

Social Inequalities in Argentina and Chile: A Comparative Analysis of Welfare Models, Labour Policies, and Occupational Trajectories from a Biographical Perspective

Journal of Politics in Latin America

1–24

© The Author(s) 2022

Article reuse guidelines:

sagepub.com/journals-permissions

DOI: 10.1177/1866802X211073914

journals.sagepub.com/home/pla

Leticia Muñoz Terra¹
and Gabriela Rubilar²

Abstract

The article analyses the configurations of social inequality in Argentina and Chile between 2000 and 2019 through a comparative biographical approach that combines three dimensions: macro-social (welfare models), meso-social (labour policies), and micro-social (occupational trajectories). In Argentina, welfare schemes oscillated between moderate protectionism and a liberal approach; in Chile, a movement was observed between revised neoliberalism and a protectionist liberal welfare approach. Regarding labour policies, a transition from employment regulation to self-management was observed in the Argentine job market; in Chile, a meritocratic discourse remains that advocates for worker self-management, regardless of changes in welfare schemes. These differences have no appreciable impact on the configuration of class trajectories, which are similar in both countries. While the service classes

¹Sociology, IdIHCS, Buenos Aires, Argentina

²Department of Social Work, Universidad de Chile, Santiago de Chile, Chile

Corresponding Author:

Leticia Muñoz Terra, Sociology, IdIHCS, 51 e125 y 125 S/N., La Plata, Buenos Aires, 1900, Argentina.

Email: leticiamunizterra@yahoo.com.ar



Creative Commons CC BY: This article is distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 License (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>) which permits any use, reproduction and distribution of the work without further permission provided the original work is attributed as specified on the SAGE and Open Access page (<https://us.sagepub.com/en-us/nam/open-access-at-sage>).

generally construct advantageous trajectories, the intermediate classes are ambivalently affected by crises and insufficient protection and the working classes accumulate disadvantages since they are conditioned by welfare schemes and social-labour policies.

Manuscript received 13 July 2021; revised 25 November 2021; accepted 28 December 2021

Keywords

Comparative analysis, welfare models, labour policies, biographical perspective

Introduction

Social inequality is a structural problem in Latin America in general and in Argentina and Chile in particular. This issue has been addressed using a variety of approaches within the field of sociological studies. For instance, theoretical analyses have focused on individual aspects (Sen, 1999), unequal relational patterns and inter-institutional exchanges (Goffman, 1981; Tilly, 2000), or the structurally asymmetric conditions imposed on social actors (Filgueira, 1998; Esping-Andersen, 2001; Martínez Franzoni, 2005; Barba-Solano, 2004; Minteguiaga and Ubasart-González, 2015).

All these perspectives have shed light on certain specific aspects of the inequality phenomenon, without proposing a holistic approach for analysing them (Reygadas, 2004: 7). In this context, some studies have examined inequality from a relational and multi-dimensional perspective, analysing it as a result of heterogeneous processes that take place over time and in specific cultural and historical contexts (Reygadas, 2004; Savage, 2014; Therborn, 2011; Wilkinson and Pickett, 2009).

This article subscribes to this perspective and is aimed at answering one core question: How are social inequalities configured in Argentina and Chile? This guiding

Table I. Class scheme.

I. Upper-level service class: professionals, administrators, and high-level managers	Service classes
II. Lower-level service class: professionals, administrative staff and lower managers, technicians, managers of small industrial establishments	
IIIa. Routine non-manual higher-level employees (routine tasks administration)	Intermediate classes
IIIb. Routine Non-manual lower-level employees (routine tasks sales and services)	
IVa. Small proprietors with employees	
IVb. Small proprietors with no employees	
IVc. Small proprietors and other independent workers in primary production	
V. Lower-grade technicians and supervisors of manual workers	
VI. Skilled manual workers	Working classes
VIIa. Semi and unskilled manual workers (outside the agricultural field)	
VIIb. Semi and unskilled manual workers (agricultural field)	

Source: Erikson et al. (1979).

question leads to the following sub-questions: What are the differences between the inequalities found in each country? What is the role played by policies and welfare schemes? And how do subjects experience these inequalities throughout their trajectories?

According to the relational perspective, inequalities can be analysed comparatively among multiple social groups. This analysis also considers the temporal component, which is a defining feature of biographical studies. Likewise, within each group there emerge relationships that can either foster or limit inequality inside the group or between its other collectives of individuals. Taking all this into account, our study identifies several dimensions that make it possible to conduct a comparative analysis of inequality, emphasising three groups: the working classes, the intermediate classes, and the service classes.

To analyse social inequality from the perspective of social class, it is necessary to analyse inter-class relationships to go beyond the theoretical perspective of class that one has adopted. This is especially relevant in some of the most recent research (Crompton, 1997; Erikson et al., 1979; Savage, 2014; Wright, 1992), with authors developing multiple class classifications by focusing on the occupational categories of the population. Similarly, authors have identified subgroups or fractions within each class. In addition, it is also relevant to consider the various types of capitalism (Undurraga, 2014), taking into account institutional aspects and the cultural practices of key economic actors.

This study underscores the interaction among three class levels (working, intermediate, and service). We do not consider class fractions or subclasses precisely to observe the occupational categories that allow a broader qualitative analysis comparing Argentina and Chile.

As for our findings, a qualitative comparison revealed that although Argentina and Chile exhibit significant differences in macro- and meso-social terms—a point also made by Undurraga (2014) this did not result in the construction of greatly dissimilar class trajectories between both countries. Even though welfare schemes in Argentina moved from moderate protectionism to a liberal model with labour policies that ranged from employment regulation to moderate individual self-management in the job market, and even though these schemes in Chile shifted from corrected neoliberalism to a protectionist liberal welfare model and a State policy with a meritocratic discourse that encouraged the self-management of individual workers, these stark differences do not appear to have had a major impact on the configuration of class trajectories in either country.

This document comprises five sections. First, we present the current state of affairs regarding the phenomenon studied in Argentina and Chile. Second, we implement the theoretical approach adopted. Third, we specify the particularities of the comparative biographical perspective (CBP) and the specificities considered in our fieldwork. Fourth, we present the results obtained, followed by a discussion of our findings. Lastly, we present the conclusions and projections of our study.

2. The Study of Social and Class Differences: Prior Work in Argentina and Chile

In Argentina, studies on class inequality have adopted an occupational approach, developing a perspective informed by social mobility and class trajectory research. This work began with the studies conducted by Germani (1955), who analysed social mobility flows in the first half of the 20th century.

More recent studies on social inequality and class stratification processes in Argentina have revealed social mobility trends that seem to coincide with fluidity patterns observed globally (Chávez-Molina, 2013; Dalle, 2010; Jorrat, 1987, 1997, 2000, Kessler and Espinoza, 2007; Pla 2016; Salvia, 2012). However, this intergenerational mobility has undergone certain changes over the last few decades. Dalle (2010), Pla (2016), and Salvia (2012) note that after controlling for the possible effects of structural change on social stratification, it is possible to observe that the relative fluidity of the socio-occupational structure conceals an increase in social polarisation, with a strong self-reproduction capacity at the top and fragmentation in the traditional middle sectors (Salvia, 2012), which has led to a partial balance between upward and downward mobility.

