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Regulating paradise: Following the changing culture of smoking in Buenos Aires, 2003-2018

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Abstract: This paper examines the rapid change in smoking culture in Buenos Aires, from celebrated to medicalized, following the ratification of the World Health Organization's treaty for tobacco control in 2003. It attempts to use the cigarette to pen the narrative of how cultural habits, sociability, and expressions of national and individual identity are transformed and regulated by both global and local actors, to evaluate how the global tobacco agenda has been translated to the local realities of Buenos Aires.

Introduction

In February 2003, the Framework Committee Alliance, a group of international NGOs that support the ratification of the WHO's Framework Committee on Tobacco Control (FCTC), published the Alliance Bulletin's first edition of the Orchid and Dirty Ashtray Awards.[1] In each issue, one country, the Orchid, would be recognized for its efforts to adhere to the tobacco policy guidelines delineated by the FCTC, while the other country, the Dirty Ashtray, would be called out for direct or indirect actions that contradicted the goals of the FCTC treaty. Printed in bold across the back cover of the issue,

> "The Dirty Ashtray Award: To Argentina, for being easily confused with the tobacco industry."[2]

This castigating title was not undeserved. The current president of the time, President Eduardo Duhalde, as well as Eugenio Corradini, the representative of the Secretary of Agriculture who joined the Argentine delegation for the negotiations of the FCTC, were just two of many public officials who were ardent defenders of the tobacco lobby and who held vested business interests in the

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[1] Heather Wipfli, *The Global War on Tobacco: Mapping the World's First Public Health Treaty.* (Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 2015), 48.

[2] Ernesto M. Sebrié, "Tobacco Industry Dominating National Tobacco Policy Making in Argentina" (*UCSF: Center for Tobacco Control Research and Education,* 2005).

industry. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, any reconciliation between the WHO's global health agenda with a cultural practice that had for so long been an important part of Argentine culture seemed an impossible task.

For over one hundred years, smoking served as a celebrated medium of sociability and self-expression in Argentina and other cosmopolitan centers across the globe. Argentina, the second largest tobacco growing country in the region, was particularly known for its pervasive smoker population. References to smoking and cigarettes in popular culture, found in a variety of mediums like tango lyrics and national cinema, served to imprint smoking into the Argentine social imaginary. Looking through publications from this golden era of smoking, the identification of Argentina as a "paradise of smokers" appears as a common trope for describing porteño society throughout the 20th century.[3] The Ashtray Award, then, is the culmination of this rich history of smoking that maintained an intimate relationship with Argentine culture and daily life, a fact which was so condemned by the global health community.

Yet just ten years following this Award in an edition of *La Nación*, a principal Argentine news publication, a reporter offered a dismal view of the sparse landscape of smokers, "a species threatened with extinction that resists even though they have passed from fashion; the least cool or fashionable that one can imagine."[4] Somehow, in this short span of time, the culture and politics of smoking in Buenos Aires had transformed from being a celebrated symbol of porteño culture into a targeted device that was censured for being harmful to the health.

A study of the recent changes in smoking practice in Buenos Aires offers a narrative of multi-dimensional voices that reflect the social legacy of a cultural habit once deeply ingrained in

[3] 'Porteño' is the local term for the inhabitants of the port city of Buenos Aires. It translates as 'from the port' and connotes the unique culture and lifestyle of the city.
[4] "Fumar pasó de moda?", *La Nación*, June 12, 2013

notions of national identity and individual expression. While the story of tobacco control exists within many national scripts, following the recent history of Argentina reveals a very particular story influenced by the globalization of health policy and information, the growth of civil society, the continued presence of the tobacco industry, and a changing awareness of the public that accompanies transforming notions of smoking as pleasurable and central to sociability. The overlapping contexts of the World Health Organization's ratification of the first global health treaty with the passing of national tobacco control laws since 2003 set the scene for understanding the drivers in changing conceptions of smoking that, until recently, was a continuous practice in Argentine history.

The contemporary history of smoking in Argentina provokes questions that arise from this recent, anomalous change in habit and from the nature of smoking itself as a social epidemic that carries strains of both national and international character. Considering the backdrop of change in smoking regulation both globally and locally, is it then possible to identify a qualitative change in how people talk about smoking in Argentina? Have changing patterns of smoking changed how national identity is imagined? Can global agendas be modified and reinterpreted in national or particular contexts, and if so, has the agenda of the WHO been reformulated in the context of Buenos Aires? These questions suggest that historicizing the cigarette can allow us to reconsider existing narratives of globalization. The cigarette then becomes an entrance into understanding the greater transnational dynamism that exists within health themes, sociocultural subjects, and conceptions of national identity.

Historiography

Just as the cigarette encases a medley of ingredients both herbal and noxious, smoking as a subject of study encompasses a diverse spectrum of historical actors, disciplines, and lines of inquiry. Through a traditional treatment of smoking in terms of its political economy, its science history, and

its period of transformation from a celebrated object of pleasure into a medicalized object of contested health effects, readings of this 'cigarette century' constitute much of smoking literature. [5] Such works include Robert Proctor's *Golden Holocaust: Origins of the Cigarette Catastrophe and the Case for Abolition,* in which he offers an extensive history of tobacco in its many manifestations beginning with a study of the tobacco plant as a crop first cultivated in Peru and Ecuador and concluding with a reflection on the U.S. tobacco master settlement agreements in 1998.[6]

Relli Schecther shares Proctor's interest in his engagement with the history of tobacco as it transformed from a theme of cultivation to one of culture and transnational industry. Although this book is situated in a different political and cultural climate than that of Argentina, Schechter answers questions that are relevant to a study of smoking in Buenos Aires, specifically in his treatment of the translation of global policy to local practices and understandings. He frames his study around the socio-cultural meanings of smoking, how smoking is related to changing patterns of government and commerce, and concludes with a reflection on "smoking as cultural distinction" where he reviews the varied forms of smoking and smoking spaces that are tinged with class and gender.[7] While he does not focus on the health and scientific narratives of smoking, Schecter's work is a strong example of how smoking, a global phenomenon, became translated into the specific context of the Middle East and its modes of sociability and expressions of nationalism. In Eric Feldman's *Unfiltered* and Carl Ipsen's *Fumo*, smoking is also presented as a rich indicator of beliefs and values concerning

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[5] Carl Ipsen, *Fumo: Italy's love affair with the cigarette.* Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2016.
[6] Robert Proctor. *Golden Holocaust: Origins of the cigarette catastrophe and the case for abolition.* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), Print.
[7] Relli Schechter, *Smoking, Culture and Economy in the Middle East,* (London; New York, I.B. Tauris, 2006), 119-132.

risk, pleasure, sociability, and the dynamic between the state and individual health as they are specific to distinct cultural landscapes. [8]

Yet, by focusing on the 'cigarette century,' this tobacco literature seems to offer closure on the issue of smoking, even encouraging the idea that smoking is a relic of the past. Few works examine smoking history since the turn of the twenty-first century, especially as it exists in the particular scene of change in Buenos Aires; the figure of the "modern smoker" remains unexamined.[9] Because of the very recent changes in global health policy that have solicited a rapid transformation in smoking practice, it makes sense that a comprehensive review of this period is difficult to locate. Heather Wipfli's *The Global War on Tobacco: Mapping the world's first public health treaty* comes closest to offering a framework for narrating the recent history of shifting global tobacco laws and culture. In this work, she reconstructs the contemporary origins and implementation of the first world public health treaty. [10]

Wipfli devotes a considerable portion of her discussion of the FCTC conferences on the development of the Framework Committee Alliance (FCA), a group of civil society organizations that united to act as a force of persuasion during the FCTC negotiations in Geneva and within their respective national contexts. Here, she offers insight into the crucial role of CSOs in mobilizing the creation of the treaty through tactics that included the public shaming of non-cooperative countries and the publication of a daily bulletin that recorded the events of meetings, promoted anti-tobacco educational material, and highlighted successful efforts of party members to commit to national plans for tobacco control. Her discussion of the FCA's work that precedes the ratification of the

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[8] Eric A. Feldman, *Unfiltered: Conflicts over tobacco policy and public health.* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2004); Ipsen.
[9] Diego Armus, "Un archivo de las grandes corporaciones tabacaleras para la historia del modern hábito de fumar en Argentina," *La historia de la salud y la enfermedad,* (Editorial de la Universidad Nacional de Mar del Plata, 2018).
[10] Wipfli.

FCTC offers a standard for non-governmental actors participating in the anti-tobacco agenda after the conclusion of the treaty negotiations. The role that CSOs assume in Wipfli's narrative can help explain how civil society actors in the case of Argentina have grown into the lead figures they are today by commanding an advocacy project based on principles of human rights through their distinct role as a mediator between government and general society.

Beyond the central work of Wipfli in understanding the global character of tobacco control, recent publications by medical historians and scientists contribute to the toolkit for constructing Argentina's modern smoking narrative. Dr. Ernesto M. Sebrié, for instance, focuses on his own local context through his contribution of significant medical and social science research on tobacco in Argentina, including an extensive case study of failed legal projects rooted in the tensions between the tobacco industry with local governmental and non-governmental organizations in Buenos Aires beginning in the 1970s through 2005.[11] Sebrié's work reveals the intimate relationship between politicians and the industry in their collaborative efforts to block national anti-smoking laws. As well, this project stands out for Sebrié's use of the Truth Tobacco Industry Archives of the University of California, San Francisco, that reveal the concerted publicity campaigns of the industry to silence health concerns of smoking through marketing segmentation strategies, for instance by introducing the trope of smoking as integral to initiation in different identity groups. The UCSF archives are a rich resource for a spectrum of inquiries related to tobacco politics and can serve as a key source for creating a smoking historiography, a methodology highlighted in the work of Diego Armus whose research raises questions of how to reconstruct the recent history of smoking in Buenos Aires.[12]

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[11] Sebrié.
[12] Armus.

