

and ground future studies of the difference that a female president can make, in Latin America and further afield.

doi:10.1017/S0022216X22000098

**David Johnson Lee, *The Ends of Modernization: Nicaragua and the United States in the Cold War Era***

**(Ithaca, NY, and London: Cornell University Press, 2021), pp. 270, \$54.95 hb, \$35.99 E-book**

Gerardo Sánchez

Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económicas (CIDE), Mexico City

*The Ends of Modernization: Nicaragua and the United States in the Cold War Era* is a remarkable book by historian David Johnson Lee. It traces the complex and often contentious relations between Nicaragua and the United States through the lens of the ever-changing theories of modernisation and development implemented during the Cold War and the post-Cold War period.

The book is a very welcome addition to the growing literature on Nicaragua's contemporary history that has often focused excessively on the revolutionary period. Lee's book contributes to our understanding of the Nicaraguan *pre-war* period, US–Nicaraguan relations and the long-term dynamics underlying the revolution. It complements the works by Morris H. Morley, Carlos Vilas and Rose Spalding, as well as post-war Nicaragua studies by authors such as David Close and Verónica Rueda. Lee's work also adds to the growing historiography on developmentalism and US foreign policy by such authors as Thomas Field, Lars Schoultz and Nils Gilman.

The book has six chapters and an epilogue on the transformation of modernisation theory, development policies and the relation between Nicaragua and the United States between the 1960s and the 2000s. Each chapter acts as a case study of a particular development theory within the context of US–Nicaragua relations. The chapters cover the Alliance for Progress, the reconstruction of post-earthquake Managua, rural colonisation, political pluralism during the 1980s, revolutionary and counter-revolutionary policies in the Mosquito Coast, neo-liberal post-revolutionary politics of development and the return of the Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional (Sandinista National Liberation Front, FSLN) to power in 2007. Lee manages to break the usual chronological divisions between revolutionary and post-revolutionary Nicaragua by shifting his attention from the Sandinista revolution and placing it within a larger framework, highlighting continuities that have shaped contemporary Nicaragua.

This book is also a magnificent example of how several concepts shaped the second half of the twentieth century in Nicaragua (and Latin America). Few

historiographical accounts manage to explain what intellectuals and policymakers say about their ideas as well as their implementation or adaptation in local contexts. Lee weaves a story of how governmental ideas are created, put into practice, and transformed. Concepts such as modernisation theory, democratisation, progress, sustainable development all become historical subjects of study. Likewise, other concepts that had their origins in Nicaraguan and Latin American history, like *concertación* (consensus-making) and *mestizaje* (cultural assimilation), and are deeply rooted in the national experience of Nicaragua, also shaped US policies in Nicaragua. Lee rightfully argues throughout his book that many of these concepts were not imports but the product of local political negotiation.

Lee's account also pays close attention to the intellectuals, technocrats and academics who shaped the discussions around modernisation and development. People such as Pablo Antonio Cuadra, Adolf Berle, Pedro Joaquín Chamorro and Bernard Nietschmann populate the pages of this book, together with the likes of John F. Kennedy and Anastasio Somoza. By giving centre stage to intellectuals and policymakers in defining the concept of modernisation and its implementation, Lee emphasises the significant overlap between science, foreign policy and governmental practice.

US Agency for International Development and State Department documents form the backbone of this book, as well as many accounts from Nicaraguan sources, especially the works of Nicaraguan intellectuals. These sources give much-needed nuance to the retelling of American policies and their reception among Nicaraguan elites. The lack of technical information on implementing development programmes and other Nicaraguan government documents confirms the well-known problem of lost data and lack of access to Nicaraguan and Central American archives. The book could have benefited from incorporating sources from other regional archives, especially from Costa Rica and Mexico, that still hold important collections that could complement a generally bilateral retelling of the story. Despite the efforts to include Nicaraguan scholarship and documents, a deeper discussion with Latin American scholarship is needed, especially on conflict and post-conflict Nicaragua.

The centrality of the United States' modernisation attempts in Nicaragua somewhat eschews the history portrayed into a bilateral affair, where both Nicaraguans and Americans negotiated without regional considerations. This perspective omits the significant intra-Central American political manoeuvring and scheming that authors such as Aaron Moulton and others have studied. The incorporation of non-US modernisation and development projects could have enriched this book. Chapter 2 on the reconstruction of Managua briefly mentions the role of Mexican experts in developing another possible Managua (after the 1972 earthquake) with skyscrapers and high rises modelled after an idealised Mexico City. This was only one of the myriad possibilities open to successive Nicaraguan governments, especially after the 1979 revolution that saw a flurry of international aid flow to Nicaragua along with alternative visions of modernity in areas such as agrarian reform, social security, industrialisation and urbanisation.

Lee explains in great detail why and how Managua chose US-led modernisation projects, highlighting the centrality of foreign actors in shaping Nicaraguan politics. As the author writes, 'the trajectory of Nicaragua's politics from the 1960s to the

present has been marked by its leaders' use of alliances to turn their country's geographic position into an exploitable resource in lieu of natural resources available elsewhere' (p. 188). Lee's remarks on the role of the United States in Central America remain prescient, especially on the crucial role of development policies in creating economic and political structures that continue to 'shape local conflict' (p. 188) and on the importance of foreign alliances in Nicaraguan politics. Many will be interested to consider the book's critique on foreign development aid and the consequences of its implementation.

Lee's book is a significant contribution to current scholarship on Nicaragua, US–Latin American relations and foreign aid. It is a very well-written account that will likely turn into a must-read text for the study of contemporary Nicaragua, adding significant nuance to the growing historiography of the Latin American Cold War. Furthermore, it helps understand current trends in Nicaraguan politics and how international actors could shape current events for better or worse.

doi:10.1017/S0022216X22000104

## **Claudia Stern W., *Entre el cielo y el suelo: Las identidades elásticas de las clases medias (Santiago de Chile, 1932–1962)***

**(Santiago de Chile: RiL Editores, 2021), pp. 486, \$24.00 pb**

Felipe Acuña

Universidad de O'Higgins

Claudia Stern's book is a historiographical analysis of the middle classes of Santiago, Chile, between 1932 and 1962. The 30 years selected by the author correspond with a moment of significant modernisation of the state, which involved important social, urban and cultural transformations. During this period, Stern argues, middle classes extracted 'the maximum benefit thanks to welfare state policies' (p. 18). Thus, the broad question driving the study is the agenda of the middle classes between 1932 and 1962, or, more precisely, what the desires of the middle classes were, what they were willing to do to achieve these desires, how their class subjectivities were expressed and how these subjectivities were in conflict with the different sectors that shaped them.

The focus on the middle classes is one of the challenges of the book. On the one hand, the author recognises a shortage of studies on the middle classes for her selected historical period (p. 19); on the other, the middle classes are an uncomfortable historiographic object of study. Whereas the roles of the working and upper classes in relationships of domination and the means of production are obvious, within historiographic studies it is not clear what problems the position of *in-betweenness*, typical of the middle classes, creates in society.