A still-underdeveloped line of research has also examined class inequalities from an occupational perspective, but stressing the importance of the representations, decisions, and actions of social actors to explain their position within the social structure. The authors have examined the views of social actors and analysed their subjective explanations regarding their place in the social structure (Pla, 2016), their upward social mobility (Dalle, 2010), class reproduction strategies in the social domain (Assusa and Jiménez, 2017; Gutiérrez and Mansilla, 2015), and differential class trajectories (Muñiz Terra, 2021; Muñiz Terra and Roberti, 2018).

In Chile, research on social and class inequalities is part of a tradition linked to sociological studies on the social structure during developmentalism (Castells, 1972; Faletto and Ruiz, 1970; Pinto, 1970). In the early 1980s, and after the so-called liberal turn, research underwent a major change, emphasising the identification of classes based on their traits. Since authors in this period privileged intra-class analysis to the detriment of a relational perspective (Martínez and Tironi, 1985), research on poverty and the work carried out to identify it gained relevance, especially focalisation studies where mobility is considered only in terms of whether individuals cross the poverty line.

Class studies appear to adopt a new perspective in the late 1990s, given the proliferation of research on inequalities that emphasised relational perspectives. In this group, the research conducted by Bengoa et al. (2000) stands out due to its sociocultural approaches and its focus on stratification and social mobility from a structural perspective (Torche, 2006; Wormald and Torche, 2001). Torche's studies have shown that, despite its high levels of inequality, Chile also displays high levels of social mobility, with more fluid patterns than those of some European countries. The barriers of inequality are hierarchical and significant, especially in the higher stratum (concentrated high class), while the other classes have weak barriers that allow individuals to enter and exit, which increases

vulnerability (Torche and López-Calva, 2012). Studies on inequalities grew in relevance during this period, especially those that examined the effects of neoliberalism on specific social groups (Gárate, 2012; Novaro, 2021; Ruiz and Boccardo, 2014; Undurraga, 2014). This situation explains the relevance gained by approaches focused on the middle classes (Barozet and Espinoza, 2008, 2016, Barozet and Fierro, 2011; Castillo, 2016; Méndez and Gayo, 2007, 2018) and their emergence as a field of study for analysing social inequalities through subjects' inter-class mobility (between the working and intermediate classes).

Many of these studies reveal an accumulation of advantages benefiting the high service class and even the middle-high classes, which results in strong income and property concentration, with regressive tax schemes that impact welfare programmes aimed at the middle and lower classes. This situation is noted in a PNUD report (2017) that features an analysis of other inequalities that are not always captured in class studies, including educational, political, and cultural aspects.

Since the literature indicates that the comparative analyses of social inequalities between countries conducted to date are too limited in scope, our article is an attempt to remedy this deficit.

Theoretical Perspective

In this article, we consider social inequalities as a whole (Savage, 2014; Therborn, 2011; Wilkinson and Pickett, 2009), that is, we hold that inequalities are multiple and can be regarded as a relational (inter-class) phenomenon that is produced and reproduced in multiple scales and dimensions.

These scales refer to the articulation/tension between macrostructural determinants (macro-social scale), institutional relations and policies (meso-social scale), and the actions carried out by individuals (micro-social scale) (Reygadas, 2004). These scales (macro, meso, and micro) each comprise different and sometimes interconnected dimensions. The way in which the scales and their dimensions connect with one another configures particular social inequalities.

In analytic terms, we define the macro scale based on the idea of welfare schemes, which alludes to the combination of practices for allocating the resources available at a given time in a given capitalist society (Esping-Andersen, 2001). This can be regarded as a risk-based society where mercantile activity is the main resource allocation practice, though not the only one, because the State also plays a relevant role. Specifically, we draw on Latin American debates on welfare schemes (Barba-Solano, 2004; Filgueira, 1998, 2013, Martínez-Franzoni, 2005; Minteguiaga and Ubasart-González, 2015), which stress the limited State presence in the region, with countries exhibiting varying levels of commodification (people's inclusion in the job market), decommodification (relative State involvement in job market inclusion), and familiarisation (participation of the family to guarantee that its members integrate into the job market and society).

Welfare schemes, as a macro dimension, enable us to contextualise the State and political interventions that make them viable, prompting the need for a dynamic

analysis that considers their constituent elements. In this context, it is crucial to analyse labour policies, which are essential to the provision of well-being inasmuch as they can either precarious working and living conditions or enable people to become better integrated into social security systems and attain greater stability and consumption capacity (Grassi and Danani, 2009). In consequence, the mesoscale will refer to State labour policies. Lastly, the micro-scale will address the way in which actors describe their occupational trajectories, adopting the biographical perspective that we present below.

In this context, given the complexity of analysing inequalities as relational, procedural, multiscale, and multi-dimensional phenomena, it is relevant to describe how we constructed the notion of social class and what diachronic perspective we adopted to conduct this study of inequalities.

Regarding social classes, they will be studied upon the basis of the conceptualisation and scheme advanced by Erikson et al. (1979), henceforth the Erikson, Goldthorpe, and Portocarero (EGP) model. In this scheme, classes determine positions within labour markets and units of production in terms of the employment relations that they involve. Specifically, these authors seek to establish a distinction between those who own the means of production and those who do not; also, regarding the latter, they classify them according to their type of relationship with their employer. The key difference is that some positions are regulated by a contract and others by a “service” relationship. Thus, although the EGP model was originally devised to apply to industrialised countries, where structural heterogeneity differs from that found in Latin America, research has proven its usefulness for international comparisons of macro-classes in the region (Solís et al., 2019).

The figure below presents the scheme derived from this perspective, showing the three macro-classes that it distinguishes and the class fractions included in each.

Regarding the diachronic approach of this study, we used the notion of work trajectories, since this perspective focuses on the study of the articulation/tension of multiple scales and dimensions over time and across space (Muñiz Terra, 2012). Specifically, we hold that work trajectories are part of a biographical perspective that makes it possible to collect social actors’ life histories, which result from diachronic and spatial sedimentation of the macro-, meso-, and micro-social dimensions (Rubilar, 2017).

Method

The methodological approach adopted is based on the CBP, which involves the use of biographical interviews and document analysis in a comparative manner.

The CBP belongs to the qualitative tradition and represents a specific contribution inasmuch as it stresses the importance of expanding the knowledge yielded by case study comparisons.

This perspective focuses on implementing the core ideas of the biographical approach, that is, examining the life trajectory of social actors, their experiences, and their particular

views, while also attempting to understand the context where all this takes place, as this approach considers that a person's life history reflects their time, the current social norms, and the basic shared values of their community (Ferrarotti, 1990).

From this perspective, all life trajectories can be regarded as a fabric composed of several relatively autonomous biographical lines that are dependent on each other. People's school trajectory, job trajectory, family life, health, and residential trajectory, among other elements, are both parallel and interconnected histories (Bertaux, 1981; Godard, 1998).

Regarding the analytic aims of the study, the objective dimension, that is, the structure of the opportunities afforded by the external world, represents macro- and meso-social levels that condition subjects, whereas the set of practices and representations that subjects implement in their trajectories belong to a micro-social level. The time axis indicates the relevance of the past, the present, and the future, and makes it possible to determine the diachronic articulation and/or tension between the macro-, meso-, and micro-social levels (Muñiz Terra, 2012).

The CBP brings out that set of premises and also seeks to extend the knowledge that can be constructed using comparisons.

