Reviewer's report

Title: The social relations of health care and household resource allocation in neoliberal Nicaragua

Version: 3 Date: 20 December 2009

Reviewer: Lori Hanson

Reviewer's report:

1. Major compulsory revisions: None.

2. Minor essential revisions: There are two. Both are small revisions.

a) On pages 16 and 17 there appears to be an inconsistency in reporting. Dona Elisabeth reports that she has not visited a local government health centre since the decade of the 80s, yet on page 17 reports that a "couple of years earlier" had been diagnosed with ovarian cysts and assisted by a government health centre auxiliary nurse. The relationship (nurse and Elizabeth) may be outside of the centre or there could be a contradiction in her testimony and in fact she had visited a centre, but the reader is not provided with the information to be able to discern. It is a small point, but worth clarifying.

b) On page 27 the first sentence of paragraph one is awkward ("in her summaries of household...") Please check the grammar.

3. Discretionary revisions: There are two potential revisions, left at the author's discretion.

a) On page 22 - bottom paragraph - the results relating to Susan and Mariluz take a jump into a discussion of women's rights during and after the revolution. There is a bit of a jarring sensation for the reader here, and begs the question of placement of that section. An alternative may be to move that short section to the following section on structural violence or perhaps better yet, to the discussion. The choice of placement in this case is left with the author as it is not substantive and does not change the argumentation only potentially the flow for the reader.

b) We are now heading into 2010. While many structural issues remain, there may be some changes which have been instituted that alter, if slightly, some of the health system issues named by study participants in 2002 (eg. improvements to the basic drug supply to health centres, elimination of health system fees, etc.) I don't think these changes substantially alter any of the observations in the paper, but may prove an interesting addition. This note could be added as a 'post-dissertation' update at the end of the article. It is at the author's discretion if or how to describe such changes (indeed there is little agreement on whether they are substantial, minimal, intended but not implemented or unsuccessful. Most long-term followers of Nicaraguan politics would agree there are different ways of viewing them.) A related question currently being begged by regime
change (in 2006) is whether there is should be any change to the designation of 'neoliberal' to the Nicaraguan state. These are all interesting potential additions - possible to capture in such an end note.

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests.