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Genealogies are a titanic task, dealing with the multiplicity of knowledge production and with the epistemic privilege of that knowledge. Such epistemic privilege entails particular languages, core regions where knowledge is produced and from which knowledge is disseminated, concrete institutional arrangements, and power structures that determine which and why specific pieces of knowledge are more valuable than others. From a critique of this ‘epistemic privilege’, the authors of the book *Desde la Cuba revolucionaria Feminismo y marxismo en la obra de Isabel Larguía y John Dumoulin*, Mabel Bellucci and Emmanuel Theumer position their analysis. It is, in particular, due to an “epistemic privilege of the global north” and an “epistemic extractivism”, as stated by Peruvian feminist Gina Vargas in the forewords (p. 13), that the pioneer contributions the book aims to rescue from hidden places were condemned to an appropriation with almost null references.

The authors’ primary objective is to seek justice for a pioneer work of two intellectuals, Isabel Larguía, and John Dumoulin,\(^3\) on novel theoretical contributions to the so-called domestic labour debate developed within a Feminist-Marxist framework, and “officially” originated in the 1960s and 1970s in countries like the United States, Canada, United Kingdom and Italy. The book’s purpose is twofold. First, it invites a rereading of the relationship between Feminism and Marxism through the work of Larguía and Dumoulin, a work that was born in Cuba. Secondly, the authors aim to make visible an “invisible work”.

A notable diversity of methods is applied to accomplish authors’ claims: semi-structured interviews, memory and feminist archives, historiographic speeches, official documents, Cuba women studies and, of course, theoretical analysis. One of the main achievements of the book is the way the authors intermingle the methodological arsenal to analyse the thread of the Feminism–Marxism relationship, and more generally the class–gender intertwines.

\(^1\) https://www.clacso.org.ar/libreria-latinoamericana/buscar_libro_detalle.php?id_libro=1432&campo-titulo&texto=

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\(^3\) Argentinian and United States couple who lived and worked in Cuba during the first almost 30 years of the Cuban Revolution (from the early 1960s until the end of the 1980s).
Following the eight sections into which the book is divided, it is possible to assemble the puzzle. The first two sections locate the producers of the contributions the book pursues to recover. Through a political biography, track of the ideas traffic and editorial circulation, the authors set Larguía and Dumoulin in a particular context, individual and socially determined, which does not just explain their positionality, but complicates it. The authors conclude that both Larguía and Dumoulin betrayed their class and their sex in non-usual ways, which will undoubtedly have had a later influence on their intellectual and political work. Bellucci and Theumer cannot separate the intellectual and theoretical work of Larguía and Dumoulin from their experiential knowledge, their historical and political context and their identities, in this case, the ones they identified with and not the “socially assigned ones”.

From section 3 to section 7, the authors combine the theoretical analysis of Larguía and Dumoulin’s work with a historical and contextual one. They examine the state of leftist movements, activism, intellectual work and social struggles, not just in Cuba but in the rest of the Latin American region, in particular Argentina, and in other countries like France, when relevant disputes between feminist movements and leftist parties or intellectual sectors took place.

In Cuba, the theory and praxis of feminist movements were not fully incorporated into the social revolution unleashed on 1 January 1959. The so-called orthodox solution to the woman question reigned during the first decades of the Cuban Revolution, which implied that: women’s emancipation was understood within a more general process within the socialist model that followed a Stalinist-soviet style; women’s emancipation was conceived mainly through women’s integration into the “public sphere”, in particular to wage-labor; and socialisation of domestic and care labour was considered the way to liberate women from their subordinated role within the household. The main limitation of this strategy is the description of necessary but not sufficient conditions for women’s emancipation (Bengelsdorf 1997: 122). In this context the work of Larguía and Dumoulin, even from a Marxist perspective, was not well-enough received by Cuban officialism, given the feminist content it entailed. The rejection of feminism was not something exclusive to the Cuban context, as the authors highlight. Populism and leftist movements in Latin American and the rest of the world considered women’s struggles and feminism as divisive of the working class (p. 47).

The authors’ research concludes that Larguía and Dumoulin’s intellectual work was pioneer in topics such as domestic labour theorisation and its relation to wage labour, its role in the capitalist system, the productive versus the unproductive character of domestic labour, which entails a discussion on whether domestic labour generates use-value only or also value in the Marxian sense, the analysis of women as a social class and the limitations of a class-preponderant
view of women’s emancipation in socialism. At the same time, the book’s authors criticise some absences in the work of the duo regarding sexuality issues and heterosexuality as the “role model” to follow within families, but do not raise the absence of racial issues.

While tracking the editorial circulation and date of publications, Bellucci and Theumer can convincingly prove that the first of the contributions of the domestic labour debate within a Marxist-Feminist framework did not come from the global north, but from the experience of a socialist country in the Caribbean, and that it was epistemic privilege that facilitated the dissemination of the work of authors like Margaret Benston and Christine Delphy, and not the Larguía and Dumoulin’s contributions. They all were published in the same dossier in Paris in 1970, and only Benston and Delphy’s ideas were highly disseminated and referenced later on.

This is a specialised but much-needed book. Specifically, for Cuba and Latin America it is extremely pertinent, and undoubtedly fills a gap in the historiography of the relationship between gender and class and between a historical complex and turbulent relationship of the scholarship of Feminism and Marxism.

Reference