We propose comparing cases in which the biographical perspective is applied. Cases may be one or many, but we chose to compare two countries from multiple perspectives based on the contributions of each of the subjects-cases from each class. The comparative intent of the CBP is to make visible, interpret, and compare the elements analysed in at least two single cases that then become multiple and can be labelled biographical. These cases can be similar or dissimilar, with similarities and differences being constructed upon the basis of common research problems. That is, starting from a comparative research problem, it is possible to delimit biographical case studies that can be similar or dissimilar regarding the issue to be studied.

The notion of spatial-temporal location reminds us that social processes analysed over time must also be understood within the framework of the spatial contexts where biographical case studies are carried out.

In addition, the notions of interdependence and interaction invite us to clarify all possible comparisons: they can be intra-scalar, intra-configurative, inter-scalar, inter-configurative, or a combination of these modes.

Inter-scalar comparisons are internal comparisons that can be conducted in biographical case studies. The idea is to take multiple units of analysis or groups within case studies and perform a synchronic and diachronic comparison of their particularities, considering the importance of the macro-, meso-, and micro-social scales in each of them.

Intra-configurative comparisons are a response to the need to interpret and contrast the particularities of the configurations of the articulations/tensions among the macro-, meso-, and micro-social dimensions within the units of analysis or the social groups in each case. This comparison makes it possible to identify the similarities and differences between the macro-, meso-, and micro-configurations in each case and helps to explain what occurs in each group or unit of analysis.

Firstly, inter-scalar configurations are comparisons between the scales present in biographical case studies; that is, a comparison between their macro-social scales, then between their meso-social scales, and finally between their micro-social scales. Secondly, these comparisons concern the changes that may occur in these scales and their comparisons over time.

Inter-configurative comparisons are comparisons between the diachronic configurations that occur through the articulations/tensions among the macro-, meso-, and micro-social scales in biographical case studies. These comparisons are especially relevant since they reveal the potential association between the macro, meso, and micro levels in each of the biographical case studies conducted, which can then be compared.

Given this situation, one possibility is to perform a qualitative analysis of biographical events and milestones (Muñiz Terra, 2018; Rubilar, 2017). It is also pertinent to pre-process the information collected through a synchronic and diachronic thematic analysis of the biographical interviews and their articulation with the macro- and meso-social sphere, hence the emphasis found in trajectory studies.

We conducted two biographical case studies, one in Argentina and another one in Chile, which covered the 2003–2019 period. Specifically, we held 24 biographical–occupational interviews (twelve per country) with workers from the three social classes proposed by Erikson et al. (1979). This procedure was aimed at reconstructing the labour trajectories of these workers belonging to the service, intermediate, and working classes of each country.

Interviews were held with a limited number of individuals per country, since our main goal was to examine how the CBP model presented in this section behaved in an empirical study. In this regard, irrespective of sample size, we sought to observe the inter-scalar and intra-configurative analysis possibilities of a comparative study of three macro-classes. We studied their articulation with the macro- and meso-social dimensions of social inequalities, presenting a brief analysis of each dimension in the Results section. Interviews were conducted in 2018 and 2019. For the micro dimension, we included some fragments of the interviews conducted to illustrate the arguments advanced.

The comparative spatial delimitation of these cases results from the selection of two spatial frameworks with a high level of population concentration and diversity: the Greater Santiago and the Greater Buenos Aires areas.

The temporal delimitation of the studies is broad and is directly related to the transition of cycles with different welfare models. In the case of Argentina, we start with the cycle that began in 2003 and continue studying until the year 2019; in Chile, we start with the cycle that began in 2000 and examine until the year 2019.

One of the limitations of the approach presented is that our empirical study is unable to capture overarching inequalities beyond class inequality. This is especially evident in the case of sex–gender and ethnicity inequalities, which were not part of this analysis but can be included in future research informed by this CBP approach by expanding the participant selection process.

Results

In this section, we present an intra-scalar and intra-configurative comparison for each case, focusing our analysis on the particularities of each of the macro-, meso-, and micro-social dimensions examined. Then, we present an inter-scalar and inter-configurative analysis, returning to an inter-case comparison as our interpretative approach. The interviewees' discourses were essential for accessing the configuration of their trajectories at a micro level, which is complemented by the analysis of welfare models and labour policies, constructed upon the basis of specialised bibliography and document sources. The articulation of these procedures contributes to the consolidation of the theoretical–methodological perspective developed.

Intra-scalar and intra-configurative biographical comparison in the case study of social inequalities in Argentina.

Table 2. Intra-scalar analysis: macro- and meso-social dimensions in Argentina.

Argentina:			
Government period	Service class	Intermediate classes	Working classes
Periods of centre-left political orientation 1st 2003–2007. 2nd 2007–2011. 3rd 2011–2015.	Tendency towards the regulation of labour	Macro dimension Welfare scheme Moderate protectionist tendency Meso dimension State labour policy	Tendency towards aid and the granting of citizens' work rights
Period of centre-right ideological orientation 1st 2015–2019.	Tendency towards meritocracy and individual self-management in the labour market. Elimination of export duties and liberalisation of tariffs.	Macro dimension Welfare scheme Liberal tendency Meso dimension State labour policy	Tendency to cut back aid programs. Increase in unemployment, increase in informal occupation, and devaluation of real salaries.

Source: own work based on interviews with Argentine interviewees.

For the inter-scalar and inter-configurative analysis of social inequalities in Argentina, we present in Table 2 summarising the particularities of the macro and meso dimensions that span all three social classes and perform a concrete analysis of the documental information to understand how welfare policies and schemes operate as structural constraints affecting the occupational trajectories examined.

Second, we conducted an analysis of the micro-social dimension taking into account the information collected and the period studied (2003–2019). To interpret the data constructed, we selected the following dimensions of the trajectories for the micro-social analysis: duration (of the job(s)), type of activity, knowledge (required to do the job), and educational transitions.

Table 2 shows that the stage being examined (2003–2019) comprises two government periods that configure the macro- and micro-social dimensions that are differentially imposed on the trajectories of the 3 classes examined. While centre-left governments were in power between 2003 and 2015, implementing protectionist welfare models aimed at protecting and regulating labour, over the following years a centre-right government was elected, leading to the implementation of a liberal welfare model that tended to apply State labour policies with a clear tendency towards meritocracy and individual self-management in the labour market.

Thus, the tradition of liberal labour policies and welfare models implemented at a national and provincial level in the 1990s (Gervasoni, 2010) and the first steps of the gender equality agenda (Caminotti and Piscopo, 2019; Etchemendy and Puente, 2017; Pereyra, 2019; Szwarcberg, 2018), began to be reviewed in the 2000s from a more inclusive perspective. In the first period (2003–2015), the welfare model prioritised the redistributive agenda, the expansion of civil and cultural rights, and the State support and regulation of the internal market (Vomaro and Gené, 2017). This was the approach adopted to tackle one of the deepest socio-economic crises to hit Argentina, which had undergone its most severe period in 2000, 2001, and 2002 (Varesi, 2009). Labour policies focused on the generation of better occupational conditions, leading to increased salaries (partly as a result of the good performance of commodities and the payment of the external debt, which injected abundant funds) and a number of citizen rights associated with various measures, including the re-nationalisation of the pension system. This system, which had been separated into a private and a public branch in the 1990s, incorporated large masses of beneficiaries during the moderate protectionist welfare period, granting them pension mobility. In addition, multiple social protection mechanisms aimed at vulnerable population groups were implemented, including the universal per-child allowance (Asignación Universal Por Hijo [AUH]), the pregnancy allowance (Asignación Universal Por Embarazo [AUE]), and the educational continuity plan (Progresar) (Danani, 2016). Furthermore, informal work assistance programmes were implemented, such as the funding scheme for cooperatives known as Argentina Trabaja (Argentina Works). The occupational trajectories of each class were thus constructed within a context of labour protection policies granting coverage to formal employees, with specific plans benefiting rural and informal workers (Varesi, 2009). Even though this period was marked by the predominance of Peronism, over time, Argentina began to exhibit

polarisation as neoliberal political approaches grew and became institutionalised by means of a centre-right alliance (Vomaro and Gené, 2017). This alliance mostly included representatives of liberal and radical groups (UCR, Unión Cívica Radical) and managed to win the presidential election in 2015, leading to the collapse of the two-party system and the defeat of Peronism.

