

present has been marked by its leaders' use of alliances to turn their country's geographic position into an exploitable resource in lieu of natural resources available elsewhere' (p. 188). Lee's remarks on the role of the United States in Central America remain prescient, especially on the crucial role of development policies in creating economic and political structures that continue to 'shape local conflict' (p. 188) and on the importance of foreign alliances in Nicaraguan politics. Many will be interested to consider the book's critique on foreign development aid and the consequences of its implementation.

Lee's book is a significant contribution to current scholarship on Nicaragua, US–Latin American relations and foreign aid. It is a very well-written account that will likely turn into a must-read text for the study of contemporary Nicaragua, adding significant nuance to the growing historiography of the Latin American Cold War. Furthermore, it helps understand current trends in Nicaraguan politics and how international actors could shape current events for better or worse.

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Claudia Stern W., *Entre el cielo y el suelo: Las identidades elásticas de las clases medias (Santiago de Chile, 1932–1962)*

(Santiago de Chile: RiL Editores, 2021), pp. 486, \$24.00 pb

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Claudia Stern's book is a historiographical analysis of the middle classes of Santiago, Chile, between 1932 and 1962. The 30 years selected by the author correspond with a moment of significant modernisation of the state, which involved important social, urban and cultural transformations. During this period, Stern argues, middle classes extracted 'the maximum benefit thanks to welfare state policies' (p. 18). Thus, the broad question driving the study is the agenda of the middle classes between 1932 and 1962, or, more precisely, what the desires of the middle classes were, what they were willing to do to achieve these desires, how their class subjectivities were expressed and how these subjectivities were in conflict with the different sectors that shaped them.

The focus on the middle classes is one of the challenges of the book. On the one hand, the author recognises a shortage of studies on the middle classes for her selected historical period (p. 19); on the other, the middle classes are an uncomfortable historiographic object of study. Whereas the roles of the working and upper classes in relationships of domination and the means of production are obvious, within historiographic studies it is not clear what problems the position of *in-betweenness*, typical of the middle classes, creates in society.

Stern's book is based on her doctoral research, carried out from 2010 to 2015. One of the significant elements of the study is that it is based on diverse information sources, both primary and secondary. At least 22 oral interviews were conducted. In addition, the author analysed minutes of meetings, documents and pamphlets from different institutions, such as the Liceo Manuel de Salas (Manuel de Salas School, LMS), or places such as the municipality of Ñuñoa, and reviewed a vast number of newspaper and magazines from the period.

The book is organised into five parts. It begins with the introduction, in which a conceptual debate regarding the meaning of 'middle classes' is presented, with the idea of 'elastic identities' conveying the middle classes' flexibility. The second part analyses the national press, focusing on graphic humour, particularly the popular comic *Condorito* (*Little Condor*), whose eponymous hero is meant to represent the Chilean people. This part is one of the most original of the study, in which the author carefully selects comic strips demonstrating critical tensions that the middle classes experienced in this period. The third part considers the LMS as an emblematic school for our understanding of the formation of the middle classes in Santiago. This institution was founded in 1932, a sociocultural fact that marks the beginning of the period under study. The fourth part studies the municipality of Ñuñoa and the lifestyle of the people who live there. This municipality was a sort of laboratory for middle-class life during the period. In the last part the 1962 FIFA World Cup, which was held in Chile, is placed under the microscope; this adds a layer of complexity to our understanding of the middle classes and marks the end of the period under study. The book closes with final comments and an epilogue that connects the study with the social unrest of 18 October 2019, a series of massive nation-wide protests and intense riots.

One of the main arguments presented by the author is signalled in the book's title, *Entre el cielo y el suelo* (*Between Heaven and Earth*). Stern's analysis leads her to identify two ways of earning a living: 'by the *sweat* of my brow' and 'by the *pleasure* of my brow'. The bottom line for the middle classes involves them earning their bread through self-denial and compliance – 'by the *sweat* of my brow' – such a struggle implying that they have to move away from 'the earth'. As seen in the third part of the book, 'the primary mobility of this period was cultural' (p. 242), which involves cultivating a person's integral ethos through education. However, parents' sacrifice and hard work in order to educate their children led to deep inter-generational tension. A new subjectivity was formed in institutions such as LMS, which enabled the younger generation to choose pleasure as a criterion for career decisions. On the one hand, this was a matter of pride for the parents, who could see how their family was moving away from the 'sweat of my brow' paradigm. On the other hand, it gave rise to conflict because it implied that their children were deciding on professional paths that were not necessarily going to support and provide for their own children's families. As a result, the parents' upward social mobility was at risk. The younger generation had access to forms of mobility, but this was not necessarily upward social mobility; instead, 'horizontal mobility', in which education played a crucial role, was one of the primary ways for the middle classes to construct an identity that provided them with flexibility and elasticity.

Stern's work offers different examples to illustrate the elasticity of Santiago's middle classes. The wide array of sources and topics referred to in the book functions both as its principal strength and as its weak point. Each of the chapters functions as a complete, free-standing essay on the subject it addresses. However, there seems to be too much information, so the book cannot achieve a careful analysis to enhance the main argument; thus, the abundance of historical data does not allow us to clearly see the full potential of the argument underlying the text. That said, this is a well-documented historiographical work for anyone interested in the formation of and changes to the Chilean middle classes during the twentieth century.

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Pierre Ostiguy, Francisco Panizza and Benjamin Moffitt (eds.), *Populism in Global Perspective: A Performative and Discursive Approach*

(Abingdon: Routledge, 2021), pp. 324, £120.00, £34.99 pb, £31.49 E-book

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While very much indebted to Ernesto Laclau's seminal work on populism, *Populism in Global Perspective* critically engages with its ontological, epistemological and theoretical foundations and builds on it, making original contributions to the study of this complex and diverse global phenomenon. The volume brings together, theoretically and conceptually, the Laclauian/Essex school with the socio-cultural and performative approaches to populism. Illustrating the complementarity of the two distinct approaches, the volume centres on the relational mode of identification and construction of popular identities, blending content and form in a combined discursive-performative approach.

This approach clearly distinguishes itself from two mainstream approaches to populism, namely the ideational and the strategic approaches. The discursive-performative approach rejects the notion of populism as an ideology (however 'thin') and understands instead the divide between 'the people' and its Other to be political rather than normative in nature (p. 2). The editors also argue that neither moralism nor a popular '*volonté générale*' (general will) are features unique to populism, as the ideational approach suggests. On the other hand, the discursive-performative approach 'shares with the strategic approach the notion that populist politicians deploy populist appeals strategically to gain political support' (p. 3). However, by studying populism in a relational way, discursive-performative approach researchers wish to understand what makes followers actually follow, conceiving of this support as rational, not pathological (p. 234); affective, not