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Soldiers, Activists, Legislators: Democratization and Women's Representation in Bolivia and Nicaragua

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**Soldiers, Activists, Legislators:
Democratization and Women's Representation in Bolivia and
Nicaragua**

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Abstract

In 2018, Bolivia and Nicaragua contain 53 and 46 percent women in their national legislatures respectively, while other countries, including the United States, lag behind with proportions around 20 percent. Why do some countries have higher levels of women in office? A preliminary answer points to gender quotas, which have increased numbers of women in legislature in numerous cases. Rather than beginning and ending the story of women's representation with gender quotas, however, this project analyzes the processes that lead a country toward the adoption of such quotas. By tracing the political histories of Bolivia and Nicaragua through crises related to democratization, women's mobilization, and opening political space, this project provides a more complete explanation of differences in women's representation. Both countries contain more women in legislature than many others, but these gains come as a result of decades of women's activism. When women mobilize during and after crises of democratization, they are ultimately able to access spaces of power within the legislature after new political space opens. This theory provides potential for a more nuanced analysis of a country's trajectory toward gender quotas and eventual increased representation of women.

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Introduction

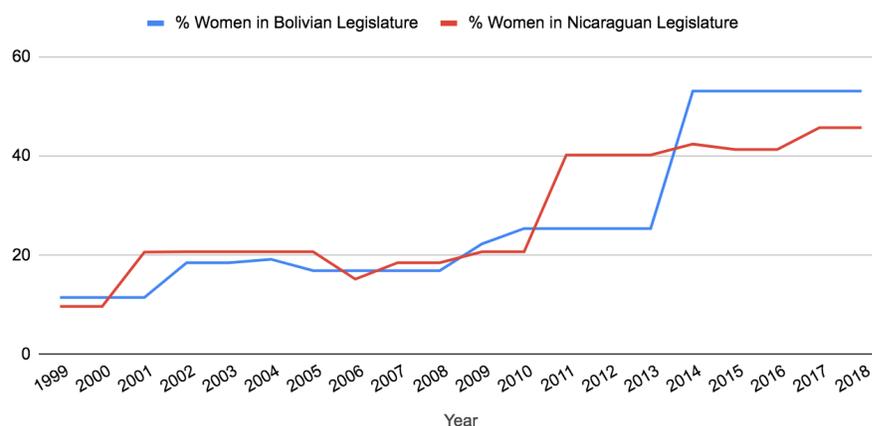
In a 2015 speech, the President of Bolivia, Evo Morales, said that if women weren't such "capricious little things," they would be running the country (ABC International 2015). Ironically, women *are* running the country to some degree, occupying over half of the seats in the national legislature. Adding another layer of irony, despite his frequent sexist jokes, it is Morales himself who is often credited with recent gains in women's rights and representation in the country. These seemingly innocent jokes come during a historic period as women are winning elections throughout the world. Despite women achieving suffrage only relatively recently in most countries, they have always been crucial political actors. Organizing, protesting, participating in armed struggle, leading communities, voicing opinions—women shape societies in countless ways. Their representation in formal political structures, however, continues to lag behind that of their male counterparts in every modern society. In 2018, women's political representation appeared in headlines throughout the world. The issue has never been more discussed, analyzed, and studied than now.

During the 20th century, women throughout the world not only gained the right to vote, but also the right to run for and hold office. Since these changes, certain countries have had dramatic increases in proportions of women in office. Many countries have enacted gender quota legislation, which, if effectively designed, has the potential to facilitate the election of many more women. For example, the United States, a country without gender quotas, has only 23.7 percent women in Congress, and in Japan, only 1 in 10 members of the lower legislative body are women (Jozuka 2019). Meanwhile, some

countries with gender quotas, including many in Latin America, have elected proportions as high as 53 percent in Bolivia and 46 percent in Nicaragua, shown in Figure 1 (Inter-Parliamentary Union 2018). Why have some countries been more effective in increasing women’s representation while others fail?

Similar to other Latin American countries, as well as Belgium, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Slovenia, and France, gender quotas in Bolivia and Nicaragua are mandated by national electoral law. Other countries, like Burkina Faso, Nepal, the Philippines, and Uganda outline gender quotas in their constitution. In other examples, like Germany, Norway, and Sweden, political parties have implemented their own quotas. Interestingly, if the dominant party in a country uses a quota, like the ANC in South Africa, female representation may be significantly affected (IDEA 2009). While only a minority of countries in the world have enacted gender quota legislation, these cases also saw some of the most dramatic shifts in women’s representation, and require further analysis.

Figure 1: Women in Bolivian and Nicaraguan Legislatures



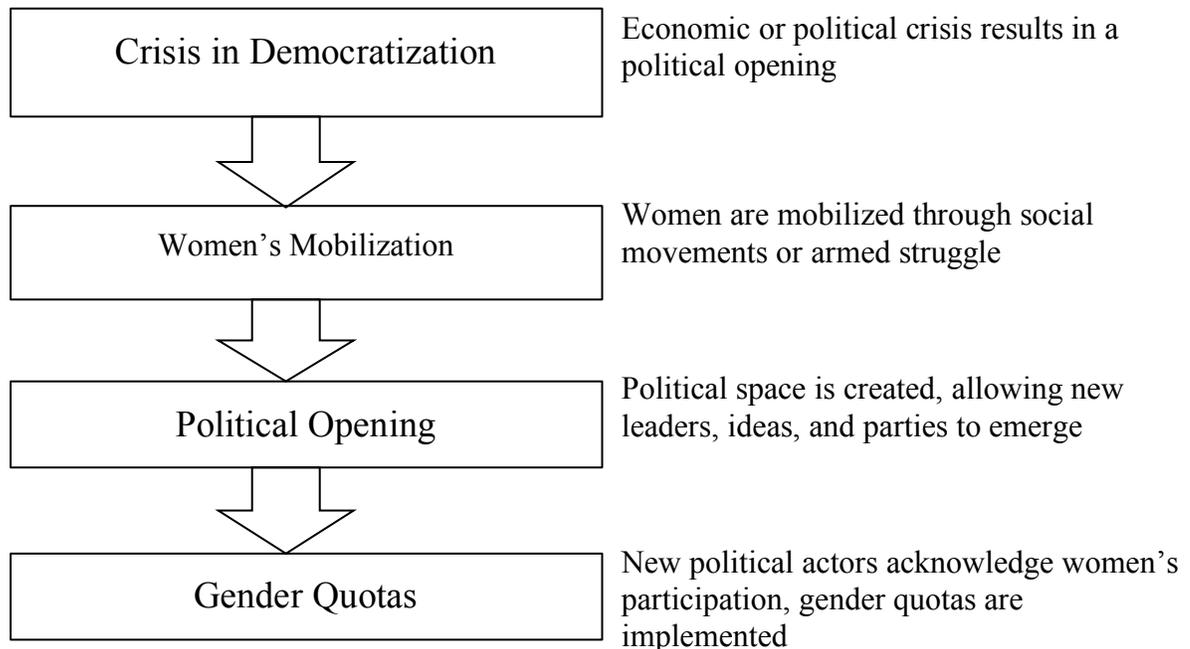
(Data from Inter-Parliamentary Union 2018)

The growing global phenomenon of gender quota legislation provides a promising explanation for rising levels of women in office—countries with gender quotas will

surely have more women representatives. Yet this preliminary answer ignores two important points: first, not all quotas are created equal. Scholars of gender quotas have shown through empirical analysis that electoral system and quota design have a significant impact on the effectiveness of quotas (Miguel 2008, Jones 2009, Paxton and Hughes 2015). The second shortcoming of this explanation is that it fails to acknowledge the important processes of democratization and women's mobilization that have a profound impact on the implementation of gender quota legislation. In this paper, I discuss quota effectiveness in Chapter 4, but my research focuses on the second point. Quotas alone cannot fully explain changes in women's representation.

This question of women's representation becomes more complicated when placed in the context of democratization. Just as universal suffrage, free and fair elections, and freedom of the press are considered indicators of democracy, women's representation in government is often included in elements to consider when assessing the quality of a country's democracy. But, if women's representation and democracy are related, how does this relationship play out? In this paper I use a comparative approach to study Bolivia and Nicaragua's processes of democratization and how those processes have influenced women's representation in both cases. Through close historical analysis, I argue that as a result of their mobilization during and after a period of democratization marked by crisis, women access new political spaces that emerge directly following these crises. This inclusion is achieved through the adoption of gender quotas, through which women are able to enter formal political office in ways they had not been able to previously. I illustrate this process in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Crisis to Quotas: The Path toward Women's Representation



I compare Bolivia and Nicaragua because although they share similar outcomes of relatively high levels of women's representation, they differ in specific histories of democratization and women's mobilization. These differences help demonstrate the relationship between democracy and women in legislature, as the democratization processes of the two countries have varied in time period, ideologies, and conflicts. Additionally, both countries possess leaders who have circumvented constitutional limits on presidential power, which suggests a shift toward authoritarianism with possible implications regarding women's participation and agency in government bodies. Additionally, focusing on only two cases of women's representation, enables me to describe complexity and nuance in a way that would not be possible with a larger study.

In this paper, I not only explain the complex paths of democratization in Bolivia and Nicaragua, I also connect democratization to women's representation, focusing on crucial moments of crisis, transition, and opening political space. This phenomenon occurred through strikingly different time periods in the two cases. Political space opened in Bolivia in 2005 with the election of Evo Morales, and gender quotas were implemented only five years later. Nicaragua's path toward gender quotas was much longer, with 33 years going by between the Sandinista victory of 1979 and adoption of gender quotas in 2012. During these three decades, women continued to mobilize, but political space went through periods of expansion and contraction which affected women's ability to enter office and participate in politics. So, when political space opened again in 2006—although in an anti-feminist context—gender quotas were implemented. By emphasizing nuance in Nicaraguan party politics and changes in party leadership, I connect the dots from women's mobilization during the guerrilla struggle to their eventual inclusion in formal political spaces.

In Chapter 1, I trace Bolivia and Nicaragua's changes in democracy through periods of authoritarianism, electoral change, and social and military conflict. Nicaragua's current government parallels the earlier military dictatorships of the Somoza families, and the FSLN's monopoly on power and its efforts to evade constitutional limits mirror past authoritarian leadership. While Bolivia experienced a shift to democracy in 2005 with the election of Evo Morales, recent authoritarian tendencies of the Morales administration demonstrate a consolidation of male power that contradicts the

inclusionary rhetoric of the Movimiento a Socialismo (Movement Toward Socialism—MAS).

Chapter 2 describes the histories of women's mobilization in both cases. Nicaraguan women were substantial participants in the 1979 revolution, which spurred increased mobilization through both institutionalized organizations and anti-feminist groups, a process which demonstrates the capacity of democratic transition to foster women's movements. Bolivian women were heavily mobilized in anti-neoliberal movements of the early 2000s, which allowed them to become key agents of the powerful MAS party.

Chapter 3 provides an analysis of changes in political space and opportunity for women in evolving democratic regimes. In both cases political space expanded with the success of leftist movements, but has occasionally contracted due to authoritarian presidential tendencies and in Nicaragua's case, significant anti-feminist sentiment. Despite the diversity in democratic transition, women's mobilization, and nature of political opportunity between the two countries, both histories have ultimately resulted in gender quotas, which I outline in Chapter 4.

Due to the presence of gender equality principles in the Bolivian Constitution and severe consequences for parties that do not adhere to gender quotas, Bolivian quotas have proved successful in increasing levels of women's representation in the legislature to 53 percent. While Nicaraguan gender quotas do not contain sanctions, the FSLN implemented its own quotas in 1994, which set a powerful precedent in prioritizing women's representation.

Although Nicaraguan women's mobilization during the 1979 Revolution occurred much earlier than the adoption of gender quotas in 2012, the legacy of women in the Sandinista army, as well as other women's movements, have influenced their entrance into the legislature through quotas. For Bolivian women, although they share a similarly long history of mobilization, the election of Evo Morales created wider political space for marginalized peoples to enter government, and because of their significant participation in the social movements that responded to neoliberal policies, women achieved representation. By connecting women's high levels of representation in 2018 Bolivia and Nicaragua to women's histories of mobilization in both cases, I hope to dispel the idea that gender equality in government is a result of quotas alone. While quotas are an important mechanism to increasing women's representation, it is women's activism, combined with moments of crisis, democratization, and political opening, that lead to quota adoption and higher numbers of women in legislatures.

Chapter 1

A Crisis in Democratization

Introduction

In 1979, the Sandinista National Liberation Front (Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional - FSLN) overthrew the Somoza dictatorship in Nicaragua, ending 43 years of oppressive authoritarian rule. Three years later, two decades of military dictatorships came to a close in Bolivia, replaced by democratic elections and civilian leadership. These similar events were milestones in Latin American history and represented the transitions from dictatorship to democracy occurring throughout the region, prompting abundant analysis of democratic transitions as scholars attempted to understand how and why authoritarian rule collapses and democracy emerges in its stead. During these democratization processes, women have achieved representation in multiple Latin American countries at rates higher than many other world regions. Is women's representation an indicator of quality of democracy? Since the Nicaraguan revolution and the end of dictatorships in Bolivia, both countries have experienced a variety of regimes along the political spectrum, and both possess relatively high numbers of women in office. To trace women's representation as it relates to democratic transition, I adopt a historical approach, analyzing both regime type and quality of democracy in recent decades. While the post-dictatorship period of the late 20th century is undoubtedly important in discussions of these countries' democracies, the first twenty years of the 21st century prompt new questions and necessitate a fresh understanding of democratic processes.

While not a concrete indicator of type or quality of democracy, women's representation can be achieved through democratic transition, especially when a powerful political party advances women's election to office. However, the hierarchical nature of some parties may indicate consequences in terms of women's participation. In this chapter, I argue that although Bolivia's neoliberal economic crisis served as a catalyst for progressive reforms and increased inclusion of marginalized peoples, Evo Morales's monopoly on power, when combined with the country's patriarchal society, has potentially created barriers for genuine participation of women in government. In Nicaragua, women have achieved high levels of formal and descriptive representation in office since the 1979 Revolution, but a regression to authoritarianism in the last decade may have diminished women's ability to exert agency in the legislature. First, I discuss theoretical understandings of democratization, focusing on the "crisis" stage. Then, I describe and analyze regime type and quality in both Bolivia and Nicaragua since democratization. Rather than simply distinguish democracy from nondemocracy, I emphasize nuance and complexity across time in both cases.

From Dictators to Democracy: A Theory of Democratization

To frame my investigation of democracy in Latin America, and in Bolivia and Nicaragua more specifically, I draw upon the theories and definitions of democracy developed by O'Donnell (1992, 2010), and Linz and Stepan (1996), who emphasize democratization as a process rather than a binary of democratic versus undemocratic. In their 2008 study of women in Central American legislatures, Saint-Germain and Chavez

Metoyer also utilize this conceptualization of democratization as a constantly evolving and changing process. However, their study exclusively analyzes the legislatures of Central American countries, whereas I apply the theories of O'Donnell and Linz and Stepan to both Nicaragua and Bolivia.

I analyze not the final outcome of democracy, but the process of democratization, which allows for additional nuance. By identifying stages of democratic crisis, transition, and consolidation, while simultaneously observing developments and changes in women's representation, the two processes reveal themselves as interconnected.

O'Donnell (2010) argues that when studying democratic systems, investigation into *democratization*, rather than democracy itself, lends more valuable insights. According to O'Donnell, analyzing a country's democratization includes, "the acquisition and legal backing of wider and more solidly supported rights and freedoms that pertain to the civil, social, and cultural aspects of citizenship and, more broadly, of the agency of everyone irrespective of [their] positions as a citizen" (213). Thus, a discussion of a country's democracy becomes a question of degree and quality rather than a simple binary of democratic or undemocratic. O'Donnell acknowledges that although difficult to calibrate, measuring a country's "degree of democratization, or the quality of democracy of each case" provides more profound conclusions (213). Applying this concept to the Bolivian and Nicaraguan contexts, I consider the political developments in each case as part of a larger process of democratization, including events and actions that affect the quality of democracy both negatively and positively.

Continuing the discussion of democratization, Linz and Stepan employ a similar theory to that of O'Donnell, but emphasize democratic transition and consolidation. They define a completed democratic transition as one in which

sufficient agreement has been reached about political procedures to produce an elected government, when a government comes to power that is the direct result of a free and popular vote, when this government *de facto* has the authority to generate new policies, and when the executive, legislative and judicial power generated by the new democracy does not have to share power with other bodies *de jure* (3).

A strength of this definition lies in its protection against the “electoralist fallacy” that claims the necessary condition to democracy, free elections, is a sufficient condition for democracy. Not only does a state need to experience regular elections, other elements, including legitimacy and autonomy, are required for a state's democratic transition to be considered complete. If a regime wins an election and subsequently assumes control of the government but there was no potential for true opposition, according to Linz and Stepan, the democratic transition has not been completed.

Linz and Stepan also present a working definition of a consolidated democracy, which combines behavioral, attitudinal, and constitutional dimensions. According to them, a democratic regime is consolidated behaviorally when “no significant national, social, economic, political, or institutional actors spend significant resources attempting to achieve their objectives by creating a nondemocratic regime or turning to violence or foreign intervention to secede from the state” (6). Attitudinally, a democratic regime can be considered consolidated when a strong majority of public opinion believes that democratic procedures are the most appropriate governing strategy. Finally, a

consolidated democracy includes specific laws, procedures, and institutions sanctioned by the democratic process. They also discuss five arenas of a consolidated democracy: a free and lively civil society, a relatively autonomous and valued political society, rule of law to ensure legal guarantees for citizens' freedoms and independent associational life, a state bureaucracy, and an institutionalized economic society.

In addition to their theories regarding democratic transition and consolidation, Linz and Stepan describe three claims about democracy. The first argues that states with more diverse populations in terms of language, religion, and culture experience more complex politics because agreement on the fundamentals of democracy becomes more difficult. The second claims that in order to establish and consolidate democracy in these multinational states, "considerable political crafting of democratic norms, practices, and institutions must take place" (29). The third and final assertion made by Linz and Stepan is that sometimes, dealing with the problems of stateness will be inherently incompatible with democracy. Thus, a nuanced understanding of democratization is needed, as both Linz and Stepan agree with O'Donnell in that democracy must not be studied as a binary variable that is either present or absent in any given context. Rather, democracy must be interpreted more in terms of the process of democratization marked by crisis, followed by democratic transition and consolidation.

Linz and Stepan also present a hypothesis regarding multinationalism, which proves relevant in the study of Bolivia, a self-proclaimed "plurinational" state. In this type of setting, characterized by multiple ethnicities, cultures, and nations, Linz and Stepan argue that "the chances to consolidate democracy are increased by state policies

that grant inclusive and equal citizenship and that give all citizens a common ‘roof’ of state-mandated and enforced individual rights” (33). This claim regarding the effect of state policies on the quality of democracy experienced by individuals will constitute a substantial element in my analyses of the Bolivian and Nicaraguan contexts in the following sections of this chapter. In my effort to understand the dynamics in which women’s representation functions in both these states through a framework of democratization, I consider elements including ethnicity and multiculturalism, which have been shown to influence the potential for and quality of a democracy.

Based on my definition of democracy as a process of democratization rather than a static variable that is either present or absent, O’Donnell’s (1992) analysis of democratization as a process that begins with crisis, followed by a period of transition, and ending with consolidation is most appropriate and applicable to my case studies. The transition stage, according to O’Donnell, is comprised of two separate transitions: the first from the authoritarian regime to the democracy, and the second from the democratic government to the consolidation of the democracy. His definition of a consolidated democracy contains five key elements: (1) avoiding authoritarian regression is no longer a principal concern of democratic actors; (2) social and political actors defer to democratic institutions; (3) practices and institutions promote the uncertain nature of democratic elections; (4) political relationships are similar to other democratic relations in other social spheres; and (5) rulers are subjected to the same laws as the public (O’Donnell 1992, 48-49). Therefore, for a democracy to be considered a *consolidated*

democracy, it must possess those five qualities. Without them, it remains a transitional democracy, with the potential of a return to authoritarian rule.

Immediately following a transition from authoritarian rule, the incipient democracy remains fragile, and the threat of a regression to authoritarianism remains looming. O'Donnell argues that these new democracies "must be nurtured and defended from the very real risks of an authoritarian regression" (17). Until a democracy consolidates, the potential to return to the previous model of authoritarianism remains strong and highly possible. In this stage of democratization, criticizing the democracy becomes increasingly difficult because different from the authoritarian regime, there exists no obvious "enemy" or threat to democracy. Critiques of the democracy cease to be threatening to the continued existence of the democracy itself only when that democracy is consolidated (O'Donnell).

To adequately explore and assess the democratic systems of Bolivia and Nicaragua, I draw primarily from the theories outlined by O'Donnell and Linz and Stepan. Following O'Donnell's emphasis on the process of democratization rather than solely considering the end result, and applying Linz and Stepan's theories of democratic transition and consolidation, in the following sections I investigate the democratization processes in both countries with a framework emphasizing nuance and complexity.

The element of O'Donnell's crisis-transition-consolidation framework that concerns me most in terms of women's representation is the first stage: the crisis. Because he crafted his theory in 1992, O'Donnell derives most of his examples of "crisis" from the economic crises that arose during the military regimes of the 1960s and

70s and the neoliberal policies of the 1980s and 90s. In the context of Latin American democracy, these economic crises serve to “generate some form of political opening and greater respect for basic civil rights,” thus creating an opening in the state for democratic transition (Mainwaring et al. 1992, 2). Then, the first transition concludes with the establishment of open elections, universal voting rights, and guarantees of traditional democratic rights. Following the crisis, the transitional democracy is consistently jeopardized by what Mainwaring et al. refer to as *desencanto* (disenchantment) where the democratic regime fails to fulfill the promises they made to get into power. Depending on the severity of disenchantment, it may affect the regime’s ability to move toward the second phase of consolidation.

The crisis phase of this framework as conceptualized by O’Donnell has usually been considered in terms of economic crises, namely the financial crises that plagued Latin America throughout the 1980s. These crises gave way to democratic expansion throughout the region, a period marked with widespread optimism that the new wave would not be, like previous versions of democracy, “a short-lived part of a cycle rather than a more enduring phenomenon” (Mainwaring et al. 1992, 6). Since O’Donnell’s 1992 vision of the crisis-transition-consolidation process 26 years ago, however, different circumstances in Latin American countries have given reason to believe that other crises, especially in the social and political spheres, may also be important in these democratization processes. Despite differences among types of crises, all result in similar changes in terms of opening political space for new actors and ideas to emerge. In the case of Bolivia, I define the crisis period from 2000 to 2005 when active social

movements were opposing neoliberal economic policies. In Nicaragua, the crisis was more prolonged, beginning with the guerrilla struggle in the 1970s but continuing into the 1980s with the Contra War. Despite differences, both examples of crisis involve developments of democratization.

Mainwaring et al. (1992) focus heavily on the second phase of their framework, the transitional democracy, which may be a result of the time in which they conceptualized the democratization process. Whereas in consolidated democracies the system of government is unquestionable, transitional democracies “operate in a political environment in which democratic continuity is still uncertain” (3). Writing in the 1990s, when many Latin American countries had only recently shifted from authoritarian to democratic regimes, authors like O’Donnell were still exploring whether the transitional democracies of the era would prove as weak and unstable as earlier manifestations of democracy. Democracies in Latin America predominantly rely on presidential systems that encourage populist leadership and zero-sum competition, which tends to inhibit legislative alliances and effective policymaking. Thus, political parties and legislatures are rendered more fragile, and the possibility of regression from democracy back to authoritarianism becomes more likely. Mainwaring et al. view political parties and legislatures as “major channels for organizing, articulating, and even reducing the expression of societal demands and interests,” and are therefore very important in democracies. Historically, presidents have had the tendency to undermine these institutions that are vital in protecting a democracy from regressing to autocracy.

In 2019, a new conceptualization of democratization is not only helpful, but necessary. The late 20th century in Latin America involved cycles of democracy, oligarchy, and military dictatorship, but the early 21st century requires updated theories to fully comprehend modern political contexts in the region. As Levitsky and Ziblatt argue, while democracies have historically died in the form of military coups, there's another, more invisible way of breaking a democracy: "at the hands not of generals but of elected leaders—presidents or prime ministers who subvert the very process that brought them to power" (2018, 3). Many of these subversive actions are technically legal, and thus draw less attention and concern than violent and corrupt abuses of power. Sometimes, these actions are framed as efforts to *improve* the democracy, which lends legitimacy to state actions that are ultimately harmful to democratic norms. The breakdown of democracy is deceptive, occurring in official channels through legal means, making it all the more difficult to prevent. These abuses of power are highly visible in both Bolivia and Nicaragua, and are crucial to understand how democratization processes are connected to women's representation and participation. In the following section, I discuss developments in the Bolivian and Nicaraguan democracies, which have resulted both in the opening of political space and constricting forces of patriarchy and top-down leadership.

Democratic Crises in Nicaragua

In the last 50 years, Nicaragua has seen varying periods of dictatorship, democratic transition, and increased women's representation. Similar to Bolivia, whose

economic crisis of the 1990s prompted a widening of the political space, Nicaragua's 1979 revolution was a pivotal moment, especially with regard to women's increased involvement in politics. After the revolution, however, evolving dynamics of anti-feminism and eventual consolidation of state power complicated the possibilities for increased representation of women. Like in Bolivia, Nicaragua's history with repressive military rule left a legacy that is visible even in 2018, especially with regard to criticisms of the current President, Daniel Ortega. To understand current dynamics of democracy in Nicaragua, an analysis must include consideration of the Somoza family dictatorship, which consumed much of the twentieth century (1936-1979). Anastasio Somoza García ruled the country as an authoritarian leader until his assassination in 1956. His eldest son, Luis Somoza Debayle, then took over and ruled directly or through puppet presidents until 1967. Slightly less repressive than the ruling style of his father, Luis liked the appearance of democracy, but remained an autocratic dictator. Finally, his younger brother, Anastasio Somoza Debayle, took power until 1979. Anastasio was more prone to the use of force than his father and brother, but all three dictators were guilty of using repressive means to maintain control over the state. Walker (1997) characterizes the governing style of the Somoza dynasty with three characteristics: (1) the co-optation of domestic elites; (2) direct control of the National Guard militia; and (3) the support of the United States. By employing these strategies, the Somoza family was able to stay in power for forty-three years, an unusually long period even for Latin America, a region with an extensive history of dictatorships. Ultimately, the problems created by the Somoza regime led to its downfall, as its policies emphasized class differences and may

have contributed to the subsequent citizen uprising. One such problem was the “socially regressive agro-export economy,” which was developed in the nineteenth century but expanded under Somoza rule and “made even more exploitative as a new wave of peasant farmers was displaced in order to make way for the production of cotton in the 1950s” (Walker 1997, 4). During the 1970s, Somoza’s grasp on power began to loosen, and was eventually overthrown on July 19, 1979, by a mass insurrection of tens of thousands of Nicaraguans, led by a relatively small band of guerrillas who called themselves the Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional, or the FSLN.

At first glance, the FSLN’s success in overthrowing the Somoza dictatorship appears unlikely. Formed in 1961 by a small group of Marxist students who had left the Nicaraguan Socialist Party, which they perceived as too strongly controlled by the Soviet Union, the FSLN’s rise to national prominence resembles a classic underdog story. Using the name of Augusto Sandino, a famous Nicaraguan revolutionary hero and leader of a rebellion from 1927 to 1933, the FSLN’s rise was connected to the example of the Cuban Revolution of 1959. Like the Cuban Revolution, the FSLN was successful through guerrilla tactics and revolutionary rhetoric. To explain this improbable triumph, Walker (1997) provides four factors that lead to the 1979 revolution’s success: the right social conditions, a repressive target regime that had alienated most of its political base, the right international environment, and the intelligent and flexible nature of the FSLN guerrilla movement. Additionally, the FSLN received support from the Catholic Church in Latin America, which was increasingly associated with liberation theology, a movement within the church that emphasizes the duty of Catholics to ease the oppression

of marginalized peoples. After a 1968 conference of Latin American bishops in Medellín, Colombia, the church viewed the FSLN as an insurgent effort that would “blend both nationalistic Marxist and progressive Catholic elements and thus considerably broaden its appeal” (Walker 1997, 7). Thus, with the support of clergy who ascribed to the tenets of liberation theology, the FSLN took over the reins of Nicaraguan politics, eager to begin their revolution.