This new political force initiated a modernising process that resulted in a number of setbacks in terms of social rights: the welfare model and its policies were captured by small power groups, businesspersons, Chief Executive Officers, and right-wing politicians (Astarita, 2018; Canelo et al., 2018) who benefited from the allocation of political positions and the reduction and/or elimination of export duties and the liberalisation of certain businesses and tariffs. All this, together with the devaluation of real salaries, had an impact on the middle and working classes. Although no shock measures were implemented, in terms of labour policies, the model shifted its focus to (a) limiting policies aimed at informal employment, leading to a loss of benefits for unemployed workers, and (b) decentralising the administration of social programmes by reducing or eliminating benefits, delegating a large portion of social functions to the market. Over the course of its administration, the government found it difficult to apply for a right-wing programme – comprising a labour reform, a pension reform, a tax reform, and zero deficit – in the face of the legacy of the public policies implemented in the previous cycle, especially those benefiting informal workers and the more disadvantaged groups (Gené, 2018; Niedzwiecki and Pribble, 2017). The main consequences of the liberal welfare state and its impact in macroeconomic and labour terms, caused by its own inconsistencies and fresh borrowing from the International Monetary Fund, were fully understood only after the coalition lost power in 2020, coinciding with the COVID-19 pandemic, which compounded existing economic and occupational issues. In the micro-social dimension, in both periods, the occupational trajectories of the service classes began after the completion of university studies, the educational level that most of the interviewees had reached. These trajectories display several stages, all of which are linked to occupational moments that, despite being short at the beginning (two or three years), tend to stabilise, leading to occupational changes associated with improvements in terms of working conditions and wages or other types of rewards.

... I started working in a theater... while I was studying, I worked there as a sound and lighting technician, I did some maintenance, a little bit of everything... after the theater, in Buenos Aires, I started working for an airline, I worked for three and a half years in Austral and then I joined the oil company. At the same time, I was also working in the university, when I started working for the airline, I was already working here at the university, and even today... I'm still working and improving my job situation (Interview 1, service class, Argentina).

In the multiple positions that they hold, which tend to be formal, workers acquire a set of institutionalised knowledge through specific courses or postgraduate programs as well as informally as part of their workplace experiences. The latter are largely associated with

attitudinal knowledge (e.g. knowing how to interact with people of the same hierarchical level or a higher one, being able to show their potential, expanding their social networks).

I'm learning a lot in the graduate program I'm doing. It's great, in terms of contents, soft skills, and my peer group... I have 69 peers who have managerial positions in various companies, so I learn every day I have class (Interview 3, service class, Argentina).

Changes in welfare models do not appear to have a direct impact on these trajectories, which are experienced as cumulative processes marked by experiences and the construction of permanent advantages.

In contrast, the trajectories of intermediate class workers tend to start during their secondary education or at the end of this period. Some interviewees begin their university education and a few complete their studies, but some time later than expected. Those who drop out do so because of their lengthy workdays.

I then got another interview at the transportation company, in the tourism area, and they selected me. I had already started my Law degree. They took me on probation for three months and then they hired me. I was there for a long time, three years. I obviously dropped out from my Law program, because this was a full time job (Interview 7, intermediate class, Argentina).

These trajectories also include occupational stages with various lengths, as some jobs are only performed during some months but others last longer, with workers staying in the same position for several years. Their qualifications tend to be informal, which makes it difficult for them to build continuous trajectories, although the knowledge constructed in the workplace sometimes enables these workers to secure specific jobs with precarious fixed-term contracts that eventually become formal.

The macro and meso transformations associated with each government period affect these trajectories, since liberal policies sometimes lead to wage devaluations, workday increases, the need for people to work more to cover their expenses, or occupational changes due to the closure or resizing of their companies, among other consequences.

My job at the distributor was important in economic terms, although I worked all day, it was very well paid, but due to an issue with business policies, which resulted from an international policy... we had two brands to sell and one of them, which represented sixty percent of our sales and had the largest profit margin, left the distributor. We stopped selling that brand, so after making eighty thousand pesos, I went on to earn forty-five thousand... a real disaster (Interview 8, intermediate class, Argentina).

This situation reflects how external constraints in both periods, that is, the macro- and meso-social dimensions, affect the configuration of these trajectories, reducing workers' chances to grow and develop gradually.

The trajectories of the working classes in both periods generally begin at an early age, in adolescence, when people drop out of secondary education or choose to delay their studies because they need to work.

I didn't really drop out. I mean, I went there and took all my exams, and when you have three subjects and they tell you "pass one, and you're fine," but I failed the only chance they gave you, so I repeated the grade. I was already working at that time. My mom has a small store, and I helped her there. I was young... when I repeated, I must have been 16 years old (Interview 9, working class, Argentina).

The occupational stages that these trajectories comprise are multiple and have a duration ranging from one month to four or five years of continuous occupation. Given their lack of specific knowledge, it is hard for them to get stable jobs. As a consequence, they tend to develop discontinuous trajectories in a variety of informal occupations.

Well, you see, I always worked. At home, with the handicrafts and the bakery stuff. Then I worked in catering: gastronomy, birthdays, weddings, that sort of thing. My first jobs were as a domestic worker and then in gastronomy. As a kitchen assistant and doing fruit carving for social events. Then I found other jobs, making sandwiches. And then we started a business with my daughter, but it didn't work out. Now I'm a caregiver... (Interview 12, working class, Argentina).

In some cases, periods of employment alternate with moments of unemployment. Thus, these trajectories accumulate one disadvantage after another and are directly affected by labour policies: tellingly, during the moderate protectionist welfare model, their periods of employment are longer and interviewees report having received low but sufficient income. In contrast, they note that, while the liberal welfare model was in force, the lower availability of resources in the market and the limited access to social schemes made it difficult to engage in informal occupations, sometimes leading them to poverty. In this context, the configuration of these trajectories – through the articulation of the macro, meso, and micro dimensions and their tensions over time – shows how deprivation is established throughout government periods.

Intra-scalar and intra-configurative biographical comparison in the case study of social inequalities in Chile.

As in our intra-scalar and intra-configurative analysis of social inequalities in Argentina, we first present in Table 3 that summarises the particularities of the macro and meso dimensions that apply to all three social classes in Chile. Second, we perform an in-depth analysis constructed for the micro-social dimension. The period studied (2000–2019) coincides with a cycle of greater social protection and employment regulation through the establishment of an unemployment insurance programme, although the predominant approach has a clear tendency towards meritocracy and individual self-determination in the labour market, with the State encouraging self-employment or individual entrepreneurship. This phase predates the social upheaval that began in

Table 3. Intra-scalar analysis: macro- and meso-social dimensions in Chile.

Chile: Government period	Service classes	Intermediate classes	Working classes
Periods of liberal-protectionist ideological orientation 1st 2000–2006. 2nd 2006–2010.	Tendency towards labour protection	Macro dimension Welfare scheme Corrected neoliberalism tendency Meso dimension State labour policy	Tendency towards deregulation and a lack of protection (temporary work, fixed-term contracts)
		Tendency towards meritocracy and individual self-management in the labour market	
Periods of liberal ideological orientation 2014–2019.	Macro dimension Welfare scheme Liberal-protectionist tendency Meso dimension State labour policy Tendency towards market protection	Tendency towards market protection, deregulation	Tendency towards market protection, deregulation

Source: own work based on interviews with Chilean interviewees.

October 2019, so this analysis does not cover the events that took place from that point onward.

The Chilean situation was analysed using the same dimensions as in the Argentine case, which facilitated the adoption of a comparative point of view.

The above table is divided into three government periods, listing the macro- and meso-social dimensions present in the trajectories of the three classes analysed. The 2000–2009 period saw a continuous sequence of centre-left governments that implemented basic social protection policies (Rubilar and Grau, 2017) focused on employment protection,

hence the “corrected neoliberal” label. However, this protectionist tendency developed within liberal models of individual self-management that emphasise meritocracy and a desire to administer individual trajectories and provide insurance against risks.

This period of protectionist expansion of welfare schemes – which provided basic benefits – was followed by a right-wing political cycle that privileged policies aimed at safeguarding private businesses to increase investor trust and strengthen capital. Between 2010 and 2014, the labour market displayed dynamics reflecting excessive demands and scarce rewards in terms of both job security and wages (Stecher and Godoy, 2014). Furthermore, this period saw the emergence of debates on vulnerability, while the intermediate classes began to experience deterioration or insecurity regarding their welfare (Barozet and Espinoza, 2016; Castillo, 2016). This situation was compounded by increasing pressures resulting from the acceleration of production processes, the extension of the workday, and an increase in commuting times. The fluidity among classes observed by Torche (2005) became especially evident given phenomena such as work flexibility and the instability of employment, even affecting the intermediate class.

The centre-left coalition returned to power in the 2014–2018 period, but with a particular orientation that included the implementation of neomanagerial models in the private and public sectors, with major transformations being observed in the management of the workforce as well as in its discourses and cultures. This tendency became more acute in the latest government of the right-wing coalition (2018–2022) and contributed to the social and political upheaval of October 2019.

In 2016, Chile implemented a policy granting free of charge university education for the poorest quintiles, leading to a high rate of students who are the first in their families to pursue such studies, with their numbers approaching those of Argentina. Both countries began to exhibit stratified graduation rates, repeating students’ baseline educational structure. Apart from the access of the working class to free of charge higher education, it can be observed that Chile’s middle and high service classes have greatly increased their educational level (in years), which now approach Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development levels.

During these periods, the work trajectories of the three selected classes were constructed within a constant tension between economic expansion and a gradual improvement in labour and social rights. However, the trajectories of the intermediate and working classes in Chile tend to follow patterns of strong labour flexibilisation, competition, and a breakdown of associativity as a result of the progressive individualisation of work relations (Ramos, 2009; Rubilar et al., 2019; Soto 2008).

That’s when I started working in this area, since the furnace was for a windshield workshop, they offered me a job here, for instance, at that time I earned three hundred thousand pesos [minimum wage]. Then they offered me another job for three hundred and fifty, I worked from Monday to Saturday, and they offered me to work from Monday to Friday and with flexible hours, so I liked that and I switched. That’s when I started on the furnace first,

but the heat was too much, so then I shifted to windshield fitting. I went out to help, I paid attention, and I learned (Interview 19, intermediate class, Chile).

These configurations generated dissimilar effects in the macro- and meso-social dimensions of the classes analysed. This occurred because the precarisation of employment, manifested through low wages, atypical contracts, uncertainty, instability, insecurity, and low bargaining power (Stecher and Sisto, 2019), has mainly affected the working classes, increasing uncertainty and instability regarding the future (Rubilar et al., 2019). Early, discontinuous, and informal occupational trajectories predominate in the working classes, with poor social protection and low qualification self-employment.

It was hard for me to find a job (...) I was willing to work anywhere, from trash collection to McDonald's, anything. Because I didn't want to be here at home lazying around, I wanted to work, and that's how I got to the retirement home. I didn't have a contract, I mean the only condition was that I had to work from eight in the morning to five in the afternoon, from Monday to Friday. They never asked for any special courses, they didn't run a background check, nothing (Interview 15, working class, Chile).

The labour trajectories of service class workers become gradually unpredictable, despite starting later in life and with higher qualifications (university education and specialised training). In general, their trajectories are formal and continuous and benefit from institutional appreciation, which enables them to engage in additional projects; however, uncertainty regarding the future and low pensions emerge as an element that hinders their well-being over time and introduces early forms of precarisation. Therefore, paradoxically, the historical rise in salaried employment in Chile (around 70% of people in employment), especially in the service sector, has not necessarily led to a proportional increase in secure and protected jobs (Ramos et al., 2015).

So I found myself doing a PhD. I had to read a lot of papers and study as well as work as an engineering professor, prepare classes, grade exams, etc. Then, in the afternoons I worked at a clinical laboratory and I tried to have some time with my partner. So, finally I said, "this is too much! I can't do it anymore." I felt like I was doing it all, but by half measures, I wasn't really learning what I needed to learn and I wasn't enjoying it anymore. I had too many things going on, running here and there (Interview 22, service class, Chile).

The occupational trajectories of intermediate class workers begin after they complete their secondary education. Networks and family support have a noticeable impact on job adaptation and promotion. Given the lack of policies in support of continuing education, workers choose technical–professional programmes or take out loans to attend higher education (Pérez-Roa and Ayala, 2019). This phenomenon, compared with the Argentine case, reflects differentiated ways of understanding specialisation. The interviewees manifest a tendency towards (self) development and autonomous entrepreneurship.

I'd say we work all the time, I mean there's freedom, but you still have a greater commitment because it's you who's in charge of everything, so you need to be on top of things all the time. Obviously being autonomous means there's some freedom, but if we're talking hours per week, I'd say 24/7 I guess. Initially, I worked with my couple, then my mom came to help us with the store, and later on, after a while, we put my friend in charge of the shipments to Chile and the website (Interview 17, intermediate class, Chile).

The labour trajectories of working class men formally begin after they complete their secondary education; however, they take informal jobs beforehand. Their trajectories generally comprise multiple short-term occupational stages in technical jobs requiring only basic qualifications. Some public programmes exist which help workers enrol in technical training courses to facilitate their early employment. In some cases, their occupation becomes formal, but their ability to start a company or employ workers is close to nil.

I worked with my dad in the outskirts of Santiago, building a chapel. I helped him, but it wasn't hard, because we drove there, he took me, he paid me about two hundred and fifty thousand pesos. Then, I started working in a retirement home. After that, I went back to work with my dad. I worked as a Cabify driver for a while, but I don't like to spend all day sitting at the wheel. Then, an aunt told me to work at the hospital's wardrobe, and then I moved to the Critical Patient Unit of the La Florida Hospital, and I've been there for three years, it'll be three years in March. (Interview 15, working class, Chile).