In this work, I aim to synthesize the multiple processes of interpreting and understanding the translations between global and local tobacco agendas, to fill in the space left in smoking history after the turn of the cigarette century. My hope is that this confluence of historical figures, which includes the WHO, civil society, the tobacco industry, and porteños, will offer a new vision of the modern smoker of Buenos Aires in the aftermath of the FCTC. I intend to begin with the creation of the FCTC as the backdrop for approaching changing cigarette culture and politics in Argentina. I will primarily focus my analysis on changing smoking culture in Buenos Aires. In the first section, I will provide a brief review of the political economy of tobacco, the introduction of the FCTC, changes in national tobacco control projects, and the growing presence of civil society actors. Here, the Fundación InterAmericana del Corazón Argentina (FIC Argentina), a civil society organization that was formed in the wake of the FCTC project and became a main proponent of local change and ratification of the FCTC, becomes situated as a principle actor in this narrative. In my research for this work, FIC emerges as a common denominator in the various branches of the global to local translation of the tobacco control agenda. In my review of sources that include congressional floor debates surrounding tobacco policy, dialogues with the Ministry of Health, educational campaigns, research publications, and WHO global health forums, FIC appears as a fierce engine of advocacy, research, and political and cultural change in regards to smoking. Of course, there are other significant factors that are worth examining as drivers of this change, such as the evolved strategies of the tobacco industry, the introduction of new laws, and the levels of public compliance to these laws. However, the increasing activity of civil society is a distinction between the recent years of the cigarette's history with those years prior to the ratification of the FCTC. This is not a case study of FIC, but the story of Argentina's changing affair with cigarettes with FIC as a key protagonist.

In the second section, I will examine the cultural shift in smoking practice and how it may correspond to movements of government, changes in law, efforts of civil society and interactions

with global health communities. I intend to begin by using news and media publications that relate to the theme of smoking to read public opinion and to map changing conceptions of cigarette culture and of the modern smoker. Then, I hope to look at transforming uses of and restrictions on public spaces that have traditionally harbored smoking communities and now continue to serve as points of sale and publicity for the tobacco industry. Different characters of noncompliance and subcultures of smoking emerge through an investigation of these smoking spaces; street corner kiosks, the web, and the night become the sites of contention. FIC appears here as a vocal source through their research publications that suggest the significance of these spaces for the tobacco industry in their efforts to create a place for the modern smoker to adapt and survive.

This paper constructs a smoking historiography through a sociocultural lens. The narrative that emerges becomes a reading of how cultural habits, sociability, and expressions and conceptions of national and individual identity are transformed and regulated in the particular landscape of Buenos Aires. Identifying the locus of this change, whether it is in Geneva, stems from local actors, or emerges from the interactions between the two, reveals how globalization has moved to create not only transnational channels of exchange and collaboration, but also suggests a move to create and diffuse a 'global culture' where smoking is policed and condemned.

The story of Argentina, the former paradise of smokers, reveals the dichotomy that exists between the presence of global agendas, as translated through the work of local actors and legislative projects, with the persistent strains of smoking sub-cultures as they exist in contested public spaces; the process of creating a smoke-free Buenos Aires remains incomplete. Perhaps missing in translation from the WHO is an understanding of the local realities of the still present tobacco industry and the habit of smoking that continues to participate in porteño culture and identity. In this study, then, understanding who has the authority to regulate as well as considering who is

regulated and how proves essential in presenting a more complete image of the transforming culture of smoking cigarettes in Buenos Aires.

I. Changes in economic and legal frameworks at the global and national level

Political economy of tobacco

When foreign tobacco companies first entered the Argentine market in the 1920s and 1930s, they were met with an already thriving, local tobacco industry. As Argentina is home to the second largest tobacco production in the region, tobacco remains an important source of livelihood for rural families. It forms the center of the agricultural industry in six provinces where the tobacco crop was first introduced during colonial times.[13] The consolidation of the tobacco industry developed throughout the century as the entrance of transnational tobacco companies brought increasing competition with regional production. By the 1970s, local marks had been subsumed by the tobacco giants, which include Phillip Morris International, British America Tobacco, Ligget's, and R. J. Reynold's.[14] Since then, these brands have dominated the Argentine cigarette trade by marketing their own brands as well as by working through local affiliates and subsidiaries. This process reflects a global trend of the transnational takeover of the cigarette trade by 'Big Tobacco.'[15] As well, over the past 25 years, Philip Morris and British American Tobacco have developed and employed marketing segmentation studies to understand how to capture the distinct Argentine market. Here, they used psychographic[16] evaluations of consumers to understand how to create identity-based advertisements to attract the porteño smoker to their brand.

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[13] Diego Armus, "Cigarette smoking in modern Buenos Aires: the sudden change in a century-old continuity," *Global Anti-Vice Activism, 1890-1950: Fighting Drinks, Drugs, and 'Immorality,'* (Cambridge University Press, 2016), 203-218.
[14] Armus, 2016.
[15] 'Big Tobacco' is used to refer to the following five major transnational companies: PMI, BAT, Imperial Brands, Japan Tobacco International, and China Tobacco.
[16] Psychographic segmentation is a marketing strategy that divides a market by individual interests, personal traits, values, and lifestyles of the consumer.

To temper the growing concerns of the harms of tobacco to health that accompanied the rise of these transnational giants, as well as in recognition of the vitality of tobacco production for the Argentine agricultural industry, in 1972 the Argentine government passed a law that initiated the state subsidization of tobacco agriculture with a federal tax of 7% on the sale price for each packet of cigarettes.[17] Called the Fondo Especial de Tabaco (FET), this subsidy is divided between two projects: 80% of it goes to tobacco farmers, and the remaining 20% goes to 'agricultural diversification' which entails projects that encourage substitution of tobacco growing with other crops. The existence of the FET has proved a central point of contention in congressional debates over tobacco legislation. To ratify the FCTC would mean getting rid of the FET; the farming sector and tobacco lobby have rallied around this as they point to the FCTC, which prohibits the articulation of such a protective tax, as disruptive and harmful to the tobacco growing sector.

Beyond the significance of tobacco production to Argentina, the network of distributors extends outside the national landscape. For instance, in 2004, Argentina produced 2% of the world's tobacco, exporting 70% of their production to neighboring countries of the MERCOSUR (Mercado Común del Cono Sur), the South American trade bloc.[18] Most tobacco products that are sold locally are sold in kiosks, and as of 2018, 79% of kiosks still violate laws concerning restrictions on tobacco publicity.[19] The Argentine tobacco trade today remains a place where foreign companies are pervasive, largely unregulated and free to shape smoking culture and habit.

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[17] "Avanza la distribución del Fondo Especial de Tabaco," Jefatura de Gabinete de Ministros, (December 27, 2017). https://www.argentina.gob.ar/noticias/avanza-la-distribucion-del-fondo-especial-de-tabaco

[18] Armus, 2016.

[19] Fabiola Czubaj, "El 79% de las publicidades de cigarrillos de los kioscos viola la ley porteña," *La Nación*, 11/8/2018. https://www.lanacion.com.ar/2189666-el-79-publicidades-cigarrillos-kioscos-viola-ley

WHO and the FCTC

The unchallenged authority of the transnational tobacco companies made them king in the political economy of tobacco. Lack of standard international regulation had for years made it easy for them to infiltrate local landscapes, align themselves with politicians, and create monopolies on health information. With this understanding of the omnipresence of Big Tobacco, the entrance of the World Health Organization to the realm of tobacco control marks the appearance of a formidable opponent as they worked to realize their lofty aims of curbing a noxious habit through practiced execution of international law. For the first time, the WHO exercised its authority to establish an international health treaty, thus solidifying its entrance as a key historical figure in the tobacco narrative. The fight against tobacco had become global.[20]

Three years of party conferences that entailed the meeting of representatives from each of the WHO's member countries resulted in the adoption of the Framework Convention Treaty on Tobacco Control on May 21, 2003, which was then ratified a year later with the required signatures from forty countries. Today, there are 181 countries that have ratified the treaty and promised to follow the guidelines it sets out for regulating tobacco trade, consumption, and advertisement. Among the fifteen non-party countries that are members of the UN but have not ratified is the United States, Morocco, Cuba, and Argentina.[21]

The ratification of the FCTC remains an indelible background of tobacco control projects that follow it, especially for Argentina whose history is riddled with failed tobacco control initiatives. The WHO's demand for reform and recognition of the tobacco-health problem held the potential of pressuring Argentina, a growing player in the global economy, to conform and ratify the treaty. Furthermore, the preamble of the FCTC recognizes the distinct contribution of NGOs and civil

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[20] International collaboration precedes the FCTC, but not at the same global scale nor with the same effect of the WHO's treaty. See Sebrié's discussion of this earlier international dialogue.
[21] Wipfli.

society to both global and local tobacco control projects which allows us to examine the legacy of the FCTC with the following goals: to reflect on the function of civil society in global health advocacy and policy, to understand its successful translation into local contexts like Uruguay, and to finally place a reading of civil society actors and the FCTC project in the context of Buenos Aires. [22]

The question of civil society's role in the tobacco debate arose early in the negotiations of the FCTC through the formation of the Framework Convention Alliance (FCA). The Alliance is composed of a group of non-governmental organizations from across the world that were first united by the common goal of supporting the formulation and implementation of the FCTC both regionally and globally. The FCA grew, as well, from the contention concerning the participation of NGOs in the conference of the parties. NGO involvement was prohibited by formal WHO conventions, thus leaving these important actors relegated to the sidelines as observers.[23] It was their exclusion from the proceedings, then, that also drove these organization together to continue a fight that many of them had already been waging locally for years.

