The Consequences of the Nicaraguan Revolution for Political Tolerance: Explaining Differences among the Mass Public, Catholic Priests, and Secular Elites

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In the four decades since Samuel Stouffer made the claim that elites were consistently more supportive of civil liberties than the public, scholars have gathered ample support for the claim.[1] Not only are elites found to be more supportive of civil liberties, but early studies also showed that, while the mass public demonstrated incongruence between support for general democratic rules and concrete applications of those rules, elites exhibited consistency.[2] Evidence for this proposition has been presented repeatedly for the United States, Europe, and Latin America.[3]

Different methodologies for measuring tolerance generally have not produced variation in the overall pattern.[4] The consensual definition of political tolerance is acceptance in the political arena of ideas and actions of groups that are disliked, whether the concept is measured against a fixed list of groups, support for general democratic values and norms, or least-liked groups picked by respondents.

What are the implications of this pattern for democratic politics? As Dahl argues, democracy appears to be grounded fundamentally in universal procedural guarantees, widespread participation, and acceptance of (or an unwillingness to suppress) competing, objectionable groups and viewpoints. With specific reference to the role of elites in promoting democracy and lessening cleavages, Dahl stresses that leaders insure against domination by any one faction over others and that they negotiate formal agreements addressing major problems.[5] In Central American nations like Nicaragua, while international political conditions and actors had an important impact on the timing and nature of transitions to democracy, clerical elites have contributed by aiding in the negotiation of armed conflicts and monitoring the protection of individual liberties and constitutional processes.[6] Given that Nicaragua has experienced continued economic crisis and disunity among other social and

political elites, the potential role of the clergy in fostering agreement on rules and institutional arrangements could be potentially greater than would be the case elsewhere.[7]

The Nicaraguan Context

Central America, Costa Rica notwithstanding, has had the misfortune of being among the poorest, least sovereign, most violent, and most undemocratic groups of countries in the hemisphere. Nicaragua, specifically, has had violent, unstable, and authoritarian politics. It experienced more than a decade of revolutionary leadership by the Sandinista National Liberation Front (*Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional,* FSLN) and is emerging from insurgency and war that destroyed much of the country's infrastructure, killed at least seventy to eighty thousand people, and produced continued distrust and polarization among the mass public.[8] In referring to the political culture and laws of Nicaragua, Velásquez noted five antidemocratic elements in Nicaraguan values that work against democratic politics: "the low esteem in which institutions are held and the total personalization of political projects, the cult of force and violence, the systematic elimination of one's opponent, the notion that citizens do not have rights, but that they should seek favors from those who govern, and the arbitrary exercise of power."[9]

In such an environment, the ability of elites to reflect and foster consensus on the rules and self-restraint of political democracy is crucial in building a democratic system.[10] Booth has argued that political and other elites in Nicaraguan society provide a key element in determining the prospects for democracy in a polarized setting by fostering accommodation, setting norms of political conduct, and encouraging popular participation.[11]

Nicaragua has had historically deep cleavages based on ideology (liberals and conservatives), religion (Catholicism versus a secular liberal state), and regionalism (León versus Granada and, more broadly, the Pacific and central regions of the country versus the Atlantic coast). Two other patterns can also be seen: the tendency toward rebellion and violence, and foreign intervention and domination. Since the end of Somoza's dictatorship in 1979 and the victory of the Sandinista-led revolutionary coalition, cleavages over political ideology (left versus right) and religion (secular revolutionaries versus religious believers, and traditional Catholics and more conservative Protestants versus liberation theology Catholics and social reform oriented Protestants) have emerged and intensified. The FSLN's defeat at the polls in 1990 and 1996 has not decreased the intensity of these divisions in Nicaraguan society and politics.

A key contributing factor to this polarization has been the conflict over religion and the orientation of the Catholic church since 1979. The conflict of a significant segment of the Catholic clergy and laity with the left has not abated. Issues have involved the continuation of FSLN officials in positions of power in the legislature and military, educational reform, property disputes, and continued violence in the countryside.[12] Three-fourths of all Nicaraguans are Catholic, and the political role of priests will continue to shape the prospects for democracy in the country.

This article tests whether the conventional wisdom regarding elite tolerance can be applied to Nicaragua's most numerous religious elite, Catholic parish priests. Does this elite manifest more tolerant attitudes than the Nicaraguan mass public, as the literature would predict? Priests qualify as an "elite" according to the criteria set out by Putnam, in that they have a much higher level of formal education than the mass public, are positioned at the higher institutional levels of authority within church structures, have decision-making power, and influence the religious, social, and political values of the mass public.[13] This article will also determine whether the revolutionary decade that polarized the church, much as it did the rest of society, created differences in political attitudes and tolerance levels within the religious elite. Spalding has demonstrated convincingly that the economic elite was divided between those who opposed the Sandinista regime and those who supported the revolution.[14] Within each camp there were variations in intensity, with some subsectors of the economic elite expressing total support or opposing the regime without quarter on moral, religious, and political-ideological grounds, while a third group responded to individual policies.[15] The Nicaraguan Episcopal Conference and many Nicaraguan-born priests supported the determined opponents of the revolutionary government. There is little indication of support for the FSLN among the Nicaraguan-born majority of the clergy. The closest approximation we have is Williams' estimate that by 1983–1985 as many as 65 percent of priests were opposed to the revolutionary government in varying degrees and 35–40 percent worked with and supported the regime, through either "direct participation" or "active or passive collaboration."[16] Over time the percentage of all priests supporting the revolutionary regime declined, and it was always quite limited among Nicaraguan diocesan priests.

Data, Hypotheses, and Measures

I examine the nature of mass and elite tolerance through data sets of sixty-five Nicaraguan priests from a 1993–1994 survey and 704 cases of the mass

public of Nicaragua from a 1991 survey that I conducted.[17] In addition, the data with which priests are compared to other elites in Nicaragua are drawn from a 1994 Gallup-CID study.[18] This section deals with three aspects: mass-elite differences in tolerance levels, differences within a single elite group (the parish priests), and interelite differences between priests and other elites in Nicaragua, such as journalists, judges, military and police officers, teachers, and union leaders.

The first goal of the study is to test with the survey data the proposition that elites are more tolerant than masses.

> H1: Priests' levels of support for civil liberties will be consistently higher than those for the mass public, measured in terms of both support for civil liberties (general rights) and opposition to suppression of civil liberties (repressive measures).

The literature has advanced two possible explanations for differences in tolerance between elites and masses. First, Sullivan and his collegues advance a "selective recruitment" thesis that elites are more tolerant than masses due to atypical background factors such as their higher socioeconomic status and education.[19] Another explanation is political socialization, that elites learn to be more tolerant due to frequent contact and compromise with others holding differing viewpoints.[20]

While it is assumed that elites in the aggregate will be more tolerant, an equally interesting line of inquiry examines differences among elites. In order to examine the validity of claims about the cleavage between foreign and Nicaraguan priests over support for the FSLN and to see the impact that changes in the recruitment of priests had on political attitudes, it is necessary to compare priests' levels of tolerance by nationality and between the secular (diocesan) clergy and regular (religious orders) clergy.

> H2: Foreign-born priests, because of the lack of personal or family involvement in Nicaraguan politics and due to their institutional autonomy from the local dioceses' authority, will show higher levels of tolerance than Nicaraguan-born priests.

Over the course of the past three decades the Nicaraguan Catholic clergy has undergone a dramatic transformation in terms of recruitment patterns and the nationality of its members. Formerly, two-thirds of priests in parishes were foreign-born (as has been the case throughout much of Central America), but since the late 1980s the clergy in parishes has become two-thirds Nicaraguan-born. There is a parallel change in the type of priests active in the country. Because of a shortage of native-born clergy, members of foreign

religious orders once predominated. These religious orders—among them Jesuits, Franciscans, Maryknollers, Dominicans, and Capuchins—worked in collaboration with local bishops but were not directly controlled by them. Now most priests are also diocesan; they are directly answerable to, underwent seminary training under the guidance of, are appointed by, and serve at the pleasure of the local bishop.[21]

It is also expected that, given three very different political systems in Nicaragua in the past twenty-five years, there will be generational differences among priests.

> H3: Specific subsets of clergy will differ, independent, of their nationality, with tolerance levels of those ordained between 1962 and 1979 being higher than those who finished their studies before Vatican II (1962–1965) or since the revolution (1979).

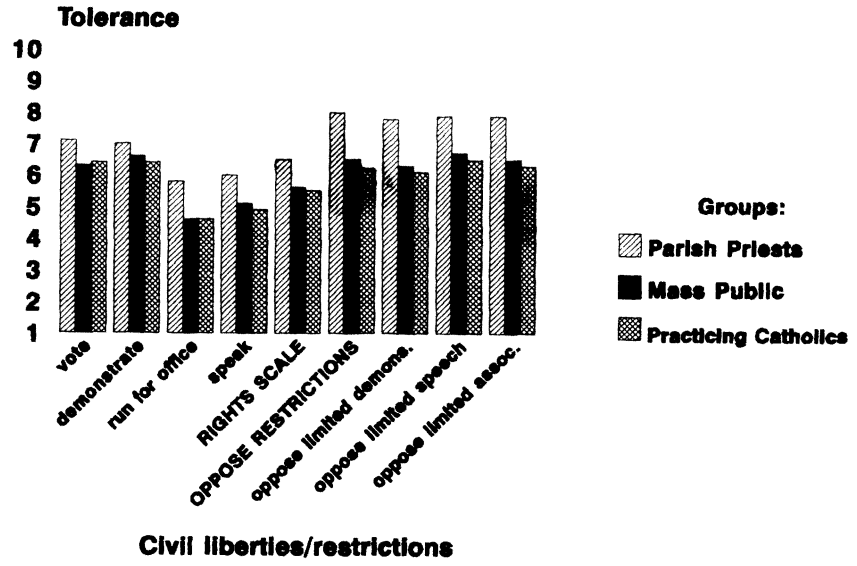
The rationale behind this proposition is rooted in the literature on political generations. As Delli Carpini notes, "in periods of rapid change and social discontinuity generational development is most likely to occur," a pattern observed by other scholars particularly for events such as social revolution that Nicaragua experienced.[22] A combination of influences of professional training and formative experiences on cohorts of priests accounts for differing levels of political tolerance. Priests who attended the seminary prior to the reforms of Vatican II and the Medellín meeting (1968) of the Latin American Bishops Council (*Consejo Episcopal Latinoamericano*, CELAM) were not exposed to the emphasis on the laity, decentralization of church authority, and reduced dependence upon the priest that characterized the period of professional training for the group educated between the second Vatican council and the revolution.[23] The priests ordained after the revolution will be less tolerant because they came of age in an environment of intense church-state conflict and political and religious polarization.

It is worth exploring whether the impact of generational experience and professional training on tolerance holds for other elites.

> H4: Other political and social elites in Nicaragua— journalists, police, military officers, teachers, and union leaders—should demonstrate generational differences in levels of tolerance based on the professional training and formative experiences of each cohort, just as is expected for priests. Those elites that came of age during the fight against Somoza and the FSLN takeover (1974–1979) should demonstrate the highest levels of tolerance.

Attitudes toward civil liberties are measured by one index based on questions regarding the political rights of unpopular dissident groups and a second index that taps opposition to the suppression of civil liberties through

Figure 1 Political Tolerance: Priests and Mass Public Compared



Note: data points are mean scores (ANOVA, F sig between mass, elite p<.001)
Source: University of Pittsburgh Public Opinion Project, 1991;
author survey of Nicaraguan priests, 1993-1994

repressive government restrictions.[24] Indicators of social background are the respondent's mean years of education, mother's and father's mean years of education, and mother's and father's occupation. Priest cohorts are identified by the answer to a question about the year in which they were ordained.

Findings

The data from the two surveys support the first hypothesis, that parish priests exhibit higher levels of political tolerance than the mass public. Priests do indeed have higher levels of political tolerance than both the Nicaraguan public in general and those Catholics who identify themselves as practicing, the respondents in closest contact with the priests in the country's 197 parishes. Therefore, these results appear consistent with the cross-national findings of higher tolerance levels for elites. Why does this pattern prevail in Nicaragua?

The relationship between education and tolerance is inconclusive. The

mean level of education for priests is more than ten years higher than for the public.[25] For the mass sample, tolerance levels increase with more years of formal education. For the priests, the trend is also upward with increases in educational level, yet some priests show lower tolerance levels than members of the mass public with the same level of education.

The literature suggests alternative predictors of tolerance. Sullivan et al. advance the "selective recruitment" thesis: "people who are more highly educated, more affluent, and live in the more cosmopolitan cities and regions of the country...also tend to have higher levels of tolerance."[26] It is unlikely that affluence is a cause of higher levels of political tolerance among Catholic priests in Nicaragua. Unlike elites in the business and government sectors of most societies, clergy (particularly Catholic priests in Latin America) tend to be from modest social backgrounds.[27] Nicaragua is no exception. Two-thirds of the priests surveyed had fathers who were either workers or peasants. The mean educational level of both parents for the great majority of priests did not surpass primary school. While certain religious orders may have access to more material resources, 65 percent of the priests sampled were diocesan priests who live at or near the standard of living of the neighborhoods in which their parishes are located. Regional and rural-urban differences also seem to be an unlikely explanation of differences in tolerance. The background traits of each of the five cohorts of priests are presented in Table 1.[28]

The second hypothesis stated that foreign priests would exhibit higher levels of political tolerance than native-born clergy. The data suggest such a difference, with the mean level of tolerance 7.7 for foreign priests and 5.9 for Nicaraguans. Though there is no exact correspondence between nationality and type of priest, over 85 percent of foreign priests belong to religious orders while an equal or greater share of Nicaraguan priests are diocesan. Here, too, the differences stand out; the mean tolerance score for the regular clergy is 8.1 and for the secular clergy 5.9. These differences in means hold up when controlling by age, education, and ordination cohort.

Age is a background factor that could account for differences in tolerance. Sullivan, Piereson and Marcus reported that age made a difference in patterns of tolerance (youth were slightly more tolerant than older people and tended to pick disliked groups to be targeted for their intolerance on the right rather than left) but that its impact on tolerance was weak.[29] Among the Nicaraguan mass public the pattern differs minimally by age. The pattern observed for priests is the opposite of what has been observed for the mass public. The data for parish priests suggest that personal experience and adult socialization may account for the difference between priests and the general public. Age reflects this difference but is not causally important by itself.

Table 1 Priests' Ordination Cohorts by Defining Characteristics (Numbers are percentages unless otherwise indicated)

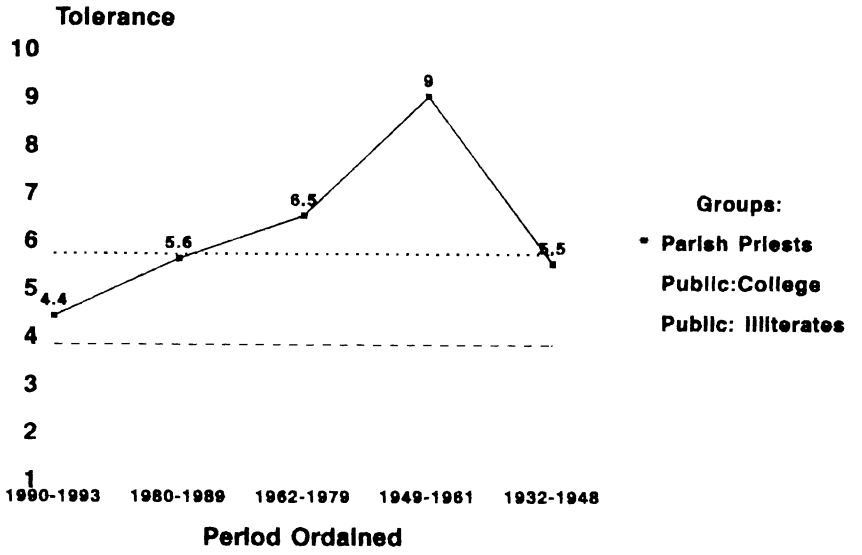
Priest Cohort and Trait by Group	1932-1948	1949-1961	1962-1979	1980-1989	1990-1993
Cohort as Share of all priests	7.5	8.6	29.0	23.7	31.2
Diocesan Priests	63.6	38.1	57.4	75.9	85.3
Religious Order Priests	36.4	61.9	42.6	24.1	14.7
Nicaraguan-born	54.5	23.8	42.6	75.9	94.1
Foreigners	45.5	76.2	57.4	24.1	5.9
Fathers were peasants/workers	45.5 27.3	50.0 16.7	33.3 23.8	29.6 11.1	44.1 20.6
mean age	78.7	63.9	52.5	37	31
mean educational level	18.1	22.1	20.2	20.5	18.9

Source: priest survey by author, 1993–1994 (N=142). Cohort 1932–1948 (N=11); 1949–1961 (N=21); cohort 1962–1979 (N=46); cohort 1980–1989 (N=29); cohort 1990–1993 (N=33).

Adult socialization is another explanation advanced by Sullivan and his colleagues. Leaders are transformed by their experiences and social learning. They learn to accommodate "ideological diversity," compromise decisions, "and the great responsibility of having actually to govern" (in this case, governing the different units of the church institution). Sullivan et al. argue that the threat faced by elites is equal to or greater than that perceived by the public but that their socialization as the guardians of democracy makes them more politically tolerant.[30]

In Figure 2 the data indicate support for the third hypothesis about cohort differences in tolerance levels among priests due to adult socialization. First, we see a very clear relationship between era of ordination and tolerance. Those priests ordained in the period 1949–1961 are the most tolerant, and those ordained since 1990 the least tolerant.[31] Priests ordained in the

Figure 2 Political Tolerance: Right to Run for Office by Priest Cohort



Note: data points represent mean scores; cases by category, N=19,21,17,7,2
Source: University of Pittsburgh Public Opinion Project, 1991;
author survey of Nicaraguan priests, 1993-1994

1980–1989 period are slightly less tolerant than college educated Nicaraguans as a whole, while those ordained in 1990–1993 were nearly as intolerant as illiterate Nicaraguans.

The intraelite differences can be explained by postrecruitment socialization and generational effects as sources of motives and beliefs. In addition to the institutional learning that priests experienced in the seminary, the data and in-depth interviews with priests suggest that personal life experience accounts for some of the generational differences.

The common notion in the literature on the church and the Nicaraguan revolution is that "progressive" foreign religious priests and a handful of Nicaraguan revolutionary priests helped to lead a popular rebellion against Somoza and to install a new revolutionary order.[32] The group surveyed that came of age before the revolution and was engaged in pastoral work at the time of the insurrection against Somoza and the rise of the FSLN (cohort 3, ordained 1962–1979) is two-thirds diocesan, and more than half are Nicaraguan-born. If we compare by social origins, region, and education,

there is almost no difference among the cohorts. The lack of differences makes it likely that other factors in addition to nationality or type of priest account for the differing political tolerance levels among the generations of priests: the content of their seminary education and the personal experiences that priests had with the Sandinista regime and Somoza's government.

The sea change brought about by internal church reform (Vatican II and the meetings of CELAM that enunciated a commitment to the cause of the poor) had a real impact on seminary learning and pastoral activities.[33] Seminary training in the three eras (before Vatican II, between Vatican II and the revolution of 1979, and after the revolution) was likely to have had different emphases.[34] Furthermore, the formative personal life experiences of priests are important in determining their general support for democratic values and specifically their willingness to accept civil liberties for unpopular groups. Many men in the 1962–1979 cohort were probably in the category of priests that Williams said was in "passive collaboration" with the revolution. Even some of the priests from this third cohort who later became strong antagonists of the FSLN government initially supported the educational, health care, and antipoverty goals of the revolution, and they had much more personal experience with the arbitrary repression of Somoza's dictatorship. Although these priests blamed the revolutionary government for its neglect of Catholic moral teaching and for undermining religious observance, they were able to recognize the structural causes of poverty and inequality that preceded the violence of the revolution and to see the initial benefits of the FSLN's redistribution policies for the well-being of the poor.

In contrast, only two of the sixty-three priests I interviewed who were ordained in the years 1980–1993 expressed some admiration for the social gains of the FSLN years, and they mentioned personal participation in those events (such as volunteering to teach peasants during the 1980 literacy crusade). Nearly everyone ordained in the 1980–1993 period placed most of the blame for the church-state conflict and internal divisions in the church during the 1980s, as well as "atheistic materialism," on the Sandinistas.[35]

In addition to life experience, where the different cohorts were educated also affects political attitudes toward tolerance. The most evident pattern is the difference between the 1980–1989 and 1990–1993 cohorts, on the one hand, and cohorts 2 and 3, in the sense that the overwhelming majority of the younger priests (ranging in age from twenty-five to thirty-nine) were trained and socialized either exclusively in Nicaragua or partly in Nicaragua and partly in other Latin American seminaries (or, in rare cases, Rome).

During the Sandinista period and the Contra war, a general setting of church-state distrust and confrontation prevailed between the bishops and the FSLN *comandantes*.[36] In addition, the church opposed the obligatory

military conscription law that the Sandinistas passed in 1984. The government, in turn, accused the church of harboring draft dodgers under the guise that they were seminarians. There were tense standoffs over this issue. Such conflict is sufficient to produce an environment conducive to the socialization of priests with an anti-Sandinista political orientation.

The other main feature that stands out is the third cohort's experience of the ferment of the international church (Vatican II, the innovations of Popes John XXIII and Paul VI) and the meetings of CELAM in 1968 and 1979. The majority of the foreign priests interviewed belonged to the second and third cohorts, not the fourth or fifth, and more native priests studied outside of Nicaragua for at least part of their seminary studies in the third and fourth cohorts than later. They were more likely to be exposed to the debates within the church at the time about authority structures, the proper role of bishops, priests, and the laity, and a wide array of issues, rather than to the ideological polarization against Marxism in the 1980s.

Multivariate Analysis

The only way to ascertain the accuracy of the claim that the exodus of foreign priests and socialization/experience account for differences between cohorts is to proceed to regression analysis. When a dummy variable was included in the equation for type of priest (diocesan/religious order), it was the strongest predictor of tolerance, followed by age and the extent to which priests favored conventional political participation. When a regression was run including both the mass and priest samples together, a second dummy variable for masses and elites was not statistically significant. In the mass sample (though not for the priests) support for conventional participation, protest action, and ideology comprised the strongest predictors of higher levels of tolerance.[37] Ordination year is negatively correlated with tolerance; the more recently a priest was ordained, the more intolerant he is likely to be.

In order to determine whether the tolerance differences among generations of priests was exclusively a function of the exodus of foreign priests, an equation was run with Nicaraguan-born priests only. Even in this case, the strongest statistically significant predictors of tolerance were age and number of years in one's parish. Among foreign priests, neither of these factors was significant, but this result may be influenced by the small number of cases. Table 2 indicates explicit confirmation of Hypothesis 3, that there would be generational differences in tolerance among priests, as had been suggested earlier.

Table 2 Determinants of Priests' and Masses' Tolerance of Dissidents

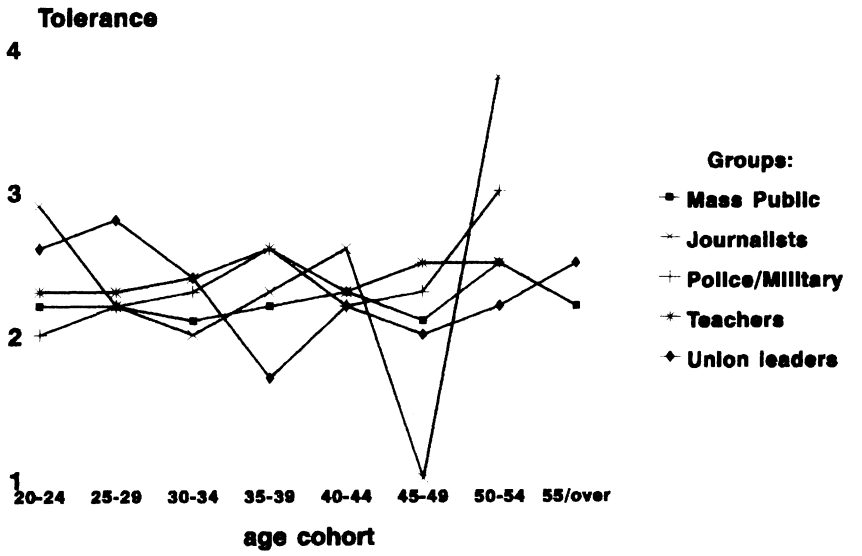
Group	Nicaragua mass public	Nicaragua Parish Priests (all)	Parish Priests (native-born)
Adjusted R Square	.16	.20	.17
beta	.27 .23 -.10	.34 .25 .23	.96 -.71
significant variables	conventional participation support for protest ideology	age conventional participation education	age years in parish
statistically significant	T, p < .001 < .001 < .01	p < .01 .04 .06	p < .01 .06

Source: University of Pittsburgh Central American Public Opinion Project, 1991; Author survey, 1993–1994.

Intra- and Inter-Elite Comparisons in Nicaragua

Given the availability of recent comparative data on tolerance in Nicaragua, it is important to see whether the same generational cohort effects are visible across other elite groups in that country. The single variable which is consistent in all elite subsamples is age. As in 1991, in the 1994 data there is minimal difference in tolerance scores by age for the mass public. In Hypothesis 4 it was expected that those who came of age during the revolution (ages thirty-five to forty-nine in 1994 and in their twenties during the final half decade under Somoza) would be most tolerant, for reasons similar to those given for the higher tolerance of priest cohort 3. With the inexplicable exception of older journalists, who were either far below or above the aggregate tolerance level for selected age groups, the cohort effects found among priests surprisingly do not appear in the other elite samples.[38] The lack of similarity between the priest pattern in Figure 2 and what is visible in Figure 3 for other elites would lead to the conclusion that generational differences alone do not account for tolerant views.

Figure 3 Political Tolerance: Right to Run for Office by Age Cohort



Note: data points represent mean scores (1-4, low to high)
Source: Gallup-CID polls of Nicaraguan mass public (N=1,664) and elites, 1994 elite samples in order (N=102);(N=236);(N=245);(N=185)

Conclusions

This analysis has shown that there are key differences in tolerance in need of examination at the interelite and intraelite levels, as well as mass-elite distinctions.[39] Empirical support was found for Hypotheses 1 and 2 and partly for Hypothesis 3. While religious elites as a whole are more tolerant than the mass public, native-born and diocesan priests and the younger cohorts socialized from the Sandinista government and Contra war to the present were the least tolerant groups of the clergy sampled and in the case of cohorts 4 and 5 were more intolerant than the mass public when controlling for education and age. Earlier interelite studies by McDonough on Brazil and by McClosky and Zaller on the U.S. showed that careful attention to the type of elite group sampled (by profession, party, ideology) could help scholars avoid making undifferentiated statements about elite tolerance.[40]

McClosky's work showed that journalists, judges, and lawyers were more tolerant than clergy and public officials, with educators between the two, and police ranking lowest. When the stakes are high, in a political context of war or extreme threat, elites' commitment to civil liberties may be conditional, especially when core interests and key values (such as religious authority structures and beliefs) are questioned or are made vulnerable.

The profile of the Catholic clergy in Nicaragua is consequential for attitudes toward tolerance. The two youngest cohorts now comprise more than half of all clergy in the parishes, and diocesan priests born and educated in Nicaragua are becoming the overwhelming majority in the priesthood, in sharp contrast to what had existed prior to the revolution. Future bishops will be drawn from this group, and this group will provide the religious value orientation of the majority Catholic nation.[41] Since the formal negotiations that ended the fighting between the FSLN government and Contra rebels, the Catholic clergy of Nicaragua has played a significant role in the country's politics. It has negotiated the disarmament of bands of former combatants, verified investigations into human rights violations, mediated hostage crises, and settled constitutional crises between the legislative and executive branches.[42] This political activity by the clergy was often seen as third party mediation, but at times as expressly partisan, and led to a series of bombings of Catholic parishes and threats against clergy in 1995–1996.

Given the reality of moderate to low levels of tolerance in the Nicaraguan mass public, these priests' commitment to civil liberties and democracy, along with that of such key elites as party leaders, public officials, the military, police, entrepreneurs, and the press, will have a substantial impact on church-state relations, the consolidation of democratic politics, and the prospects for individual liberties for average Nicaraguans in years to come.

NOTES

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1. Samuel Stouffer, *Communism, Conformity and Civil Liberties* (New Brunswick: Transaction, 1992).

2. James W. Prothro and Charles M. Grigg, "Fundamental Principles of Democracy," *Journal of Politics* (1960), 276–94; V. O. Key, *Public Opinion and American Democracy* (New

York: Knopf, 1961); Herbert McClosky, "Consensus and Ideology in American Politics," *American Political Science Review*, 58 (June 1964), 361–82.

3. For the United States see Stouffer; Herbert McClosky and Ada Brill, *Dimensions of Tolerance* (New York: Basic Books, 1983); John L. Sullivan, James Piereson, and George E. Marcus, *Political Tolerance and American Democracy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982). For Latin America, see Mitchell A. Seligson, "Elites in Central America and Democratic Theory: Survey Data from Costa Rica and El Salvador," paper presented at the Latin American Studies Association meeting, Atlanta, 1994; Orlando J. Pérez, "Elites, Power and Ideology: The Struggle for Democracy in Panama" (Ph.D. diss., University of Pittsburgh, 1996).

4. See James Gibson, "Alternative Measures of Political Tolerance: Must Tolerance Be 'Least-Liked'?," *American Journal of Political Science*, 36 (May 1992), 560–77.

5. Robert Dahl, *Polyarchy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971), pp. 115–20.

6. For background, see John A. Peeler, "Elites and Democracy in Central America," in Mitchell A. Seligson and John A. Booth, eds., *Elections and Democracy in Central America, Revisited* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), pp. 249–54.

7. Some scholars have argued that low levels of development and economic growth exacerbate elite disunity and make it harder for fragmented elites to control their followers. This characterization is quite accurate for Nicaragua in the period 1990–96. See Michael Burton, Richard Gunther, and John Higley, "Elites and Democratic Consolidation in Latin America and Southern Europe: An Overview," in John Higley and Richard Gunther, eds., *Elites and Democratic Consolidation in Latin America and Southern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 335–37.

8. Knut Walter, *The Regime of Anastasio Somoza, 1936–1956* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993); Thomas W. Walker, ed., *Revolution and Counterrevolution in Nicaragua* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1991); John A. Booth, *The End and the Beginning: The Nicaraguan Revolution* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1982). Booth, p. 181, estimates that 40,000–50,000 people died during the insurrection against Anastasio Somoza Debayle. Official government statistics from the Sandinista period (figures for 1980–1988) indicate a total of 29,270 dead and 20,000 wounded in the Contra war. See Instituto Nacional de Estadisticas y Censos, *Nicaragua: 10 Años en Cifras* (Managua: INEC, 1989), p. 57, Table v.1.

9. José Luis Velásquez, "Bases fundamentales en un regimen constitucional en Nicaragua," in INESP, *Democratización y constitucionalidad en Nicaragua* (Managua: INESP, 1993), p. 24.

10. It is especially important that this elite commitment to civil liberties be normative and consistent over time, not utilitarian or conditional on their own political fortunes. Previous studies of Nicaragua have shown that tolerance for dissent is contingent upon whether one's party is in government or in opposition. Mitchell A. Seligson and John A. Booth, "Political Culture and Regime Type: Evidence from Costa Rica and Nicaragua," *Journal of Politics* (August 1993), 788–90.

11. John A. Booth, "Toward Democracy in Nicaragua? Elites, Political Culture and the 1990 Election," paper presented at Latin American Studies Association meeting, Washington, D.C., 1991; John A. Booth, "A Framework for Analysis," and "Elections and the Prospects for Democracy in Central America," in Seligson and Booth, eds., pp. 14–16, 280–82.

12. See Andrew J. Stein, "The Church," in Thomas W. Walker, ed., *Nicaragua without Illusions* (Wilmington: Scholarly Resources, 1997).

13. Robert D. Putnam, *The Comparative Study of Elites* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1976), pp. 5–19.

14. Robert D. Putnam, *The Comparative Study of Elites* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1976), pp. 5–19.

15. A recent study of the majority of party elites in Nicaragua also showed that alliances

among parties were shaped by formative cleavage-creating events of the 1970s and 1980s under Somoza and the FSLN. Kenneth M. Coleman and Douglas Stuart, "Nicaragua's Fractionalized Party System of the 1990s," paper presented at the Latin American Studies Association meeting, Washington, D.C., 1995, pp. 2–6; see also Kenneth M. Coleman and Douglas Stuart, "The Other Parties," in Walker, ed., *Nicaragua without Illusions*.

16. Philip J. Williams, *The Catholic Church and Politics in Nicaragua and Costa Rica* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1989), p. 77, makes reference to the results of a survey of 220 priests conducted in 1982–1983.

17. There are more than 300 priests in Nicaragua, including parish priests, other assistant priests who also work in pastoral programs, and clergy involved in the administration of the dioceses and instruction in the seminaries and schools. I made the strategic choice to interview only parish priests and to the extent possible also speak with assistant priests in the parishes. Based on the diocesan directories, I attempted to interview all 203 priests active in the eight dioceses and 197 parishes of the country during 1993–1994 field work. Nationally, more than two-thirds were interviewed. This level of response prevailed in five of the eight dioceses, with the response rate in two of the three most important dioceses, Managua and Granada, more than 80 percent. On the other extreme, in the dioceses of Estelí, Jinotega, and Matagalpa, the response rate was much lower. Not all batteries of questions could be covered with all clergy who consented to an interview. The results on priests' political tolerance were taken from a subsample of priests who were able to answer these items at the end of the questionnaire. The general characteristics of this random subsample conform closely to those of the entire sample. There is no substantial basis for questioning the generalization of the patterns found in the sixty-five cases where priests responded to tolerance items (45.7 percent of the total) in comparison to the entire 142 cases of all priests interviewed. In June-August 1991 I conducted a mass survey (N=704) with the assistance of the Centro de Estudios Internacionales (CEI) and student interviewers from the Escuela de Sociología at the Universidad Centroamericana (UCA) in Managua. The areas sampled included Managua, León, Granada, and Masaya. In all four cases we designed a stratified sample based on "upper, middle, and working class, and squatter" categories based on available SES data and housing conditions/social services available in each neighborhood. I made use of the demographic data and SES indicators from the population division of the census bureau, the Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas y Censos (INEC), as well as figures from the Consejo Supremo Electoral (CSE) voter registration lists of 1990. This survey formed part of a broader, six nation study, the University of Pittsburgh Central American Public Opinion Project.

18. For more on the elite surveys, see Mitchell A. Seligson, "Political Culture in Nicaragua: Transitions, 1991–1995," unpublished ms., University of Pittsburgh, 1995, pp. 9–10. Each elite group comprised at least 100 interviews.

19. John L. Sullivan, Pat Walsh, Michal Shamir, David G. Barnum, and James L. Gibson, "Why Politicians Are More Tolerant: Selective Recruitment and Socialization among Political Elites in Britain, Israel, New Zealand and the United States," *British Journal of Political Science*, 23 (1993), 52–54.

20. Ibid., p. 52; Roberta S. Sigel, "Conclusions," in Roberta S. Sigel, ed., *Political Learning in Adulthood* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), pp. 458–59.

21. For further discussion, see Andrew J. Stein, "The Prophetic Mission, the Catholic Church and Politics: Nicaragua in the Context of Central America" (Ph.D. diss., University of Pittsburgh, 1995), pp. 96–103. For differences in political views between the secular and regular clergy, see Brian H. Smith, *The Church and Politics in Chile* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), pp. 247–58; 267–80; Paul Tortolani, "Political Participation of Native and Foreign Catholic Clergy in Guatemala," *Journal of Church and State* (1973), 407–18.

22. Michael X. Delli Carpini, "Age and History: Generations and Sociopolitical Change," in Sigel, ed., pp. 24, 11–22. Also, Roderic Ai Camp, *Political Recruitment across Two Centuries: Mexico, 1884–1991* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1995), pp.48–58, 65–66. Camp states that Mexican political elites' direct personal experiences and the nature of their education were two keys in patterns of their socialization. See also Roderic Ai Camp, *Crossing Swords: Religion and Politics in Mexico* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp. 26–31, 154–99; Eduardo Sota García, "La visión socio-política de los párrocos en el Estado de México" (M.A. thesis, Ibero-American University, Mexico City, 1993), pp. 193–205; Smith, pp. 111–14, 231–34.

23. Further research on this issue is needed. An important study that demonstrates the impact of Vatican II reforms on seminary curriculum and clerical training for the generation of priests in the 1960s is Joseph M. White, *The Diocesan Seminary in the United States* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1989), pp. 405–30.

