

de modernidad de un proyecto o una ideología de élite a una realidad cotidiana para millones de personas. Es decir, se hace necesario cubrir la brecha entre la diversidad de interpretaciones y proyectos generados por las élites culturales e intelectuales de la región, y la profunda transformación de los hábitos sociales, culturales, y de consumo material impulsados por el crecimiento económico, las migraciones internas e internacionales, y la urbanización. Para percibir la magnitud de esa “modernidad masificada” es necesario trascender la idea de modernidad como una producción puramente intelectual e incursionar en el análisis de los cambios políticos, económicos y sociales que la hicieron posible.

Finalmente, como consecuencia de ese proceso de masificación de la modernidad, que produjo tan profundas transformaciones en los hábitos de consumo cultural y material en algunas capitales latinoamericanas, sugiere Moya, ¿cuán “periféricas” o “marginales” podía considerarse que eran Buenos Aires o La Habana a comienzos del siglo XX, si son comparadas con ciudades “modernas” europeas o norteamericanas? Esta es también una intuición que choca con afirmaciones en torno a la idea de “modernidad” sostenida por algunas versiones de los estudios poscoloniales.

Estos interrogantes están tal vez fuera del objeto de estudio específico enunciado por este muy interesante libro y son simplemente apuntados como una observación complementaria a los muy sugerentes resultados presentados en la investigación de la autora.

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A. RICARDO LÓPEZ PEDREROS, *Makers of Democracy: A Transnational History of the Middle Classes in Colombia*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2019.

This monograph forms part of Duke University Press’s “Radical Perspectives” series, edited by Daniel Walkowitz and Barbara Weinstein, renowned historians working at NYU. The book emerges out of the author’s 2008 Ph.D. dissertation at the University of Maryland, under the direction of Professor Weinstein, titled “A Beautiful Class, an Irresistible Democracy: The Historical Formation of the Middle Class in Bogotá, 1955-1965.”

The work forces readers to consider a central question never adequately answered in this book, or any other book: What exactly is the meaning of “middle class”? The question is unanswerable since so many variables affect “entrance” into this community. In the late 1950s, historians, led by Stanford University’s John J. Johnson, insisted that the middle class would/was emerging in Latin

America, and that this would lead to democracy and prosperity for the region. He posited this theory one year before the Cuban Revolution.

Clear and compelling economic data would have helped Professor López-Pedrerros advance his thesis about the importance of the middle class, or middle-class discourse, in attempting to build a democratic Colombian nation. The author offers an Appendix with some graphics designed to explain, numerically, the Colombian middle class, but the reader is never certain as to what constitutes middle-class status in Colombia. A nicely organized wage table charted out over a twenty-five-year period (roughly the time-period covered by the book, from the beginning of the Frente Nacional in 1958 to the late 1970s) adjusted for inflation, would have helped. Figure 5 in the Appendix is helpful – if somewhat out of context – but the reader does not see what percentage of Colombians earn below and above the stated middle-class wage of 5,000-12,000 pesos per quarter in 1967. (Today, 5,000 pesos would exchange for a medium-size *latte* at a Juan Valdéz coffee shop.) The “Family” budget/spending data in this segment of the book is helpful.

The author spends significant time exploring the differences between the proletariat, the bourgeoisie, and the petite bourgeoisie—adopting classifications/theoretical thinking from Mao, Marx, Lenin, Frantz Fanon, Ernesto “Che” Guevara, and Paulo Freire. These were the core texts of the time – theoretical works, drawn up elsewhere and never truly reflective of a twentieth-century Colombian reality that was mostly unknowable to, let us say, Vladimir Lenin. Priest/sociologist Camilo Torres Restrepo understood Colombia; he received theoretical training in Belgium at Université Catholique de Louvain, a place where many progressive intellectuals from Latin America met and exchanged notes. Torres’s significance is indisputable in Colombia, and he pushed students to de-center the comfort of theory and the classroom, in favor of hands-on investigation. His translated (from the French) M.A. thesis, *La proletarización de Bogotá: ensayo de metodología estadística*, published in Bogotá in 1959, was a model study but Torres’s impatience led him to armed struggle and he joined the ELN in 1965 (not 1966, as reported by the author); he died in combat in February 1966. A middle class should have buffered the excesses of the proletariat against a rapacious oligarchy—but it never really worked out that way, as the tragic case of *el cura guerrillero* demonstrates.

López-Pedrerros’s title is a bit disingenuous: The book is really a study of Bogotá—not Colombia in its entirety. There are scant references to what is happening in other regions of Colombia at this time: i.e. on the north coast, in the *llanos orientales* or in the expanding, industrializing city of Medellín. Of course, the author’s research/documentation base is centered in the Colombian capital

city, which explains why the text focuses on this area, but the book lends to the unfortunate stereotype that Colombia is Bogotá and Bogotá is... Colombia.

