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Paper Title: ***Matrimonio Igualitario: Achieving Family Law Equality for Same Sex Couples in Argentina***

Abstract: On July 15, 2010 Argentina's Senate approved the Ley Matrimonio Igualitario, a law permitting same-sex couples to marry, and became the tenth country in the world, and the first in Latin America, to legalize same-sex marriage. While heralded as a major advancement for Argentina's LGBT community, an examination of Argentine culture made this a relatively unexpected result given the LGBT community's historic lack of influence with Argentine policy makers.

Part II of the paper traces the development of Argentina's LGBT movement starting in the 1960s with a particular focus on the growth of LGBT activist organizations and how the strategies adopted by these groups impacted the passage of the same-sex marriage law. Spain's decision to legalize same-sex marriage, the ability of the LGBT community to forge alliances in all three branches of the government, and the ability to effectively employ the media were three critical factors in the passage of the law.

Part III examines the significant role that adoption played in the same-sex marriage debate as both sides advocated passionately while offering philosophical, religious and scientific evidence to support their views. Part IV examines the difficulties of implementing the law. While legislators have addressed a number of specific issues pertaining to adoption, a number of gaps still exist which will require legislators to grapple with the difficulties of implementing gender-neutral legislation in the gendered language of Argentina's Civil Code.

Part IV looks at the current focus of LGBT activists. After achieving equal marriage rights for gays and lesbians, LGBT organizations are now pushing for legislation to achieve equality for Argentina's transgendered community. Finally, Part V assesses the extent to which Argentina's passage of the same-sex marriage law will influence other countries in the region to pass similar legislation.