

Colombia perceptively focus on how class distinctions and tastes figure in the contemporary making of homes and identity. In a fascinating chapter that explores similar themes, Christina Inclán-Valadez examines massive lower-middle income housing developments in Mexico and reveals how construction interests and marketing efforts profit from and feed into the making of class through home improvements and additions.

Other chapters contain criticisms of the workings of the state. In their contribution on the massive increase in federal housing programmes in Buenos Aires since the early 2000s, Fernando Ostuni and Jean-Louis Van Gelder analyse how these programmes have largely failed to deliver on their promises. They insightfully reveal how the cosy relationship between the state and the construction industry has been a significant factor in this failure. In their chapter on Medellín, José Samper and Tamera Marko develop how residents of consolidating squatter settlements seek to narrate and make sense of their lives in oral histories. Adopting a novel, socially engaged, and collaborative methodology, the authors seek to recover voices and experiences that are often drowned out by the dominant discourses emanating from the state and the mass media. In a chapter on Rio de Janeiro, Palloma Menezes investigates how the residents of a small section of a favela that is scheduled for removal have sought to remain in place. In doing so, she exposes the often fraught and limited spaces within which citizens seek to claim rights and gain sympathy from broader publics.

The volume, then, contains critical and astute interpretations of certain dynamics of power and inequity. Most of the contributors, moreover, recognise the importance of neoliberal reforms and the subsequent influence of leftist policy frameworks in much of Latin America. Still, the authors only occasionally hit on themes of ideology and conflict, violence and coercion, and (in)security and indebtedness. Yet in ostensibly covering a period from the mid-twentieth century to the present, the book examines an era dominated by intense polarisation, violent dictatorial regimes, massive social schisms, ambitious, wide-ranging development projects, and a deepening of the market, especially under neoliberalism. This volume, however, only sporadically deals with these issues.

Somehow, housing and belonging seems not to wholly belong within the purview of such crucial phenomena. As such, the ideologically charged narratives that have framed debates (and actions) surrounding housing are not themselves an object of study. If this volume presents rich new directions in the study of urban residence and its intersections with state policies, family life, spatial dynamics, and class distinctions, it also underscores the need for further work on the evolution of housing and belonging in Latin America.

Michigan State University

EDWARD MURPHY

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Chris Walker, *Venezuela's Health Care Revolution* (Black Point, NS: Fernwood Publishing, 2015), pp. vii + 120, \$19.95, pb.

Venezuela has been a hotly debated topic since Hugo Chávez assumed the presidency of that country in 1999. Most analysis has focused on the late president's personality and style of governing, the overall policy and ideological direction of his government and the groups and movements that have supported him. Relatively little work has been produced, however, on actual policies in specific areas, such as health, and their impact.

The death of Chávez in March 2013 and the increasing polarisation between the government of Nicolás Maduro (2014–present) and the opposition grouped in the Mesa de Unidad Democrática (Democratic Unity Table, MUD), has once again focused attention on Venezuela as it embarks on a new and unpredictable process of change. The violent opposition uprising in late 2013/early 2014, termed *La Salida* (the exit, the solution) and the MUD's spectacular win in the National Assembly elections of December, 2015, gaining a two-thirds majority in that chamber, have further obscured more detailed discussions on policy and its impacts. For both these reasons alone, the present volume is welcome.

Walker's study provides detail on the new health structures brought in by the Chávez government in cooperation with the Cuban government, principally *Misión Barrio Adentro* (Mission Into the Neighbourhood, MBA) and *Misión Sucre*, explaining their philosophical underpinnings and outlining their positive health outcomes. Walker's analysis is not just about Venezuela's health-care revolution, but more accurately about the feasibility of transferring the Cuban health-care model to other countries. Venezuela demonstrates that the Cuban 'paradox' (achieving 'first world' health outcomes in a 'Third World' context) is transferrable, not just to other developing countries, but also to developed countries with large and increasing marginalised populations.

Walker identifies two principal characteristics of the Cuban system that have been key to its successful transferral to Venezuela. The first is the recognition of 'structural violence', which Walker, drawing from John Galtung, defines as 'the way that social institutions and structures cause a form of violence when they prevent people from attaining their basic needs' (p. 7). The second is *conciencia* that is 'a sense of duty, commitment, compassion and empathy to treat patients as family' (p. 83). Both of these basic ideological characteristics of the Cuban system can lead to 'health in all policies', as articulated in the 1978 Alma Alta Declaration, meaning a recognition of inequality of access to health and the need to design a health system which actively tackles the sources of this inequality.

