Favores, Ayuda y *Robo*: Views of Continuity in Systemic Change in Rural Nicaragua

Birgit Müller *Laboratoire de l'anthropologie des institutions et organisations sociales (EHESS), France*

Abstract: While a succession of governments has poured its contrasting ideologies and programs over the rural people in Nicaragua, this article looks at how villagers in Carazo challenged the objectives and categories of the governments of the day in their everyday practices and discourses. Villagers evaluated official development policies as they were applied locally, in their own terms of favores (in the sense of favours), ayuda (in the sense of help but also in the material sense of gift) and robo (in the sense of theft, but also fraud and deception). With these three terms they appraised relationships of power and control with agents of the government and of NGOs with the same moral frames with which they assessed other more direct personal relationships of reciprocity, dependency and exploitation. They thus gave their own reading of the challenges in their daily lives brought about by systemic transformations and questioned the promises of a better life.

Keywords: favouritism, development aid, ideologies, systemic change, governance, moral economy

Résumé : Pendant que des gouvernements Nicaraguayens successifs ont répandu leurs programmes et idéologies divergents parmi la population rurale, cet article explore comment des habitants d'un village au Carazo mettaient en cause dans leurs pratiques et discours quotidiens les objectives et catégories de développement des gouvernements en place. Les villageois évaluèrent les politiques du développement avec leurs propres catégories de : Favores (dans le sens de faveurs), ayuda (dans le sens d'aide mais aussi dans le sens de cadeau) et robo (dans le sens de vol, mais aussi de fraude et déception). Avec ces trois termes, ils rendirent compte des relations de complicité et de conflit avec les agents du gouvernement et des organizations non-gouvernementales utilisant les mêmes cadres moraux avec lesquels ils appréciaient aussi d'autres relations plus intimes de réciprocité, de dépendance et d'exploitation. Ils donnèrent ainsi leur propre interprétation aux défis que posèrent les changements systémiques dans leur vie quotidienne et démentirent les promesses d"une vie meilleure à venir.

Mots-Clés : favoritisme, aide au développement, ideologies, changements systémiques, gouvernance, économie morale

In 2004, when I returned to Los Cañales, a village on the high plateau of Carazo, after 15 years of absence, my acquaintances answered the casual question, "how has it gone since I left?"[1] with *"lo mismo"* (it is all the same). The statement was surprising, as they had experienced tremendous political and economic changes since 1990 when the Sandinistas lost the elections. The institutional structures that the Sandinistas had created to regulate agricultural production and trade had collapsed and the government of Violeta Chamorro had maintained the land reform while distributing individual land titles. Her successor, the corrupt liberal president Arnoldo Alemán, had pushed to restore Somocista property relations. NGOs had been working in the village, particularly after Hurricane Mitch, implementing numerous small development programs that had taught farmers organic agricultural techniques. The Catholic village church was closed and believers had joined evangelical churches. Some houses in the village had more holes in the roof than 15 years ago, but almost every household now owned a TV set. While I was still wondering why my friends had told me that things had stayed the same, I remembered that in 1986, at the time of the Sandinista land reform involving land distribution, technical development programs and central distribution and marketing mechanisms, villagers had also told me that their living situation had stayed the same since the Somoza period. They emphasized that they continued to lead a life *luchando y aguantando* (fighting for life and suffering hunger), a condition which none of the different development regimes had been able to change substantially.

Anthropologists (Murray Li 2007; Ferguson 1990) have recently denounced the *dispositif* of development as an "anti-politics machine," as "a machine for reinforcing and expanding the exercise of bureaucratic state power" while suspending "politics from even the most sensitive political operations" (Ferguson 1990:256). The anti-politics of development is intended to contain challenges to

the status quo (Murray Li 2007:8) by labour movements, land occupations and hunger riots. The development politics of the Sandinista period seems at first sight to be an exception. Talk of political struggle permeated the development discourses of government representatives and state bureaucrats. According to the official rhetoric, a claim to the benefits of a better life through "development" had to be "won," if necessary with arms in hand. However, as I will show in this article, the rhetoric of mobilization stood in contrast to the efforts of the Sandinista government to limit and channel spontaneous actions such as land occupations and to oblige farmers to sell at the lowest possible price. As a consequence, the villagers I spoke to in the 1980s considered that the development politics of the Sandinista period had not substantially changed their living situation for the better, or as one farmer put it, "life is the same. The only thing that is better is that the government has more respect for life" (Interview Adolfo Carillo Cruz[2] 1987).

Intrigued by *lo mismo,* I was incited to probe deeper into the categories that rural people used when they spoke about the ways in which they were governed. I wanted to find out how their discourse resonated and communicated with the different official discourses on development and with the regulatory frameworks created by successive political regimes.

In this article I want to do two things. First, I want to analyze how different Nicaraguan governments devised rural development programs and how they constructed rural people consecutively as "rural labourers," "rural producers," "rural entrepreneurs" and "rural poor." I want to examine what different regimes wanted rural people to do and to what extent they effectively became "subjects"[3] on whose conduct governments were able to intervene. The question I follow up in this article concerns the limits of the power of governments to make people think and behave in a particular way. Government, as the conduct of conduct of human beings (Foucault 2009), is not the preserve of the state apparatus alone. Governmental programs are also devised by transnational donors, NGOs, and a host of other authorities (Murray Li 2005:2).

Secondly, looking at the village of los Cañales over a period of 25 years, I will examine the extent to which the inhabitants identified during and after the Sandinista Revolution with governmental categorizations and accepted them as truths about themselves. I will also look at practices and discourses they devised in their everyday lives that challenged the objectives and categories of the government of the day. I will show how the villagers evaluated official development policies as they were applied in the village, and how they interpreted different governmental interventions in their own terms of *favores* (in the sense of favours), *ayuda* (in the sense of help but also in the material sense of gift) and *robo* (in the sense of theft, but also fraud and deception). With these three terms, villagers appraised relationships of power and control with agents of the government and of NGOs with the same moral frames with which they assessed also other more direct personal relationships of reciprocity, dependency and exploitation. With these terms, villagers responded to official development discourses, attempting to make sense of challenges in their daily lives and in their most intimate relationships that were brought about by systemic transformations.

These concepts were not necessarily an expression of resistance to attempts at governing them, although they were used to judge the behaviour of those in power. But they were delimiting a communicative space of their own for the people using them and they were the communicative basis of "counter-conducts" (Foucault 2004:204-205), refusals of certain values and relationships presented as obligatory (Foucault 2004:202) and practices that were unexpected and uncontrolled[4] by those governing. As we will see, the forms of relationships that these concepts designated, changed with time over the last 30 years, but the moral ideas about what relationships were to be considered fair and just remained relatively stable. Contrary to the idea of progress essential in development discourses, villagers did not present their lives as a linear progression, but rather as a wheel in motion where one can either stay above and survive or be caught and potentially crushed.

