

A recurrent issue in the book is the concern with morality, especially with how women would dress for the beach. Clearly, these concerns were associated with the Roman Catholic Church's conservative ideas and patriarchal attitudes. Nonetheless, these concerns were mostly directed to upper- and upper middle-class women. Thus, by looking at the culture of beachgoing, we can better understand how the city became increasingly stratified: how the south zone (*Zona Sul*) became the focus of attention, with little concern to spare for how women dressed (or behaved) at the downtown "poor" beaches. Hence, the author's innovative perspective leads the reader to draw conclusions about larger issues such as class, race, gender, and social exclusion.

Although this may not have been the book that Barickman wanted to write—and it may seem, at times, unfinished—it is a major contribution to Rio's historiography and one that has not been lost, thanks to the dedication of the editors.

Saint Mary's University
Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada
rosana.barbosa@smu.ca

ROSANA BARBOSA

US SETTLEMENT IN COSTA RICA

Cold War Paradise: Settlement, Culture, and Identity-Making among U.S. Americans in Costa Rica, 1945–1980. By Atalia Shragai. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2022. Pp. 338. \$99.00 cloth; \$30.00 paper; e-book \$30.00.
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Studies on migration in Central America pay special attention to two processes: the movements of Nicaraguans to Costa Rica and the movements of Central Americans to the United States. Atalia Shragai innovates in this field by considering a phenomenon only sporadically addressed previously: the settlement of US citizens in Costa Rica from 1945 to 1980. Based on interviews with 40 women and 25 men and a detailed review of other sources (such as the *Tico Times*), Shragai examines the ethnic, generational, and geographic background of this population flow, including its class and gender dimensions. Furthermore, she places the experiences of these immigrants in the context of the Cold War.

In the book's lengthy introduction, Shragai summarizes the main contextual issues, compares the United States to Costa Rica, and discusses why this Central American country has become an attractive destination for generations of US immigrants. Based on the 1950, 1963, and 1973 censuses, she estimates the number of people from the United States who settled on Costa Rican soil and then contrasts that figure with the number of other foreigners, particularly Europeans and Nicaraguans. Finally, she explains how diverse the community made up of US citizens was, why their origin assured them a privileged status, and the identities they built, not as immigrants, but as expatriates or guests.

Shragai explores in the first chapter the reasons for moving from the United States to Costa Rica and classifies those who made the trip into three main groups by their motivations: political, typical of those who opposed the wars in Korea and Vietnam; countercultural, claimed by people who were looking for lifestyles different from those predominant in the industrialized US society of that time; and institutional, associated with the incentives that Costa Rican legislation offered to foreign retirees. Based on this differentiation, Shragai considers, in the second chapter, the community formed by these immigrants, the organizations they established and the activities they carried out. Her analysis differentiates between those who settled in cities and those who settled in rural areas, including rainforest and beaches.

The next two chapters deal with more specific topics. In the third, Shragai delves into the experiences of those who lived in distant places such as frontier areas, the relationship they established with nature, and how this process influenced their identities. In discussing this environmental dimension, Shragai incorporates a decisive gender perspective. This approach continues in the fourth chapter, where Shragai analyzes in detail how US American women experienced their immigrant status in Costa Rica. Of particular interest is her reconstruction of the US Women's Club, activities carried out by this organization, and contributions made by these women to the *Tico Times*.

The fifth chapter also focuses on a specific theme: the material culture of immigrants. Shragai discusses here the characteristics of their houses, furniture, appliances, and culinary practices, and how these things helped to preserve their identity as US citizens. In the final chapter, Shragai examines the memory built around migration, which is seen as the result of coincidence and circumstance rather than intention and planning. Here again, Shragai documents the diversity of experiences and representations, whose common background is the civilizing mission of white men and women.

Shragai's book is innovative and fascinating, but it has the limitation that Costa Rica appears as a scenario rather than as a nation or society; Costa Ricans appear as extras and not as co-stars or even supporting actors. Not herself familiar with Costa Rica or Costa Rican academic production, Shragai sometimes tends to inadvertently reproduce the prejudices and stereotypes of her informants. Thus, her valuable contribution contrasts with the more immersive perspective on Costa Rican culture that dominates the narratives of some other foreign academics, like those who collaborated in the book *Ciencia social en Costa Rica. Experiencias de vida e investigación* (Heredia: EUNA and EUCR, 1998), a missing reference in Shragai's bibliography.

University of Costa Rica
San José, Costa Rica
IVAN.MOLINA@ucr.ac.cr

IVÁN MOLINA