 343).

Unfortunately, the book is marred by occasionally sloppy footnotes, a repeated reliance on assertions made by questionable sources, and internally inconsistent renditions of the same historical events. For example, Robben

claims, offering the slimmest proof, that leftwing Peronist social critic and author Rodolfo Walsh was one of five commandos who assassinated Peronist labor leader Augusto Vandor in 1969. He places the date of merger of “all” of the Peronist leftwing guerrilla groups with the fast-radicalizing Montoneros at “the beginning of 1973” (p. 115), while the date of the fusion of by far the most important of these, the Revolutionary Armed Forces (FAR), was later correctly given as October 1973 (pp. 119, 134). The crushing defeat of the Marxist Peoples’ Revolutionary Army (ERP) in December 1975 did not “in any direct sense mark the ERP’s military defeat” (p. 156), Robben writes, while claiming that both the ERP and the Montoneros “had been largely defeated by early 1976” (p. 173). Similarly, the state intelligence agency, SIDE, was incorrectly described as the “army intelligence service” (p. 196). Robben also makes an artificial distinction between police and military practice on torture, saying that the former’s six-decade-long use of torture accounts for the fact that most secret detention centers during the 1976–83 “dirty war” were located on “police premises” (p. 216). Until 1983 and the return of democracy, Argentine police were almost always under the command and control of the armed forces; by far the two largest concentration camps—the ESMA and La Perla—were run by the military.

These and other errors relegate Robben’s study to the category of a thought provoking and important, but not an authoritative, read.

**Same-Sex Cultures and Sexualities: An Anthropological Reader.** Jennifer Robertson, ed. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2005. 310 pp.

## BRIAN RIEDEL

Rice University

As a field of study matures and deepens, its progress can be charted through the anthologies that may come in time to constitute landmarks in the field. The editor of *Same-Sex Cultures and Sexualities*, Jennifer Robertson, is deeply aware that this volume follows a number of well-known edited collections of anthropological works on same-sex sexuality. Yet, she has assured that the quality of this anthology will remain on par with its predecessors by choosing essays that have all been previously published in either peer-reviewed journals or other edited collections.

So why publish them again under a single cover? Unit-ing these essays allows Robertson to undertake two specific tasks that distinguish it from previous collections. The first is to “question and challenge, in different yet related ways, the a priori assumption among many people of a connection between same-sex sexual *desires*, *practices* and *identifications* and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, queer, etc. *identities*” (p. 1). The book thus promotes a perspective deeply influenced by the impact of queer theory on our understanding of behaviors, desires, practices, and identities.

In doing so, Robertson’s collection extends and specifies earlier arguments favoring attention to practices rather than a naive adherence to identity politics—arguments such as those made previously in volumes such as Roger Lancaster and Micaela di Leonardo’s *Gender/Sexuality Reader* (1997). Perhaps the anthology’s best exemplar of this type of argument is found in Deborah Elliston’s contribution, in which she analyzes the deployment of the idea of “ritualized homosexuality” in anthropology to describe practices that, while deemed sexual by Western standards, are better understood through the contexts of kinship, gender, and progression through the life cycle. Elliston’s chapter thus properly extends Robertson’s first task beyond distinguishing practices from identities to questioning the boundaries of “what constitutes ‘sex’ or ‘the sexual’ ” (p. 92).

Robertson’s second task for the book is to “channel the comparative anthropological and historical study of same-sex cultures and sexualities into a full-spectrum anthropological mainstream” (p. 92). It is a task of which any single volume might despair. Funding battles alone indicate that the mainstreaming of sexuality in anthropology is far from clearly accomplished. Still, the number of anthropologists integrating sexuality into their work has grown immensely over the last 15 years, a growth visible in the wide range of anthropological subdisciplines represented in the volume: linguistic, archaeological, applied, sociocultural, biological, and historical. Significantly, the authors represented include not only anthropologists but also the historians Estelle Freedman and John D’Emilio and the lawyer-philosopher Edward Stein.

Several of the chapters have become standard reading since their original publication, such as Carole Vance’s “Anthropology Rediscovered Sexuality” (1990) and Judith Shapiro’s “Transsexualism” (1991). Others are less familiar but fit the volume well. In particular, Timothy Wright’s sensitive reconstruction of his fieldwork in Bolivia captures the multiple tensions between facile identity politics and lived practices in the context of HIV/AIDS outreach projects. He demonstrates that while many Bolivian *hombres de ambiente* (roughly, men who have sex with men) disavow any sort of “gay” identity, Bolivian government agencies remain fixated precisely on what Robertson would call “ready-made identities” such as “gay” and “straight.” That impasse goes some way towards explaining why only a small number of people embraced the services on offer from the government-funded “gay community center” in which Wright was employed. Moreover, Wright is satisfyingly articulate about the role that he himself played as a mediator of those interactions, both as outreach worker and as anthropologist.

As a whole, this volume recapitulates the core theoretical movements in studies of sexuality and identity over the 1990s, building on the distinction of sexual practices from sexual identities to call for the interrogation of any assumed connection between the two realms. The main virtue of the anthology is that it clearly positions ethnographic research as a methodology appropriate to that interrogation.