I collected the material for this article during ten months of fieldwork in 1986-87 and several shorter visits of two months each in 1988, 1989 and 1990, in a village in Carazo that I call Los Cañales. I returned to the village for a short visit in 2000 and did a restudy of two months in 2004. In 2006, I went back to interview state administrators, members of NGOs, trade unions and political representatives of donor governments on the national, regional and local level about the new integrated rural development program, Pro Rural, that had been commissioned from the Nicaraguan state by the World Bank and other donors. While this article was under review in 2009, I spent another eight months of fieldwork in Nicaragua visiting Los Cañales from time to time.

Constructing the Rural Subject

The re-peasantization of the Nicaraguan rural economy—the fact that rural people relied for their income mainly on working their own or rented land—has been one of the unintended consequences of the Sandinista Revolution.

During the 1980s, when borders were closed and imports restricted, labour migration was limited and the produce of the land constituted an essential part of the rural family budget. This development stood in striking contrast to the developments in most neighbouring countries in the 1980s, which saw a further expansion of large-scale industrialized production for export at the expense of peasant agriculture. In Nicaragua, "peasant" (*campesino)* became, in the 1980s and 1990s, an important ideological term used in political debates among representatives of government and farmers. However, I am not using *peasant* here as an analytical category to characterize the rural people I am talking about, but rather, I treat it as one of the ideological terms that have been used by others to describe them. Following Bernstein (2006:454) I think that "nothing is gained and much is obscured" by characterizing the villagers in Los Cañales as "peasants." Over the last 25 years, they had to diversify their forms, and spaces, of employment and moved in and out of the "peasant" category as Eric Wolf defined it, as "agricultural producers who control their land" (Silverman 1979:54).

Los Cañales already had a large proportion of wage labourers and migrants in the 1970s. The village lies on a dusty road six kilometres from the Pan American highway on fertile rather flat land fit for the cultivation not only of subsistence crops but also of sugarcane. Sugarcane is the main cash crop for small and large landowners and the main source of seasonal work in the village. In the 1970s, most of the inhabitants of Los Cañales were landless labourers and small farmers cultivating small, often rented plots for subsistence. The landless families and smallholders grew corn and beans in the rainy season (June to October) and worked in the dry season (November to April) on the sugarcane plantations and in small artisanal sugar mills (*trapiches)* of the larger local landowners, or migrated to other parts of Nicaragua or to Costa Rica. In the 1980s, the war brought labour migrations to a standstill. About a quarter of the landless families joined the production cooperative CAS, which received land through the Agrarian Reform.[5] The village was by no means a model village for its revolutionary zeal, but it played the game by creating Sandinista institutions, cooperatives, various committees and distribution outlets (*puestos*).

Although an important part of the revolutionary struggle took place in the countryside, the Sandinista revolution was not a peasant movement, but originated in the cities (Gilbert 1990:86). Rural labourers and farmers joined guerrilla leaders from the cities though, and started to occupy land as soon as the revolutionary struggles were won. The Sandinistas, however, were divided over issues of agrarian policy: one pole favoured the transition to a centralized socialist economy supporting state farms and heavy investment in large-scale, capital-intensive projects, whereas the other placed strong emphasis on peasant farmers and rural cooperatives and believed in locally controlled technologies (Gilbert 1990:90-91). The first position was represented by the agriculture minister, Jaime Wheelock, who shaped agrarian policies in the early years of the revolution. The estates of Somoza and his allies, covering 20% of the agricultural land, were converted into state farms producing for export.[6] In this collectivist model of agriculture, rural labourers (not peasants) were to play the role of revolutionary subjects (Nuñez Soto 1986:267). The faction of the Sandinistas following an orthodox socialist doctrine, hoped to accelerate the accumulation necessary for industrialization by investing massively in large state-owned farms (Bernstein 2006:453) and by guaranteeing their support to the large capitalist landowners who had not compromised themselves by giving political support to the Somoza regime. As a matter of fact, the Nicaraguan economy was dependent on the dollar income that farm exports provided even for its most basic needs (Gilbert 1990:87) and the Sandinistas needed to ensure the continued generation of foreign exchange (Deere et al. 1985:79). The priority given to industrialized production also showed in the price that the government offered for foodcrops. The price for rice produced on large industrialized farms, whether state-owned or private, was set at more advantageous rates than those of the staples, corn and beans, cultivated by small and medium producers (Gilbert 1990:96). To maximize the surplus produced by the large industrialized farms, salaries for agricultural labourers were capped as the government deemed that "a general increase in agricultural salaries implies a decline in the funds of accumulation available for increasing the productive base, above all if it is not accompanied by an increase in productivity" (MIDA-INRA 1982:6). After inciting farmers and agricultural workers to fight for a better life during the revolutionary struggles, the government was now urging them to practice "austerity and efficiency" (Colburn 1986:120).

Producers that cultivated their land efficiently were assured of government support if they produced according to government plans at set prices. They had to contend with the tremendous growth of state administration and regulation, with each regulation bringing exceptions to the rule and attendant privileges. The Ministry of Agriculture, MIDA-INRA (Ministerio de Desarollo Agropecuario y Reforma Agraria), educated them in intensive production methods and encouraged the use of high yield varieties, which required large quantities of fertilizer and

pesticides. The Ministry for Internal Trade, MICOIN (Ministerio de Comercio Interior), controlled the commercialization of their products and issued permits for selling them. The state distribution system, ENABAS (Empresa Nacional de Abastecimiento de Alimentos Basicos), organized the distribution of a weekly allowance of staple food and centralized state purchases of grain.

However, rural subjects did not react as they should. Discouraged by low prices, farmers refused to sell to the state (Zalkin 1986:212, 216), creating a deficit in staple crops and obliging the government to import food (Spoor 1992:10). Landlords refused to rent their land because the lease for land was officially established at a low rate and sharecropping was forbidden. Frustrated by low salaries, the workers reduced their productivity and their working hours (Deere et al. 1985:80). The economy became a generalized shortage economy, and the distribution was de facto more and more directed towards civil servants, the army, local militia and workers in state-run industrial and agricultural enterprises (Spoor 1992:22). The situation was aggravated when many farmers (especially in the north and in the interior of the country) became involved in the counterrevolutionary struggle, often on the side of the U.S.-financed Contra revolutionaries (Gilbert 1990:97). As a consequence, the Sandinistas ultimately responded to the persistent claims for land by landless sharecroppers, tenant farmers and smallholders, by encouraging them to form cooperatives and occupy underused land that would be awarded to them collectively (Mechri Adler 2000:193). In 1984, the leaders of the trade union UNAG (Union Nacional de Agricultores y Ganaderos) self-identified as "peasants" and promised to help "patriotic" medium-sized producers in their fight against excessive bureaucratization, supporting their demands for capital goods and production inputs (Mechri Adler 2000:335). As black market sales of subsistence goods had skyrocketed and production collapsed, the government decided to legalize what it was unable to control without a high degree of repression. In 1985, it allowed the commercialization of certain agricultural goods produced mainly by small producers (Gilbert 1990:102) such as corn, raw sugar and beans, through authorized traders on the parallel market, while it continued to appeal to their sense of moral responsibility, inciting them to sell at least part of their production into the state marketing system in order "to feed the workers in the factories." The implementation of this policy took more than two years to trickle down to the regional and district level, however, as roadblocks remained in existence until 1987 (Spoor 1992:13).

In this second half of the Sandinista period, the government created conditions that allowed especially the medium sized farmers (5 to 35 MZ[7]) to prosper economically (Spoor 1992:15), providing they ignored the incessant appeals of the government to sell at least part of the harvest at low prices through the state distribution system. At the same time, this system made them increasingly dependent on state distribution of cheap loans, Green Revolution varieties of corn and beans, and subsidized fertilizers and pesticides (Ruiz and Meussen 1993:17-18). Most producers who had access to transport or traders chose to profit from high parallel market prices that were secure, since the national borders were closed and imports restricted. In this national subsistence crisis, cultivating the land became a rewarding activity again, not only economically but also socially and politically, as the farmers were reminded every day by government propaganda of the central role they played in feeding the country and the soldiers at the front. Production levels for basic grains reached their highest level ever in 1988 (Mechri Adler 2000:320). What farmers perceived as "selling on the free market," however, was in fact taking place in a closed national economy. They would only confront the "free market" once the Sandinistas lost the elections in 1990 and Nicaragua hurried to emulate the politics of its Latin American neighbours to open up to the world economy.

In the two months following the elections, and before the government changed, the Sandinistas and Chamorro agreed to a Transition Protocol that addressed among other things the need to assure "legal security" to the beneficiaries of the Agrarian Reform (Jonakin 1997:100). For the first time, the Sandinistas distributed alienable individual and collective land titles that could be inherited and sold. However many Sandinistas and their allies used the opportunity to personally enrich themselves and to give each other land titles and real estate (Jonakin 1997:100; Cupples 1992:299). In the course of this redistribution, soon to be known as *piñata*—a game where children dance blindfolded and use sticks to try to smash a paper doll filled with sweets—the poorest 43% of the population received 4% of the distributed land while a small minority (4% of the population) received 46% (on average, 499MZ) (Mechri Adler 2000).

When Violeta Chamorro came to power in 1990, a protracted struggle over property erupted. Chamorro's election platform promised to respect the landholdings of poor beneficiaries and to restore expropriated properties only when it was possible without injuring the former (Dye et al. 1995:20). In the years following her election, her government was confronted with land claims of former owners, land invasions by former contra-revolutionary fighters and demobilized members of the Sandinista army, and pressures from the U.S. government. The government

responded by legalizing land occupations and by a politics of privatization that gave disparate groups slices of the pie but of different sizes (Dye et al. 1995:29). Land became an instrument for calming social tensions and by March 1992, the Chamorro government was reported to have transferred 701,500 MZ of land to over 24,000 families (Jonakin 1997:101). Many land titles attributed by the Sandinista Agrarian Reform to cooperatives were individualized and the members of the cooperatives became independent producers for the market, often for the first time in their lives (Merlet 1995:16). Farmers were addressed as independent "entrepreneurs" operating on the free market, a role that they had claimed for themselves throughout the Sandinista period. The encounter with the free market, however, happened without the safety net and the subsidies that the Sandinista government had extended. The Sandinista practice of pardoning loans that individual producers and cooperatives had accumulated ceased instantly as the new government was struggling to bring down the hyperinflation it had inherited from its predecessors (Jonakin 1997:103-105). Extension services were downsized and the state distribution system shut down (Jonakin 1997:103). The input-dependent type of agriculture they had become accustomed to during the Sandinista period became extremely expensive as fertilizers and pesticides were no longer subsidized. Their price on the world market put agricultural producers at a disadvantage compared to the price fetched for their products. The result was that individual producers, and especially the remaining cooperatives, rapidly went into debt again, losing land and cattle because they were unable to pay back their loans (Jonakin 1997:110). Sandinista leaders became entrepreneurs, claiming that conquering a place in the market was indispensable for exercising some influence in the new political constellation. Acquiring economic power seemed a precondition to exercising political pressure. Also the farmers union, UNAG, thought it necessary to get involved in entrepreneurial activities, attempting to replace some of the storage, commercialization, credit and extension services that the state had ceased to offer by creating its own enterprises (Mechri Adler 2000: 489-490; Jonakin 1997: 106, 110).

The liberal government of Arnoldo Alemán, elected in 1996 to replace Chamorro, attempted to reverse the Sandinista land reform and to retrieve the land of Somoza's allies through both legal and illegal means. The state entirely withdrew its support from subsistence agriculture and the two state-owned banks that had offered loans to the agricultural sector went bankrupt. The main reason was that supporters first of Chamorro (Jonakin 1997:106) and then of Alemán had taken out huge loans for buying enormous properties. They never paid them back nor were they made liable for them. Moreover, president Alemán himself obtained several large properties that were formerly owned by cooperatives for ridiculously low prices. With the second structural adjustment plan signed in 1998, and the signing of the Central American Free Trade Agreement (2005), small producers were left without state support to confront the forces of the world market.

Economic hardships during the 1990s led to a massive wave of labour migration from the countryside to the city, to neighbouring Costa Rica and to the U.S. In Nicaragua, special economic zones (*zonas francas*) were exempt from taxation, and foreign companies (many Chinese) built factories that employed mainly rural female labour. Cultivating the land by taking out loans, then hoping for a good harvest and favourable market prices, became an almost invariably ruinous option as prices were low and interest was high. Many small and medium producers would have lost even more land if their wage-earning children had not bailed them out in time. Having lost their relevance in terms of providing cheap labour and helping the accumulation process of industrial capital, rural people became simply "the rural poor" to those who governed them.

"The rural poor" are non-entities in political terms. They appear as mere statistical units in the World Bank's Nicaragua Poverty Assessment (2004), which states that 2/3 of people in rural areas live in poverty, 26% on less than one dollar a day. Indicators include high fertility rates (4.14%), illiteracy (18.7% in 2001), lack of sanitation (13.8% in 2001) and no access to paved roads or electricity. These "poor" are considered to be a burden on national development, to be potentially dangerous, and to be in need of having their energies channelled. The innumerable projects to help them[8] seemed invariably destined to fail. As a result, the World Bank and other donor agencies threatened to cease committing millions of dollars to poverty reduction if the Nicaraguan government did not implement programs destined to improve the living conditions of Nicaragua's poor. Since the Nicaraguan state had withdrawn support from subsistence agriculture throughout the 1990s and had concentrated its planning exclusively on the development of clusters for export agriculture, donors now forced the government to formulate a rural development plan that reintroduced the needs of the rural poor and claimed to consult them on their needs and priorities through participatory processes. The rural development plan, Pro Rural, however, published in 2006, proposed more of the same: exchanging traditional

varieties for high yielding ones through the *Libra por Libra* (Pound for Pound) program, which is likely to increase their dependence on high-cost inputs; granting easier access to loans through the establishment of new rural loan funds, which addresses a real demand, but may aggravate poverty rather than alleviating it (Legovini 2003); and consolidating the land markets through the progressive realization of a land registry, which may accelerate even further the commoditization of land without increasing tenure security (Broegard 2000).

