

Referring to:

**12<sup>th</sup> IAS-STS Annual Conference - Institute for Advanced Studies on Science,  
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**Special Session: Queer perspectives on STS**

ABSTRACT

**Parthenogenesis? An elusive process within heteronormative imaginaries**

Parthenogenesis is described within Biology as a type of reproduction needing only females to create new individuals through their eggs. It is common in different animals, with the exception of mammals. On the last decades, parthenogenesis has entered the arena of Biomedicine, presented as a technique capable of breaking what Sarah Franklin named IVF-Stem Cell Interface. Unlike other techniques, parthenogenesis draws on a long history. Since its *discovery* until its latest developments, it has generated hopes and fears, leading to intense debates. This research aimed to acquire deeper knowledge on the imaginaries around parthenogenesis present on the scientific community. As a first approach, the news reporting on it on the leading journals *Nature* and *Science* during the last twenty years have been analysed. The analysis has been driven by Critical Discourse Analysis and the theoretical approach links social studies of science with feminist epistemologies and Queer theory, following what has been called *Queer Studies of Science* by Carmen Romero. Linking Judith Butler and Gayle Rubin's ideas on heteronormativity, a model has been developed to explain the main imaginaries found on the news. The present communication will focus on the development of that model and the ways in which it helps to analyse how heteronormative notions rely on the main understanding of fertilisation and parthenogenesis (as the norm and *the other* to it) as well as the roles of the gametes involved (or not) within those processes (finding sperm over represented and masculinised, and eggs feminised and misrepresented).

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