This leads to a more holistic 'bio-psycho-social' approach taking into account both the person and the social, economic and cultural context in which that individual finds herself. This approach leads to increased complementarity between the preventative and the curative aspects of health provision. It also results in changes in policy areas which can condition health outcomes, such as the physical environment, access to water and water treatment services, to sports facilities, and to adequate nutrition, and so on, as well as improving access to curative facilities and treatments. It also involves intensive training of personnel drawn from local communities, especially the poor and those in rural areas, inculcating in them the ethical characteristics mentioned above.

Walker's study underscores the positive impact of these new structures for Venezuela's poorer sectors, turning the country into a world leader in reversing negative health indicators. Yet the transferral of Cuban health ethos and practices to the country has not been without problems. One of these has been the dismissal of the entire programme by large sections of the opposition and their supporting social groups, for being 'communist' or simply of second-rate quality. Yet as Walker points out, Cuban health training is officially recognised by the US authorities, a point which the author comments silenced such criticism in interviews. More interestingly, and tellingly, there is a clash between the preventative, community focused nature of the Cuban-led programmes and what Walker terms the 'health = drugs + doctors' basis of much Western health policy, led increasingly by the pharmaceutical

industry. This expresses itself in Venezuela as a clash between the opposition-dominated pre-Chávez health systems (with their curative, privatised orientation) and the social-justice values of the nascent systems grouped in the missions.

Such attitudes underline the political and ideological difficulties in transferring what is an objectively effective health policy to neoliberalising national contexts. The Cuban system challenges the very basis of neoliberalism with its reification of the private sector and dismissal of the effectiveness of state intervention in most policy areas. The result in Venezuela has been effective in terms of health outcomes for the poor, but at the cost of polarisation and system fragmentation.

In my own research with Venezuelan opposition groups, I found potentially contradictory discourses regarding the future of the missions instituted by Chávez. On the one hand the opposition has declared that it will continue them in recognition of their electoral value among the poorer sectors of society. On the other hand, they also intend to 'de-ideologise' the missions, 'professionalise' them, integrate them into local authority control, with obvious risks of causing increased fragmentation, and possibly reducing personnel (most notably Cuban staff which opposition groups, especially the established medical associations, have consistently complained about). The implications for the missions could be that the very basis of their success (the recognition of structural violence and conciencia, both brought to them from the Cuban experience via Cuban personnel) could be undermined if not entirely eradicated. How the opposition will manage these conflicting objectives will be a fascinating process to watch. Walker's fine, accessible book, nevertheless, is a timely and valuable reminder of the importance of the Venezuelan experiment in alternatives to dominant modes of health provision.

Maynooth University

BARRY CANNON

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Christopher R. Boyer, *Political Landscapes: Forests, Conservation and Community in Mexico* (Durham, NC, and London: Duke University Press, 2015), pp. xix + 337, £66.00, £18.99 pb.

Struggles over land tenure have long dominated Mexico's historiography. Until recently, our understanding of broader ecological change has been more limited. Christopher Boyer has helped promote new approaches to Mexico's environmental history, and now provides a sweeping history of forestry since the 1880s, focusing on the relations between peasants, logging corporations and forestry officials. The core argument is that state forestry agencies struggled and largely failed to protect forest ecosystems or provide social justice for communities that live in them. More broadly, Boyer shows how a blend of social and environmental history can powerfully illuminate broader processes of capitalist development and nation building.

The two sections of the book correspond to major cycles of capitalist expansion. In the first, three chronological chapters show how Porfirian order and progress made fortunes for well-connected logging interests, triggered social conflict in the countryside, and fostered worries about deforestation and desertification among Mexico's emerging scientific elite. These forces culminated in the 1930s experiment with 'revolutionary forestry': expert-supervised, *ejido*-based logging cooperatives. Like the Cardenista project as a whole, the initiative became rooted in a few places, but obstacles abounded. Cooperatives confronted business opposition, bureaucratic incapacity