As in the Argentine case, the intra-scalar and intra-configurative comparison performed makes it possible to visualise the articulations and tensions present in each class along with their occupational trajectories. This approach reveals the persistence of social inequalities, a lack of opportunities and self-development capabilities, and the low impact of government policies aimed at increasing social mobility.

Discussion

The configuration of welfare models and labour policies, that is, the macro- and meso-social dimensions presented for the above cases reveals the dissimilar tensions affecting each social class. While welfare models and labour policies had no major impact on the trajectories of the service classes, the trajectories of the intermediate and working classes were clearly affected by changes in said dimensions. This situation was visible in both countries, but differed as a result of the more protectionist tendency in Argentina and the more liberal approach in Chile.

Moving on to the analysis of the micro dimension of occupational trajectories, major differences emerge in the interplay among the decisions, experiences, and actions deployed by social actors. This illustrates how deprivations and privileges intermingle with models and policies in the configuration of social inequalities. The service class appears to be less affected by tendencies towards job flexibility and uncertainty,

whereas the intermediate and working classes must deal with instability and a tendency towards labour precarisation.

The intra-scalar and intra-configurative analysis conducted as part of the case studies on social inequalities in Argentina and Chile – the articulation presented between welfare models, labour policies, and occupational trajectories – yielded guidelines for understanding the specific traits of social inequalities in each country. As for the inter-scalar and inter-configurative comparisons performed, they suggest that the inequalities constructed in these two countries differ in ways worth noting.

First, the macro-social inter-scalar comparison shows that while welfare schemes in Argentina oscillate between moderate protectionism (applied for 12 years) and a liberal model that lasted 4 years (until 2019), Chile displays a corrected neoliberal turn, shifting from 10 years of protectionist liberalism to 4 years of liberalism and then to 4 years of a protectionist liberal welfare scheme, which is insufficient for examining the social and political crisis generated in previous periods.

These movements shed light on the dissimilarity of the configurations of State policies in both countries (meso-social dimension): while Argentina shifted from employment regulation measures to others that promote meritocracy and individual self-management in the labour market, Chile maintained a State policy grounded in a meritocratic discourse and a focus on self-management, despite the changes that welfare schemes underwent.

Nevertheless, the micro-social dimension, that is, the trajectories of all the classes, have similar limits, thus revealing that class boundaries are constructed analogously in both countries. An inter-scalar analysis of the micro dimension reveals that classes occupy a relatively similar place within the Argentine and Chilean social structures. Thus, while the service classes progressively accumulate advantages, the intermediate classes are weakly affected by State policies, with their lack of protection gradually increasing, and the working classes are directly conditioned by welfare schemes and labour policies. This generates mounting disadvantages not only of a macro- and meso-social nature: they are also subjective. Early entry into the labour market and unfinished secondary studies are compounded by external constraints, all of which configures paths characterised by intermittence and deprivation.

Lastly, when we turn to the inter-configurative comparison, there emerges a concrete element that distinguishes the class trajectories identified in each country: while State labour policies and public primary, secondary, and tertiary education institutions play a relevant role in the trajectories of each class in Argentina, Chile clearly displays the consequences of meritocratic labour policies and the individualistic approach to the labour market, as well as the weight of exclusionary and selective educational policies (since secondary and tertiary education are not free of charge). This inter-configurative comparison is especially relevant since it concretely highlights the association between the macro, meso, and micro levels in each of the biographical case studies conducted, while also explaining social inequalities in each country. In this regard, some similarities exist between Chile's and Argentina's educational and labour trajectories, as in both cases institutional aspects and the ways in which people access education and jobs continue to be a key mechanism of the reproduction of inequality.

Conclusions

This article examines the configuration of social inequalities in Argentina and Chile from a perspective that contrasts welfare models, labour policies, and occupational trajectories through a cross-sectional analysis. Owing to the adoption of a qualitative approach, this study represents a contribution in itself because social studies lack a consolidated tradition in qualitative, comparative, and diachronic research between nations. Our analysis emphasises the interrelationships that develop between welfare models, labour policies, and the occupational trajectories of subjects within the same class and between classes over time, at both an intra-scalar and an intra-configurative level as well as at an inter-scalar and inter-configurative level, by country and between countries.

The intra-scalar and intra-configurative biographical analysis performed revealed that Argentina underwent a diachronic sedimentation characterised by: (a) the transition from a protectionist welfare model that tended to protect and regulate labour (2003–2015) to a model that implemented liberal strategies with a clear tendency towards meritocracy and individual self-management in the labour market (2016–2019); (b) a transition from a labour policy aimed at the protection of labour (2003–2015) to a labour policy that delegated to the labour market most of its social functions (2015–2019); (c) class-related occupational trajectories that – within a context of changing welfare models and policies – tended to maintain positions of power and privilege (service classes), zigzagged between slowly developing opportunities and limitations (intermediate classes), or were marked by increasingly limited work opportunities or fewer rights and possibilities (working classes).

In Chile, a diachronic articulation developed, characterised by: (a) the transition from welfare models with low degrees of focused protection to a welfare model based on subjects' individual ability to deal with crises; (b) labour policies supported by the development of a work market oriented towards outsourcing, characterised by temporary jobs, low salaries, and individual risk management within a market insurance model; and (c) the configuration of occupational trajectories which are still dominated by a focus on social mobility within the classical model of educational improvement, accompanied by a tendency towards entrepreneurship and self-management, with high levels of demand in terms of hours worked per week and low retribution or compensation for these efforts, manifested through low wages and decreasing levels of protection.

The inter-scalar and inter-configurative analysis yielded evidence indicating that, at the macro-social level, Argentina's welfare models oscillated between moderate protectionism and a liberal approach, while in Chile they shifted from corrected neoliberalism to a liberal-protectionist welfare model. At the meso-social level, labour policies reveal that Argentina moved from employment regulation to individual self-management in the work market, whereas Chile maintained a State policy characterised by a meritocratic discourse and worker self-management regardless of changes in welfare models. Nevertheless, these constant differences do not appear to have had a major influence on the configuration of the class trajectories of two countries with similar features: the service classes tend to construct advantageous trajectories, while the intermediate

classes are ambivalently affected by schemes and policies, and the working classes accumulate disadvantages because they are directly conditioned by welfare models and State policies. However, the similarities found do not diminish the importance that the interviewees attach to certain labour and educational policies that tend to have a dissimilar impact on class trajectories in Chile and Argentina, with public education and employment protection emerging as two institutional strategies that help to construct class and mobility trajectories that are absent from Chile's individualistic labour strategies and exclusionary educational policies.