Among the numerous contributions of the FCA and its distinct members, the creation of the daily publication the Alliance Bulletin stands as a clear product of the groups' methodology and intentions. Following with their restrictions of observation only,[24] FCA members used the Bulletin not only as a vessel to communicate the daily activities of the party conferences, but as an indirect means to exert pressure on non-Party countries and nations whose actions contradicted the goals of the FCTC. The Bulletin employed tactics such as the 'death clock,'[25] a section printed on the front page of each edition that numbered the lives lost from smoking since the opening of the first

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[22] Beatriz Marcet Champagne, Ernesto Sebrié, and Verónica Shoj. "The role of civil society in tobacco control in Latin America and the Caribbean." *Salud Pública de México* 52.2 (2010): 330-339.
[23] Wipfli, 46.
[24] Hadii M. Mamudu and Stanton A. Glantz, "Civil society and the negotiation of the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control," *Global Public Health* 4:2, (2009), 150-168.
[25] Wipfli, 47.

working group for the FCTC on October 25, 1999. The Bulletin also printed tobacco-related diseases of the day, included interviews with party members and tobacco industry officials, and chose a daily theme meant to correct misconceptions such as the perceived threat that a tobacco tax held for the farming industry. Most notorious were the Orchid and Dirty Ashtray Awards, designations chosen via submissions of party countries, which recognized WHO member countries either for "leadership" or "bad behavior" in themes of national tobacco control and were printed on the back page of each issue.[26] For instance, the day after the FCTC was formally ratified in 2003, Argentina was granted the Dirty Ashtray Award for its prioritization of industry interests over the right to health. In other words, this humiliating designation was the FCA's way of 'punishing' Argentina for not joining the other member countries in ratifying the treaty.

After the ratification of the FCTC, this form of education and persuasion would later be adopted by CSOs as they turned their efforts towards local tobacco control. The technique of the 'death clock' blatantly marks most anti-tobacco articles published in *La Nación* after 2003 as reporters followed a trend of introducing their arguments with the death toll of Argentines via tobacco-related illnesses. The creation of the FCTC, then, not only elevated the role of global cooperation across distinct governmental bodies in the interest of a transnational health concern, but also created space for civil society to unite and understand how they could contribute to the agenda of reforming the law and culture of smoking. Already, a space for FIC, Argentina's civil society leader in tobacco control, was in negotiation.

The Case of Uruguay

Uruguay offers a remarkable story of a country that shed its notoriety as a tobacco nation to become the first country to implement each of the standards for tobacco control set forth by the

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[26] "Orchid & Dirty Ashtray Awards," *Alliance Bulletin,* (Issue One), October 16, 2000. https://www.fctc.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/fca_bulletin_001.pdf

FCTC. As well, a case study of Uruguay's ratification of the FCTC and creation of national policy suggests a framework for approaching how world health policy has been translated in different ways in Buenos Aires. The anti-tobacco agenda in Uruguay was conceived from the work of Dr. Eduardo Bianco who succeeded in mobilizing the National Doctor's Union, el Sindicato Médico de Uruguay (SMU), to support his smoking cessation crusade.[27] With the SMU, he worked to persuade the PanAmerican Health Organization and the Ministry of Health of the need for Uruguay to become an active participant in the WHO treaty negotiations. From this collaboration, the National Alliance for Tobacco Control, a coalition of NGOs, was created with the specific goal of prioritizing changes in tobacco policy domestically as inspired by the FCTC process.

The union of civil society with the Ministry of Health and international organizations facilitated the creation of internationally financed projects like 'Project Smoke-Free Uruguay' which funded mass education campaigns, scientific research, and journalism trainings and competitions meant to inspire coverage of the tobacco debate. Through these domestic projects that ran concurrent to the FCTC negotiations, a new consciousness of the tobacco health debate took hold of Uruguayan society. While Uruguay's ratification of the FCTC in 2004 and the election to presidency of oncologist Tabaré Vásquez in 2005 also mark important points of change for national tobacco policy, the work of civil society seemed to have already introduced a culture of compliance with tobacco regulation; the media and education campaigns surrounding the party conferences, then, primed the Uruguayan public for the codification of FCTC guidelines into law.

In a 2007 edition of the Alliance Bulletin titled "How did Uruguay achieve so much change?", the authors attribute Uruguay's 100% smoke-free environments to the sensitization of the public to the harms of smoking, concluding that "the experience of Uruguay has demonstrated that the application of smoke-free environment not only is desirable, but also possible, even in Latin

[27] Wipfli.

American countries with high consumption and especially when there is support of civil society and the political will of the government."[28] Here, there is a clear emphasis on the weight that this cross-sectoral collaboration played in not only driving Uruguay towards ratification and in introducing a drastic change in domestic law, but also in leading the public to be conscious of the issues at play. Uruguay then exemplifies a story of change that began with its active participation in the treaty negotiations and concluded with the rapid assimilation of the FCTC's ideals into their local politics. When we consider the case of Argentina, it is relevant to consider the role of civil society, collaboration with the government, and the new self-regulation and changing awareness of the smoking debate in Uruguay that facilitated the relegation of smoking as a socially unacceptable, cancerous habit.

Civil society on the rise

The rise of civil society as a key figure in tobacco control in Latin America reflects the progression from individuals fighting smoking to the professionalization of this advocacy work.[29] Since the ratification of the FCTC, Argentine civil society has held an irreplaceable role in working with media and political decision makers to introduce change in smoking politics and culture. As delineated in Sebrié and Schoj's article concerning the intersection of civil society and tobacco control, these specific roles include serving as an advocate, watchdog, coalition builder, provider of evidence-based information, and service provider.[30] These characteristics provide a framework for analyzing the work of specific organizations like FIC to understand how the growth of such organs of civil society may reflect developing democratic practice.

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[28] "How did Uruguay achieve so much change?" *Alliance Bulleting*, (Issue 69), 2007.
[29] Champagne, Sebrié, and Schoj. "The role of civil society in tobacco control in Latin America and the Caribbean." *Salud Pública de México* 52.2 (2010): 330-339.
[30] Ibid.

The origins of FIC began with the recent emergence of the InterAmerican Heart Foundation (IAHF) in 2000. The organization's mission was to create a stronger institutional framework and international network for tobacco control approaches in the Latin American region.[31] The IAHF soon became the leader in advocating for regional ratification of the FCTC and adoption of national tobacco control projects. Between 2007 and 2009, the IAHF opened three regional affiliates in Mexico City, Buenos Aires, and Jamaica. Here, la Fundación InterAmericana del Corazón Argentina (FIC Argentina) was conceived in 2008 as the local engine of the anti-smoking agenda.

FIC's founding function was to advocate for tobacco control at the national legislative level and at the global level of FCTC ratification. Their work follows the six characteristics of civil society organization,[32] particularly standing out for their provision of a wealth of research and evidence based advocacy. Since their inception, they have expanded the scope of their tobacco work to focus on other subjects of heart health such as fitness, nutrition, and alcoholism. FIC has maintained an intimate working relationship with the Ministry of Health, the national news, other civil society organizations, and transnational tobacco control assemblies like the Bloomberg Initiative and American Heart Foundation. Although a trail of proposed tobacco control laws precedes the entrance of FIC, the real changes in national law concurred with the rise of the organization and its increasing presence in the field. The initiatives of FIC reflect the growing dynamism between Argentine civil society and governing bodies as they work to adopt the Geneva agenda to their local legislature.

National legislature after the FCTC

A brief review of the legislative projects for tobacco control that mark the past 15 years completes the framework necessary for analyzing the changing culture of smoking. Before the

[31] Champagne, Sebrié, and Schoj.
[32] Ibid.

injection of the WHO's agenda into national politics, a legacy of failed tobacco projects characterizes efforts of reform through the last third of the twentieth century. Recent studies on the interference of the tobacco industry in these projects and their coercion of local politicians reveal the twisted network of actors who inhibited regulation of smoking practice.[33] However, since the ratification of the FCTC, two projects at the national level stand out as forerunners of changing habits.

In 2003, the National Program for Tobacco Control was adopted by the Ministry of Health which promised to develop the already-in-progress regional initiatives for 100% smoke-free environments. This project suggested the prioritization of the tobacco debate at the national level and recognized local changes in law. By 2010, many provinces had introduced a new law for regulating the cigarette trade including in Buenos Aires. With this momentum, the anti-tobacco bloc was at last able to rally enough support for the successful introduction of an ambitious tobacco control law, L26.687, in 2012. Considering a history of failed tobacco projects that dates to the 1980s, the passing of L26.687 suggests that Buenos Aires and the rest of the country had experienced a monumental change in smoking attitudes that has been responsible for the break in the legal continuum of pro-tobacco legislature at the turn of the century. The codification of tobacco control is more than a regulation of a particular vein of the economy; it is the censoring of a habit intimately tied to sociability and self-expression. These legal projects serve as indicators of changing social mores and moral secularism, new conceptions of the responsibility of the government in policing health habits, and the new symbiotic relationship between global and national health policy. The few though significant laws passed since 2003 inform a reading of the cultural and social changes in smoking habit as follows in the next section.