The study would have benefitted from a clearer focus on the architectural development in and around Bogotá during the period covered. Important urbanization projects designed to create decent, affordable housing for an emerging middle class developed in the early 1960s with the visit of President John F. Kennedy to Colombia in December 1961. “Ciudad Kennedy,” launched with funding from the “Alliance” (which, the author notes, “lost its way” during the 1960s) is now a sprawling low-middle-class section of the capital city. The socially oriented funding of the Alliance faded out, replaced with more sinister, military-motivated aid packages. Pablo VI, an urbanization project near the National University (inaugurated in 1966, two years before Pope Paul VI visited Colombia) was designed as a pleasant, middle-class neighborhood, just west of the city. Nearby, during the second third of the twentieth century, the National University went up, expanding access to public education for Colombians and training a cadre of “middle-class” professionals: lawyers, physicians, engineers, and geologists.

The author effectively incorporates oral history interviews collected over the past fifteen years. These interviews provide some needed respite from writing that is unnecessarily dense, producing opacity in places; this book is designed to dialog with specialists in the field of contemporary Colombian history.

Yet, the author is to be commended for his investigative thoroughness. The research is remarkable and Professor López-Pedreros has mined the archives of Bogotá. He secured documents at many sites, including the Ministry of Agriculture and the National University. He also built his study through “Company” documents, bank records, and the records/papers of individuals from private collections. “Political” archives were consulted, and the papers of professional associations were used, such as the Archive of the Colombian Federation of University Professionals. In the United States, the author consulted documents at the OAS in Washington, the John F. Kennedy Library in Dorchester, and the U.S. National Archives at College Park, MD.

Makers of Democracy demonstrates the simplicity of the Johnson thesis—drawn up at a time of excessive developmentalist exuberance, prior to the reality check imposed by the arrival of *los barbudos* to Havana. Colombia, today, is one of the world’s most unequal nations in terms of wealth distribution (as measured by the Gini Coefficients) and 44 percent of the Colombian population earns minimum wage or less: about US\$257 per month (converted). Democracy is about inclusive decision-making, shared governance, and fair distribution of resources across all sectors of society. It exists fully in, let’s say Norway, peripherally in Colombia, and A. Ricardo López-Pedreros has helped us understand

the complexities, indeed the impossibility, of building a democracy on the backs of an amorphous middle class in contemporary Colombia.

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MARCOS NAPOLITANO, *Coração Civil. A vida cultural brasileira sob o regime militar (1964-1985)*. São Paulo: Intermeios, 2017.

Near its conclusion, Marcos Napolitano's impressive new work elegantly articulates a peculiar problem, one with which many readers will be familiar: from the perspective of historical and social memory, Brazilian cultural life in the period of dictatorship "parece ter sido *cheia e vazia* ao mesmo tempo, fazendo conviver a sensação de plenitude e crise coetâneas." Analysis of this and other contradictions and collisions constitutes the bulk of Napolitano's lengthy excursus, which seeks both to disentangle the many threads of the period's cultural history, and to complicate historiographical conclusions that Napolitano deems oversimplified. Quite as ambitious as its subtitle suggests, *Coração Civil* challenges "a somewhat idealized image of the culture of opposition" to the regime; the book recuperates the much messier, more complex terrain of the period's various art worlds and their relationships to each other, the regime, the market, and the public. Culture itself, and the many anti-regime cultural initiatives that emerged, "united oppositions as much as it divided them" (26).

In a certain sense, Napolitano is dealing in well-known historiographical structures and debates. He provides a schematic for the categories into which "resistant" culture might fall: liberals, from moderate "elitists" to the more democratically minded; communists aligned with the PCB; counterculture, revolving around the search for individual liberation; and the "new Left." From the outset, the book addresses the time-honored disjuncture between more traditional leftists' affinity for national-popular cultural production and the vanguardist tendencies of younger, newer Lefts. Napolitano emphasizes differences between these two currents, noting the extent to which the latter questioned the party line in terms of moralism. Yet the book also explicitly questions this binary, concluding that the two were intertwined and that this "simplistic dichotomy" must be revised.

This type of complication forms part of the larger arc of Napolitano's work. If, on the one hand, he constantly seeks to demonstrate the ideological and aesthetic convergence and interrelatedness of actors often assumed to have been antagonistic, he is also very much concerned with exposing the role of the market and mass media in the histories of cultural output in this moment. Burgeoning culture