Finally, the perspective adopted in this study, based on the diachronic articulation of the macro-, meso-, and micro-social dimensions, was found to be pertinent for addressing the relational and processual features of class-related social inequalities, enriching the comparative analyses performed with multi-scalar and multi-dimensional logics. Nevertheless, it is still necessary to meet the challenge of taking this perspective further, conducting specific studies on each dimension and incorporating other countries and more cases to analyse the possibilities and limitations afforded by this approach for the comparative examination of relational inequalities.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The authors declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Funding

The authors disclosed receipt of the following financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article: This work was funded by Agencia I + D+ I, Ministerio de Ciencias y Tecnología, Argentina, PICT 2015-0928. "Trayectorias y carreras laborales heterogéneas de generaciones jóvenes en el Gran La Plata. Un análisis de itinerarios ocupacionales en el sector formal e informal del mercado de trabajo en el período de Postconvertibilidad" (grant number Agencia I + D+ I, Ministerio de Ciencias y Tecnología). This article was funded by ANID/ CONICYT/ FONDECYT 1190257 longitudinal study of transitions and research trajectories of Chilean social workers

References

- Assusa G and Jiménez C (2017) Familias, retornos educativos y clases sociales. Valorización de capital cultural y estrategias escolares de clase media y clase trabajadora en Córdoba. *OBETS* 12(2): 303–335.
- Astarita M (2018) Cambios y su modelo de Estado: Hacia un orden jerárquico y modernizador. In: García D, Ruiz C and de Anchorena B (eds) *Elites y Captura del Estado*. Buenos Aires: FLACSO, pp.61–89.
- Barba-Solano C (2004) *Régimen de Bienestar y Reforma Social en México*. Santiago: CEPAL-Naciones Unidas.
- Barozet E and Espinoza V (2008) ¿Quiénes pertenecen a la clase media en Chile? Una aproximación metodológica. *Revista Debate* 74: 103–121.
- Barozet E and Espinoza V (2016) Current issues on the political representation of middle classes in Chile. *Journal of Politics in Latin America* 8(3): 95–123.

- Barozet E and Fierro J (2011) *Clase media en Chile, 1990–2011: algunas ampliaciones sociales y políticas. Serie estudios 4*. Santiago: Fundación Konrad Adenauer.
- Bengoa J, Márquez F and Aravena S (2000) *La desigualdad. Testimonios de la sociedad chilena en la última década del siglo XX*. Santiago: Sur Ediciones.
- Bertaux D (1981) *Biography and Society. The Life History Approach in the Social Sciences*. London: Sage.
- Caminotti M and Piscopo J (2019) Neither penalised nor prized: feminist legislators, women's representation, and career paths in Argentina. *Journal of Politics in Latin America* 11(2): 181–203.
- Canelo P, Castellani A and Gentile J (2018) Articulación entre elites económicas y elites políticas en el gabinete nacional de Mauricio Macri. In: García D, Ruiz C and de Anchorena B (eds) *Elites y Captura del Estado*. Buenos Aires: FLACSO, pp.117–136.
- Castells M (1972) *Estructura de clases sociales en Chile, 1970*. Santiago: CIDU/PI/PT.
- Castillo M (2016) Fronteras simbólicas y clases medias. Movilidad social en Chile. *Perfiles Latinoamericanos* 24(48): 213–241.
- Chávez-Molina E (2013) *Desigualdad y movilidad social en el mundo contemporáneo, Aportes empíricos y conceptuales. Argentina, China, España y Francia*. Buenos Aires: Imago Mundi.
- Crompton R (1997) *Clase y Estratificación. Una Introducción a los Debates Actuales*. Madrid: Tecnos.
- Dalle P (2010) Estratificación y movilidad social en Argentina. *Revista de Trabajo* 8(6): 59–83.
- Danani C (2016) Las políticas públicas del área de desarrollo social durante los gobiernos de Nestor Kirchner y Cristina Fernandez. *Análisis* 12, Buenos Aires: Fundación Friedrich Ebert Stiftung.
- Erikson R, Goldthorpe J and Portocarero L (1979) Intergenerational class mobility in three Western European Societies: England, France and Sweden. *The British Journal of Sociology* 30(4): 415–441.
- Esping-Andersen G (2001) *Fundamentos sociales de las economías postindustriales*. Barcelona: Ediciones Ariel.
- Etchemendy S and Puente I (2017) Power and crisis: explaining varieties of commercial banking systems in Argentina, Brazil and Mexico. *Journal of Politics in Latin America* 9(1): 3–31.
- Faletto E and Ruiz E (1970) Conflicto político y estructura social. In: Pinto A (ed) *Chile Hoy*. Santiago: Siglo XXI, pp.213–254.
- Ferrarotti F (1990) *La historia y lo cotidiano*. Buenos Aires: Centro Editor América Latina.
- Filgueira F (1998) El Nuevo modelo de prestaciones sociales en América Latina. Eficiencia, residualismo y ciudadanía estratificada. In: Roberts B (ed) *Ciudadanía y Política Social*. San José: FLACSO, pp.71–116.
- Filgueira F (2013) Regímenes de bienestar en el ocaso de la modernización conservadora: posibilidades y límites de la ciudadanía social en América Latina. *Revista Uruguaya de Ciencia Política* 2(22): 17–46.
- Gárate M (2012) *La revolución capitalista de Chile*. Santiago: Ediciones Universidad Alberto Hurtado.
- Gené M (2018) Politización y controversias: los CEO en el gobierno de Cambiemos. *Revista Ensamblés Primavera* 5(9): 41–62.
- Germani G (1955) *Estructura Social de la Argentina*. Buenos Aires: Raigal.
- Gervasoni C (2010) Measuring variance in subnational regimes: results from an expert-based operationalization of democracy in the Argentine provinces. *Journal of Politics in Latin America* 2(2): 13–52.

- Godard F (1998) Uso de las historias de vida en las Ciencias Sociales. In: Lulle T, Vargas P and Zamudio L (eds) *Los usos de la historia de vida en las ciencias sociales*. Colombia: Anthropos, pp.1–55.
- Goffman E (1981) *La presentación de la persona en la vida cotidiana*. Buenos Aires: Amorrortu.
- Grassi E and Danani C (2009) *Trabajar para vivir; vivir para trabajar*. Buenos Aires: Espacio Editorial.
- Gutiérrez A and Mansilla H (2015) Clases y reproducción social: el espacio social cordobés en la primera década del siglo XXI. *Política y Sociedad* 52(2): 409–442.
- Jorrat JR (1987) Exploraciones sobre movilidad ocupacional intergeneracional masculina en el Gran Buenos Aires. *Desarrollo Económico* 27: 261–278.
- Jorrat JR (1997) En la huella de los padres: movilidad ocupacional en el Buenos Aires de 1980. *Desarrollo Económico* 37: 91–116.
- Jorrat JR (2000) *Estratificación social y movilidad. Un estudio del área metropolitana Buenos Aires*. Tucumán: EUDET.
- Kessler G and Espinoza V (2007) Movilidad social y trayectorias ocupacionales en Buenos Aires. Continuidades, rupturas y paradojas. In: Franco R, León A and Atria R (eds) *Estratificación y movilidad social en América Latina. Transformaciones estructurales de un cuarto de siglo*. Santiago: LOM-CEPAL-GTZ, pp.259–301.
- Martínez-Franzoni J (2005) La pieza que faltaba: uso del tiempo y regímenes de bienestar en América Latina. *Nueva Sociedad* 199: 35–52.
- Martínez J and Tironi E (1985) *Las clases sociales en Chile. Cambio y estratificación, 1970-1980*. Santiago: Sur Ediciones.
- Méndez ML and Gayo M (2007) El perfil de un debate: Movilidad y meritocracia. Contribución al estudio de las sociedades latinoamericanas. In: Franco R, León A and Atria R (eds) *Estratificación y movilidad social en América Latina. Transformaciones estructurales de un Cuarto de Siglo*. Santiago: LOM-CEPAL-GTZ, pp.121–158.
- Méndez ML and Gayo M (2018) *Upper Middle Class Social Reproduction. Wealth, Schooling and Residential Choice in Chile*.
- Minteguaga A and Ubasart-González G (2015) Regímenes de Bienestar y gobiernos “progresistas” en América Latina: los casos de Venezuela, Ecuador y Bolivia. *Política y Sociedad* 52(3): 691–718..
- Muñiz Terra L (2012) Carreras y trayectorias laborales: Una revisión crítica de las principales aproximaciones teórico-metodológicas para su abordaje. *Revista Latinoamericana de Metodología de las Ciencias Sociales* 2(1): 36–55.
- Muñiz Terra L (2018) Biographical events and milestones: A methodological proposal to analyze narratives of life. *Forum Qualitative Social Research* 19(2): 1–25.
- Muñiz Terra L (2021) Trayectorias de clases previsibles e imprevisibles. El lugar de la transmisión familiar en la reproducción y el ascenso social en Argentina. *Revista Cuestiones de Sociología* 24: 1–23.
- Muñiz Terra L and Roberti E (2018) Las tramas de la desigualdad social desde una perspectiva comparada: Hacia una reconstrucción de las trayectorias laborales de jóvenes de clases medias y trabajadoras. *Revista Estudios del Trabajo* 55: 1–32.
- Niedzwiecki N and Pribble J (2017) Social policies and center-right governments in Argentina and Chile. *Latin American Politics and Society* 59(3): 72–97.
- Novaro M (2021) *Historia de la Argentina 1955–2020*. Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI.
- Pereyra S (2019) Corruption scandals and anti-corruption policies in Argentina. *Journal of Politics in Latin America* 11(3): 348–361.