[33] Sebrié, 2005; Ipsen; Armus, 2016; Feldman; Wipfli; Proctor.

II. Changing discourse and public spaces

"I quit smoking and today I feel like a pariah that yearns for a kingdom of exquisite nothingness, an imaginary smoky kingdom, that apparently, was lost long ago…When I stopped smoking, forty years of smoke remained behind me within twenty-four hours. At the end of the month I was a ghostly version of myself. It was then that I realized that smoking is not only strictly breathing and exhaling smoke. No, it is much more than this. Smoking is a landscape of gestures and attitudes that lend an accompanying tone to the dangerous existential void…With time, the flavor of tobacco disappears and is reemployed by the mechanical ritual of the addiction, whose only flavor, if there is one, is in the mind and in the past." –Rodolfo Rabanal, 1999[34]

The global and national projects for tobacco control that developed from the nexus of the FCTC set the substructure for the cultural shift in smoking that has since been in motion. To read a change in culture can be accomplished through a variety of methods, each of which contain their own unique insights and biases. I will primarily use the press to study general changes in attitudes of smoking, beginning by looking at public opinion as it is presented in news and media production that relate to themes of individual, national, and global habits and perspectives of smoking. Using the news as a source offers a multi-vocal reading of an era. As it would be unreliable to identify truth in a single article, I aim to identify trends and modulations in the discussions of smoking culture that appear throughout articles that I draw from the national publication *La Nación* as well as two other major media publications, *Página 13* and *Clarín*.

I then hope to narrow this scope by examining public spaces as an object of study to see how they cultivate or inhibit smoking practice. Considering L26.687, places like cafés and public transportation that used to be characteristically veiled in smoke fumes became censored by national law. The restriction on smoking places, and the noncompliance of smokers with these laws, has created a new landscape of smokers where the night, the web, and other points of sale have become their haven for reception, practice, and exchange. In the broad evaluation of shifting attitudes and in the closer analysis of public spaces, the work of FIC serves as a vocal source of knowledge through its frequent contributions to *La Nación* in the form of interviews and articles, as well as through its

[34] Rodolfo Rabanal, "Humo azul," *La Nación*, January 31, 1999.

investigative reports that cover themes of smoking as it intersects with popular opinion, public spaces, and social demographics. In my search for articles, I used two approaches. First, in my use of print news archives, I reviewed the last issue of every other month for *La Nación* between 1998 and 2012, as well as for *Clarín*. For the online archives of the three publications, I used the following keywords to identify relevant news articles: 'Fundación InterAmerican del Corazón,' 'tabaco,' 'cigarillos,' and 'fumar,' which together offered a spectrum of stories ranging from editorials to reports on increasing tobacco taxes.

With this approach, I hope to follow the changing social and cultural contexts of smoking, to understand the recent conception of the modern smoker. Smoking can be interpreted from these news publications as cultural diffusion and distinction. Essentially, the confluence of these articles map smoking practice across distinct identity groups, each with their own reason for smoking, and reveal smoking as a habit that has passed down through social hierarchies, moving from upper class to working class, men to women, adults to adolescents and children. The following questions then continue to be of relevance: How does smoking relate to conceptions of Argentine identity? How might smoking serve as a medium for constructing recent history? And does FIC, with its active production, influence media coverage and how the debate is represented? Since many articles either begin global with discussions of the WHO or are grounded in the routines of daily life in Buenos Aires, it is valuable to consider as well the interaction between the abstract principles for tobacco control conceived in Geneva with the customs and habits of Buenos Aires. Then, what is lost or added in the translation of global policy to local realities? And how have new subcultures of smoking been able to survive and grow from this relationship?

In these articles, references to the many purposes of smoking become apparent as they range from issues of socialization, political stress, youth identity, individual rights to health, the responsibility of national government in providing health access and information, and the dynamic

interplay between global and local actors and agendas. The characterization of smoking as an 'epidemic' develops in these publications through grounding in both the social and medical connotations of the word. As journalists condemn the harms of smoking for one's health and point to alarming statistics concerning tobacco-related illnesses, the medicalization of smoking then introduces tobaccoism as sickness, another way to comprehend recent history. As well, the portrayal of smoking as an epidemic suggests a sense of urgency for actors like the government to step up and protect the health of its citizens.

In the other sense of the word, reading smoking as a social epidemic, as presented through the media's coverage of the culture of smoking, reveals the malleability of smoking for molding identity in modern times. An image of the subcultures of smoking as modeled by these publications appears via discussions, images, stereotypes, and stigmatizations of the modern smoker. The processes of social diffusion are at work here as it is clear that smoking practice has departed from its origins as celebrated among the adult, male elite to a stigmatized 'habit-addiction' adopted in growing numbers by women, youth, and the working class.

Reconfiguring the debate; pitting the public against the modern smoker

Identifying the change in smoking culture is accomplished through comparison of news pieces that are written from the early 2000s through today. As well, a new awareness of the transforming culture of smoking can be identified in these publications through the observations of reporters and porteños alike. Earlier reports situate smoking practice within the traditional discourse of smoking as a mechanism of sociability, a malleable tool for self-definition, and a source of release for the stress accumulated from the tensions of daily life. Just ten days after the WHO adopted the FCTC in May 2003, anthropologist and sociologist Leanardo Daino, director of the Anti-Tobacco Campaign of LALCEC, wrote in an article for *La Nación*:

> "Now, the elevated levels of stress derived from the situation of the crisis that we Argentines experience seems to have been equalized through the cigarette. So, the majority of smokers

> are social smokers, that recur to the culturally learned habit of smoking that provides them a dirty tool for controlling the tensions of daily life…Our culture provides mechanisms of escape for its members: habits, ceremonies. In the case of tobacco, smoking is a habit-addiction, established from a base of nicotine, that facilitates the control of stressful social situations."[35]

Here, Daino ascribes mechanisms for dealing with stress to Argentine culture, a trait which seems generally applicable to many national contexts, though it is interesting here as he refers to the unresolved social anxiety and political tension that have remained as vestiges of the banking crisis of 2001. More than attributing a social character to smoking, Daino acknowledges that smoking is a "habit-addiction"; the addition of the descriptor 'addiction' to 'habit' suggests the intimate relation of the two. Smoking, then, is a social mechanism to deal with stress, and nicotine offers, in a sense, a constant way to cope with stress because it is addictive.

Other articles that were published concurrent to the FCTC negotiations focused on the community of youth smokers as cigarettes continued to symbolize the appeal of the exclusive adult world. Discussions of "the desire of children to enter into the world of adults and its pleasures, including smoking"[36] are strengthened by interviews with high school and college-aged students who talk about the choice to smoke as intimately tied to feelings of social anxiety and the desire to belong especially as these adolescents self-divided among those who smoke and those who do not. One reporter goes so far as to suggest that there are characteristics that parents can identify in the personality of the adolescent smoker who "gets bored easily, tends to be uninhibited, enjoys the search of new sensations and emotions."[37]

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[35] Sebastián A. Ríos, "Se fuma más para enfrentar el estrés," *La Nación,* May 31, 2003. http://www.lanacion.com.ar/500181-se-fuma-mas-para-enfrentar-el-estres

[36] Cecilia Boullosa, ""El 30 por ciento de los chicos fuma," *La Nación*, November 30, 2002. http://www.lanacion.com.ar/454130-el-30-por-ciento-de-los-chicos-fuma

[37] Fabiola Czubaj, "El diálogo padre e hijo previene las adicciones: La figura paterna sería más efectiva que los especialistas," *La Nación*, Science/Health, September 30, 2006. http://www.lanacion.com.ar/836922-el-dialogo-padre-e-hijo-previene-las-adicciones

Parallel to these descriptions that focus on the individual habit of smoking are a growing number of pieces that rationalize and medicalize smoking into statistics of youth exposure and initiation. For instance, per a survey commissioned by the Minister of Health, 75.9% of children expressed not having received information in school about tobaccoism in the past year, and 30% of children smoke with most picking up their first cigarette before the age of 13.[38] The lack of education campaigns, which would not come until after the ratification of the FCTC, as well as the still unchecked advertising domain of the tobacco industry, enabled the continued sense of allure of smoking for adolescents as it remained integral to their notions of adulthood and sociability.

In 2005, a law passed in the city of Buenos Aires that prohibits smoking in public spaces and up to 100 meters outside bars and restaurants generated public dialogue concerning the censorship of smoking. While articles that are grounded in statistics and whose primary goal seems to be to relay information regarding the new law maintain a neutral if not favorable tone, publications that are built through interviews with porteños reveal a more nuanced reception of the law. Those who were skeptical of the measure pointed to it as paternalistic and made the common appeal to the right of individual choice. On the other hand, sentiments of supporters of the law are captured in the response of Carlos Chueke, a 73-year-old who frequents a café in the center of the city that would be affected by the new restrictions on smoking in public spaces. He shares:

> "Puf! Here we all smoke, sometimes we have to put the air conditioning on to refresh the air. The measure seems perfect for such a small space like this. It's possible that it could lower business, but I don't trade money for health." [39]

Here, Chueke acknowledges that smoking is still pervasive and so concedes that the tobacco control measure would be 'perfect' for curbing smoking practice in small local cafes. His evaluation of the debate as one of 'money' versus 'health' reflects the way the tobacco debate was being framed at the

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[38] Ibid.

