

forced to connive at it. Serious, dedicated, and apparently honest with money, Landa y Piña was in the end corrupt himself, not just through clientelism but through gross abuse of power, because he saw no choice in the matter. He could either get in line or get out.

Finally, *Los otros* is not just intrinsically valuable as a systematic uncovering of bureaucratic racism, crookedly operationalized to a hitherto unrealized extent, but also as an excellent case study of one of the more unpleasant ways in which post-revolutionary and *priista* governments added up the mathematics of domination. The policies and practices of migration are a part of the corrupt and violent side of the *dictablanda*, one resolution of Mexico's complicated equation of high levels of inequality, superficially low levels of conflict, and remarkable longevity. This gatekeeper state migration policy was one of the many ways a rent-seeking constituency was kept happy, with cash earned and favours delivered, the profits earned by smirking bullies at the expense of those incapable of answering back. As with Mexico's more remote and Indigenous populations, the attendant oppression was racialized and exercised against people who—unlike students, say, or urbanites in general—were neither particularly visible (the Jewish refugees who never made it out of soon-to-be Nazi Europe, the Black migrant workers from Belize or Texas, the confused American tourists, the Eastern European sex workers, the *pochos*), nor particularly cared for.

Paul Gillingham

Northwestern University

ERYNN MASI DE CASANOVA, *Dust and Dignity: Domestic Employment in Contemporary Ecuador*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2019.

Masi de Casanova's study of domestic work in Guayaquil, Ecuador centers on two questions: "What makes domestic employment in Ecuador a bad job?" and "How can working conditions be improved?" (p. 122). To explore these questions, she engaged in collaborative research conducted with members of the Asociación de Trabajadoras Remuneradas del Hogar (Association of Remunerated Household Workers, or ATRH) in Guayaquil from 2010-2016. The resulting book makes a significant contribution to our understanding of domestic work in Ecuador (a woefully understudied topic) by placing it in comparative perspective and demonstrating the usefulness of class analysis in evaluating domestic work.

The book evaluates domestic work in Ecuador through three lenses. First, Masi de Casanova fruitfully applies the Marxian analysis of social reproduction to identify many of the challenges that face domestic workers. Domestic

workers earn a wage, but they lack a direct relationship to capitalist production; instead, their work in private homes and their isolation from each other blurs their relationship to the productive economy. Second, the book evaluates domestic work as part of the highly insecure urban informal economy. Interviews with and a survey of domestic workers in Ecuador show that they favor formalization while also making clear that such a commitment would require significant government investments in the form of money and staffing. Finally, Masi de Casanova evaluates how the personalized nature of class domination in domestic work makes this a particularly “bad job” that is not only physically demanding, but also degrading.

Structurally, the book begins with employers’ views before moving on to focus on domestic workers’ perspectives, and culminates with a consideration of how ATRH has tried to improve conditions for domestic workers. Chapter 1 examines employers’ thoughts about the “ideal domestic worker” based on classified advertisements from 2010 and 2016. Masi de Casanova’s close analysis of these advertisements shows that new legal requirements to pay domestic workers minimum wages with benefits had a limited impact on employers. Employers stopped using the term “muchacha”—but they now indicated that they were looking for a woman under 30. Likewise, they often indicated a salary and “good treatment”—but that salary often fell short of the minimum wage, and they did not mention legally required benefits such as overtime pay or social security. Her findings indicate that new laws resulted in only superficial changes in the nature of domestic work in Ecuador. Chapter 2 explores how class inequalities are literally embodied in contemporary domestic work. Employers demanded intense physical labor with little regard for workers’ health, and they emphasized class difference by requiring domestic workers to dress in a uniform and to eat different food from the family for whom they worked. The author asserts that these embodiments of class difference are especially important to employers in Guayaquil, where both domestic workers and employers are mestizo. Chapter 3 analyzes the results of a 2014 survey of current and former domestic workers, which focused on work conditions, pay, and social security benefits in order to measure the impact of domestic labor reforms. Although most workers knew about social security benefits, few received them, in part because they were loath to request them from employers. The survey also helps us to understand the typical background and experiences of Ecuadorian domestic workers, most of whom had children of their own, but were left with little time for their own families due to long commutes and work requirements. Chapter 4 tackles two opposing myths: the first, that domestic work serves as a steppingstone to better jobs, and the second, that domestic work is lifelong and, thus, a defining feature of the worker herself. Instead, Masi de Casanova’s research shows that