- Pérez-Roa L and Ayala MC (2019) The transition to the adult world with debt: Characterizations of new economic insecurities of indebted young professionals in Santiago de Chile. *Journal of Youth Studies* 23(5): 631–649. DOI: 10.1080/13676261.2019.1636011.
- Pinto A (ed.) (1970) *Chile Hoy*. Santiago: Siglo XXI.
- Pla J (2016) *Condiciones objetivas y esperanzas subjetivas*. Buenos Aires: Autores Argentina.
- PNUD (2017) *Desiguales. Orígenes, cambios y desafíos de la brecha social en Chile*. Santiago: PNUD.
- Ramos C (2009) *La transformación de la empresa chilena. Una modernización desbalanceada*. Santiago: Ediciones Universidad Alberto Hurtado.
- Ramos J, Senhbruch K and Weller J (2015) Calidad del empleo en América Latina. Teoría y datos empíricos. *Revista Internacional del Trabajo* 134(2): 187–212.
- Reygadas L (2004) Las redes de la desigualdad: Un enfoque multidimensional. *Política y Cultura* 22: 7–25.
- Rubilar G (2017) Narratives and biographical approach. Uses, scope and challenges for interdisciplinary research. *Enfermería: Cuidados Humanizados* 6(spe): 69–75.
- Rubilar G and Grau O (2017) Direcciones y derroteros de la Protección Social en Chile: Análisis del proceso de reconstrucción de una ciudadanía basada en derechos. *Rumbos* 15: 11–37.
- Rubilar G, Muñoz Terra L and Dominguez-Amoros M (2019) Sobre el Futuro. Narrativas laborales de estudiantes de liceos técnico-profesionales en tres claves de desigualdad. *Psicoperspectivas* 18(3): 1–12. DOI: 10.1080/13676261.2019.1636011.
- Ruiz C and Boccardo G (2014) *Los chilenos bajo el neoliberalismo. Clases y conflicto social*. Santiago: Nodo XXI/El Desconcierto.
- Salvia A (2012) *La trampa Neoliberal*. Buenos Aires: Eudeba.
- Savage M (2014) A new model of social class? Findings from BBC's Great British Class survey experiment. *Sociology* 47(2): 25–39.
- Sen A (1999) *Nuevo examen de la desigualdad*. Madrid: Alianza Editorial.
- Solís P, Chávez E and Cobos D (2019) Class Structure, Labor Market Heterogeneity, and Living Conditions in Latin America. *Latin American Research Review* 54(4): 854–876.
- Soto A (2008) *Flexibilidad laboral y subjetividades. Hacia una comprensión psicosocial del empleo contemporáneo*. Santiago: Lom.
- Stecher A and Godoy L (2014) *Transformaciones del Trabajo. Subjetividades e Identidades*. Santiago: RIL.
- Stecher A and Sisto V (2019) Trabajo y precarización laboral en el Chile neoliberal. Apuntes para comprender el estallido social de octubre 2019. In: Araujo K (ed) *Hilos tensados Para leer el octubre chileno*. Santiago: IDEA-USACH, pp.37–82.
- Szwarcberg M (2018) Gender and politics in Buenos Aires. *Journal of Politics in Latin America* 10(3): 3–27.
- Therborn G (2011) Inequalities and Latin America. From the Enlightenment to the 21st Century, *desiguALdades.net Working Paper Series, Nr. 1*, Berlin: *desiguALdades.net Research Network on Interdependent Inequalities in Latin America*.
- Tilly C (2000) *La desigualdad persistente*. Buenos Aires: Manantial.
- Torche F (2005) *Desigual pero fluido: El patrón chileno de movilidad en perspectiva comparada*. Santiago: Expansiva 29.
- Torche F (2006) Una clasificación de clases para la sociedad chilena. *Revista de Sociología* (20): 15–43. DOI: 10.5354/0719-529X.2006.27529.
- Torche F and López-Calva F (2012) Stability and Vulnerability of the Latin American Middle Class. *Working Paper 98 Development Studies*. UNU-WIDER.

- Undurraga T (2014) *Divergencias. Trayectorias del neoliberalismo en Argentina y Chile*. Santiago: Ediciones UDP.
- Varesi G (2009) La configuración del modelo postconvertibilidad: políticas y clases. Algunas claves para su caracterización. *Cuestiones de Sociología* 5–6: 27–54.
- Vomaro G and Gené M (2017) Argentina: el año de cambiamos. *Revista de Ciencia Política* 37(2): 231–253.
- Wilkinson R and Pickett K (2009) *The Spirit Level*. London: Allen Lane.
- Wormald G and Torche F (2001) *Estratificación y movilidad social en Chile: entre la adscripción y el logro Serie Política Social 98*. Santiago: CEPAL.
- Wright EO (1992) Reflexionando, una vez más, sobre el concepto de estructura de clases. *Zona Abierta* 59/60: 17–126.

Author Biographies

Leticia Muñoz Terra holds a PhD in Social Sciences awarded by the Universidad de Buenos Aires, Argentina. Currently, she is a Researcher affiliated with the National Council of Scientific and Technical Research (CONICET) at the Universidad Nacional de La Plata (UNLP). She is the director of the Interdisciplinary Social Science Methodology Center (CIMECS) of the UNLP. Her main topics of research are inequalities, social classes, social policy, and work trajectories.

Gabriela Rubilar holds a PhD in Sociology Research Methodology awarded by the Universidad Complutense de Madrid. She is the current director of the Department of Social Work of the Universidad de Chile and principal investigator in the project ANID/FONDECYT Regular 1190257 entitled “Research trajectories and transitions of Chilean social workers.” Her main lines of research are public policy, comparative analysis of social programmes, trajectory studies, and the biographical approach.