

organized in the fields against tremendous odds but they also had to contend with the internal politics of the national union and sometimes ran afoul of Chavez's demand for centralized control.

Rodriguez has much to offer and correctly draws our attention to the strong links between Mexican American leaders in Wisconsin and Texas but his admiration for their work often results in hyperbole and broad generalizations. His claims about the importance of a trans state connection are well taken but, at the same time, it is not surprising that activists travel, maintain contacts with one another, or build networks with other organizations and leaders. Rodriguez should have devoted more space to setting the context within which this new wave of political work took place. More weight should have been placed on the alliances they built with student activists, church groups, labor unions, and Wisconsin progressives. The reason so many Texas migrants settled out of the migrant stream and sought work in Wisconsin factories was because southern agriculture became increasingly mechanized and less dependent on manual labor. Likewise, the prospects for Mexican American empowerment during this period were profoundly influenced by developments that receive little attention: the termination of the Bracero Program, liberalization of the Democratic Party politics, the Voting Rights Act, and a slow but steady rise in the number of minority elected officials. Despite these omissions, the Tejano Diaspora is a welcome addition to the literature on contemporary Mexican American history.

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A. Ricardo López and Barbara Weinstein, eds., *The Making of the Middle Class: Toward a Transnational History* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012).

In the United States, paeans to the middle class are as clichéd as barbeques and stump speeches. Politicians' obsession with the middle class derives in part from the broadness of the phrase and the wide swath of the electorate that identifies itself as middle class regardless of income, profession, or property. Candidates know that targeting middle-class voters is the core of electioneering, even if no one is quite sure what the middle class is or what it believes. Unlike American politicians, however, historians have been reluctant to use terms like "middle class," precisely because of scholarly unease regarding its definition.

In this path-breaking work, a range of historians tackle not only the meaning of the phrase, but also the ways in which the middle class has evolved in countries around the world from the mid-nineteenth through the late twentieth centuries. Explicitly challenging the scholarly assumption that middle-class formation happened first in England and America and then spread out over the

globe in similar patterns, the twenty-one essays in this volume examine the emergence of middle classes in a wide variety of countries like Syria, Chile, Peru, Zimbabwe, India, Argentina, and Columbia, as well as nations in Europe and North America (although middle-class formation in Asian countries aside from India is surprisingly absent). Divided into four sections, each concluding with commentary that broadens the discussion, this valuable collection “invites the reader to think about the historical formation of the middle class in a comparative, connective, and transnational framework” (11).

The volume excels in its goal to identify different historical patterns of middle-class formation and the parallel social construction of modernity in varied countries, helping to shift scholarly attention away from Western Europe and North America (although the volume also includes fine analyses of the middle class in the United States, Mexico, Canada, Germany, and France). Addressing extraordinarily diverse topics from professionals in Chile and Peru in the late nineteenth century to middle-class formation in colonial India to the expropriation of natural resources in Zimbabwe, the essays are remarkably uniform in their quality of research and depth of analysis. The essays themselves tend to focus on one nation or city, but commentaries by Barbara Weinstein, Mary Kay Vaughan, Brian Owensby, and Robyn Muncy, and an excellent afterword by Mrinalini Sinha, help to fulfill the volume’s promise of contributing to a transnational approach.

As learned and sophisticated as these essays are, their authors frequently apologize for employing the phrase “middle class,” repeatedly stressing that its meaning is often shrouded in fuzziness and imprecision. Even editors López and Weinstein are ambivalent, and several of the other authors evince similar discomfort. It is time to move beyond such ambivalence and realize that “middle class” is no more obscure or imprecise a term than others that scholars frequently employ, like “elite,” “working class,” “gender,” or “race.” Rather, like other terms that scholars fearlessly exploit, “middle class” is a construction that can hold varied meanings at different times and places. All use of historical terminology requires definition, and “middle class” can be as worthwhile a phrase as any other.

In fact, taken together, the essays in this volume – despite their disparate chronology, methodology, and object of analysis – demonstrate surprising consistency when it comes to middle-class formation and ideology. Although historical-formative circumstances differ, middle classes in Europe, the Americas, Africa, and South Asia shared a broad range of characteristics often linked to modernity, including but not limited to an adherence to political liberalism, an independent press, urbanism, professionalization, free trade, associational culture, medical and educational reform, and a lively public sphere. Rather than offering evidence of the fuzziness of the term, these essays confirm the impressive coherency of the concept and its applicability to an array of cultures. More so

than the elite or working classes, the middle class and its interest in connections, associations, links, and networks are an ideal subject for scholars interested in transnational approaches to the past. Because it succeeds in offering specific examples of middle-class formation within a broader transnational framework, scholars will find this collection valuable for promoting classroom discussion as well as sparking new approaches to their own research.

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Anna J. Willow, *Strong Hearts, Native Lands: Anti-Clearcutting Activism at Grassy Narrows First Nation* (Winnipeg, MB: University of Manitoba Press, 2012).

Anna J. Willow opens with movement: on 3 December 2003, “three young members of Grassy Narrows First Nation positioned a falling tree across a snow-covered logging road” (1). Thus begins the Grassy Narrows blockade, a community-directed campaign to stop unregulated corporate logging by Abitibi-Consolidated in Grassy Narrows Traditional Land Use Area. Willow argues that the act of a blockade represented an assertion of treaty rights including, but by no means limited to, the “right to pursue their [Anishinaabe] avocations of hunting and fishing.” She further argues that the placement of the blockade became a site of cultural revitalization. In short, *Strong Hearts, Native Lands* makes the case that environmental issues are intertwined with political and social issues. The fight to save Whiskey Jack Forest cannot be separated from the fight to uphold Treaty #3, to receive recognition as a sovereign nation, and ultimately to protect the Anishinaabe way of life from unrestrained corporate development on Anishinaabe lands.

Willow divides her text into two sections. The first three chapters provide context. In Chapter 1, Willow suggests that land-based subsistence has become a marker of cultural identity. Harvesting practices that were once “a way of life” now allow Anishinaabe peoples to define themselves against mainstream society (36). Willow positions the blockade as an attempt to maintain “a deeply symbolic way of life” by preserving territory required for land-based subsistence (35). Chapter 2 explores the cultural and political influences on the Grassy Narrows blockade while Chapter 3 focuses on material drivers. Here, Willow illustrates the environmental realities of reservation life – from hydroelectric flooding to mercury poisoning – that spurred direct action.

The second section (Chapters 4 – 8) discusses the blockade’s beginnings, its culture, and its preservation. Chapter 4 introduces the Grassy Narrows Environmental Group (GNEG) and their initial attempts to combat clearcutting. Chapters 5 and 6 examine the establishment of the blockade at Slant Lake.