In 2006, the Frente Sandinista De Liberation Nacional returned to power and Daniel Ortega was re-elected president of Nicaragua. Many of the Sandinista leaders are now among the richest people in the country and the Sandinista government unambiguously supports free market principles, while using strong socialist rhetoric in its public discourses. The government has promised to eliminate hunger in the countryside launching a US$150 million program, *Hambre Cero* (Zero Hunger), that lends poor rural women farm animals and seeds for a fraction of the purchase price and provides technical assistance. The objective is to "recapitalize" rural producers and to make them capable of pulling themselves out of poverty. This practice has now been imitated by a number of development NGOs and the Program for Food Security of the FAO, flooding the countryside with farm animals that are hard to feed on small parcels of land.

The various rural development policies that a succession of Nicaraguan governments put forward were intended to "conduct the conduct" of peasants (Foucault 1983:212), not through direct coercion but by setting conditions from which a type of conduct would follow that suited their political objectives. Different regimes attempted to govern rural people who had emerged as dangerous subjects in the prolonged civil war of the 1970s and 1980s by "changing their mentalities" (Wheelock and Lucas 1979:106), while making real or bogus concessions, rather than by confronting them directly. In the next three sections, I will analyze how inhabitants in a small village on the high plateau of Carazo experienced the outcomes of all these attempts at rural development in their own terms of favores, robo and ayuda.

Favores: From Patronage to Brokerage

The term *favor* evokes an informal reciprocal but hierarchical bond that a person with authority and resources establishes with a person in need of resources, in exchange for allegiance and services. Villagers used that term to qualify relationships to landlords, bureaucrats and development brokers. Obtaining land for cultivation for instance was considered a favor and obliged the tenant in multiple ways. In return for being allowed to work a piece of land tenants were expected not only to share the harvest or pay rent but also to be at the disposal of their patrons whenever they needed them. For this relationship to be experienced as *favoritismo*, the tightly knit bonds of personal exchange between tenants and large landlords, the landlord had to limit his exertions on the tenant. He had to respect a certain moral idea of the economic and not invade the subsistence needs of the tenant. This idea of subsistence as a moral claim is in keeping with the "moral economy of the poor" that James Scott identified among South Asian peasants (Scott 1976:32-33) and among urban and rural poor in 18th- and 19th-century Europe.

Before the revolution of 1979, some of these landlords reigned over the village as patriarchs with several common law wives and dozens of children to whom almost the whole village was related in one way or another. The largest landowner in the village, Don Frederico, ran his ancient sugar mill right in the middle of the village. The labourers who helped him with the harvest of sugarcane or in the mill, were allowed to cultivate a manzana of land or to sow their beans between the rows of freshly planted sugarcane. Don Frederico paid the lowest salaries in the village and compensated his workers—insufficiently as they thought—with three meals a day. Nonetheless, they continued to work for him since land was scarce and the bonds that tied them to the old man were highly complex. He had helped out families in distress and was godfather to innumerable children in the village. One of his workers explained, nonetheless, that it was preferable to have several patrons rather than to rely with one's whole existence on a single one.

At first, the Sandinistas attempted to break open the structures of dependency and eliminate *favoritismo*. In practice, however, the agrarian reform of the 1980s did not entirely sever these complex ties. Don Frederico, for instance, was exempted from any reforms as he had helped the Sandinista guerrillas during the war. He was well connected to government as one of his sons occupied an important post in the Ministry of Industry and the second one held a leading position in the largest state-owned sugar factory. Instead, the Sandinista government became a patron itself, facilitating access to land and other resources. As land laying idle was not simply distributed to those who needed it, but had to be gained in a protracted struggle, the occupants needed the political and institutional support of the Sandinistas to hold onto the land they had invaded.

In Los Cañales, the cooperative of small peasants and landless labourers who had occupied the land of two absentee landlords right after the revolution had to face the

threat of eviction for four consecutive years before the land was officially expropriated. Formally, the land remained the property of the state and land titles were distributed to the cooperative only after the elections of 1990. For the landless labourers who joined the cooperative, the Sandinista state became a capricious new patron whose conditions were opaque and difficult to accept. They understood Sandinista politics as another form of favouritism, which they called *compañerismo* (favouritism among comrades). As Alberto Moraves, the vice president of the production cooperative CAS (Cooperativa Agricola Sandinista), explained, the term meant that the Sandinistas helped only those with land, loans, chemicals and seeds who organized themselves in cooperatives. In exchange they were expected to sell their produce to the state.

The owners of sugar mills and cane plantations complained that the cooperative tied up the labour they needed in their fields and that members of the cooperative now felt like *dueños* (masters) who did not work for others. In reality, however, membership in the cooperative and the time worked by each member fluctuated greatly and changed from year to year, except for a core group of members. As the cooperative was selling most of its production for low prices to the state, and as the weekly salary that the members were paying each other was extremely low, the cooperative offered its members the prospect of securing food for their families, but could ensure only a limited cash income below or equivalent to that earned in local sugar mills.

Moreover, getting involved with the production cooperative was experienced as a risk, and one of the landless peasants told me that he preferred not to become a member, because this would make him a client of the Sandinistas. He thought that those who "lived in the heat of Tomás Borge" (the minister of the interior) at the time of the Sandinistas would have a hard time if the government changed: "the wheel, the wheel of life it changes, it turns. You have to stay in the flow, otherwise it crushes you." In a kind of resigned pragmatism, he did not believe that a radical improvement of his position in society through radical acts such as land occupations could be long-lived.

On the other hand, those in Los Cañales who had given help and shelter to the Sandinista guerrillas who knocked at their door during the revolutionary struggles had gone against the wheel, though not necessarily all based on strong political convictions. For them, the Sandinistas were the boys (*chavalos, muchachos*) whom they had helped and from whom they expected understanding and support. Rudolfo Gutiérrez, whose brother was killed as a reprisal for their help to the guerrillas, became head of the local Sandinista Defence Committee after the revolution. He considered it a favor of the Sandinistas that he obtained permission to slaughter a cow every second week and to sell it at set prices to the village population. By buying and selling beef he was able to set up a flourishing cattle trade that allowed him to increase his own herd. His wife, Carolina, was granted the right to distribute food and basic household items each week on rationing cards, and she managed to run a small shop for other staple goods at the same time. Nobody questioned their privileges since they had taken the risk of assisting the Sandinistas and were now being legitimately rewarded for it. More contested was the permit that the wife of the head of the production cooperative had obtained to sell a few crates of beer and low quality rum each week. Rumours had it that while running her little bar, she was working as an informant for the political police of the Ministry of the Interior.