[39] "Y no cambio plata por salud," *La Nación*, September 30, 2005.

governmental level. This new responsiveness of the public to tobacco control initiatives suggests a turning point in terms of a public discussion of the issue as similar projects in the past did not receive the same reception. Considering that it was only a few years earlier that Argentina was identified and self-imagined as the "paradise of smokers,"[40] where the division of smoking spaces was ridiculed and the norm of reserving the best spots in cafes for smokers prevailed, this positive reaction to legal projects after 2003 foreshadows a narrative of change.

As well, it is important to note that this publication's use of personal interviews is unique. More often, articles that promoted the anti-tobacco agenda mobilized their arguments through quantitative rather than qualitative information. This pattern of using statistics to justify the anti-tobacco project contrasts with the tobacco industry's tendency to use qualitative information, such as marketing campaigns that appeal to the desires and interests of smokers, to enrapture the public. Here, we can begin to observe the distinct vocabularies and approaches used by the anti-tobacco camp versus those used by the industry. While anti-tobacco actors employed the language of objective and uncontestable facts in the interest of regulating the habit of a whole population, marshalling data in order to advance a particular agenda, the tobacco industry appealed to the use of images and identity narratives in the interest of satisfying the desires of their consumers. Making this distinction between using lived experience versus abstract statistics to mobilize pro or anti-tobacco sentiments makes it easier to see the politics involved in the tobacco debate.

The identifiable change in perceptions of smoking and the policing of smoking developed as porteños themselves began to address and articulate the new wave of awareness of the changing meanings of the cigarette. The shifting of the public gaze to smoking as an issue of public importance distinguishes contemporary Buenos Aires from the previous century where themes of

[40] "Fumar pasó de moda?", *La Nación*, June 12, 2013. https://www.lanacion.com.ar/1587695-fumar-paso-de-moda.

cigarette consumption remained external to changing political agendas in both times of dictatorship and democracy.[41] Rather than crediting changes in domestic politics, it seems that the milieu of international consensus and global actors catalyzed this new awareness of the smoking debate if not after the ratification of the FCTC, certainly following the passing of the national tobacco control law in 2011.

This new attitude can be identified in direct observations of the growing stigmatization of smoking. One reporter notes,

> "Another change in attitude is in the perception of the harm that the smoke of tobacco produces. Unlike what was occurring not so long ago, when an emboldened smoker chose to raise his voice in a bar or in a taxi to demand that his 'right' to smoke be respected, 98.3% of Argentines now know that smoking causes serious diseases…Like in the rest of the countries, public opinion is changing about the impact of tobaccoism on the health. Smoking is not good, and second-hand smoke is harmful and fatal."[42]

Where did this new awareness come from? Did the medicalization of smoking as introduced through efforts of the WHO and local civil society construct the modern smoker as the subject of shame campaigns? In a subsequent article, a journalist suggests that the policing of smokers by non-smokers drives tobacco control more effectively than official monitoring efforts might have accomplished.

> "The population became conscious of the risks of smoking for one's health and this can be seen clearly in the decisions to not smoke in homes or in other private environments. But still as we must intensify the controls on smoking, it is difficult to have an inspector in each kiosk to make sure that they don't sell cigarettes to minors in all the bars and public spaces where it is prohibited to smoke. It is a law that basically puts value in the control of the citizen."[43]

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[41] Armus, 2016.

[42] Fabiola Czubaj, "Los argentinos y el cigarillo: siete de cada diez piensan en dejar," *La Nación,* Society/Health, December 4, 2012. https://www.lanacion.com.ar/1533127-los-argentinos-y-el-cigarrillo-siete-de-cada-diez-piensan-en-dejar

[43] Fabiola Czubaj, "La adicción al cigarillo no retrocede, pero crece el rechazo social," *La Nación*, Buenos Aires/Health, May 23, 2017. https://www.lanacion.com.ar/2026423-la-adiccion-al-cigarrillo-no-retrocede-pero-crece-el-rechazo-social

The author here points to self-regulation and informal community monitoring as central to transforming ideas of what is acceptable smoking behavior; the manners of smoking had begun to be codified.[44] If this observation is to be taken as an accurate reflection of change and sensitization to the smoking issue, then self-regulation can perhaps be understood as a way of measuring change in cultural awareness as cigarettes have become relegated to a position of stigmatization.

This idea of the internalization of tobacco control as a self-regulatory mechanism within each individual has powerful connotations for understanding the role of the state, if it is even necessary, versus that of other channels like civil society actors and their information campaigns in introducing a new attitude towards smoking. Perhaps the achievement of civil society resides not so much in the changing of national law, but rather in the production of self-regulating subjects as we have seen in the case of Uruguay. The industry's construction of smoking as 'sociability' comes in conflict here with the individualization of the tobacco debate with the pointed turn towards individuals as the regulated and the regulator. This idea suggests that the potential for a smoke-free Buenos Aires rests in the transformed attitudes of individuals who make up a new self-regulating public.

Tobacco advocates also display a perhaps naive optimism for what the perceptible changes in smoking signify for goals of a 100% smoke-free future. Dr. Anguira shares with La Nación,

> "For many years, the tobacco industry convinced us that smoking was for being with friends, that it was part of communication, like sharing mate. Now, this is no longer normal. For this reason smoking has passed from fashion."[45]

Here, Dr. Anguira localizes the tradition of smoking in the context of porteño sociability through his comparison of smoking to that of drinking mate.[46] As well, he boldly asserts that smoking is no

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[44] Feldman.
[45] Gabriela Navarra, "Fumar pasó de moda?", *La Nación*, June 12, 2013, https://www.lanacion.com.ar/1587695-fumar-paso-de-moda.

longer a symbol of what it means to be 'cool' nor a necessary ritual for initiation into the adolescent realm of counter-culture, risk and pleasure-seeking. But it is difficult to identify this sentiment as an accurate reflection of smoking culture. It could be that the anticipation of change has obscured the existence of continued subcultures of smoking that have adapted to the modern landscape.

Senator Paula Bertol, a fierce advocate of anti-tobacco laws, carefully noted in reference to the modest project for tobacco control in 2005, that "we didn't want to abruptly transform a culture that is totally smoker into a city free of smoke because we know that this is not possible."[47] Her reservations about the feasibility of completely altering the makeup of the city, its smoking spaces and communities, reflects a nuanced understanding of the local character of smoking in Buenos Aires. Bertol grounds the hope for local change that came out of the FCTC in the reality of what it means to change a cultural habit, a long process that certainly cannot be realized by the introduction of law alone.

With Bertol's more cautious evaluation of the smoking scene in mind, we must be able to identify a new sub-community and form of smoking that has evolved to explain the continued dominance and prosperity of the tobacco industry. The depiction of a new smoking community would contradict the evaluations of doctors whose work directly involves them in dialogues of change in smoking and journalists who set out to report on legal initiatives and general reception of tobacco control efforts who take an empirical lens to support their evaluations of the diminishing smoking community. An editorial written in 2013 offers one perspective of this new, present though less overt, community:

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[46] Mate is a drink typical of Argentina and the Latin American region that is made by steeping 'yerba mate' leaves in hot water. It is served in a gourd and drunk through a metal straw. It is most often consumed as a communal beverage that is passed between friends and family.

[47] "Hacia un mundo libre de humo," *La Nación,* September 30, 2005. https://www.lanacion.com.ar/743406-hacia-un-mundo-libre-de-humo

> "You can find them in balconies, or with half a body leaning through a window towards the void, or seated at a table in a corner bar (near the sun if it is cold and far from the sun if it is hot). You can see them grouped together at some door or walking in circles along some path, or more relaxed, in group, at the entrance of some office, in the door of a restaurant or in the spaces reserved for them, always farther from the others. It seems a lie, but they are the smokers. A species threatened with extinction that resists even though they have passed from fashion; the least cool or fashionable that one can imagine."[48]

This descriptive landscape of the 'modern' smoker suggests the recent medicalization and stigmatization of smoking; a habit once lauded as a symbol of pleasure is now a source of addiction that no longer unifies smokers through a pact of being the 'cool' others. Instead, the 'otherness' of smokers in this article suggests that they are now united in their shared status of social rejects contained to their designated smoking spaces where they have to think twice before lighting up. Yet even ten years after the ratification of the FCTC, smokers remain a continuous presence; they are just conceived in a different way. Essentially, their relationship with the rest of society has changed even if the same motivations for smoking persist.

This passage reveals a distinction between smokers of the past and those of the present, a rupture in the continuity of the cigarette's narrative. The perceived 'extinction' of the traditional Argentine smoker suggests the significance of the shifting place of smoking as porteños and journalists alike take note of the dying habit of smoking as a celebrated cultural norm. The image of this smoker perhaps remains only in historical memory, in feelings of nostalgia for the porteño with his cigarettes and espresso. The yearning for the pleasures of this lost smoking sociability exists in works like that of Rober Klein's *Cigarettes are Sublime.*[49] Even before national projects developed to address smoking, the placement of the 'celebrated smoker' in the narrative of history is suggested in Argentine writer and journalist Rodolfo Rabanal's editorial "The Blue Smoke of Cigarettes." Here, he laments his decision to quit smoking, offering a nostalgic ode to smoking, an act which stands for

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[48] Gabriela Navarra, "Fumar pasó de moda?", *La Nación*, June 12, 2013, https://www.lanacion.com.ar/1587695-fumar-paso-de-moda.
[49] Richard Klein, *Cigarettes Are Sublime*, Duke University Press Books, 1995.

much more than the simple inhale and exhale of smoke but captures the contours of youth, desire, and the temporal nature of pleasure. Rabanal's nostalgic piece reminds us of the individual love affairs with cigarettes that compose much of the past century's smoking experience, thus suggesting the even greater sense of rupture and change that develops in the chronology of these news reports that paint a changing attitude towards smoking and the modern smoker.