poor urban women are often stuck in cycles in which they sometimes do paid domestic work, while at other times doing other work in the informal economy or taking low-paying service jobs. Their movements between these poor job choices are based not only on wages offered, but also on the workers' health or family obligations. Chapter 5 explores the strategies and challenges faced by domestic workers who organized to improve their labor conditions. The focus here is on women involved in the ATRH, the Guayaquil organization that also created the first national union for domestic employees. ATRH members have emphasized that domestic work is "regular work" and should be treated like any other job. The problem with this strategy, according to Masi de Casanova, is threefold: first, domestic workers are not like other workers because they experience feminized and personalized (as well as economic) forms of oppression. Second, domestic workers are often invisible to each other and, further, find it difficult to forge alliances with either male-dominated labor unions or with middle-class feminists. Finally, Ecuadorian president Rafael Correa's interest in the problems of domestic workers was limited, and his successor (Lenín Moreno) did not address them at all.

The book draws heavily from comparative studies of domestic work, especially from Latin American scholarship, and Masi de Casanova advances knowledge in this field through her innovative research methods and wide array of analytical perspectives. The rich results from her examination of classified advertisements and a multi-city survey suggest that these sources might also be useful to other scholars, and the author's work with the ATRH emphasizes the effectiveness of collaborative research. Also important is the author's attention to former as well as current domestic workers, which serves as a reminder that domestic work is something that women *do*, rather than an indicator of what someone *is* (a "domestic worker"). Her insistence on capturing domestic workers' own views and insights is broadly impactful. For example, many of the women she interviewed do not consider paid domestic work as distinct from the unpaid labor they perform in their own homes, but rather as the same work done on a continuum of circumstances (p. 100). Her attention to domestic workers' goals, in particular, reveals that although they are stuck in low-paying work, they strive to help their children break out of the cycle of poverty. These findings challenge previous scholarly assumptions and have implications for both further scholarship and for activism. Finally, Masi de Casanova's focus on class analysis helps to explain why domestic work conditions did not substantially improve even in a period when Ecuador had a self-proclaimed socialist president who passed domestic labor reforms. Within Marxian theory, there is a tension between "production" and "social reproduction," and, in practice, unions and leftists identify productive, typically male, labor as work. Domestic workers

might gain momentary attention from leftist politicians or labor organizers, but rarely obtain a more serious commitment to eradicating the oppressions that domestic workers face. (Masi de Casanova rightly points out that to do so, politicians and labor leaders would have to confront their own role in class exploitation in their relations with their own domestic workers.)

The weaknesses in the book are minor, and mostly in the form of missed opportunities to use existing scholarship to flesh out some of the claims and ideas presented. Masi de Casanova tends to make vague references to the “colonial” or “pre-capitalist” roots of Ecuadorian domestic labor. In fairness, this is a contemporary study of domestic workers, but the references are frequent enough that they should (and could) be more precisely developed somewhere in the study. Relatedly, there are surprisingly few references to works on Ecuador. Masi de Casanova is correct that little research has been conducted specifically on Ecuadorian domestic workers, but there are some studies that could provide useful context and depth to her work. For example, anthropologist Eduardo Kingman Garcés has published work that includes thoughtful consideration of domestic work; although his focus is on twentieth-century Quito, it could provide comparisons at least as fruitful as those Masi de Casanova makes with other Latin American countries. Similarly, scholarship on Ecuadorian labor or leftist movements would have allowed her to deepen her discussion of the marginalization of domestic workers within these organizations. Finally, while I appreciate the value of Masi de Casanova’s focus on class analysis, there were points at which when I would have liked to see her draw more specifically on other, comparative studies to highlight the possible gender and race implications in her work. These, however, are minor criticisms that highlight the relevance and importance of the work at hand, and indicate future research that might result from it.

This well-researched book on an understudied nation will be an important read for scholars interested in domestic workers, gender issues, and labor studies. Most readers will be Latin Americanists, but Masi de Casanova makes a compelling case that researchers who study domestic work in the U.S., Canada, or Europe should learn from research conducted in the Global South. Her book is a good place for them to start.

Erin E. O’Connor

Bridgewater State University