After the Sandinistas lost the election in 1990, the state progressively ceased to play the role of the patron who put his own resources at the disposal of the clients. The system of patronage and dependence built on landownership likewise declined. Favores were now distributed by a new category of brokers (Gupta 1998:147) who drew on the resources of international development aid and skimmed off portions for themselves. One of the new claimants for the role of broker was Gustavo Ortiz the manager of two local sugar mills. When, under pressure from the World Bank, the Bolaños government introduced local structures of self-government to allow the village to have direct representatives at the municipal level, he stepped forward as a candidate even though he did not live in the village. He was elected by his workers to the general indifference of the village. The new structures of local representation promoted by the World Bank were supposed to give villagers the opportunity to determine development policies together with the municipal council. Although Gustavo Ortiz had been a political friend of the mayor of the municipality, he quickly began to compete with him for influence. The strategy he chose was to make himself a broker for development projects that did not fall under the control of the municipality and that were not part of its strategic planning. With the help of a political friend who was a deputy in the national assembly, and through the Institute for Rural Development and the MARENA (Ministerio de Recursos Naturales), he organized a reforestation project for his sector that would bring, as he said, barbed wire, agricultural tools and cheap seeds. As he cheerfully told me, "you have to follow the money. If it is not here, it is there, or there or over-there." Through his role as a broker, he entirely depoliticized the

political role he was supposed to play as a local representative, made it a vehicle for his personal ambitions and relegated the villagers to the position of mere spectators. One of his former workers commented on his ambitions: "the only interest that he or the mayors of this municipality have ever had is to make money for themselves."

Gustavo Ortiz went beyond the fine line between a personal relationship of unequal exchange and outright manipulation and selfishness. The villagers were aware that the favores he distributed did not make use of his own property but relied on the delivery of development services from which he skimmed off a profit. The transition from patronage to brokerage changed the nature of the bond through favores and made it less predictable and reliable. By sharing the proceeds of a development project which they considered a scam, villagers found themselves to be complicit in what some of them would characterize as robo.

Robo: The Rejoinder of the Villagers

Robo includes a wide field of meanings, from robbery and theft to fraud, deceit and usury. In relation to authority, *robo* is used when the unequal relationship of favouritism transgresses what is considered a moral boundary and becomes a pure relationship of exploitation or appropriation. In Sandinista times, when villagers accused state institutions of robo they mostly meant low prices offered by the state for agricultural products, road checks to stop illegal traders and (after 1987) high interest on their bank loans.

In the 1980s, the word *robo* was commonly used to characterize the state distribution system, particularly the practice of intercepting illegal traders and seizing their merchandise. As staple food was getting scarce in the cities, and since the army needed to be fed, the Ministry of Internal Trade set up roadblocks. However, most staples like corn and beans were transported by women and children—called by government officials the "army of ants" in sacks on overland buses—and sold in the city at several times the official price. In order to take a sack of beans or corn on a bus, a written permit was needed stating that this food would be used for personal needs. The newspapers were full of heartrending stories about poor women surrounded by crying children, from whom MICOIN had confiscated a sack of beans because they did not have a permit.

In the spring of 1987, MICOIN agents stopped three tortilla bakers from a neighbouring village and confiscated corn they had just bought from the local cooperative. The village women meeting in the evening in Carolina's distribution outlet to fetch the few goods that were distributed on their ration card, discussed the event for weeks. They interpreted the seizure as robo and some of them surmised that the agents of MICOIN themselves were selling the seized goods on the black market. The agents had morally disqualified themselves because although they had acted according to the letter of the law, they had shown no sympathy or compassion for the poor women trying to earn a living.

In 1987, when hyperinflation set in, the interest on loans remained far below the rate of inflation. In 1988, the interest rates skyrocketed but the loans were pardoned at the end of the year to prevent rioting in the countryside. It was therefore extremely advantageous for the farmers to take up loans and pay them back as late as possible. The prices middle-sized producers (who did not need all their harvest to feed their families) could obtain for their produce on the town markets and from legal and illegal traders allowed them to build up reserves mainly in the form of cattle for the first time. This sudden enrichment, on the other hand, also created a feeling of unease, as described by a middle-sized producer who usually sold part of his harvest for a low price to the state:

> This government does not know its people very well. The government wants to do the impossible in all ways for its people, but the people do not understand it. If you make a mistake and your mother punishes you and then comes your father and gives you a kiss, then you no longer know what you are supposed to think. [Interview Adolfo Carillo Cruz 1987]

He expressed the conviction shared by many farmers who sympathized with the Sandinistas, that the state was too permissive and inconsistent. Some like Adolfo Cruz even thought that the Sandinistas did not know their own people and their egotism. As they violated the unwritten law of reciprocity, many farmers feared outstanding claims and were uncertain whether they would be able to keep what they had acquired. Rumours circulated about new expropriations, which would affect the middle-sized farmers who did not give the state the cheap products that it rightfully expected from them. Thus, Sandinista governance and its credibility was not judged according to the laws and formal structures they had instituted, but according to how these were applied *at a just measure* in everyday life, not too strict and not too lax.

Interestingly, the occupation of land lying idle did not fall under the category of *robo*. Land occupation was not considered appropriation even by conservative villagers. According to the moral terms the villagers expressed, land should not lay idle, but feed those who needed it, or as the vice-president of the cooperative put it:

> The land is for the industrious hands that work it. It is not for oneself. The land is for those who work it and if they don't want to work it, it will pass on into the hands of those who want to work it. [Interview Alberto Moraves 1987]

The election of the UNO party of Violeta Chamorro threw the villagers who had supported the Sandinistas into a new state of uncertainty. The wheel of life had turned once again and the members of the cooperative were uncertain whether they would be allowed to keep the land title that the Sandinistas had granted them upon leaving power. What aggravated the matter was that many Sandinista leaders had morally disqualified the Agrarian Reform in the Piñata, attributing the majority of land titles to themselves. Rudolfo, the former head of the Sandinista Defence Committee, would now ridicule Ortega, the Sandinista leader, each time he appeared on television. Besieged by the constant rumours about expropriation, and uncertain about the legitimacy of their land-titles, six of the 13 members of the production cooperative sold their share of the title in the beginning of the 1990s at throw-away prices to a large landowner from a neighbouring town. In addition, members of the new government participated in the fast sell-out of agrarian reform titles. President Alemán himself forced indebted cooperatives near the village where I did my fieldwork to sell thousands of hectares near the protected coast line well below market prices. Then he used public funds to have a road built to open the area for tourism. The road never made it all the way to the coast because, before finishing it, he was put into prison on charges of corruption by his successor and former vice president, Bolaños.

In the 1990s, robo permeated all aspects of daily life. Not only the laws but also the moral principles guiding everyday routines seemed to have lost their force. Rudolfo's wife, Carolina, explained that she slaughtered her chickens out of fear that they would be stolen by her neighbours. She was never able to harvest the mango trees on outlying fields because the fruit disappeared shortly before harvest. Neighbours who owned TV sets, refrigerators and radios told me that somebody always had to stay at home to make sure these possessions were not stolen. The most common, and for the villagers often tragic, form of robo threatened them whenever they were in contact with private or public institutions.