An Attempt at Democracy: 1979-2006

As the FSLN began their government after the revolution, they attempted to reinvent a state previously controlled by military dictators and autocrats. Despite losing power in 1990, which constitutes a dramatic shift in Nicaragua’s political history, the period from 1979-2006 represents 27 years in which the country experienced elections and transfers of power, which I argue constitutes a genuine attempt at democracy. In 1979, instead of leading a revolutionary guerrilla movement, the FSLN were in charge of the state, including the bureaucracy, the legislature, the courts, and the military. Hoyt (1997) describes the Sandinista regime as attempting to combine three separate aspects of democracy: political, or representative, democracy, participatory, or mass, democracy, and economic democracy. These three elements included elections, citizen participation, and equalization of wealth. For the FSLN, democracy required more than just elections, but also “the participation of those masses of people who in the past had been denied access to the public life of the country” (Hoyt 1997, 22). This change in governance was significant for Nicaragua, because although elections had certainly been held in the past,

they were viewed as corrupt and illegitimate by the public. Thus, at least initially, the Sandinista Revolution of 1979 was, both symbolically and in practice, a revolution in the type of government Nicaragua claimed. No longer were elections rigged, laws self-serving, and judicial rulings biased, and the FSLN attempted to usher Nicaragua into an era of democracy.

Following the 1979 revolution, the FSLN regime has been considered a transitional government, emphasizing participation of the masses rather than prioritizing elections. In the wake of one of the longest dictatorships in history, the Sandinistas took considerable steps to guard against such occurrences in the future, including issuing decrees to prevent an authoritarian leader from emerging, and were initially “far more respectful of civil and political rights than other revolutionary regimes and, indeed, than most Latin American governments” (Walker 1997, 8). Over time, however, the interests of the FSLN shifted as they adjusted to being the government rather than struggling against it. As they transitioned from authoritarian rule to their revolutionary system, they also shifted from promoting participatory democracy through grass-roots organizations, the Council of State, and the literary crusade. Starting in 1984, the FSLN chose to emphasize electoral representative democracy, which would “partly eclipse, but not completely obliterate, the participatory aspects of the system” (Walker 1997, 15). Through these elections, the FSLN administration evolved from its initial status as a transitional government to a constitutional government (Walker 1997). Despite many advances in political participation and a growing civil society, Bendaña (2004) refers to the FSLN during this period as “authoritarian,” led by the nine-member National

Directorate who appeared to be unaffected by economic downturn. So, while the FSLN government was certainly *more* democratic than the previous military dictatorships, evidence indicates that it was not a fully consolidated democracy.

Indeed, as they continued ruling, the initial revolutionary nature of the FSLN that had been so radical and socialist began to change. During the 1980s, FSLN practices began to shift to the right, and the party slowly lost its resemblance to the Sandinistas who had victoriously captured state power in 1979 (Prevost 1997). The FSLN quickly realized that the strategies that had won the revolution, along with socialist policies and practices, were less feasible than they had anticipated. As the Nicaraguan public started realizing the ideological shift of the FSLN, the party lost the mass support it had enjoyed when they came into power. This loss of support, when combined with the devastating effects of the Contra War, culminated in the presidential election results of 1990, when the opposition candidate Violeta Barrios de Chamorro of the National Opposition Union (UNO) won 55 percent of the vote and was elected president (Walker 1997). For the social organizations who had been co-opted by the FSLN, the electoral defeat had mixed consequences. They had lost the “powerful mechanism of the state to support [their] needs and interests,” but gained independence and no longer were expected to fulfill “many functions that in other times and places would have been performed by government functionaries” (Hoyt 1997, 53). Because the Sandinistas relied so heavily on the support of civil society organizations, their defeat in 1990 had immense repercussions in the public sphere. The FSLN’s initial regime only lasted eleven years, but their efforts

in democratizing Nicaragua continued to affect the country even after they left the Presidential Palace.

Following their exit from power in 1990, the shifts within the FSLN that had begun in the 1980s continued, further distancing itself from its previous position as a unified revolutionary power. In 1995, the Sandinista movement experienced a severe split, and the Sandinista Renovation Movement (Movimiento Renovadora Sandinista - MRS) formed. In addition, the party also continued losing public support, as the population of Nicaragua was increasingly alienated from politics and had begun viewing the Sandinistas as “part of the country’s traditional political elite that had failed to address their fundamental social and economic problems” (Prevost 1997, 149). The party split of 1995 was especially damaging for the Sandinistas, and they struggled to recover as a movement and political party. The FSLN had managed to retain strong loyalty among their support base, and had established political space for itself within the democracy it had initiated. However, a majority of Nicaraguans were disappointed with the Sandinistas’ inability to accomplish many of its revolutionary promises and turned to opposition candidates and parties to fulfill their needs.

One of the key aspects of the new Nicaraguan democracy was the active and vibrant social organizations that formed, including the Nicaraguan Women’s Association (AMNLAE). A more comprehensive discussion of the women’s movement in Nicaragua is found in Chapter 2, but AMNLAE was an important actor in the process of democratization led by the FSLN. Organizations like AMNLAE were key elements of the FSLN’s 1979-1990 government, and I argue that rather than being independent spaces for

people (especially women) to participate in politics, these organizations served to consolidate the Sandinistas' iron grip on power. Despite its initial strength as "one of the grassroots groups that showed the greatest promise at the time of the 1979 Sandinista victory," AMNLAE quickly fell under the Sandinista umbrella where FSLN leaders dictated much of AMNLAE's actions and platform. After the FSLN lost power, this political domination by the party fell away and in 1993, without the financial assistance from the FSLN, AMNLAE declared itself an "autonomous movement that was not subordinate to any political party" (Hoyt 1997, 66). Once independent and able to create their own priorities, AMNLAE focused on democratizing power relations, a woman's right to her own sexuality, and the ability to freely choose maternity. Using a definition of democracy that includes an independent civil society, AMNLAE's autonomy had a large impact on the quality of Nicaragua's democracy. Ironically, this autonomy was only possible after the revolutionary movement that had promoted its version of democracy left power.

The changes in the FSLN extended beyond ideological differences and party fragmentation and included changes in structure and internal governance practices. Despite its appearance as a "party of the people," Martí i Puig (2010) argues that the FSLN is actually very hierarchical in structure, with an organizational framework focused around the figure of the "member." Because of its emphasis on labels and status, the FSLN was, in practice, not a "mass" party led by and for the Nicaraguan public, but rather a party directed by a selective group of leaders. While in power after the revolution, the FSLN functioned as a large bureaucratic apparatus that overlapped with

the state, but evolved into “a relatively centralized organization, totally faithful to its leader, with a great capacity to negotiate in different political arenas” (Martí i Puig 2010, 80). Daniel Ortega, despite losing elections in 1990, 1996, and 2001, maintained his status as leader of the FSLN and, through secretive alliances and deals with opposition leaders and the Catholic Church, adapted the party until it was ultimately captured the presidency in 2006. From 1996 to 2006, Ortega steadily built up his power, consolidating the FSLN into his personal circle of supporters (also called the “ring of iron”), and strategically diminishing the influence of rival party officials. Ortega engaged in a period of strategic negotiation from 1997 with President Arnaldo Alemán (1997-2001) and into the administration of Enrique Bolaños (2002-2006). In 2000, Ortega and Alemán negotiated “the Pact,” which resulted in two-party control of the three key institutions: the Contraloría General de la República (Comptroller General of the Republic), the Corte Suprema de Justicia (Supreme Court of Justice), and the Consejo Supremo Electoral (Supreme Electoral Council). The Pact, a strategic move by Ortega to pave the way for his party to return to power, also restricted space for political representation and reformed electoral law. This agreement resulted in a liberal bloc split between supporters of Alemán (Alemanistas) and supporters of Bolaños (Bolañistas), which meant the FSLN had the highest representation in the National Assembly, controlled the other public institutions including the judiciary, and became the most important player in Nicaraguan politics (Martí i Puig 2010). By driving a wedge in its primary opposition, the FSLN was able to end its era out of power, and, with Ortega at the helm, reclaimed its position as the most important political organization in the country. In the following section, I discuss

Bolivia's transition toward democracy, a process that involved a political party similarly dominant to the FSLN.

Bolivia's Evolving Democracy

Bolivia's 2019 version of democracy has roots in historical themes of ethnicity, indigeneity, and colonization. Like Nicaragua, Bolivia experienced authoritarian leadership in the form of military dictatorships and an eventual transition to democracy. However, the story of Bolivia's democracy centers on issues of indigeneity in ways that Nicaragua's does not. Like many Latin American countries, Bolivia's history of colonization included arbitrary national boundaries resulting in a heterogeneous indigenous population without a common culture or language to unite them as a nation. From 1932 to 1935, Bolivia fought the Chaco War against Paraguay over control of the northern Gran Chaco region of South America, which was significant in reinforcing a form of "Bolivian" identity claimed by members of diverse indigenous communities; an Indian identity centered on struggling for recognition and collective rights that had been forming since the 18th and 19th centuries through Andean peasant uprisings (Larson 2004). This national identity continued to develop, and the Bolivian public celebrated its independence in 1952 when the National Revolutionary Movement (Movimiento Nacional Revolucionario - MNR) succeeded in overthrowing the mining oligarchy that had been in power. Although ideologically and socially diverse, the MNR leadership was united by "nationalism, opposition to the oligarchy, and a populist-modernist orientation" (Kohl and Farthing 2006, 46). While the leaders of the MNR used populist rhetoric, the

movement was anti-communist and eventually abandoned the interests of any social sector beyond the middle class.

The three major outcomes of the 1952 revolution were the nationalization of the tin mines, land reform that ended the feudal system, and universal suffrage that included peasants (von der Heydt-Coca 2009). Despite these changes, not all members of society were treated equally, and Bolivia's indigenous population continued to be oppressed, but now in the name of national unity. *Indios* (a pejorative term for non-citizen indigenous people) were now considered citizen *campesinos*, therefore stripping them of cultural difference and placing them into a social category that reflected a goal of combatting the "backwardness" of indigenous people and creating a homogeneous *mestizo* nation (Kohl and Farthing 2006).

Not long after Bolivian independence, military dictatorships controlled the country from 1964 to 1982 and routinely denied civil rights, including free speech and assembly and democratic elections. These military regimes were not unique in the region, as many Latin American countries experienced increasingly radicalized ideologies within their governments throughout the Cold War period (Brands 2010). Dynamics of representation and governance certainly existed throughout the authoritarian period, but because my research focuses on democratic transition, I limit my scope to post-dictatorship Bolivia, beginning in 1982. Nonetheless, the country's past, including Spanish colonization and military rule remains significant in contemporary understandings of Bolivia's democracy.

Precursor to Chaos

In 1982, Bolivia's history took a dramatic turn. An economic crisis involving massive debt, corruption, and mismanagement climaxed, and despite attempts to maintain its grasp on power, the military government was removed from office through a democratic election (Healy and Paulson 2008). The dictatorships that had used violence and repression to maintain power since 1964 had fallen, and on October 10, Hernán Siles Zuazo was sworn into office as the democratically-elected president. Leading the Popular and Democratic Union (Unión Democrática y Popular - UDP), a coalition of twenty political organizations whose goal was to continue the nationalistic economic and political project that had begun in 1952, Siles Zuazo's administration signaled an end of authoritarian rule and a turn toward liberal democracy. However, the UDP quickly became fragmented and the already damaged economy continued to decline. Initially an important ally for the UDP, the Bolivian Workers federation (Confederación Obrera Boliviana - COB) fractured from the coalition, removing a large source of support and legitimacy for the regime. This forced the Siles Zuazo government to negotiate with the COB, which was, at that time, entrenched in the confrontational politics of the dictatorships and unaccustomed to functioning under democratic conditions. On the other side, the Bolivian Private Business Federation (Confederación de Empresarios Privados de Bolivia - CEPB) was increasingly cohesive and able to pressure the relatively weak coalition government. They pushed for free market principles and the removal of the state from the economy, indicating the beginnings of the neoliberal policies that would continue throughout the 1980s and 90s. "Neoliberal" policies in this era were defined by

the Washington Consensus, a set of economic policy prescriptions for developing nations outlined by international financial institutions and included “reduction of fiscal expenditures in social spheres, favorable laws for foreign investments, opening of their economies to free market competition, deregulation of labor markets, privatization of state enterprises, and decentralization” (von der Heydt-Coca 2009, 347). While the Siles Zuazo government attempted to manage the competing interests of the CEPB and the COB, Bolivia was plagued by worker’s strikes and opposition from the military. These challenges, combined with the lack of international financial support, prompted the Siles Zuazo administration to call elections a year early in 1985 (Kohl and Farthing 2006).

When elections were called in 1985, the Bolivian economy was in crisis. Under the leadership of Victor Paz Estenssoro, the MNR—the same movement behind the 1952 revolution—took power with a coalition government formed with a social democratic party: the Left Revolutionary Party (MIR). The new government implemented what they called the New Economic Policy (NEP), which included many of the neoliberal reforms advocated for by the CEPB during the Siles Zuazo administration. While to many international observers, the economy was viewed as a massive success and Bolivia “became a potent symbol of neoliberalism’s ability to achieve macroeconomic stabilization,” the country experienced massive job loss and a rapid growth of the informal economy which suddenly included 70% of the urban workforce (Kohl and Farthing 2006, 61). Supporting these neoliberal reforms were international financial institutions like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), who “collaborated with Bolivian elites to marshal popular aspirations for political democracy

after twenty years of military dictatorship and ten years of political and economic decline to create the necessary support for the NEP” (Kohl and Farthing 2006, 62). Neoliberalism was in full force in Bolivia, and its consequences affected every sector of society, especially the most impoverished and marginalized.

One of the primary neoliberal reforms enacted during this period was the elimination of the miners’ union and shift to “cooperative” mining, which was organized into the National Federation of Mining Cooperatives (FENCOMIN). This policy was significant, as mining has always been one of the biggest industries in the country. Cooperative mining, as opposed to state-owned mining, was much less constrained, and had little regard for safety, working conditions, and environmental impact (Farthing and Kohl 2014). Administrations following Estenssoro’s continued to implement neoliberal policies and eventually privatized thirty small state firms by 1993. Then, Sánchez de Lozada’s government (1993-1997) completely reconfigured Bolivian policies in the realms of education, taxation, and property rights in accordance with the Washington Consensus, decreasing social spending and prioritizing private interests. His crowning neoliberal achievement was the *Plan de Todos*, which included the Law of Popular Participation to decentralize the government and the Law of Capitalization to privatize state enterprises (von der Heydt-Coca 2009). Neoliberalism was an attempt to create a modern state, but ultimately “failed to reduce endemic poverty, furnish indigenous peoples with basic rights, or satisfy regional demands for local control” (Farthing and Kohl 2014, 29). At a microeconomic level, neoliberalism was disastrous for Bolivia,

putting many people out of work and stripping them of social services in the pursuit of promoting private enterprise and a free market economy.

Neoliberal Crisis: 2000-2005

An unintended consequence of Bolivia's neoliberal period became visible at the turn of the century. Although the purpose of the Washington Consensus was to develop the economies of poor countries throughout the world, the results starkly contradicted its promises of economic growth, reduction of poverty, and creation of jobs through new investments. Although these policies were heralded as a success at the time by international institutions and Bolivian elites, neoliberalism had failed Bolivia. Because of neoliberalism's secondary effects of increasing economic inequality, its policies of privatization and deregulation had especially failed the most marginalized members of society: the poor, the indigenous, and the unemployed. However, the failure of neoliberalism then gave way to one of the most successful and well-known social movements in the world. The negative economic effects of neoliberalism "provoked a powerful protest from a broad spectrum of the population," and the world took notice (von der Heydt-Coca 2009, 355). In 2000, Bolivians in Cochabamba, one of the country's largest cities, mobilized and succeeded in reversing the World Bank-promoted privatization of a public water company in what was later called the Cochabamba Water War. This type of social movement victory was unprecedented, and signaled a substantial shift away from neoliberalism and globalization. Parts of society that had traditionally been distinct, in particular rural peasants, urban movements, and the middle class, were

able to converge in Cochabamba, a coalition that would not have existed without the detrimental effects of neoliberal policies that touched all of Bolivian society. Rather than ending in 2000, protests “engulfed the country,” culminating in the 2003 and 2005 “Gas Wars” against the exploitation of the country’s natural gas reserves, which sent two presidents out of office and “proved that people in a small, poor country could successfully challenge powerful companies, governments, and institutions” (Farthing and Kohl 2014, 30). It was in these movements that an indigenous coca farmer named Evo Morales rose through the ranks, becoming a social movement leader heading toward national recognition (von der Heydt-Coca 2009). In Bolivia, pre-revolutionary governments excluded extensive portions of society, military regimes repressed democratic processes, and neoliberal reforms negatively affected wealth disparities, but the crisis caused by economic downfall served to create a space in which increased democracy and inclusion seemed not only possible, but likely.

Morales’s Transitional Democracy: 2005-2018

Evo Morales was elected to the Bolivian presidency in 2005 with 53.7 % of the vote, an event covered widely by international media that focused on his Aymara background and radical rhetoric. Since taking power, Morales and his party, the Movement Toward Socialism (Movimiento a Socialismo - MAS) have pursued a variety of ambitious projects and reforms with mixed results. Combining indigenous ideology and symbolism, the MAS and Morales represented a drastic shift in the trajectory of Bolivian politics, a space from which indigenous peoples have historically been

excluded. By wearing traditional Aymara clothing during official events, recognizing the many indigenous languages found throughout the country, and explicitly including indigenous people in his government, Morales signified a shift in governance toward increased participation and representation. I analyze two key moments of the thirteen years Morales has been in office in order to describe and investigate the status of Bolivian democracy: the 2009 constitution and the 2016 referendum. While these two events certainly do not represent the Morales administration in its entirety, they provide substantial evidence to support the claim that while Bolivia has experienced heightened levels of women in office in recent years, patriarchal forces remain at play and continue to constrain women's agency in public spheres.

One of the motivations behind rewriting the Bolivian Constitution was to reverse the neoliberal policies of the 1980s and 1990s, which had caused extensive economic and social problems. Another reason the Bolivian public was motivated to change the constitution was a desire to re-found the country through "an alternative philosophical view rooted in the notion of *'Vivir Bien,'*" a traditional indigenous concept of living well (Mendoza-Botelho 2016, 27). Additionally, one of Morales's campaign promises was to decolonize the state, which could be facilitated by writing a new constitution. So, soon after his inauguration, Morales signed the *Ley de Convocatoria*, which mandated the Constituent Assembly (Asamblea Constituyente - AC). The Constituent Assembly was comprised of a diverse group of delegates from around the country, representing different ethnic groups and interests with an emphasis on gender equality. Seen as a unique example of democracy in a heterogeneous, historically colonized country, the AC

symbolized many of the values Morales had repeatedly spoken about during his presidential campaign (Mendoza-Botelho 2016). However, the reality of the AC was not perfect, and scholars have since noted disparities between the stated purpose of the assembly and its actual consequences for democracy. For example, the institutional design of the *Ley de Convocatoria* “favored partisan affiliation over broader participation and inclusiveness” (Mendoza-Botelho 2016, 31). To be a delegate on the assembly, one needed to be affiliated with a mainstream political party or organization, so smaller organizations, interests, and ethnic groups were excluded. Thus, the process ultimately demonstrated the prioritization of politics over democratic ideals, and should not be considered a true manifestation of democracy in action. Despite these shortcomings, the essence of the AC was democratic, and resulted in a new constitution for Bolivia, one that “codified multicultural entitlements, introduced new forms of representation and deliberation and identified state responsibilities in health, housing and social provision” (Grugel and Riggirozzi 2012, 7). One of the democratic elements of the new constitution, however, would be challenged ten years later by the most important proponent of the document: Evo Morales himself.

The 2009 Constitution limited presidencies to two five-year terms, a common practice for democracies worldwide, and because Morales was elected in 2005, his two terms would have ended in 2015. In preparation of the 2014 elections, however, a law was passed in 2013 that allowed Morales to seek a third term, which was supported by the Supreme Court, which ruled that because the constitution had been ratified in the middle of Morales’s first term, he would be permitted to run a third time. Morales was

then reelected with a wide margin, capturing 61.4% of the vote, and began his third term. However, the issue of presidential term limits was far from over, and the MAS began pursuing a legal way for Morales to run for office yet again in the 2019 elections. Claiming that the transformation of the Bolivian state could only be fully realized if Morales was permitted to stay in power through 2025, the MAS called a referendum in 2016, giving the Bolivian public the power to decide whether or not they would allow Morales to seek a fourth term. Voting is compulsory in Bolivia, and 84% of potential voters turned out to the polls on February 21, 2016 to make their opinion known. After all the votes had been counted, 51.3% had voted against the constitutional revision proposed by the MAS to allow continuous presidential reelection (Driscoll 2017, 256). Significantly, municipalities traditionally loyal to the MAS, especially ones heavily concentrated with mine workers and indigenous groups, were some of the areas that most strongly rejected the referendum. Morales, who had initially promised to abide by the results of the referendum, only shifted his strategy and pursued a judicial path to maintain power. In 2017, the Bolivian Constitutional Court annulled the results of the 2016 referendum, claiming that presidential term limits were unfair to Morales, who had, according to them, been wrongly attacked by the media (Casey 2018). So, Morales won the fight to seek yet another—fifth!—term, which, would make his administration last for twenty years. This moment represented a turning point in the Morales regime, when the president's allegiance to democracy and fairness suddenly appeared fragile and insincere.

Ironically, Morales and the MAS were the strongest proponents of the 2009 constitution that established presidential term limits. Their argument for continuing the

president's time in office rests on the claim that the advances seen since 2005 would be reversed with a change in leadership, and the ultimate vision of decolonization would be lost. Certainly, the MAS government has made impressive strides since coming into power, especially in reducing income inequality and poverty. But there is also reason to believe that public opposition to the MAS is substantial, and Morales has only succeeded in remaining in power because of a lack of a legitimate opposition party, coalition, or even leader. Additionally, allegations of corruption and maladministration have plagued the Morales administration, which undermines his credibility, especially with the increasingly discontented middle class. The results of the referendum may seem surprising when compared with the relatively large margin of victory Morales received in the 2015 elections, but scholars have theorized that because the referendum presented a clear, concise alternative to Morales rather than the fragmented and weak opposition of the 2015 elections, the public faced an easier choice (Driscoll 2017).

Beyond the somewhat authoritarian tendencies of Morales, the MAS itself gives reason to believe the Bolivian democracy may be in fragile condition. Although the MAS encompasses several different social movements and groups, many have questioned the extent to which these groups actually influence and participate in the actions and policies of the MAS regime (Farthing 2017, Stuenkel 2017). The labor movement and mining cooperatives have challenged the Morales regime, demonstrating internal party conflict. Observers have also noted a lack of internal democracy within the MAS party structure, which has ramifications for Bolivian democracy at large. Free press is often considered a democratic value, and Morales and MAS leadership have repeatedly attacked journalists

and the media, accusing them of propagating rumors and false information. These factors call the quality of Bolivian democracy in question, and the rosy picture Morales painted in 2005 becomes increasingly complicated. Recent advances in democratic inclusion, descriptive representation, and poverty alleviation, while significant, seem less impressive when put in context with the social unrest and sometimes violent protests, contestation regarding citizens' rights and civil liberties, and challenges to governmental legitimacy from within existing party structures. In a 2016 Quality of Bolivian Democracy survey conducted by the Association of Bolivian Political Scientists, 200 Bolivian elites characterized Bolivia as a "democracy in transition" (Driscoll 2017). It remains unknown whether Bolivia will move forward in its democratization process toward a consolidated democracy or regress to the authoritarianism of the past.

Conclusion

At first glance, the trajectories of democratization in Bolivia and Nicaragua appear similar. Both countries have histories of repressive dictatorships, both possess weak opposition parties, and in 2019 both countries had presidents who have pushed through constitutional changes to allow them to maintain power. In the last 20 years, rather than happening through violent bloodshed and guerrilla warfare, changes in democratization have occurred in the laws, policies, institutions, and court rulings. In this chapter, I have approached the question of these countries' democracies through a historical lens, choosing to focus on nuance and complexity throughout the democratization processes. Despite similarities in past regime types and similar outcomes

of high representation of women, Bolivia and Nicaragua experienced different kinds of democratic crises. In Bolivia, neoliberal reforms in the late 20th century spawned a period of increased social movement activity and opening the public sphere to indigenous peoples and women, and the legacy of the Nicaraguan revolution continues to affect the ways in which democracy appears in the country. Despite recent undemocratic actions taken by Morales, Bolivia's crisis in democratization seems to have ended in 2005, whereas in Nicaragua, the crisis related to democratization lasted from the guerrilla struggle of the 1970s into the 1980s. The events of 2018 have indicated a significant shift in Nicaragua's trajectory: away from democratization and toward authoritarianism. While the two cases present important differences in democratization processes, both have included mass mobilization of women, which affects the potential for women's representation. In Chapter 2, I explore women's mobilization throughout democratic transitions.

Chapter 2

Mobilizing as Women

*“Little by little I understood that having been born female meant having to eat
shit, in industrial quantities”*

- Sofia Montenegro, 1994 interview with Margaret Randall

Women’s mobilization comes in diverse forms and with a variety of guiding ideologies. Anti-feminist women’s groups, religious women’s organizing, women comrades in the socialist struggle are all considered “women’s mobilization.” Throughout Latin American history, women have organized not only around “women’s issues,” but often constitute large support bases for social movements and political parties.

Machismo, a form of sexism and patriarchy specific to Latin America and its colonial history, discourages women’s participation in the public sphere throughout the region, but women were strategically mobilized in specific contexts, which shaped the future of women’s organizing. Throughout the 1970s, Nicaraguan women were recruited to participate in the armed struggle, which involved them in public life and politics and prompted the creation of active women’s organizations, whereas Bolivian women were historically excluded from the political sphere until the 1990s, when they began mobilizing in opposition to neoliberal policies. These distinct mobilization patterns during periods of democratization would ultimately shape how political leaders and parties approached gender issues and women’s representation. To explain how these factors have influenced women’s representation, I discuss both countries’ histories of women’s mobilization, which in Nicaragua included women’s participation in the armed insurrection of 1979 as well as the organizations created after the FSLN victory. Bolivian

women's organizing, however, focused mainly on responding to neoliberal economic policies and emphasized the role of indigenous women.

Concientización and Autonomy in Nicaraguan Women's Movements

Nicaragua's history of women's mobilization is complex, varying from women combatants to members of AMNLAE, Catholic anti-feminist groups, and autonomous organizations committed to the overthrow of patriarchy. While these diverse manifestations of women's organizations had different motivations, objectives, and memberships, all contributed to the vibrant tapestry of women's activism in Nicaragua. The trajectory from suffrage to women occupying almost half of the seats in the national legislature has included many setbacks, compromises, and political conflicts. Nevertheless, it is the tradition of activism and legacy of women's mobilization that has shaped Nicaraguan gender relations and resulted in a congress that more accurately represents the population in terms of gender.

Women's involvement in the 1979 Revolution was unprecedented in terms of Nicaragua's history as well as armed struggles worldwide. Not only were women active participants through traditional feminine roles in warfare—communication, logistics, support—they also took up arms and fought alongside men, putting their lives in danger to aid the revolution. Women's involvement in guerrilla movements was a prominent feature in many Latin American revolutionary struggles, but scholars emphasize Nicaragua as an outlier, where women took up arms and fought for revolutionary ideals, including but not limited to women's liberation. Because women's involvement in the

revolutionary struggle was unique, especially when considering the gender stereotypes and culture of *machismo* in Latin America, much attention has been paid to women's status in Nicaragua. Indeed, their military participation necessitates a close analysis of gender relations within the revolutionary period, but women's movements had existed prior to 1979, and continue to actively engage with Nicaraguan politics and society in 2018.

The study of women's movements in Nicaragua reveals a complex story of feminism, anti-feminism, women in power, and women excluded. The diversity of women within the country presents both obstacles and advantages to a united women's movement, and the role of different institutions, mainly the FSLN and the Catholic Church, have interacted in different ways in the last twenty years to create a nuanced context of anti-feminism, autonomous organizations, and contradictory messages from leaders. This context, when compared to the 46 percent women in the national legislature, provide a unique example to analyze the legacy of revolution and gender consciousness in terms of women's access to formal power. Nicaragua's extensive history of women's mobilization, when combined with the revolutionary legacy of women's participation and a feminist consciousness, has shaped state gender policies and ultimately contributed to the rise in women legislators. To explain this increase in women's representation, I will analyze women's movements during the pre-revolutionary period, women's participation in the revolution and their adoption of a political and feminist consciousness. Throughout these different developments in Nicaraguan politics, women have continuously

mobilized, shaping Nicaraguan politics to the extent that women now constitute almost half of its national legislature.

Pre-Revolutionary Women's Movements in Nicaragua

Despite the attention paid to women members of the FSLN, an analysis of women's movements in Nicaragua before 1979 lends important insights to the development of women's mobilization and their political status in 2018. González-Rivera (2014) describes pre-revolutionary women's movements as primarily falling into two categories: first-wave feminism¹ (1920s-1950s) and the right-wing Somocista women's movement (1950s-1970s). After the revolution, women's involvement in the FSLN garnered more attention domestically and internationally, despite the multitude of groups that operated prior to 1979 that had lobbied for legal, educational, social, and political rights for women. However, while women's movements before the revolution were successful in increasing opportunities for some women and achieving women's suffrage, their legacy was ultimately undemocratic. According to González-Rivera (2014), "feminists were unable, and Somocista women were unwilling, to implement internal democratic processes in their organizations" (260). Both movements centralized power in the hands of elites, and lacked procedures to find consensus and develop new leadership. This lack of democratic practices was emblematic of the general lack of democracy in

¹ It is important to note that not all Nicaraguan women identified as "feminists" during this period, and many continue to reject the term because of its Western connotations. However, I find the term useful as a broad category to describe groups of women who fought for women's rights.

Nicaragua during this period, characterized by the dictatorial regime of the Somoza family.

Nicaraguan women voted for the first time in 1957, but the election was controlled by the Somoza dictatorship, and thus non-democratic in nature. First-wave feminists, including Josefa Toledo de Aguerri, struggled for decades to achieve suffrage, but their goals were not limited to the vote. Toledo de Aguerri, described by González-Rivera (2014) as Nicaragua's most important first-wave feminist, had first led efforts for increased educational access for women in the 19th century before turning her attention to suffrage in the 20th. Along with her activist work, Toledo de Aguerri also published the country's first feminist magazines and founded many women's organizations, all of which were independent of the Catholic Church and political parties. During this period, independent feminist organizations attempted to address multiple issues, including civil and political rights, anti-war activism, anti-U.S. presence in Nicaragua, cultural expression, and cooperation with other countries. Eventually, most feminists in these organizations became members of the Comité Central Femenino (Central Women's Committee), a suffragist group affiliated with the Federación de Mujeres de América (Women's Federation of America). The Committee was disbanded after suffrage was achieved, and although many first-wave feminists were initially conflicted about creating partisan women's organizations, most members eventually chose to join women's groups aligned with certain political parties (González-Rivera 2014). First-wave feminism, especially its ability to remain autonomous from larger institutions, had an enduring legacy for women's mobilization in Nicaragua.

The Somocista women's movement was diverse, combining women who supported the dictatorship and were also interested in improving Somocista women's lives. In 1954, the Ala Feminina (Feminine Wing) was formed, soon to become the largest and most powerful group in the Somocista women's movement. Although some Somocista women were hesitant to create women-only organizations in fear of criticism, they were affirmed by elites within the Somoza regime, exemplified in a 1959 political statement in support of an upcoming plebiscite:

Democracy forms the base and foundation for our Party [. . .] within the bases of that democracy the engineer Somoza Debayle will give woman opportunity, through the female vote, which will constitute a giant step for the Liberal Party, for in that way woman will be able to aspire to represent the people. (Letter from Felipe Santiago Roque to Ramiro Sacasa Guerrero. 3 de febrero, 1959. Fondo Presidencial. Sección Partido Liberal. Signatura 296, ANN [Archivo Nacional]) (quoted in González-Rivera 2014, 267)

However, the elections that women were able to participate in under Somoza rule were tightly controlled by the regime, and did not reflect a democratic process. Because of this, it is possible that although they were able to vote, "Somocista women did not learn to engage with electoral democracy but rather learned to claim that fraudulent elections had been held democratically since the *appearance* of fair elections mattered so much to Somocismo" (González-Rivera 2014, 268). Unlike first-wave feminists, who were not "patrons, brokers or clients in a broader clientelistic system," Somocista women benefited from the clientelism of the Somoza regime and were rewarded for their loyalty (González-Rivera 2014, 270). Despite differing levels of autonomy and variation in goals, both the first-wave feminist movement and the Somocista women's movement are emblematic of the long, convoluted history of women's mobilization in Nicaragua.

Women in Armed Combat

Women's involvement in the 1979 Revolution differed from other military conflicts in that women occupied roles outside of those considered "feminine." Rather than fulfilling exclusively supportive functions, women were actually prominently involved in combat, constituting approximately 30 percent of the FSLN's military forces. This participation alone prompts the need for analysis, but also caused the phenomenon of *concientización* (consciousness-raising) among women, both political and feminist. In an interview with Margaret Randall (1994), Daisy Zamora, a poet, feminist activist, and former Vice-Minister of Culture, described her participation in the revolution, emphasizing the equal experiences of men and women: "We women did everything during the period of armed struggle. We risked as much as men, we carried the same sort of responsibilities: there was no way we hadn't earned the right to leadership positions in the revolutionary government" (Zamora interview, Randall 1994, 109). Female combatants in the FSLN repeatedly emphasized the unusual role women undertook in the revolution, sharing responsibilities with men in a way that was previously unheard of in military contexts.

Vidaluz Meneses, a poet and former Dean of Humanities at the Central American University, who briefly served as Vice-Minister of Culture, attests to the opportunity presented to women by the revolution: "We women have always been marginalized. The revolution signaled a great potential for us. But reality itself left us with the overburdened responsibility we've always had" (Meneses interview with Randall 1994, 164). Yet women's participation in the revolution did not directly translate into increased power

within the FSLN. Gioconda Belli, one of Nicaragua's most famous poets, explains the FSLN's shift in its approach to women: "The moment victory became a possibility, that's when we women who had been active participants in the struggle began to be forced out, to lose power, to be marginalized" (Belli interview with Randall 1994, 176). Despite the FSLN's resistance to embrace a completely egalitarian platform of gender relations, women's participation in the revolution included a process of consciousness-raising, which would prove to be vital in women's leadership following the revolutionary struggle.

In addition to defeating the Somoza regime and claiming state power, the FSLN's revolutionary movement also introduced many women to both politics and feminism, the legacy of which would continue throughout the end of the 20th century and into the 21st. Although not an intended consequence of the guerrilla struggle, organized feminism emerged from the revolution. According to Kampwirth (2004), "feminists were not born, they were created... by decades of armed and unarmed social struggle" (7). Because guerrilla struggles aim to transform a country's economy, society, and politics, they often result in rising feminism, which is also revolutionary in nature. Many women who became members of the FSLN came from politically active families, which influenced their personal experiences and contributed to the rise of feminism, a trend caused by the political socialization and transformation of consciousness during the revolution (Kampwirth 2004).

Although many women came from families involved in politics, they commonly describe their membership in the FSLN as the first moment they became aware of

women's marginalization. Milú Vargas, an attorney, feminist organizer, and co-founder of AMPRONAC, describes her upbringing as heavily influenced by politics: "Ours was a very political home. We breathed and ate and talked politics every day" (Vargas interview with Randall 1994, 128). However, she also explains that her awareness of sexism did not begin until around 1974, when, at twenty-four years of age, her "real gender consciousness" came with her first marriage" (Vargas interview with Randall 1994, 129-130). Women like Vargas may have been preconditioned by their families to be active in politics, but joining the FSLN marked the beginning of their own political involvement. "It was as if we'd given birth to ourselves in the Party," explains Vargas (interview with Randall 1994, 140). As well as introducing them to a military space previously uninhabited by women, the FSLN "enabled [them] to grow to the extent that [they] were able to claim autonomy, think for [themselves], create new alternatives and new possibilities for struggle" (Vargas interview with Randall 1994, 140). These opportunities had a significant impact on the women involved, and set the stage for a vibrant women's movement going forward.

Many personal narratives of women in the FSLN resemble that of Vargas's, describing their participation in the revolution as a turning point in their path to achieve a gender consciousness. Gioconda Belli, a prominent Sandinista poet, describes her transition to political activism: "As I became involved—with the people, with their vision of the world, with the FSLN—I began to break with everything that had been my life up to then" (Belli interview with Randall 1994, 172). In accordance with Saint-Germain and Chavez Metoyer's argument that women who had grown up in politically active families

with non-traditional mothers, Belli cites her mother, who “appreciated intellect, who wanted to know things, and... hated domesticity” as a chief influence in her early life (Belli interview with Randall 1994, 173). These backgrounds led women to participate in the FSLN, which in turn influenced their conceptualizations of democracy and gender. Sofía Montenegro, active in Nicaraguan newspapers during the revolution, argues that “the essence of feminism is its democratizing character; feminism promotes a general as well as a radical democratization” (interview with Randall 1994, 305). For many, the goals and strategies of the FSLN created an awareness of gender hierarchies, but the revolution itself did not achieve many of the feminist results desired by its female members. Doris Tijerino, the only woman who achieved the rank of full commander in the Sandinista army, claims that one of the multiple goals the revolution was not able to complete was “the profound and necessary change in human consciousness” (Tijerino interview with Randall 1994, 214). Thus, rather than concrete achievements in women’s political and social rights, the legacy of the revolution is found in the women themselves. Grabe and Dutt (2015) observe that despite the routine suppression of Nicaraguan women by political elites, women’s organizations have “maintained a consistent discourse of rights” since the revolution (90). It is impossible to imagine what women’s movements would look like in Nicaragua without their involvement in the 1979 revolution. Nonetheless, women’s experience in the FSLN, especially the profound *concientización* and valorization of autonomy, continue to influence women’s mobilization and participation in Nicaraguan politics.

Confronting the Challenge of Neoliberalism in Bolivia

Compared to Nicaragua, where analysis on women's movements and mobilization is abundant, scholarship on women's organizing in Bolivia is remarkably scarce. This could be a reflection on the reality of the Bolivian case, indicating a relatively low degree of women's movements, but a likelier explanation is a preference of scholars to focus on women's mobilization in Nicaragua. Because of the visibility of women in the Nicaraguan revolution, a wealth of scholarship has been written on their participation and organizing in the latter half of the twentieth century. Nevertheless, a close examination of the Bolivian case indicates that while women's organizations have certainly acted in political processes for decades, their high level of representation in the legislature in 2018 is closely related to the political opening created by Morales's election to office in 2005. Morales's party, the MAS, was skilled in co-opting diverse social movements—including many women's organizations—so women who had been fighting for greater inclusion and representation in civil society became part of the state rather than working outside of it.

Additionally, studies of women's movements throughout Latin America often focus on responses to authoritarian rule and economic crisis, both relevant to the Bolivian case. During the 1980s and 1990s, many countries in the region attempted to address mounting debt by implementing neoliberal economic policies characterized by privatization and deregulation. These policies have been shown to have a disproportionate effect on women and children, as they have resulted in “increased unemployment and underemployment, a decline in real wages..., as well as cuts in

government expenditures for social services” (Safa 1998, 140). When combined with changing gender roles, with increased potential for participation in politics and the public sphere at large, women’s movements have been key actors in social struggles opposed to neoliberalism in Latin America.

Much of the available literature on 20th century women’s organizing prior to the Morales regime focuses on the effects of neoliberalism in the 1990s on women’s ability to exert influence and achieve power. Widespread women’s movements that self-identified as feminist began in the 1980s, and continued to develop throughout the following decade. In this era, women’s movements were divided ideologically between what Monasterios (2007) describes as “a liberal, NGO-based ‘gender technocracy’ and the anarchy-feminism embodied in the *Mujeres Creando* (Women Creating) organization” (33). Women’s NGOs “increasingly took on a quasi-public-sector role,” which served to legitimize what Monasterios sees as a co-optation of women’s movements by the neoliberal state (33). Contrastly, *Mujeres Creando* operated autonomously, defining discrimination against women in terms of systemic patriarchy. However, both of these camps excluded indigenous women, who were disproportionately affected by colonization and neoliberal policies (Draper 2008). In addition to negative economic effects, neoliberalism also affected indigenous women “in terms of their participatory capacities in the field of politics, since they were largely fighting for their survival” (Wanderley 2010, 16).² In 2018, both rural and urban women’s groups are

² “Es absolutamente conocido que los procesos de la exclusión neoliberal afectaron fundamentalmente a las mujeres más pobres y que las afectaron en función de sus capacidades participativas en el ámbito de la política, dado que en gran parte estaban luchando por su sobrevivencia” (16).

sometimes perceived as more authentic representatives of large populations of women, but have realigned their political stances in terms of decolonization and radical democratization, both key elements of the MAS's platform (Monasterios 2007).

In Bolivia, women's exclusion stems from *machismo* as well as global capitalism, which combines with indigenous identities to increase marginalization. Bolivian women are highly diverse in terms of culture, language, education, and class, and therefore experience different forms of discrimination. For the majority of Bolivian women who lacked the tools of education, language, physical assets, network of contacts, "improving their lives through economic globalization [could] happen only indirectly, through intermediaries" (Draper 2008, 215). These intermediaries were often economic and political elites, who cannot be considered accurate representatives of women. Since the neoliberal period, women's movements have evolved to be more inclusive of different populations of women, and thus are confronted with different challenges. Along with the economic policies of neoliberalism, perceptions of women's identity have changed "as a response to the influx of ideas and exchange with Western values that accompany that economic influence" (Draper 2008, 214). These new perceptions of what it means to be a woman, including issues of motherhood, work, and leadership have resulted in more complex roles for women in Bolivian society.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have demonstrated that while Bolivia and Nicaragua show similarly high proportions of women in their national legislatures in 2018, women's paths

to representation diverged in two ways. First, while women have been involved in politics throughout both countries' histories, the unique nature of women's participation in the Nicaraguan revolution shaped women's movements going forward. Because of increased attention received by Nicaraguan women's organizations and evolving autonomy, women's mobilization in Nicaragua began a tradition of involvement in the public sphere which led to women's achievement of representation. Second, although the FSLN exercised control over women's movements after the revolution, the political space that emerged with the 1990 electoral defeat allowed women to mobilize with greater independence. In Bolivia, the MAS continues to co-opt women's movements under its umbrella of social organizations, constricting women's ability to independently participate in the Morales administration. Despite these differences, Bolivia and Nicaragua both enacted gender quota legislation that succeeded in increasing women's representation. Chapter 3 describes the opening of political space that facilitated women's inclusion and participation.

Chapter 3

Creating Space and Co-opting Women

Introduction

Do male-dominated political parties manipulate women for their own benefit? Or do women act with agency in parties, advocating for their own interests? In Nicaragua and Bolivia, it's a little of both. At times, regimes strategically choose to mobilize, co-opt, or control women as a support base, either in military struggle or electoral efforts. Women's substantial participation in the Nicaraguan revolution prompted the creation of AMNLAE, which provided a space for women to advocate for themselves in the newly created Nicaraguan state. However, for the first ten years of the revolution AMNLAE was controlled by the FSLN and only gained a sense of autonomy, and therefore a different type of political space, after the party's 1990 electoral defeat. In Bolivia, Evo Morales's party, the Movement toward Socialism (MAS), co-opted women's organizations in order to win office, and included them in the MAS regime because of Morales's emphasis on indigeneity, pluralism, and inclusion. These efforts at co-optation and control affected the adoption of gender quotas in both cases, which occurred at separate moments and amidst different environments. Gender quotas would not have been implemented, however, without the political spaces that were opened and influenced by women's mobilization.

After the Revolution: Women in the FSLN Administration and AMNLAE

After the FSLN assumed power, women's roles in the revolution began to change. During the early years of the revolution, women mobilized in large numbers. This was partly because women had "earned" the right to participate through their roles in the guerrilla struggle, and partly because "Sandinista leaders were influenced by Marxist notions that the road to gender equality was through the integration of women into the public sphere" (Kampwirth 2011, 5). Many women saw the revolution as a method to not only broadly transform Nicaraguan politics, but also to assist them in their struggle for enhanced rights and representation. A prominent new policy was the 1980 literacy crusade, which was especially important for women, who had been historically excluded from education. The literacy crusade also introduced many women to the public sphere, as most of those recruited to teach Nicaraguans how to read were women (Kampwirth 2004). In 1977, an organization called AMNLAE (Luisa Amanda Espinoza Association of Nicaraguan Women) was formed as a women's association closely tied to the FSLN. In some respects, the FSLN seemed to support women's emancipation, but policies of the regime as well as internal practices continued to marginalize women in politics.

AMNLAE was important in terms of creating a formal space for women's mobilization, but rather than functioning as an autonomous women's organization, it was largely controlled by the FSLN. The organization was oftentimes driven by party concerns, not gender concerns specific to women, and has been described as "practically married to the FSLN" and almost a "submissive wife" of the revolutionary party (Kampwirth 2004, 29). Thousands of women mobilized in the early 1980s to support

revolutionary efforts, as the FSLN “systematically encouraged women’s organizing, demands and identities,” but only if they “supported, not divided the revolution” (Jubb 2014, 292). Because the FSLN controlled the state, AMNLAE was forced to adhere to the party platform and comply with the revolutionary government. Framed as a prioritization of the revolution, women’s groups were urged to “focus their energy on preserving the revolution first,” and put gender concerns aside “until the right moment should present itself” (Saint-Germain and Chavez Metoyer 2008, 111). During the 1979-1990 period, the FSLN operated hierarchically, by a nine-member National Directorate that set policy for a governing junta headed by Daniel Ortega. Despite being a democratizing project in theory, the Sandinistas were also “born of a guerrilla organization that was hardly democratic,” so their governing practices included an army-style leadership structure (Kampwirth 2004, 20). Thus, the feminist principles many women had developed during their participation in the revolution were ignored by party leaders in favor of maintaining its grasp on power.

The Contra War, an armed conflict between the FSLN and anti-Sandinista guerillas supported by the U.S. Reagan administration, plagued Nicaragua in the 1980s and influenced gender dynamics in the country. Responding to the war, the FSLN adopted hierarchical military strategies, which were unfavorable for women’s organizing compared to the initial grassroots military strategy of the revolution (Kampwirth 2004). Additionally, the Contra War prompted conflict among different sectors of women’s organizations, mostly between labor unions and other economically organized groups and AMNLAE. Without this conflict, AMNLAE may have evolved into a more independent

and feminist organization, but instead remained loyal to the FSLN (Kampwirth 2011).

Ultimately, while the revolution had spawned a new generation of politically active women with a gender consciousness, the historical context following the revolution, including strategic choices of the FSLN, prevented an autonomous women's movement from emerging.

Electoral Defeat of 1990

In a 1990 election that shocked many Nicaraguans, the FSLN was voted out of office and replaced by an administration led by Violeta Chamorro, a conservative woman. Both during the presidential campaign and throughout the 1990s, women's movements confronted a strikingly different context than that of the revolutionary regime. Daniel Ortega, the Sandinista President of Nicaragua in the 1980s, ran a campaign in 1990 that was largely silent on gender issues. Additionally, the already-subservient AMNLAE was further controlled by the FSLN in an effort to maintain party unity and win the election. In the face of this crackdown, many women activists—even those who wanted autonomy from the party—chose to support the FSLN, as they “still believed that the revolution offered their best hope for future progress toward gender equality” (Kampwirth 2004, 40). Violeta Chamorro's campaign relied heavily on her identity as a woman, but because of her emphasis on motherhood and traditional gender roles, took on an anti-feminist symbolism. When Ortega lost and the FSLN was out of office for the first time since the revolution, women's movements enjoyed unexpected consequences.

Although feminists within the party were discouraged by the 1990 electoral loss, “within a year they were reenergized by the freedom they enjoyed as they cut their formal ties to the FSLN” (Kampwirth 2010, 168). No longer servants of the party, women’s organizations prioritized their own interests rather than submitting to the will of the FSLN. During the 1990s, Nicaraguan leaders implemented neoliberal policies that were emerging throughout the region, and because of women’s newfound autonomy in their movement, were able to respond independently to policies enacted by the Chamorro administration. Women’s organizing in this decade began forging coalitions across party and class lines, a move that would not have been possible under the heavy-handed control of the FSLN (Kampwirth 2004). However, Chamorro’s election to president also signaled an ideological change for Nicaragua, as right-wing parties and the Catholic Church “promoted a return to the most archaic values” (Daisy Zamora interview with Randall 1994, 122). This trend of anti-feminism grounded in religion and traditional gender roles negatively affected women’s ability to overcome patriarchal barriers, the consequences of which are still visible in Nicaraguan politics.

Ortega’s Return to Power

Daniel Ortega’s 2006 presidential election was one of many throughout Latin America that signaled a shift from the conservative, neoliberal governments of the late 1900s to left-wing, often populist leaders. However, the FSLN of Ortega in 2006 barely resembled the Sandinistas of the 1970s and 1980s. Rather than a revitalization of leftist revolutionary ideals, some argue Ortega’s presidency is reminiscent of “the old

authoritarian strongman model of politics,” that dominated Nicaragua in the early to mid-20th century (Kampwirth 2011, 3). To win the 2006 election, the FSLN reimagined the legacy of the revolution, becoming aligned with the Catholic Church and taking on an anti-feminist approach. Anti-feminism had already been visible in Ortega’s political maneuvering, exemplified when Ortega’s stepdaughter, Zoilamérica Ortega Murillo accused him of sexual abuse in 1998. The scandal served to further alienate feminists from the FSLN and Ortega continued to approach politics with anti-feminist rhetoric. Ortega and Murillo’s strategy demonstrates the willingness of the FSLN to oppose its former base in the women’s movement in order to succeed electorally (Kampwirth 2008). One similarity of the “new” FSLN to the revolutionary regime is the tendency to promote feminist concerns when they align with their own interests, but “constrain women’s rights activists whenever they slip out of the control” of the party (Kampwirth 2011, 3). Many even question whether the FSLN can still be considered a leftist party, especially from a feminist perspective.

Ortega’s populist leadership has transformed the FSLN’s ideology of gender, a shift influenced by a new connection to the Catholic Church. This alliance has resulted in reinforced gender roles for women, “reifying men’s authority in the family and making women responsible for maintaining family unity,” while simultaneously “including women’s rights in particular ways that do not fundamentally challenge that order” (Jubb 2014, 290). Ortega and his wife have also come to be seen as symbols of patriarchal values, with Daniel as the powerful leader and his wife, Rosario Murillo, the epitome of fertile womanhood. Especially during Ortega’s first three years back in power, his

administration punished feminists who did not conform with the FSLN's agenda (Kampwirth 2011). Notably, more women have won seats in the National Assembly as members of the FSLN than any other party, but the women's movement now extends beyond the Sandinistas, exemplified in the Autonomous Women's Movement.

Formed in 2006, the Autonomous Women's Movement (Movimiento Autónomo de Mujeres - MAM) has emerged as a source of significant opposition to the Ortega regime. Going so far as to compare Ortega's second presidential term to Somocismo, the MAM has been outspoken with criticism against the president. In June of 2006, the MAM officially allied with the Sandinista Renewal Movement (Movimiento de Renovación Sandinista - MRS) to oppose the pact made between Ortega and former president Alemán, which facilitated Ortega's election to office (Lacombe 2014). In an effort to "more inclusively attend to the rights of women whose voices had been consistently suppressed," the MAM has actively mobilized against Ortega and Murillo (Grabe and Dutt 2015, 89-90). After a long history of the FSLN exerting control over women's movements, the MAM is a concrete example of women organizing independently, opposing a revolutionary party they had previously supported.

Eroding Nicaraguan Democracy: 2006-2018

Ortega's electoral success in 2006 directly resulted from the agreement he had made with Arnoldo Alemán in 2000, which had reformed electoral policy, making it possible for a candidate to win the presidential election with as little as 35 percent of the vote, as long as the winner had at least a five percent margin over the runner-up. So, with

just 38 percent of the vote, Ortega won the 2006 presidential election and prepared to return to office after seventeen years out of power. The Ortega administration immediately encountered problems, and despite efforts to maintain public support, has experienced extensive criticism from the Nicaraguan people. After entering office in January 2007, Ortega appointed Sandinistas with limited public profiles as ministers. Because they were weak against his considerable power, these ministers provided little resistance to Ortega, allowing him to act freely without being questioned. Additionally, issues of privilege and nepotism plagued the administration since its inauguration, especially with regard to the influence wielded by Ortega's wife Rosario Murillo, the president's advisors who possess more power than officially appointed ministers, and the presence of children and grandchildren of the "Ortega-Murillo" family in different state roles (Martí i Puig 2010). While not illegal, these practices are particularly significant in the Nicaragua, with its history of dynasty and single-family rule. Increasingly, with its use of nepotism and family rule, Ortega's government has begun to resemble the Somoza dynasty of dictatorships that Ortega himself so fiercely opposed during the revolution. By avoiding constitutional limits on presidential power and term limits, Ortega's administration has been perceived as a return to authoritarianism (Thaler 2017).

In the last 40 years, the FSLN has evolved from a revolutionary guerrilla movement to a party platform revolving around the personality of its leader. According to Martí i Puig (2010), the FSLN has successfully adapted to a hostile environment by "achieving a total autonomy of the leadership and the absolute eradication of formal restrictions," in order to "transform the party in all its sectors and decisions, including

some elements of its ideological identity” (97). Ortega utilized informal alliances with elites and big business to win the 2006 election, promising them stability to gain their support (Raderstorf and Binetti 2018). Because he had spent the period from 1990 to 2006 consolidating the control over the FSLN by expelling any members who questioned his leadership, making alliances with rival politicians, and filling the legislature and courts with his supporters, Ortega was poised to implement his vision after coming into power (Morris 2018). No longer a leftist party, the FSLN of the 21st century is centered around Ortega, who aligned the party with the private sector and the Catholic Church to maintain hegemony over any opposition. The FSLN of 2018 is not the FSLN of 1979, and should not be classified as the revolutionary movement it once was.

The elections of 2011 and 2016 constitute key moments in Nicaraguan political history, as they paved the way for the democratic crisis of 2018. In 2011, Nicaraguan politics were centered around the November elections, but more specifically, around Daniel Ortega’s candidacy. Running for a second consecutive term, Ortega and the FSLN emphasized Nicaragua’s economic growth during his first term. Poverty levels, especially extreme poverty, diminished during the 2006-2011 administration, and his party attributed all economic improvement to Ortega himself. The FSLN also capitalized on its alliance with the Catholic Church and religion in general to garner support from conservative voters, which resulted in the country’s 2006 ban on therapeutic abortion. Their motto, “Christian, Socialist, in Solidarity,” symbolized their attempt to combine different sectors of society and was successful in getting Ortega re-elected with a landslide victory of 62.46 percent of the vote (Pérez-Baltodano 2012). Despite claims of

rigged voting, Ortega remained in power for a second term. In preparation for the 2016 presidential elections and with all three branches of state power effectively consolidated in Ortega's hands, the National Assembly approved constitutional changes that would allow Ortega to run for a third consecutive term. Without term limits, Ortega was free to run in 2016, and won 72 percent of the vote with First Lady Rosario Murillo as his running mate. By "banning the main opposition party, defunding and splintering the opposition, and barring international election observers," Ortega once again claimed victory in an election many viewed as corrupt. The economic growth Nicaragua experienced under Ortega's leadership, while significant, came alongside a president who "gradually dismantled all checks and balances, packed the judiciary with his acolytes, restricted free press and repressed almost all political opposition" (Raderstorf and Binetti 2018). However, Ortega's grasp on state power had begun to deteriorate, and the potential for crisis began looming in the near future.

In 2018, the underlying tensions surrounding Ortega's leadership came to a sudden and dramatic climax that resulted in violence and tragic loss of life. On April 15, the government announced a reform of the national pension system that would increase worker and company contributions but decrease benefits, and mass protest began the following day. Although certainly triggered by the changes to social security, the protests quickly turned into a general uprising against the regime, calling for Ortega's resignation and restoration of democratic institutions (Raderstorf and Binetti 2018). The government responded to the riots with heavy force, and although exact numbers are unclear, hundreds have been reportedly jailed, and protesters have accused police of using torture

while in custody. After the first week of protests, the Nicaraguan Center for Human Rights (CENIDH) confirmed 43 deaths, two people in critical condition, and hundreds more wounded (Morris 2018). The protesters, who number in the tens of thousands, include university students, pensioners, environmentalists, feminists, religious leaders, black and indigenous activists, journalists, and left-wing and right-wing opposition groups. In response to the protests, the state shut down several tv stations that were broadcasting live coverage and ordered anti-riot police forces that shot live rounds into the crowds, resulting in casualties and injuries. On April 19, Vice President and wife of Ortega Rosario Murillo spoke about the protests during her daily midday address, claiming that the riots were an effort to “promote destruction [and] destabilization,” and decried the protesters as “tiny groups that threaten peace and development with selfish, toxic political agendas and interests, full of hate” (quoted in Morris 2018). In an attempt to quell the riots and maintain stability by reducing freedom of the press and using violent repression techniques, the Ortega administration has actually provided more incentive for protesters who want democracy reinstated in Nicaragua.

To present itself as a regime committed to transparency, the government launched a truth commission to investigate the deaths during the first wave of protests. However, the commission was primarily staffed by people with current or past ties to the FSLN, and is therefore not an unbiased source of judgement. Additionally, the government committed to engaging in a “national dialogue” with select groups of representatives from different sectors of civil society, including university students involved in the April protests. Despite these actions, by refusing to allow representatives from the Organization

of American States (OAS) to lead a truth commission investigation like activists wanted, the Ortega administration has demonstrated an unwillingness to respond to the substantive demands made by protesters about the state of Nicaraguan democracy. Ortega's government blames the violence on "foreign agitators, gangs, organized crime, and drug cartels," and denies any responsibility for the bloodshed and presence of paramilitaries (Rogers 2018). Consequences of the protests go beyond political instability, as basic services have been neglected in the face of social unrest. Public schools have closed their doors in areas of intense fighting, and some hospitals were turning away injured protesters, denying access to healthcare. The economy has also been negatively affected, with estimated losses over \$600 million and great damage done to small businesses (Rogers 2018). With the country in shambles, protesters continue to demand resignations and a clean slate for Nicaragua. However, even if Ortega were to resign, the country would not necessarily be more democratic because Ortega's followers control all of Nicaragua's institutions, including a majority in congress and most of the judiciary. The opposition is weak, fragmented, and without substantial financial resources, and no clear alternative to Ortega has emerged in the current political context (Raderstorf and Binetti 2018). In 2019, Nicaragua is in the midst of a crisis of democracy with no clear path forward. How Ortega, the FSLN, and the Nicaraguan public chooses to proceed will be revealed in the coming years. Nevertheless, Ortega's authoritarian actions and top-down leadership indicate a severe contraction in the political space available to women, especially non-FSLN women.

Emerging Spaces of Power in the MAS

Compared to Ortega, whose track record with democratization and inclusion has been complicated and controversial, Morales's administration was widely heralded as a revolutionary model of inclusion. No longer were indigenous women left out of the political process, they were right next to the most powerful man in Bolivia, offering advice and participating in writing the new Constitution. The story of women's representation in the legislature actually began earlier, during a time when women's representation was not connected to indigenous rights. Amidst the neoliberal reforms that lasted from the 1980s to 2005, Bolivia's first gender quotas were actually implemented in 1999. These preliminary quotas required that 30% of candidates in national and municipal elections be women, but actually served to consolidate male leadership and only benefited elite women. Indigenous women were again excluded from the formal political process, so they found their own path to achieving representation. Maybe the largest and most recognized indigenous women's organization is the Bartolina Sisa National Federation of Peasant Women, which is closely allied with the MAS administration. Under previous administrations, the Bartolina Sisas functioned as an autonomous, anti-systemic organization, but because of "government initiatives to establish a direct dialogue with social movements and their grassroots organizations," has a more intimate relationship with Morales and the MAS (Monasterios 2007, 36). Rather than acquiring political power through reforms implemented by the state, indigenous women were able to enter spaces of power through social movements like the MAS and the Movimiento Indígena Pachacuti, which have developed into political parties.

Although their allegiance to the MAS has resulted in greater representation of indigenous women, groups like the Bartolina Sisas pay the price of autonomy. Monasterios (2007) discusses the implications of party allegiance, arguing that women's participation "will remain critical for mobilizing, but invisible in terms of decision making and political leadership" (37). Here, I limit my analysis to questions of how women achieve representation, but in Chapter 3, I investigate women's participation within the legislature more extensively.

The MAS is not alone in its support base of social organization, and is one of the new, movement-based parties that draws organizational strength from connections to grassroots movements. Anria (2016) analyzes the effects of these movement-based-parties on civil society, finding that where civil society is strong and united, "it can play an important role in affecting internal party governance and help impede the oligarchization of allied parties" (461). Despite Bolivia's history of mass movements and active civil society, organizations are fragmented, united only under the umbrella of MAS leadership, so the party is able to centralize power without impediments from social movements.

In addition to women's representation in the national legislature, gender equality was a key element in the Bolivian Constituent Assembly (August 2006-December 2007) that created the 2009 Constitution, which was approved by the Bolivian public with 61.43% of the vote. Women were highly present in the assembly, occupying 88 out of the 255 seats (33%), and 64 of the MAS's representatives were women (46.72%). The strong presence and influence of indigenous women in the constitutional process "enabled them

to strengthen their voice throughout the constituent assembly process” (Rousseau 2011, 6). Evo Morales chose Silvia Lazarte, a prominent peasant leader, as the president of the assembly, which signaled changing power dynamics in political spaces. Women elected to the Constituent Assembly created the Coordinadora de Unidad de Mujeres Constituyentes de Bolivia, which included all the female political party representatives in the assembly. However, in an effort to retain control over its party, the MAS “impeded the functioning of the *coordinadora*” (Rousseau 2011, 13). Thus, MAS demonstrated an unwillingness to grant autonomy to their women members, prioritizing their own agenda over the independence of the women present at the assembly. Additionally, the high numbers of women in the assembly marked a new power balance within the MAS regime, where feminist movements no longer represented “all” women, but were specific to indigenous and poor women. Because of these factors, the Constituent Assembly presents an important milestone in the development of women’s representation in formal political spaces.

Morales’s regime is part of a trend throughout Latin America of left-wing governments gaining power and seeking radical changes in politics and society. Friedman (2009) analyzes the governments of Brazil, Bolivia, Chile, and Venezuela, concluding that although these governments have “improved the well-being of many, opened new opportunities for activist influence, and increased representation,” but the transformation of gender and sexual power relations is impeded by entrenched opposition, institutional roadblocks and inconsistent commitment on the part of left-wing executives” (415). In these cases, feminists supported leftist parties as a channel to state power during the

transition to liberal democracies in the 1980s and 1990s. Morales presents one of the more direct challenges to neoliberalism, which Friedman argues may indicate a parallel transformation in gender relations. Because presidents have limited influence on legislative membership, cabinet membership may be a more effective measure of an executive's commitment to gender equality than legislative representation. Indeed, Morales appointed women to half of the positions on his cabinet when he was first elected in 2005, a historic move widely covered by international media. His efforts were not limited to cabinet appointments, as Morales also promoted and influenced the 2009 Constitution, which outlined gender equality in government as a key value of the new regime and led to the adoption of national gender quotas in 2010. Additionally, because Morales wields ultimate control over the entire MAS party, the majority of congress, gender quota legislation may be traced to him more directly than other systems in which the president does not claim complete control over party members. Ultimately, Friedman finds that strong parties have more influence over their members than weak or fragmented systems that lend more independence. The MAS is a perfect example of a strong party, and its practices and policies have influenced gender issues and women's representation in multiple spheres of politics.

The MAS's approach to gender equality in Bolivia is nuanced and complex as both a path through which women achieve representation in formal political spaces and a centralized party that reduces women's autonomy in favor of a unified regime. Despite the substantial work done by women's movements in the 1990s, the principles of gender equality expressed in the Constitution, and legislation aimed at improving women's status

in the country, “the structures of domination and of inequality of gender persist in the social, economic, and political spheres” (Wanderley 2010, 11). Women observe a discrepancy between concrete achievements in laws, regulations, and the increase of women’s political participation and the continuation of power structures and masculine dominance. Issues of intersectionality complicate women’s marginalization throughout the country, as groups struggle to form alliances with different groups of women and certain populations, like *campesina* women and domestic workers, experience more difficulty in achieving positions of power and seeking legislative change. Some even argue that “the MAS itself and its party structure has excluded *campesina* and indigenous women,” because not all indigenous women possess the same spaces of power (Wanderley 2010, 17). Morales’s campaign for presidency emphasized decolonization, but some women claim a confrontation of Bolivia’s *machista* culture is equally important as deconstructing the legacies of colonialism. Women have been active in Bolivian politics long before they captured half the national legislature and they continue to exert agency in political processes, but in terms of formal spaces, women’s spike in representation resulted from the MAS’s strategy of co-opting grassroots organizations into their broad alliance of social movements.

Conclusion

Bolivia and Nicaragua present similar stories in terms of political opportunity for women’s representation, but the timelines differ. In Nicaragua, political space emerged with the revolutionary success of the Sandinistas in 1979. Because of women’s heavy

involvement in the guerrilla struggle, the new FSLN regime represented an opportunity for women to be more heavily involved in the political sphere. Yet the FSLN began their first stay in office by co-opting the primary women's organization (AMNLAE) in their institutional framework and maintaining top-down control over its activities. While this constraint was lessened with the 1990 electoral defeat, rising anti-feminist sentiment throughout the country, when combined with Ortega's authoritarian tendencies in recent years has resulted in restricted space for opposition. While women have managed to achieve 46 percent of the seats of the national legislature, their ability to act with agency and voice opposition within Ortega's administration may be minimal. In contrast, the election of Evo Morales as president of Bolivia symbolized a dramatic shift for the country, away for elite-centered politics toward a more inclusionary government with potential for indigenous peoples, and especially indigenous women, to participate in politics. Interestingly, these moments of opening political space occurred with extremely hierarchical parties practicing top-down leadership and intense discipline. It was through the mechanisms of these parties that gender quotas were implemented in both countries, a process I discuss in the next chapter.

Chapter 4

Success and Failure of Gender Quotas

Introduction

Since 1991, when Argentina adopted the first gender quota law in the world, gender quota legislation has become an increasingly studied topic by scholars of representation. Questions of why certain types of quotas are more effective are common, and often result in a discussion of variations in electoral structure: closed vs. open candidate lists, the number of members in a district, and the presence of proportional representation (PR) in legislature systems. Scholars have theorized as to why some gender quotas are more effective than others, but a complete understanding of gender quotas necessitates a comprehensive analysis of a country's political context, especially with regard to women's movements. Although many types of quota laws have been implemented, I focus on national gender quotas that regulate women's representation in national legislatures rather than in municipal governments and other governmental bodies. Much of the literature on gender quotas discusses the "success" of quotas, which I define in terms of the proportion of women elected compared with the percentage mandated by the quota. Quotas are therefore deemed more successful when they result in representation levels closer to the percentage required by law.

Nicaraguan gender quotas were party-led, starting with the FSLN in the 1990s, reflecting the legacy of women's mobilization during the revolution. In Bolivia, gender quotas were adopted in tandem with the constitution of 2009, demonstrating new national practices and changing ideals about gender equality. Despite the absence of sanctions in Nicaragua's case, gender quota legislation has

proved effective in the effort to increase women's representation. In both cases, quotas must be analyzed in conversation with the histories of women's activism and approach of the respective regimes. Additionally, the implementation of gender quotas was, in both Bolivia and Nicaragua, an action taken by a dominant party, capable of enacting such a drastic policy.

Because Bolivian and Nicaraguan gender quotas are relatively recent, little analysis exists on their specific legislation. Therefore, I will highlight important themes within the available literature, then analyze the quota laws of both countries in relation to that literature. Latin American countries have implemented more gender quota laws relative to other regions of the world, which makes it an ideal arena in which to study them. All but one of the Spanish-speaking countries in the region have implemented gender quotas, but with varying degrees of success. As Jones (2009) points out, "the adoption of quotas alone does not automatically enhance the legislative presence of women" (57). For example, Brazil approved a quota of 30% women for its national legislature in 1997, but in 2017, the proportion of women in its national legislature was only 10.7% (Miguel 2008). Why are quotas so unsuccessful in Brazil but so effective in Bolivia and Nicaragua? Some scholars have answered this question by citing factors of electoral structure while others have looked to cultural and political factors to explain variation in quota success.

In his study of gender quota effectiveness in Latin America, Jones (2009) focuses on electoral factors to explain why some quotas are more successful than others. He finds that closed-list systems result in more women getting elected to legislatures than open

lists. In closed-list systems, party officials determine the order of candidates on party lists, so voters choose a party to vote for but exert no influence on the specific candidate they elect. With open lists, voters choose individuals rather than just the party. Candidate lists, whether open or closed, appear only in proportional representation (PR) systems, and are not present in winner-take-all systems like that of the United States. Additionally, Jones (2009) finds that while closed lists are generally more successful in achieving equal representation, the closed-list system is superior when the party magnitude (number of seats a party wins in a district) is two. Parties will often comply with gender quotas but place women lower on candidate lists, so if the party magnitude is two rather than one, women have a higher chance of actually being elected. Jones also argues that the quota legislation itself matters, and that well-designed quota legislation is more influential in determining a quota's success than the factor of open vs. closed lists. This suggests that regardless of the electoral structure and practices of a country, if the quota legislation is well-designed, it will ultimately be more effective.

Brazil presents an interesting example of a country where quotas were implemented, but failed to achieve the intended proportion of women in the legislature. Miguel (2008) argues that Brazil's electoral system—open list PR—“makes it difficult to transform candidacy vacancies into seats in the legislative branch” (197-198). Writing in 2008, Miguel acknowledges the failure of Brazilian quotas, implemented in 1997, to result in higher levels of women in the legislature, but suggests auxiliary effects of quotas. Despite their inability to achieve the intended 30% women in legislature, Miguel claims that the electoral quotas “trigger mechanisms that favour a broader female

presence in spheres of power” (198). The first benefit of quotas is not the immediate increase of women in power, but rather the empowerment of women within political parties, with greater political capital. Miguel (2008) argues that parties with a higher number of competitive female candidates “hold greater chances of reaching their electoral quotient and of winning a higher number of seats” (205). From this perspective, women’s representation appears to be the result of party strategy and not a direct consequence of women’s efforts and mobilization.

An alternative explanation of gender quota success comes from Paxton and Hughes (2015) who study the increasing effectiveness of national gender quotas from 1990 to 2010. Instead of relying on structural factors, the authors examine the role of norms, both domestic and international, about women’s political participation. Norms of equality have been changing, which could result in “declines in political party efforts to circumvent quota targets,” as well as “a simultaneous increase in the public’s taste for the inclusion of women, which together would decrease the need for strong quota provisions to achieve gains for women” (Paxton and Hughes 2015, 333). Oftentimes when candidate quotas are adopted, male party elites must include women at the cost of their own political power. Because party elites often try to circumvent quotas to maintain their dominance, the most effective quotas are reserved seats, which don’t displace men.

Paxton and Hughes (2015) suggest two hypotheses for the increased success of gender quota laws since they began in the 1990s. The first is the possibility that as more countries adopt gender quotas, information spreads about how to make quotas more effective, including sanctions for parties that do not comply with quotas. The second

focuses on evolving norms of women's political participation, which influence parties' responses to quotas because "quotas do not operate in a vacuum," and are affected by the contexts in which they operate (Paxton and Hughes 2015, 337). Previous conceptualizations of women's roles have changed, and new discourses of gender equality have created an emphasis on women's representation in government. These norms may be internalized by political parties, who are then "less likely to attempt to circumvent the spirit of a quota law" (Paxton and Hughes 2015, 338). Additionally, party elites are beginning to accept the arguments made by gender activists having a high percentage of women in politics is normatively appropriate and desirable. Therefore, an increase in quota effectiveness is not just related to electoral rules and policies, but also suggests normative changes in favor of gender equity. The cases of Bolivia and Nicaragua both support previous conclusions by these scholars about gender quota success, including elements of electoral structure, well-designed legislation, and changing norms.

Party-Led Gender Quotas in Nicaragua

Where Bolivia outlines its commitment to gender equality in its constitution, women's political participation was a key element in the FSLN revolutionary platform. As early as its inception, the FSLN included gender as one of its primary priorities. A 1969 proclamation promised to end gender discrimination along with the following goals: "pay special attention to the mother and child, eliminate prostitution, put an end to the system of servitude that women suffer, especially abandoned mothers, establish equal

rights for children born out of wedlock, establish child-care centers, mandate a two-month maternity leave for working women, and raise women's political, cultural, and vocational levels through their participation in the revolutionary process" (FSLN 1987, quoted in Saint-Germain and Chavez Metoyer 2008). Although these initial objectives do not explicitly mention women's equal representation in legislature, they demonstrate a commitment, even on a rhetorical level, to women's empowerment.

In 1994, the FSLN adopted a party-specific quota of 30% women on all of its candidate lists. This quota only applied to the FSLN, but set a precedent in terms of women's representation and inclusion. Eighteen years later, a reform to the country's electoral law (Ley No. 790, Ley de Reforma a la Ley No. 331, "Ley Electoral") formalized gender quotas for all political parties in Nicaragua. Article 82 of the 2012 law defined gender quotas of 50%, amplifying the initial 30% quotas adopted by the FSLN:

"The political parties or alliances of parties that participate in municipal elections, of deputies of the National Assembly and the Central American Parliament, should present in their lists of candidates fifty percent men and fifty percent women ordered in an equitable way and presented in an alternating way." (Translated by author)

Different from Bolivian quota legislation, the Nicaraguan gender quota law includes no consequences for parties that do not follow the 50% mandate. However, other parties followed in the footsteps of the FSLN and have their own voluntary quotas, so representation of women has increased in spite of the lack of sanctions.

Alternancia y Paridad: Gender Quotas in Bolivia

Although gender quotas were formally codified in Bolivia's 2010 Electoral Reform Law, the principle of women's representation in government is substantially included in the country's 2009 Constitution. Gender equality is mentioned multiple times throughout the document, with references to political inclusion as well as protection against gender violence and discrimination. Article 11 describes the general basis of gender equality: "I. The Republic of Bolivia adopts a participatory democratic, representative and communal form of government, with equal conditions for men and women." Despite the vagueness of this assertion, it sets up gender equality as a key principle of the new constitution. In Article 26, political rights are explained: "I. All citizens have the right to participate freely in the formation, exercise and control of political power, directly or through their representatives, individually or collectively. Participation shall be equitable and under equal conditions for men and women." Then, the document goes a step further, and actually mandates equal representation with Article 147: "I. The equal participation of men and women shall be guaranteed in the election of the members of the assembly." Despite the prevalence of gender quotas throughout the region, Bolivia's inclusion of equal representation for men and women within its constitution is distinctive, and indicates the significance of gender equality in the country's most important document.

A year after the new Bolivian Constitution was implemented, the legislature passed the 2010 Electoral Law (Ley No. 026: Ley del Régimen Electoral). With the passage of this law, the ideals of gender equality and equal representation in the

constitution were translated into specific regulations on electoral practices. Article 11 outlines the specific policies regarding equal representation:

The Bolivian intercultural democracy guarantees the equity of gender and the equality of opportunities between women and men. The appropriate electoral authorities are obligated to their compliance, conforming to the following basic criteria: a) The candidate lists of Senators, Deputies, Departmental and Regional Assembly Members, and Municipal Council Members, and other elective authorities, office holders and alternates, will respect the parity and alternation of gender between men and women, in such a way that there exists one woman candidate, then one man candidate; one man alternate candidate, then one woman alternate candidate, successively. b) In the cases of the election of one candidate in one district, the equality, parity, and alternation of gender will be expressed in [titulares] and alternates. In the total of those districts at list fifty percent (50%) of candidates will be women. c) The lists of candidates of the indigenous nations and *pueblos originario campesinos*, will respect the principles mentioned in the previous paragraph in accordance with their own norms and procedures. (Translated by author)

This article describes the two key concepts of Bolivian quotas: *alternancia* (alternation) and *paridad* (parity). Alternation requires parties to present candidate lists in which a male candidate is directly followed by a female candidate, followed by a male candidate. Thus, when candidates are elected to the legislature through the PR system, if a party wins 50 seats, 25 should be awarded to women candidates. Parity describes the equal presence of men and women on party candidate lists. Article 107 of the 2010 Electoral Law establishes the sanctions for parties that do not comply: candidate lists will be rejected if they do not comply with the legislated quota. This sanction provides a substantial incentive for parties to adhere to the rules of alternation and parity. If they refuse, they lose any possibility of achieving representation and gaining political power.

Since Bolivia adopted quotas in 2010, women's representation has dramatically increased, reflecting the effective design and successful implementation of the legislation.

Explaining Quota Effectiveness

Multiple similarities exist between Bolivian and Nicaraguan quota laws, many of which provide evidence supporting scholars' hypotheses about quota effectiveness. In Bolivia, the 2009 Constitution's emphasis on gender equality reflected changes in gender norms, which according to Paxton and Hughes (2015) shapes the effectiveness of quotas. Similarly, the Nicaraguan Revolution changed how many Nicaraguans conceptualized women's role, and as women were increasingly seen as members of the public sphere, the FSLN adopted the country's first gender quotas. Furthermore, because both countries operate under closed-list systems, their quotas are more successful than those in open-list systems (Jones 2009). Miguel (2008) discusses the influence of party strategy in achieving women's representation, which is evident in both cases. Women were a strong faction of support for the MAS during Evo's election to office, and their co-optation by the party shaped their ultimate inclusion in formal political positions. In Nicaragua, the FSLN strategically recruited women during the revolution, and continued to control AMNLAE throughout the 1980s to focus on supporting the socialist regime rather than be distracted by women's issues.

One difference between the two cases is the lack of sanctions in Nicaraguan quotas. Although the Nicaraguan quota laws do not provide consequences for parties that

do not comply, the FSLN set a precedent early on for including women in their ranks, and other parties have followed suit. Because of this, I consider both examples of quota legislation to be “well-designed,” which Jones (2009) argues is a key factor in their effectiveness. Ultimately, while women’s representation may be attributed to quotas, the effectiveness of those quotas are also shaped by a country’s history of women’s mobilization and how the regime in power approaches women’s organizing. Both the FSLN in Nicaragua and the MAS in Bolivia were able to implement quotas because of their monopoly on power and strict party discipline.

Conclusion

The stories I have told in the preceding chapters end with both countries enacting gender quotas: Bolivia in 2010 and Nicaragua in 2012. These quotas resulted in substantial increases in women's representation in both cases, and women now constitute around half of all legislative seats. However, it is clear that the full story of women's representation does not end with women getting elected to office. Even after taking their seats in legislatures, women remain constrained by patriarchal forces that permeate all formal political spaces. These forces might manifest in women being placed in gender-specific committees and roles, not being taken seriously during debates, or not being offered the same positions of leadership as their male counterparts (Saint-Germain and Chavez Metoyer 2008). While a comprehensive study would include these elements along with analysis of women's paths to office, without direct evidence from inside the walls of legislatures, it is difficult to understand the gender dynamics at play. Absent a secret camera allowing us to spy on the interactions and relationships within these spaces, we can only get a small glimpse of what's happening, but anecdotal evidence about party discipline hints at how women are able to operate in legislatures.

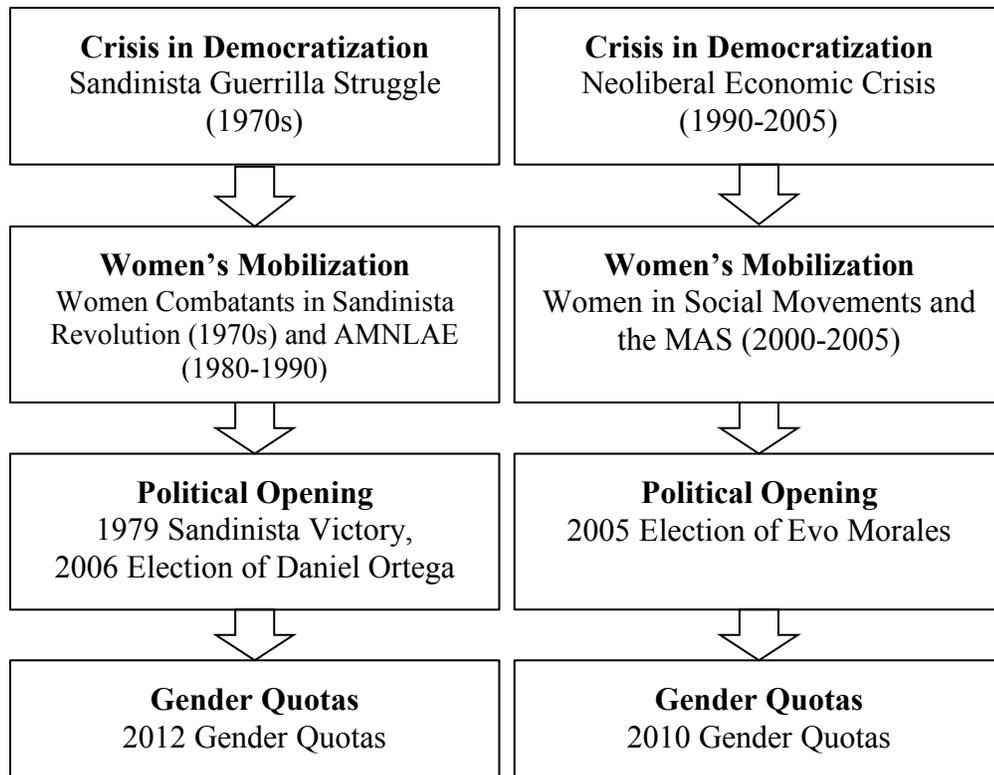
On June 24, 2013, just a year after Nicaragua implemented national gender quotas, FSLN Deputy Xóchitl Ocampo was dismissed from her position in the legislature (Sirias 2014). Her dismissal came as a result of her choice to vote against the Interoceanic Canal Law, which, while condemned by various social sectors in Nicaragua for surrendering national territory to a Chinese businessman, was strongly promoted by the Sandinistas. The party provided no explanation as to why the deputy was dismissed, but it

suggests how women are punished for exercising autonomy as legislators. Even if the FSLN would have treated a male deputy the same way after a demonstration of independence, party discipline nevertheless presents a formidable obstacle for women to act as autonomous agents within political spaces.

In Bolivia, *machismo* often operates in a violent way for women politicians. Despite the passage of Law 243, which condemns harassment and political violence toward female candidates, appointed officials, and elected representatives, the Association of Councilors of Bolivia (ACABOL) reported 144 harassment complaints in a period of eighteen months between 2017 and 2018 (Caignolle et al. 2018). Women like Juana Quispe, an Ancoraimés councillor who was murdered in 2012, have lost their lives as a result of their commitment to fighting harassment and violence (Butters 2012). Quispe had been trying to help her female peers file harassment claims and was a strong proponent of Law 243. Despite ACABOL's efforts to reduce the instances of violence and harassment, perpetrators frequently go unpunished for their crimes. While Quispe was a councillor, not a national deputy or senator, her death represents a national failure in preventing gender violence and protecting women from political harassment. Gabriela Montaña, leader of the MAS, president of the Senate between 2012 and 2013, and president of the Chamber of Deputies since 2015, has claimed that harassment against national legislators is less frequent because they have more resources available to fight against it, and local harassment is less visible (Caignolle et al. 2018). While women now occupy a majority of seats in the national legislature, it is clear that there is still work to do in terms of transforming political spaces to be less dangerous and safer for women.

Perhaps the most well-known work on women's representation comes from Hanna Pitkin's 1967 *The Concept of Representation*. Pitkin outlines four distinct dimensions of representation: formal, descriptive, substantive, and symbolic. In this paper, I have described the paths in Bolivia and Nicaragua toward the first two dimensions; how they achieved formal representation in the form of quotas, and how women have come to a higher degree of descriptive representation, or proportion of seats in the legislature. Of course, this is not the whole story. Substantive representation, or policy outcomes, is an important facet of women's representation, and is reflected in the kinds of policies enacted in legislatures. Law 243, with a goal of protecting women politicians from harassment and violence, appears on the surface to be a step forward in women's issues policy. However, the inability to prevent violence in practice sheds doubt on the effectiveness of such policies, and hints toward larger cultural and societal forces at play. Symbolic representation, or constituents' feeling that their representatives truly represent their identities and interests, is difficult to measure. Ideally, future research on women's representation will take into account all dimensions of women's representation. In this project, I have highlighted how the work of women themselves is just as important as gender quotas in terms of explaining increases in women's descriptive representation.

Figure 3: Crisis to Quotas in Bolivia and Nicaragua



In a period of democratization marked by crisis, women often emerge as crucial political agents, crossing from their traditional roles in the private sphere toward increased involvement in the public. When the crisis progresses, new political space is created for different ideologies, actors, and parties to claim power. As I have shown in the cases of Bolivia and Nicaragua, if women have been participants in the crisis, through mobilizing and armed struggle, they will be included in the new framework of democracy. In Bolivia, this process was a straightforward one. Intense opposition to

neoliberal economic policies in the 1990s prompted a crisis of democracy in the early 2000s as social movements rejected the politics of the past. With the election of Evo Morales in 2005 and subsequent democratic developments in the form of a new 2009 Constitution and inclusion of indigenous people and women, political space was created for women to participate. Nicaragua's process toward women's representation was much lengthier, and was complicated by changes in party strategy, ideology, and coalitions. The guerrilla struggle of the 1970s was noted worldwide for the substantial participation of women, especially in armed combat. Initially after their victory, the FSLN was able to co-opt women in the Nicaraguan Women's Association. After their electoral loss of 1990, however, the party, led by Daniel Ortega, became closely allied with the Catholic Church to regain power in 2006. Despite the Sandinistas fervent adoption of anti-feminist values, women continued to mobilize around a variety of issues and ideologies. Thus, when the FSLN came back into power, gender quotas that had begun a decade early with party-specific quotas were enacted nationally, and women were able to achieve representation, albeit under a highly disciplined party with severe top-down leadership. In both cases, we see a dominant party led by a leader who has demonstrated some degree of authoritarianism. While Ortega's commitment to democracy vanished long ago and Morales's government has shown a much higher quality of democratic institutions and practices, both party leaderships may have significant implications for women's participation and agency within legislatures. In the next few years, we will hopefully be able to more clearly understand the consequences that powerful men and their parties have for women's representation.

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