24. The author is grateful to Mitchell Seligson and John Booth for permission to use these items. The identical questions were asked in the two separate Nicaraguan samples. The first index was based on the following four questions, each of which was scored 1–10. (1) There are people who only say bad things about the Nicaraguan form of government. How strongly do you approve or disapprove of the right to vote for these people? Please read the number (1–10) to me. (2) Thinking still about those people who only say bad things about the Nicaraguan form of government, how strongly do you approve or disapprove of these people being permitted to organize peaceful demonstrations with the purpose of expressing their points of view? (3) How strongly do you approve or disapprove of people who only say bad things about the Nicaraguan form of government being permitted to run for public office? (4) Thinking still about those people who only say bad things about the Nicaraguan form of government, how strongly do you approve or disapprove of their appearing on television to make a speech? The Opposition to the Suppression of Democratic Liberties (OSDL) scale is from John A. Booth and Mitchell A. Seligson, "The Political Culture of Authoritarianism in Mexico: A Reevaluation," *Latin American Research Review*, 19 (1984), 106–24. This second scale, scored 1–10, is made up of answers to the three following questions. (1) If a law were passed that prohibited public demonstrations, how strongly would you approve or disapprove of it? (2) How strongly would you approve or disapprove if all meetings of any group that criticizes the Nicaraguan political system were prohibited? (3) How strongly would you approve or disapprove if on the radio, on television, and in the newspapers there were censorship of all public statements that criticized the Nicaraguan political system?

25. In Nicaragua, recent surveys have shown that merely 8–9 percent of the public has had some college or has completed university studies.

26. Sullivan et al., "Why Politicians Are More Tolerant," pp. 52, 68–69. In their four nation study, they found such background factors to be a less complete explanation of higher tolerance than adult socialization.

27. See Peter McDonough, *Power and Ideology in Brazil* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), pp. 58–74, 94–98. Most of the bishops in Mexico are also from modest social backgrounds and predominantly from rural areas. See Camp, *Crossing Swords*, pp. 188–97.

28. The logic for dividing the generations of priests is as follows. Since the key explanatory power of political generational analysis is shared environmental conditions and formative experience rather than chronological age, not all of the cohorts cover the same number of years. Cohort 1 (1932–1948) was the most traditionally trained group; cohort 2 (1949–1961) experienced the Cold War and the rise of missionary priests sent to Latin America; cohort 3 (1962–1979) experienced Vatican II and the local internal church reforms begun at Medellín, in

addition to having lived through the fight against Somoza; cohort 4 (1980–1989) was defined by the FSLN years of conflict with the church and the Contra war, yet there were priests in this group old enough to have had preseminary experiences under Somoza and the revolution; cohort 5 (1990–1993) was the group that came of age at a time of the smallest foreign missionary presence in decades and in a context of hierarchical reassertion of control in pastoral work and theological training.

29. Sullivan et al., *Political Tolerance and American Democracy*, pp. 134–35.

30. Sullivan et al., "Why Politicians Are More Tolerant," pp. 53, 69–73.

31. The data in this figure present partial confirmation of Hypothesis 3, that the generation ordained between Vatican II and the Sandinista revolution would be more tolerant than the two younger cohorts of mostly native-born priests, now the majority in the parishes. Yet the pattern shows that, contrary to expectations, the 1949–1961 cohort demonstrates a higher tolerance level than cohort 3. However, any interpretation of the high level of tolerance in the 1949–1961 cohort and the low level in the 1932–1948 cohort must be conditioned by the extremely small number of cases (7 and 1, respectively) and by the fact that almost half of cohort 2 consists of foreign regular priests, most of whom are American Capuchins who often showed total approval with the tolerance items, responding with 10, the highest level.

32. Williams, pp. 48–52; Michael Dodson and Laura N. O'Shaughnessy, *Nicaragua's Other Revolution: Religious Faith and Political Struggle* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990), pp. 116–39.

33. Margaret E. Crahan, "Religion and Politics in Revolutionary Nicaragua," in Scott Mainwaring and Alexander Wilde, eds., *The Progressive Church in Latin America* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1989), pp. 41–44.

34. Author's correspondence with Capuchin priests who served in Bluefields diocese of Nicaragua, November 1994.

35. For a detailed discussion of the church-state conflict in the 1980s, see Williams, pp. 83–95; Dodson and O'Shaughnessy, pp. 165–90.

36. Stein, "The Prophetic Mission," pp. 49–57.

37. Andrew J. Stein, "The Impact of Religion on Mass Political Tolerance in Central America: Affiliation, Beliefs and Practices in Nicaragua, El Salvador and Guatemala," unpublished manuscript, February 1997, p. 22.

38. Due to the fact that the 1994 elite groups survey used a semantic differential for response categories, regression analysis of data from the Gallup poll was not possible. The variation among the oldest three age groups for journalists and police and military officers has to be given less weight due to the small number of cases per category.

39. Paul M. Sniderman, Joseph F. Fletcher, Peter H. Russell, Philip Tetlock, and Brian J. Gaines, "The Fallacy of Democratic Elitism: Elite Competition and Commitment to Civil Liberties," *British Journal of Political Science*, 21 (1991), 349–70, found sharp differences in levels of support for civil liberties among politicians depending on political party and unpopular group considered.

40. McDonough; Herbert McClosky and John Zaller, *The American Ethos* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press/Twentieth Century Fund, 1984), pp. 242–45.

41. The cohort differences that have been found in this analysis also hold across a series of attitudes on political protest (which was supported most of all by cohort 3), views on violence, social change, and preferred pastoral movements in their parishes. See Stein, "The Prophetic Mission."

42. For a discussion of the political and institutional crises that have characterized democratization in Nicaragua, see Philip J. Williams, "Dual Transitions from Authoritarian Rule:

Popular and Electoral Democracy in Nicaragua," *Comparative Politics*, 26 (January 1994), 169–85; and Shelley A. McConnell, "Democracy in the Balance: Evolving Relationships between the Branches of State in Nicaragua since 1990," paper presented at Latin American Studies Association meeting, Washington, D.C., 1995.