Farmers told me how they had lost their savings, cattle and land because a member of the family had to be treated for a serious illness, because they had had a conflict over inheritance or because they had been unable to pay back a loan. Lawyers made legal procedures even more complicated than they were in reality and simulated intense activity while they remained inactive, at best, or even colluded with the opposing party. Getting land registered was as expensive as actually buying it. Doctors prescribed expensive treatments for illnesses that people did not have and did not treat those they suffered from. Rudolfo told me when he fell ill in the middle of the 1990s, with a slowly progressing paralysis, the doctors robbed him of his cattle herd. A doctor in the next city promised to heal him with eight injections a week. He sold cattle and was taken to town by a friend every week, only to find out two months later that the doctor had given him nothing but vitamin C.

As most of the political parties were identified with the practice of robo (with the exception of the MRS, a small splinter group from the FSLN that had not participated in the Piñata), it seemed senseless to trust government institutions or representatives. The problem was openly discussed, even within government departments. As one of the administrators in the Ministry of Agriculture put it:

> There is a lot of robbery (*despojo*) and the judicial authorities are not transparent. There is a lot of influence peddling and there are municipalities—as people told us—where the judge is the wife of the police chief and the lawyer is the cousin of the judge. All sorts of manipulations are thus easy to do. There is a serious problem of corruption. The institutions that should be the protectors of the laws of the land and of their application don't guarantee them and this facilitates all sorts of things. [Interview MAGFOR 2006]

Villagers told me they had no expectations that things would improve through the new structures of local self-governance imposed by the World Bank and donor states, nor did they think they could influence governmental decision making: "Things are dictated from up there and down here it's prattle (*chompipen*)." Their strategy consisted in removing themselves from the state and having as little as possible to do with its private and public institutions. The laws of the state ceased to be effective and people seemed to be left to their own devices and the help (ayuda) of their closest friends.

Ayuda: No Reciprocity Possible

Ayuda (help, support) describes, ideally, a relationship of reciprocity, *ayuda mutua* (reciprocal help), that links acquaintances and family members in a relationship considered fair. The term *ayuda* is used however also to talk about development aid and about money and gifts from relatives abroad *(remesas)* that are essential to assure subsistence and cannot be reciprocated. The poor *(los*

pobres) seem to have a moral right to receive help (ayuda) in order to survive.

This is how one of the farmers described a relationship of ayuda mutua:

> I have a politics of man to man with Luis. I help him and he helps me. He does chores for me and I pay him. When I help him I don't charge him because Luis is very poor. If he helps me I consider his help very valuable, because if he went and cut sugarcane instead he would earn more. I recognize this. Ayuda mutua! [Interview Marco Sevaro 1987]

The Sandinistas attempted to use the concept of ayuda mutua to explain the political relations and economic dependences inside the Sandinista state as personal relations of reciprocity. In the 1980s, the political leaders of the FSLN encouraged this interpretation by organizing public and half public assemblies, where they stood "with their face to the people" (*cara al pueblo*), exposing themselves to criticism and complaints and promising to remedy specific problems. Political strategies and objectives were conveyed through this personalized discourse. In return, the criticism that the villagers had of the political system was not expressed in ideological terms but was concrete, addressed to specific persons and phrased in their own moral terms. What was considered fair was neither total equality, nor total appropriation, but a relationship of reciprocity with clearly defined obligations.

In meetings with farmers in the village, a representative of the Nicaraguan Development Bank and the Ministry of Commerce presented the price and loan politics of the government as a personal problem linked to pressures exerted by his employer, the State, and tried to make the debtors sympathize with his difficulties in implementing these policies. Government representatives expressed their disappointment that their political work did not convince the farmers to sell their produce at a low prices to the state. As one employee of the Banco del Desarollo Rural (Rural Development Bank) put it:

> They show no conscience. We explain to them that we are not producers, that we are consumers and that they have to produce in order to help us, because we in turn help them too with loans and technical assistance. [Interview Employee of the Banco del Desarollo Rural 1986]

Bank employees linked the abstract categories of "producer" and "consumer" and the universalizing claim of a worker-peasant alliance with their personal situation and needs. The farmers did the same and interpreted the ideological concept of a peasant-worker alliance as a personal relationship based on sympathy and compassion. After the 1987 harvest, the vice-president of the cooperative, Alberto, explained to me that he felt sorry (*mi duele*) that the production cooperative had not sold any grain to the state, as the state had just provided them with asbestos shingles to cover the roof of their new granary, which would allow them to sell the grain progressively throughout the year. A farmer who had just sold his entire harvest to private dealers explained that the *muchachos* (boys) would understand that a poor man had to look out for himself (*defenderse*) and that he could not sell his production for a low price.

In the last 20 years, the production and sale of corn and beans, which had played such an important role in Sandinista times, had declined in economic importance for the families and also for the state. During the years of Sandinista rule, farmers had become accustomed to taking loans before seeding, for buying high-yielding varieties, fertilizers and pesticides, and in order to rent a tractor for cultivating their land. In the 1990s, many farmers who had continued the practice of taking out loans had lost cattle and land to the bank because the loans were not forgiven by the new regime. Now, medium producers also lost their oxen and had to cultivate their smaller plots of land by borrowing oxen and a plough in exchange for a share of the harvest. Many farmers continued to cultivate their fields, but their main source of income became remittances from children who had emigrated to the U.S. or who worked as seasonal labourers in Costa Rica. In many families, children were raised by their grandmothers while their mothers and fathers were working abroad or in Managua. Ayuda mutua—reciprocal help—was one of the basic principles of these family relationships.

The family of Alberto Moraves offers a successful example of this relationship. Alberto and his two sons managed to hold on to the land titles they obtained when the cooperative was dissolved. Alberto, his sons, his daughter and sometimes even his wife left the village for months and years at a time to work as migrant labourers in Costa Rica and as housemaids and cooks in Managua, while the remaining members of the extended household cultivated the fields (10.5 MZ altogether). Alberto hardly ever took out a loan, although he had no problem obtaining one. He mainly financed his farm inputs with money earned with migrant labour. When I last visited them, the extended family had moved into a big house in the centre of the village.[9]

The practice of reciprocal help that was so successful for the Moraves family got lost, however, in the exaggerated expectations that other families projected on their emigrant family members, especially those who had man-

aged to enter the U.S. Any child was able to explain that a worker earned 10 times more an hour in Costa Rica and 100 times more in the U.S. Some youths even refused to start working for the small salaries that were offered in the village while their fathers were thought to be earning many times that amount. These expectations were fuelled by the extravagant gift giving during the homecomings of some migrant children.

On the second day of my brief visit in 2000, for example, I witnessed the unexpected visit of Rudolfo's and Carolina's eldest daughter Leila, her husband and four children. After 15 years working in the U.S., and a successful hunger-strike by the Nicaraguan community, they had finally obtained their Green Cards and were allowed to leave the U.S. without losing their status. They arrived in the village with a rented pickup truck filled with household items: a gas stove, a huge TV set plus video player, a big refrigerator, a stereo set, an electric rice cooker, a microwave oven, an electric insect killer, clothes, sheets and plastic dishes. Leila had obviously wanted to bring her parents all the comfort and status she had achieved in the U.S. after all these years of hard work. When Leila and her family left that evening to sleep in town (the children refused to use the latrines on the farm), Rudolfo and Carolina were left confused. Carolina was wondering how to repair the roof of the house they were living in and how high the electricity bill would be to run all these appliances. Four years later, after Rudolfo had died, Carolina was desperately waiting for money transfers from Leila who by that time was divorced from her husband and had her own difficulties to cope with. The occasional money transfers from far-away family members, unpredictable as they were, thus created expectations and disincentives for those relying on them and yet another type of dependency. They also devalued the painstaking efforts made by farmers to feed their families at least partially with the fruit of their land. Not only did the Aleman government abdicate responsibility for peasant agriculture, but the generation between 15 and 30 years of age also regarded agriculture as a senseless activity, Land had no productive or symbolic value for them any more.

The projects and small development programs that NGOs and the World Bank financed in the village had an effect not unlike the unpredictable money transfers from family members. Although they claimed to ensure the "participation" of those concerned so that they would become "empowered" "to help themselves," such projects transformed the villagers into "the assisted," unable to give something back in return. At the end of the 1990s, the German branch of the Catholic aid organization Caritas financed a program for family gardens. These gardens had an organizing committee that administered small sums of money that each participant paid in each month. The committee also distributed donated goods such as clothes, food and garden utensils. The participants cultivated a vegetable garden together and learned techniques of organic agriculture. They produced organic pesticides, practiced companion planting and made compost. The members of the NGO taught them how to cook with soybeans, and since soybeans were not grown in Los Cañales, they distributed them so that the women could try out the recipes. When the program ran out and the aid stopped coming in, the core of the group continued gardening together for another year and a half until the treasurer built herself a house and according to fellow members, plundered the funds. Then the common gardening work also stopped. The women spoke about the project with a certain amusement. "It was a nice project, but far too much work, especially the composting. It is a shame, but the recipes for soy cookies are useless now too." The villagers participated but did not have a word to say in the actual planning of the project.

Unemployed agronomists also tried to develop projects for the village, which they hoped would provide them with a job. The villagers cooperated, when asked, in the applications for all these projects, providing copies of their land titles, identity cards and signatures. They did not do this because they expected to improve their living conditions in the long run, but simply because they wanted to get their share—the local expression was *agarar algo*, grab something—whether zinc for the roof, barbed wire, medicine, laying hens or vegetable seeds.

Neither the generous loan politics of the Sandinistas, nor the aid—ayuda—from donors were in keeping with ideas of dignity that the villagers had. To take something without offering anything in return seemed like robo, both immoral and a relationship that cannot last and that one cannot rely on. It was justified as a means of survival beyond morals. As Alberto Moraves put it:

> Autonomy (*autonomia*) is the basis for the existence of each person and this autonomy is not respected in this society by those who are in power. Although we have 90% poor people and 10% rich people in Nicaragua, the poor don't count. All our elected deputies are interested in is their salary of C$60.000[10] a month and not the situation of the people who they should represent. Help is coming from foreign countries, but the question is, what do those who help us expect for their help in return? What will they request from Nicaragua in exchange? [Interview Alberto Moraves 2004]

Conclusion

In their struggle to survive, villagers search for small tactical advantages and look for allies, without ever trusting one patron too much. The semantics that the villagers use to make sense of the different techniques of governance that have been tried out on them over the last 25 years, puts the principle of reciprocity in the centre of their relationships and does not fundamentally distinguish whether state or non-state power is exercised over them. To establish a personal relationship with those who possess the power and economic resources seemed self-evident and pragmatic to them. It was also obvious that this relationship could not be based on the principle of equality or justice, but that they could only hope for a certain transparency and continuity. Relationships with those in power qualified with the terms favores, ayuda and robo changed. Traditional patronage and compañerismo with the Sandinista government were based on a certain reciprocity and trust, though it more often than not put the villagers at a disadvantage. The relationship of brokerage, which replaced these relationships during the 1990s to a large extent, was based not on reciprocity but on the complicity of the villagers with the development brokers who skimmed off profits from the international development system. The shift from ayuda mutua to one-sided help from family members and development NGOs was out of line with the "moral economy of the poor" (Scott 1976:32) who preferred a secure, if inequitable, relationship of reciprocity, rather than the uncertain promises of development aid. Also, relying on the charity of far-off donors made the exploitative relationships inherent in the global neoliberal system, and endorsed by the neoliberal Nicaraguan government, even more obscure and difficult to oppose.

To conclude, I come back to my initial question of why the villagers in Los Cañales talk about continuity, lo mismo, in spite of important systemic changes. Seen through the categories of favores, ayuda and robo with which the villagers make sense of their relations with government and non-state "developers," the different political systems kept them in a position of personal dependency and did not allow them to achieve what Alberto called autonomy. In the ideological scheme of the early Sandinista revolution, peasants were supposed to believe in a relationship of fair reciprocal help between workers and peasants while providing the country with cheap agricultural commodities to allow for rapid industrialization. Ironically their personal aspirations to acquire individual titles to land that might have allowed them to secure food self-sufficiency, were only satisfied once the Sandinistas lost power. Yet again, their aspirations were crushed. Under the Chamorro government, heavy debt loads, high interest and the generalized corruption of the Alemán regime made them lose these assets whenever they came into contact with the state. To the inhabitants of Los Cañales, development discourses with their "tales of triumph" (Gupta 1998:41), of overcoming hardship and poverty, appear as fictions providing the ruling regimes with their chief legitimating function that helps to keep them in power. They experience their individual lives not as a progression, a trajectory of potential improvement outlined in development discourses, but rather as a wheel that turns constantly and that can crush one's existence in the process.

Lo mismo challenges the programs and projects undertaken by governments, NGOs and international organizations to improve the lot of the rural people and the moral and political leadership of those who attempt to regulate populations, bodies and things in the name of progress (Gupta 1998:34). By contesting negative representations of the past that are central to development narratives, the villagers denied that progress had taken place. Lo mismo points out that both large and small projects of the Sandinista revolutionaries and the post-Sandinista reformers have failed to improve their economic situation. It points to the unintended consequences of such structured changes and to the contradictions between development plans and practices.

Lo mismo is not a statement about history standing still, about the absence of change in general. It is part of a *mètis*[11] discourse contesting the validity of development discourses, in particular the prospect of a bright future, the ultimate arrival of Third World people in consumer heaven or an egalitarian paradise. This discourse is not only an existential complaint about precarious living conditions, it is also subversive because it challenges the ways in which state and non-state organizations intervene in people's lives in the name of development and attempt to regulate populations, bodies and things in a supposedly common interest. Lo mismo ridicules teleological images of modernity that act as an "absent presence" (Gupta 1998:40) in discourses about development. By analyzing development with their own categories of favores, ayuda and robo, the "underdeveloped" (*atrasados*) retained the capacity of lexical autonomy (Cusso and Gobin 2008:10) and refused to become a shabby imitation of the "developed."