The news as an agent of change

Besides reading the news to follow trends and evolutions in public smoking dialogue, analyzing the voices and agency of the media as an institution with a social agenda offers insight into understanding the dynamic between news publications and changing perceptions of smoking. Editorials are clear examples of a publication taking a stance on an issue of public importance. They also present a unique mode of argumentation. The strongest worded editorials appear most frequently around times of legal projects and international health conferences. These pieces reveal three roles that the media has adopted in terms of the tobacco debate: the news as a line of direct advocacy and health education, as a vocal supporter of the agendas of FIC and the WHO, as well as a self-appointed policeman of governmental bodies like the Ministry of Health and the National Congress who have lagged in their efforts towards implementing national tobacco control laws. The frequent use of FIC's expertise and research by the media reiterates the integral role of the organization in generating public dialogue concerning the 'tobacco epidemic.'

The media's role as a podium for information campaigns and for raising sensitivity of the public to the tobacco issue has already been established by the review of coverage of the tobacco debate that lends a sympathetic tone for the anti-tobacco agenda. Yet the authorship of an editorial reflects a strong impulse of morality and suggests that the news editors, who are vested with the power to craft public interest and sway public opinion, felt it was their duty to serve the greater good of the paper's national readers by taking an assertive stand in the tobacco debate. In a 2009 article

calling for smoke-free environments, the editorial board of *La Nación* urged the approval of the most recent legislative project that would introduce bans on smoking in public and work spaces, a measure that is "a pending debt that shouldn't be further delayed." The board writes:

> "There are no doubts about the harms of tobaccoism…This isn't about discriminating against the smoker. It is about, simply, saying where one can smoke so that it doesn't become a risk for the health of those that choose not to do it." [50]

The editors develop this thought by appealing to the rights of the individual, particularly those of the non-smoker who is affected by second-hand smoke. There is no question as to whether smoking is harmful, nor as to whether tobacco control is a form of discrimination. Rather, the debate here concerns the correct 'manners' of smoking that respect the general right to health for each individual of Argentine society. And so continues the distancing between the modern smoker with modern society. The cycle of positive feedback is broken; where smoking was once a practice encouraged and amplified by a city of smokers, there now exists a majority of non-smokers who serve to pit society against the individual smoker.

Subsequent editorials take a more aggressive tone by calling out the tobacco industry for targeting youth in their belligerent publicity campaigns. A formula for these pieces becomes apparent in the repeated use of the 'death clock' statistics, public opinion polls that show support for stricter tobacco control laws, interview excerpts from advocates like senator Paula Bértol,[51] and an ever-urgent call to support local projects or to ratify the Framework Convention. Each of these editorials draw on research conducted by FIC or highlights new initiatives of the organization in collaboration with the Health Ministry, such as workshops for training journalists in how to navigate the tobacco debate in the face of the industry's massive misinformation productions.

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[50] "Ambientes libres de humo," *La Nación*, editorial, October 30, 2009. https://www.lanacion.com.ar/1192152-ambientes-libres-de-humo

[51] "Tabaco: otro año más sin ley," *La Nación,* editorial, December 28, 2009. https://www.lanacion.com.ar/1216030-tabaco-otro-ano-mas-sin-ley

The issue of responsibility, as well, finds a place in these editorials. In calling for change, the question arises as to whom is the target of these critiques. In 2014, the editorial board of *La Nación* asks:

> "We know that in bingos, casinos, and some dance halls they don't comply with the law. It is then only fitting to ask why, and who are those responsible of this noncompliance with the norms."[52]

The editorials then navigate the fine line of calling out bodies like the Health Ministry and the Senate, who are the main line of government collaboration for groups like FIC, to incite them to action rather than anger. A few months later, in light of a study by FIC that revealed that 73% of kiosks were in violation with advertising standards introduced by L26.687 one year prior, another editorial demanded the accountability of the government and again blamed both the tobacco industry for disseminating deceptive images meant for adolescents and the Health Ministry for acting only as a symbolic watchdog.[53] Other editorials continue by using Argentina's failure to ratify the FCTC to suggest the moral failing of its Congress, especially in comparison with the other 181 nations who have ratified the treaty, "those countries that do value improving the health of their citizens" rather than allowing "commercial interests to continue to carry the greatest weight at the most important hour of decision making."[54] These veiled critiques suggest the stance of the news, and of their friends like FIC, that lasting change must come from legislative bodies and legal frameworks just as the WHO has done through its creation of a global legal treaty. As well, the focus of the editorials on the issue of regulating 'public spaces' sets the tone of the next section which turns to the contested relationship between space and the evolving sub-cultures of smoking.

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[52] "Muertes por Tabaco," *La Nación,* editorial, March 25, 2014. https://www.lanacion.com.ar/1675035-muertes-por-tabaco

[53] "Antitabaco, otra ley que no se respeta," *La Nación*, editorial, August 23, 2014. https://www.lanacion.com.ar/1721100-antitabaco-otra-ley-que-no-se-respeta

[54] "Ley antitabaco, tampoco en 2010?" *La Nación,* editorial, November 22, 2010. https://www.lanacion.com.ar/1326975-ley-antitabaco-tampoco-en-2010

The tobacco industry and centers of smoking culture

The image of modern smokers that is drawn from the previous fragments of articles and from the many more that adopt similar language and perspectives on smoking suggests a general perception of smoking as a dying habit that might at last be extinguished through Argentina's ratification of the FCTC and its passing of stringent national tobacco control laws. However, certain subcultures of smoking persist; it seems the smoker has evolved into a new character, whether this is through the advent of the electronic cigarette, noncompliance with tobacco control laws, or the continued misinformation campaigns and marketing schemes of the tobacco industry whose magnetic pull continues to draw youth and women into its folds.

Examining the research papers and protocols published by FIC reveals a disparity between the way journalists portray the slow progress of the anti-tobacco agenda with the reality of a continued habit. These publications include protocols, research projects, public opinion polls, and case reviews. Their treatment of smoking as it persists in its multitude of forms and spaces today challenges the idea that smoking has become decidedly stigmatized as the mainstream news would lead one to believe. In a 2018 interview with Verónica Schoj, Nora Bär, a reporter from Televisión Pública Noticias reveals her take on the issue,

> "Before you saw smoking in all of the films and everywhere around but today it would be unthinkable, even uncomfortable, to see an image of this type because it has been culturally transformed."[55]

Is this a correct evaluation of smoking, as a 'culturally transformed' practice? When we look at public places where smoking communities remain vibrant today, we get a different story than that which is offered from this report and from the transformative narrative of smoking as it appears in the news.

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[55] "Entrevista a Véronica Schoj," *La Nación*, Conversaciones, November 6, 2015. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=amsxDFmxEnE

This disconnect between the landscape of smokers that is presented by the media, and that is also reflected by public support for smoke-free environments, with the actual practice of smoking suggests the vital distinction between changing awareness of the smoking debate versus transformation of the smoking habit. Attitude versus practice, then, informs the following observations of the tension between the way smoking practice is prescribed by the law versus how it is encouraged by the industry in the three spaces of kiosks, the web, and the night.

The most recent tobacco control law, L26.687, has its own structural failings that have created loopholes for the tobacco industry to continue its ceaseless marketing campaigns and trade of cigarettes. As explained in a report by FIC concerning the publicity of tobacco products at points of sale,[56] the law does permit the sale, advertising, and use of cigarettes in certain public places like dance halls and restaurants provided it takes place in an area separated from the greater venue. As well, tobacco companies have introduced new forms of announcing and exhibiting their brand through flashy displays strategically placed near candy in kiosks and on big screens at night clubs. In the words of the industry,

> "Now that Argentine law prohibits publicity in traditional forms, we have three main channels available. One is the point of sale, where the retailer plays a key role; another one is the Internet, where we establish a direct and unipersonal communication; and the other channel is made up of bars and nightclubs."[57]

The tobacco industry is well aware of the paths of actions that remain for them after national tobacco controls were mandated by law in Argentina. FIC's report continues by outlining the four courses of action that the industry has developed based on these three 'principle channels of publicity' which are: the exhibition of the product, the commercial incentives for the retailers, the

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[56] Verónica Shoj et al. "Publicidad, Promoción y Patrocinio de Productos de Tabaco en los Puntos de Venta de Argentina: Características y Cumplimiento de la Normativa Vigente. Informe de Resultados Ley Nacional." Investigative Report of the Fundación Interamericana del Corazón. June, 2014.

[57] Ibid.

design of the packaging and product as a form of publicity, and the incentives for the consumer such as gifts, promotions, and contests. Each of these techniques aims to strengthen the attraction and accessibility of smoking for the modern porteño by taking advantage of the shortcomings in the national law for the benefit of the industry. Examining the following reports of the robust culture of smoking that inhabits both public and peripheral spaces begins to suggest that the WHO's guidelines for national tobacco control were usurped by the tobacco sector, leaving public interest and the right to health secondary to the right to individual choice and self-expression.

Before considering the cigarette and its continued presence in the Argentine public sphere, an important paradox must be addressed. Statistics and public opinion polls as developed through surveys and interviews conducted by FIC suggest that an overwhelming majority of Argentinians are in favor of ratifying the FCTC, introducing stricter national tobacco control laws, and in creating a 100% smoke-free environment. This data can explain the optimistic tone that the media and reporters like Nora Bär have adopted in their observations of a changing conscience and awareness of the tobacco debate. For instance, a year after L26.687 was approved, 89.1% of Argentines polled expressed that they knew about the law, and 93.3% supported the law and the anti-tobacco agenda. However, of those polled, only 56.9% thought that the measures outlined by the law have been followed while the legislative guidelines have been close to ignored. They further divulged their perceptions of where noncompliance with the law occurred: 90% suggested that people still smoke in discotecas, 48% affirmed that smoking persists in game rooms, 43% in bars, 34% in universities, and the list goes on.[58] Even though these statistics suggest that there has been an overall favorable response to changing laws and social mores of smoking, the fact is that the modern smoker remains a recognizable, anticipated character who frequents cafes and nightclubs with the same facility, though perhaps not the same reception, as he might have twenty years prior.

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[58] Ibid.

Perhaps the evolving publicity strategies of the industry as they plaster flashy ads in kiosks and nightclubs can explain the persistence of the individual smoker. Over the course of 2014, FIC conducted a study in 8 major cities that intended to evaluate cigarette points of sale and publicity strategies. After investigating 850 kiosks, the principal sale point for tobacco products, they found that less than a quarter had ads that explicitly labeled products as prohibited for kids under 18 years of age, as required by law.[59] Furthermore, half of the kiosks had decorative exhibitions of the cigarettes placed nearby candy displays. The kiosks reflect the tradition of using points of sale for advertising and targeting youth, an idea confirmed by an executive of BAT-Nobleza Piccardo when he wrote in a 2012 article of Fortune magazine titled "How to sell without using advertising,"

> "To make distribution more efficient, we need to add value through contact with the client. As we do not sell directly, our clients are the kiosks or convenience stores, so we know our relationship with them is crucial."[60]

Despite the recent introduction of strict tobacco control laws, the industry continues to exploit the power of images to capture new consumers. A study of smoker initiation in Spain confirms the fact that was first established with the cycle of lawsuits against the tobacco industry in the early 2000s - that publicity, promotion, and patronage naturalizes the negative image of smoking which then both increases consumption and the incentive to start smoking, as well as lowers the motivation for smokers to quit. The brightly lit up displays of cigarettes, which stand next to candy bins and at the eye level of young children, hold the incredible power and potential to catch the attention of a passerby. This point of rapture and connection with the advertisements may seem harmless in the moment, but is a proved catalyst for turning images and words like 'suave' into a life-long habit-addiction.

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[59] Paricia Gutowski and Mariela Alderte, "Health is Not Negotiable. 2nd Edition. Civil Society against the Tobacco inudstry's Strategies in Latin America. Case

[60] "How to Sell Without Advertising," *Fortune Magazine*, September 29, 2012.

Mapping the modern landscape of points of sale and advertising, then, affirms the idea that the tobacco industry has constructed smoking as a realm meant to signify the adult world for youth and adolescents. A study published in the journal *Tobacco Control* draws on industry documents and newspapers dating from 1994 to 2004 to provide a brief history of the psychographic studies and marketing segmentation that have informed the creation of profiles for four target consumer groups.[61] These profiles reveal a concerted focus on capturing a youth market of smokers, intentions that have manifested themselves in the kiosk strategies observed earlier. Psychographic studies conducted by companies Nobleza Piccardo (BAT) and Massalin Particulares (Philip Morris), whose largest brand was Marlboro, focused on lifestyle and values of the target smokers rather than the traditional focus on age demographics. BAT even created a matrix of personality types for the new smoking target, the 'Young Adult Urban Smoker' (YAUS), which included four sections:

> "…with 'progressives' being agnostic, liberal and anti-US in politics; 'jurassics' or conservatives being religious and pro-US, and 'crudos' or 'spoiled brats' being uninvolved in religious or political issues." [62]

The industry used these studies of adolescent sociability and identity to encode ideas of a liberal lifestyle, individual freedom, and nationalism, among other themes, as the language of the tobacco campaigns of the 1990s and early 2000s. Although the introduction of L26.687 has restricted the messaging tools of the industry, the strategic manipulation of psychographic studies of the modern smoker allows the industry to continue to develop publicity messages for adolescents; the target is the same within an evolved form of advertising. The authors of this study seem right to suggest that, due to the recurring patterns of publicity used by the industry, anti-tobacco groups could employ these same strategies to counter the industry's campaigns.

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[61] S. Braun and R. Mejía, "Tobacco Industry Targeting Youth in Argentina," *Tobacco Control,* Vol 17, No. 2, (April, 2008), 111-117.
[62] Ibid.

As well, the industry documents used in this report point specifically to Argentina as a "market in expansion" worthy of expensive advertising campaigns. The success of their efforts is reflected in the 20% increase in cigarette sales between 1990 and 2004, as well as in the fact that 90% of children ages 14-17 responded in a 2002 survey to having seen tobacco ads in Buenos Aires in the previous thirty days. Considering the very recent research by FIC of publicity and points of sale, it is likely that similar results to this survey could be found today. In fact, the past ten years have provided the industry with a new powerful platform for publicity that makes up for the introduction of advertising controls, the internet.

The world of the web has opened an entirely new channel for communicating products to mass communities of consumers and internet users. Considering the importance of the internet as a forum of communication and information exchange for younger generations, tobacco companies have tailored their online presence to the preferences and lifestyle of adolescents. For instance, FIC's review of the online presence of the industry uses Philip Morris's webpage as an example of evolved marketing strategies. Upon entering the site, the user is prompted to fill out contact information and to name their preferred brand of cigarettes, a questionnaire which is followed by gifting the user with a coupon and entrance to the site. Here, users can play games to earn more promotions, read about limited editions and flavors, sign up for summer concerts, enter in competitions like designing a packet of cigarettes, or simply browse the promotional videos that flash images that range from dancers at outdoor concerts to edgy urban landscapes.

The 'Maybe Marlboro' campaign and its legacy of promotions that follow is another demonstrative example of how the industry has infused the internet and other points of sale with their characteristic aggression in targeting adolescents and apathy to national tobacco control laws. First launched in 2011 in Germany by Philip Morris International and later introduced into 64 countries including Argentina, 'Maybe Marlboro' was promptly condemned for violating Article 13

of the FCTC for its explicit promotional messaging to encourage cigarette use particularly among adolescents.[63] The premise of the campaign is that the decision to smoke is not one of yes, no, or maybe; this type of hesitance is meant to reflect the uncertainty of adolescence, the indecision of what type of social behavior entails belonging.[64] Rather, to smoke is to 'be Marlboro' and to become everything that the brand stands for including confidence and allure. The campaign logo is '~~May~~be Marlboro,' which cleverly changes a statement of hesitation to an assertion of brand and personal identity. A slogan accompanies this, "Don't be a maybe. Be Marlboro," and is strengthened by visuals that vary across countries but most often feature young, attractive smokers.

Palermo Films S.A., an advertising agency in Argentina and Uruguay, transformed this campaign to a short clip of young people dancing with a voiceover, "Be real, be free, be fearless, be inspiration, be celebration, be everything you are, and everything you want to be. Be Marlboro."[65] The connotations of this message, that to smoke Marlboros is to realize all harbored desires for pleasure and independence, again underscore adolescents as the target. Maybe Marlboro occupied the internet and traditional advertising platforms alike, whether it was the company's website, on the streets, or at promotional events and parties where drinks and Marlboros were handed out as extra enticement. Although German tobacco control organizations put pressure on their Prime Minister of Health to investigate this campaign for targeting adolescents which led to a ban of its advertising in public places, it continued with a modified 'You Decide' campaign. From this controversy, as well, the 'Stop Marlboro' initiative was created by the international organization Campaign for

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[63] Article 13 of the FCTC introduces restrictions on tobacco industry advertising content, messages, and audiences.

[64] "You're the Target: New Global Marlboro Campaign Found to Target Teens," *Tobacco Free Kids,* March, 2014. https://www.tobaccofreekids.org/assets/global/pdfs/en/yourethetarget_report.pdf

[65] "Buscan prohibir la campaña 'Be Marlboro' en todo el mundo," La Fundación InterAmericana del Corazón-Argentina. April 15, 2014. https://www.ficargentina.org/buscan-prohibir-la-campana-be-marlboro-en-todo-el-mundo/

Tobacco-Free Kids as a branch of the anti-tobacco advocacy agency focused on fighting against Marlboro's explicit targeting of adolescents.

After the 2013 ban in Germany of Maybe Marlboro, Argentina followed suit through the channel of the Consejo Nacional de Autorregulación Publicitaria (CONARP), the national authority on standards for advertising. They claimed that the campaign's messaging "related to decisions and attitudes that influence identity formation, particularly in relation to pre-adolescents and adolescents in their desire to emulate adults, a theme that is a continual concern of the World Health Organization."[66] While this ruling lowered the frequency that Maybe Marlboro was featured in online advertisements and dance venue displays, no real regulation or enforcement of the campaign was introduced in Buenos Aires; the city remains a focus of the Stop Marlboro campaign.