Birgit Müller, Laboratoire de l'anthropologie des institutions et organisations sociales LAIOS, École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, 54, bd. Raspail, 75006 Paris, France. E-mail: bmuller@msh-paris.fr.

Notes

1 *Como le ha ido desde la ultima vez que nos hemos visto*?
2 All names of villages and persons are pseudonyms.
3 I use the word "subject" here in the dual meaning that Foucault gives it: "Subject to someone else by control and dependence; and tied to his own identity by a conscience or self-knowledge. Both meanings suggest a form of power which subjugates and makes subject to" (Foucault 1982:781).
4 The term *Eigensinn* (acting according to ones own mind) used by Alf Lüdke (1993) would fit here as well.
5 In 1986, when I did a survey of all households, the eight biggest landowners owned 50% of the land though not more than 100MZ (see endnote #7) each, while 50% of the families did not possess any individual land title.
6 In 1978, large farms with more than 500MZ controlled 36.2% of the land (2,920,000 MZ in 8 million MZ). Farms that had between 200 and 500MZ controlled 16.2 % (1,311,000 MZ), those of 50 to 200MZ 30.1% (2,431,000 MZ), those between 10 to 50MZ 15.4% (1,241,000 MZ) and those with less than 10 MZ 2.1% (170,000 MZ). In 1988, 1,326,000MZ had been distributed to peasants and 948,000MZ to state farms (Mechri Adler 2000:405).
7 One manzana (MZ) equals 0.7 hectares.
8 Nicaragua has consistently been, since the late 1980s, among the top aid receiving countries in the world in terms of aid per capita; most years it places among the top five.
9 All the members of the Moraves family had become evangelists belonging to the Mennonite Church and the Iglesia de Dios.
10 In 2004 this was US$4000.
11 From Greek, "cunning intelligence," born out of prudence: people with mètis seize opportunities or devise tricks that enable them to prevail in adversity without exceptional physical strength.

References

Bernstein, Henry
2006 Is There an Agrarian Question in the 21st Century? Canadian Journal of Development Studies 27(4):449-460.

Broegard, Rikke
2000 Land Titles, Tenure Security and Land Improvements. A Case Study from Carazo. M.A. dissertation, Institute of Geography, Copenhagen University

Colburn, Forrest
1986 Postrevolutionary Nicaragua: State, Class, and the Dilemmas of Agrarian Policy. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Cupples, Julie
1992 Ownership and Privatisation in Post-Revolutionary Nicaragua. Bulletin of Latin American Research 11(3):295-306.

Cussó, Roser, and Corinne Gobin
2008 Du discours politique au discours expert: Le changement politique mis hors dêbat? Mots: Les langages du politique 3(88).

Deere, Carmen Diana, Peter Marchetti and Nola Reinhardt
1985 The Peasantry and the Development of Sandinista Agrarian Policy 1979-84. Latin American Research Review 20(3):75-109.

Dye, David, Judy Butler, Deena Abu-Lughod, Jack Spence and Georges Vickers
1995 Contesting Everything, Winning Nothing: The Search for Consensus in Nicaragua, 1990-95. Cambridge, MA: Hemisphere Initiatives.

Ferguson, James
1990 The Anti-Politics Machine: Development, Depoliticization and Bureaucratic Power in Lesotho. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Foucault, Michel
1982 The Subject and Power. Critical Inquiry 8(4):777-795.
1983 Afterword. The Subject and Power. *In* Michel Foucault. Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics. Hubert Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, eds. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
2004 Sécurité, territoire, population. Paris: Gallimard/Seuil.
2009 Le courage de la vérité. Le gouvernement de soi et des autres. Paris: Gallimard, Éditions du Seuil.

Gilbert, Dennis
1990 Sandinistas: The Party and the Revolution. Cambridge: Blackwell.

Gupta, Akhil
1998 Postcolonial Development: Agriculture in the Making of Modern India. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Jonakin, Jon
1997 Agrarian Policy. *In* Nicaragua without Illusions: Regime Transition and Structural Adjustment in the 1990s. Thomas W. Walker, ed. Pp. 97-114. Wilmington: Scholarly Resources.

Legovini, Arianna
2003 The Distributional Impact of Loans in Nicaragua: Are the Poor Worse Off? *In* The World Bank, Nicaragua Poverty Update. February. Annex 8.

Lüdke, Alf
1993 "Ehre der Arbeit": Industriearbeiter und Macht der Symbole. Zur Reichweite Symbolischer Orientierungen im Nationalsozialismus. *In* Eigensinn. Arbeitererfahrungen und Politik vom Kaiserreich bis in den Faschismus. Alf Lüdke, ed. Hamburg: Ergebnisse Verlag.

Mechri Adler, Zohra
2000 Mouvement paysan, réforme agraire et politiques agricoles au Nicaragua 1979-1990. Ph.D. dissertation, Department of Sociology, University of Paris III.

Merlet, Michel
1995 La construction d'une nouvelle identité paysanne. Paris: IRAM.

MIDA-INRA
1982 Estrategia de desarollo agropecuario y reforma agraria. Managua: MIDA-INRA.

Murray Li, Tania
2005 Government Through Community: The World Bank in Indonesia. Unpublished MS for the Hauser Colloquium: Globalization and Its Discontent. New York University School of Law, October 18.
2007 The Will to Improve: Governmentality, Development and the Practice of Politics. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Nuñez Soto, Orlando
1986 Réforme agraire et luttes des classes au Nicaragua 1979-85. Ph.D. dissertation, Department of Sociology, University of Paris VIII.
Ruiz Garcia, Alfredo, and Inge Meussen
1993 Evalucion del impacto de credito en las familias rurales (Masaya, Carazo) tres estudios de Caso Managua: Nitlapan
Scott, James
1976 The Moral Economy of the Peasant: Rebellion and Subsistence in Southeast Asia. New Haven: Yale University Press
Silverman, Sydel
1979 The Peasant Concept in Anthropology. Journal of Peasant Studies 7(3):49-69.
Spoor, Max
1992 Issues of "State and Market": From Intervention to Deregulation of Food Markets in Nicaragua (1979-1992). Institute of Social Studies Working Paper Series, 120. Rotterdam: International Institute of Social Studies, Erasmus University Rotterdam.
Wheelock Roman, Jaime, and Jerry Lucas
1979 Interview with Jaime Wheelock. Latin American Perspectives 6(1):121-127.
World Bank
2004 Nicaragua Poverty Assessment. Electronic document, http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/main?menuPK=2823806&pagePK=64193027&piPK=64670046&theSitePK=2721269&menuPK=64154159&searchMenuPK=4658161&theSitePK=2721269&entityID=000160016_20040116101352&searchMenuPK=4658161&theSitePK=2721269, accessed 4 November 2010.
Zalkin, Michael
1986 Peasant Response to State Grain Policy in Post-Revolutionary Nicaragua: 1979-1984. Dissertation, Department of Economics, University of Massachusetts UMI.