Beyond the realm of the internet, the city at night becomes the next scene where smoking culture returns as smokers populate the street and night venues with a renewed vigor no longer seen in the regulated public spaces of the day. Here, a new subculture of smoking suggests a resistance to the changing laws and social mores, a reminder that ultimately smoking as a form of self-expression becomes most salient in the youth-filled spaces of the night.

In the BBC documentary, "Burning Desire: The Seduction of Smoking", journalist Peter Taylor turns his attention to the porteño night as a hubbub of smoking culture. His interviewee Véronica Schoj, the then director of FIC, addresses this theme:

> "In the city of Buenos Aires, we evaluated 40 discos, and 95% violated the law – night time is a different story."[67]

Peter Taylor investigates for himself the information offered by Schoj, statistics that suggest a blatant tolerance, even promotion, of smoking in dance venues. As he enters a club, the camera

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[66] Ibid.
[67] "Burning Desire: The Seduction of Smoking," BBC Mini-Series. 2014. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RntmJAKThMM

pans out to the left and the right of the main stage and shows 'Philip Morris' emblazoned across two huge screens. Subsequent camera shots show dancing silhouettes with cigarette smoke streaming around them, lighters exchanged and cigarettes sold behind the bar with more advertising screens positioned behind the barista. As Taylor concludes, "In the clubs, you'd never guess there were restrictions on smoking."[68]

FIC's case study of Mojito Fest, a promotional event for Pall Mall products and alcohol, serves as a rich example of the new smoking experience as informed by the intersecting forces of illicit points of sale, the web, and the night. FIC's report on the event follows the chronology of an attendee's exposure to and experience with smoking culture. This case study is also revealing of the audience and message of such promotional campaigns that again seem most closely linked to adolescent culture.

The first entrance point into Mojito Fest is online where the event is advertised and where tickets to the event can be obtained. After filling out personal data, including date of birth as the age requirement is 21 years, the survey prompts the user to fill out their preferences of tobacco product and cigarette brand. Completion of this survey awards the new guest with a coupon for a pack of Pall Mall brand cigarettes. At the actual event, after passing through a line of security a second barrier of Pall Mall promoters stand ready at the doors, an unavoidable wall of live publicity. Their approach, this personal interaction, aids in normalizing the smoking scene in the venue and in helping the guests replace concerns with regulations and stigmas with the desire to participate and celebrate as the promotors pass out packs of Pall Mall flavored 'mojito' and coupons for free drinks. More Pall Mall Mojitos were sold behind a bar inside the venue.

The space itself included a stage and dance space as well as an outdoor patio for smokers, although this partition did little to control the mingling of smokers indoors. Much like Peter Taylor's

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[68] Ibid.

experience at a nightclub, here huge screens displaying Pall Mall Mojito were found framing the stage and the bar, among other locations. The physical occupation of this night club by the industry reflects the injection of cigarette culture into the adolescent social sphere and culture of the night. Here, through the web, attractive promoters, club music, and alcohol, the presence of the tobacco industry is not subtle; there is no need to hide in the transformed nights of Buenos Aires.

Smokers endure through these spaces of commerce, the web, and the night where the publicity strategies of the tobacco industry ensure the survival of tobacco culture. Here, the industry continues to encourage smoking through the creation of tropes for smoker identity as exemplified in the messaging of the Mojito Fest and Maybe Marlboro campaigns. Certainly, smoking culture has been transformed since the introduction of the FCTC in 2003. Understanding this rapid change and break in a continuum of smoking sociability and politics, identifying ways to measure both qualitative and quantitative changes in culture, thus occupies the focus of this paper. Yet an evaluation of this change has revealed the presence of a transforming smoking community that reflects the perseverance of the tobacco industry. The industry remains the fuel for the pockets of resistant smokers who, despite the introduction of national tobacco control law and an active civil society, continue to inhabit and create the Buenos Aires landscape.

As individuals assimilate the medicalized vision of smoking into a new system of manners and self-regulation simultaneous to the targeted industry campaigns that appeal to adolescent and porteño identity, perhaps a reconfiguration of the relationship between regulators and the regulated is necessary in an evaluation of a transforming smoking culture. Here, both civil society and the industry have worked through distinct strategies to control the way Argentines think about smoking. Ultimately, it comes down to the individual smoker against a new sensitized public, outside the sphere of government regulation, that informs the modern culture of smoking today.

Conclusion

As we have understood smoking as a habit of social diffusion, it follows that the characteristics of the growing sub-cultures of smokers in Buenos Aires today are distinct from those of the past cigarette century. These changes include the shift from the adult, predominantly male, and upper class groups to adolescents, women, and poorer communities. Attention to the recent phenomenon of the 'feminization of smoking,'[69] as well as the correlation between impoverished communities with tobaccoism is missing from the scope of this paper. This choice reflects the dominant focus on the relationship between tobacco messaging and adolescent smokers in research and news publication. Although women and individuals from lower socio-economic backgrounds are only now receiving greater concern and coverage as vulnerable to smoking practice, like adolescents they have been identified as the 'replacement smokers' by the industry for the new cigarette era. In other words, the modern smoker here is in part constructed by the targeted efforts of the industry. An image of the modern smoker, then, is strongly associated with adolescents and females, a vision that is supported by the fact that as of 2018, teenage girls in Argentina smoked 33% more frequently than did boys of the same age.[70]

Defining the modern smoker and smoking culture is revealing of the origins of the 'rapid change' in cigarette politics in Buenos Aires in the past fifteen years. As we have identified the possible agents of this changing practice as the global community of the WHO, the ratification of the FCTC, bodies of local and transnational civil society, as well as the responses of the smoking and non-smoking public and the industry itself, it seems that transforming notions of smoking were born from the dynamic relationship between global and local health dialogue, and public and

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[69] "El vicio de fumar," *La Nación*, editorial, November 12, 2015.
[70] Antoine Latran, "Smoking in Argentina on the Rise Among Younger, Poorer Populations," *The Bubble,* May 28, 2018. http://www.thebubble.com/smoking-in-argentina-on-the-rise-among-poorer-population/

individual regulation. The translators, organizations like FIC who took the scheme and spirit of the FCTC and translated a global treaty into local education campaigns, legal projects, and lobbies, hold a crucial role in making a global project fit the language and scene of Buenos Aires. But there is no single actor who led the change in smoking from celebrated to medicalized, rather a confluence of factors has elicited this change.

We can use the issue of smoking to reconstruct recent history in the sense that smoking politics and culture can serve as an indicator of multiple processes: the growing participation of Argentina in the global economy, the increasing agency of civil society in mobilizing projects of public health, a new sentiment of secular morality. Reviewing the ways in which the news has reported on new trends and modes of talking about and identifying the changes in smoking, as well as examining the public spaces and the tobacco industry, is suggestive of unanticipated changes in conceptions of national identity and culture, as well.

Through the identifiable change in consciousness of the Argentine public in regards to smoking, it seems that the global and local initiatives for tobacco control have encouraged the growth of a self-regulating public where the behavior of the individual smoker is monitored by the community itself. A new system of manners and sociability of smoking accompanies this change in regulation of cultural habit. No longer is it acceptable to smoke in cafes, public transportation, nor even in the private space of the home. The division of public space into areas where one can and cannot smoke reinforces this new stigmatization of smoking that contributes to this culture of self-regulation. The identity of the smoker no longer radiates a sense of cool or of belonging, but evokes themes of individual and societal health, the evils of foreign companies, and concern over respectability and acceptability.

National identity has then changed not just in the sense of the changing culture of smoking, but in the transformed behaviors, attitudes, institutions, and global relationships that smoking

culture encompasses. Argentina, a place where for so long smoking culture was woven into narratives of individual and national expression, no longer is a paradise of smokers. Instead, the anti-tobacco culture of self-regulation, active civil society, and participation with the global health agenda reflects a new conception of Argentine society as one that has become intimated in the global exchange of health information and culture. Perhaps it is the process of the celebrated smoker becoming a figure of history and source of nostalgia, this process of positioning romantic smoking culture in the past, that best reflects the decisive change in the relationship between cigarettes and Buenos Aires.

Yet as suggested by the study of public spaces that continue to harbor smokers, there remains resistance to the global anti-smoking agenda that has otherwise infiltrated Argentine culture and politics. While the FCTC served as a catalyst for reflecting on the problems of smoking for health and society, its prescriptive, universal guidelines necessitated the coupling of local with global agents to lead local change. It seems that there remains a disconnect between the global framework and then the global as translated through these local agents of change in the efforts to institutionalize tobacco control and make smoking an object of offense; the cultural revolution of smoking remains incomplete. The persistence of smoking sub-culture indicates the presence of a still prosperous industry that remains backed by a government subsidization of tobacco, and implies, as well, the lingering notions of smoking sociability that conflict with the recent individualization of the tobacco debate.

Situating Argentina's unique story of rapid transformation in the context of smoking as a global phenomenon raises important questions about how culture, law, communities and individuals can be shaped by the influence of both global health communities and local civil society. While this paper does not attempt to answer the question of why smoking persists today, to attribute a single actor as the source of changing smoking culture, or to condone or dismiss the significance of the

global-local framework to issues of health and society, it does provide a reading of Argentina's recent history of smoking that elevates the historiography of a cigarette as a revealing method for constructing a more comprehensive history of the city in terms of its cultural habits, sociability, and expressions of individual and national identity. Studying smoking then provides tools for approaching other inquiries that require the quantification and qualification of a change in a cultural practice as woven into local history.

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