Revolution's Legacy: Residual Effects on Nicaraguan Participation and Attitudes in Comparative Context

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ABSTRACT

A longstanding scholarly debate asks what lasting changes revolution makes in political attitudes and behaviors. Scholars generally regard revolution as transformative, but research on revolution's behavioral and cultural legacies after transfers of state power has been limited. This study explores revolution's residual impact on individuals' electoral participation, civil society engagement, and social capital by comparing postrevolutionary Nicaraguans to their Central American neighbors. Using survey data on comparable samples of urban Central Americans, the research found higher electoral engagement in Nicaragua than in the other nations in the region that experienced major insurgencies but not revolution. It also found among Nicaraguans greater support for civil disobedience, greater school and union activism, and more frequent leftist political identification. Although revolution did leave residual effects in Nicaragua, more significant influence appears to have decayed rapidly.

Scholars' enduring fascination with revolutions reflects their belief that these great political upheavals lastingly transform the societies in which they occur. Indeed, change lies at the heart of most definitions of the term *revolution* (e.g., Sederberg 1994, 54–62; Calvert 1970). For example, Huntington (1968, 264) defines it as "rapid, fundamental and violent domestic change in the dominant values and myths . . . [and] political institutions, social structure, leadership, government activity and politics," while Skocpol (1994, 5) describes social revolutions as "rapid, basic transformations of a society's state and class structure, accompanied by and in part accomplished through popular revolts from below." As "something that the people [do] to the state, consciously and with forethought" (Sewell 1994, 192), revolution alters not only institutions but also individual political attitudes, values, behaviors, and interactions. Selbin (1997, 241–47) contends that revolution and its social transformation are more likely where popular rebellion has cultural roots and precedents. But how strong and persistent are revolution's individual-level effects after revolution ends? Do political attitudes and behaviors in countries shaped by revolution differ from those in other

societies? This study uses survey data to explore the residual impact of revolution on individuals' electoral participation, civil society engagement, and social capital. It takes as its case study Nicaragua shortly after the revolution ended in 1990, and examines Nicaraguans in comparison to their Central American neighbors.

The Revolution and Nicaragua

The Nicaraguan revolution (1979–90) destroyed the Somoza family dictatorship, taught millions of Nicaraguans to read, broadened workers' rights, and established an electoral democracy. The Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) mobilized vast numbers of citizens into neighborhood groups, unions, and producer and interest organizations. Sandinista leader and Nicaraguan vice president Sergio Ramírez Mercado described the FSLN as promoting "a permanent dynamic of the people's participation . . . [to] give their opinions. . . , suggest, construct, and direct, . . . organize themselves [and] attend to community, neighborhood, and national problems" (quoted in Ruchwarger 1987, 4; on the goals of the revolution, see also Ekern 1987; LaRamée and Polakoff 1997; Walker 1981; Wright 1995). This statement provides this study's working hypothesis: that despite its eventual demise in 1990, the Nicaraguan revolution left distinctive imprints on electoral participation, civil society engagement, and social capital compared to neighboring countries where no revolution occurred. We will call this the "distinctiveness hypothesis."

While the Nicaraguan revolution can be expected to have affected citizens' political behavior and values, in general, revolution's effects are not always straightforward. Some revolutions are reversed, and some survive for only a short time, as in the Nicaraguan case (Foran 1997, 241–47). Even in long-term great social revolutions, the effects of revolutionary public policy decay over time, leaving the postrevolutionary society with problems and politics that resemble those that preceded the revolution (Huntington 1968; Hansen 1971; Eckstein 1993; Kelley and Klein 1993; Stacey 1993). Some scholars argue that the logics of revolutionary war and governance by victorious revolutionaries inevitably lead toward authoritarianism and corruption (Hamerow 1990; Goldstone 1991; Sederberg 1994, 371–79).

Various factors might mitigate or dampen the impact of revolution on political behavior and social capital. In Nicaragua, hundreds of thousands eventually countermobilized to oppose the revolution, its policies, and the FSLN. This contributed to the Sandinistas' 1990 electoral defeat, which formally ended the revolution. Postrevolutionary Nicaraguan governments have labored to undo the revolution's effects (Castro and Prevost 1992; Prevost 1997; Vanden 1997; Walker 1997). Such efforts have dispir-

ited and undermined the status of the revolution's supporters, and may thus have diminished the revolution's residual imprint on political behavior and social capital (Lundgren 2000, 113–217). The survey for this study was conducted 15 months after the Sandinistas relinquished power, and it is possible that even by that early date the revolution's impact on attitudes and behaviors might have abated as institutions changed.

The effects of the Nicaraguan revolution may also have been limited because the FSLN never truly monopolized national political and economic life as other successful revolutionary movements have done. Throughout the revolution, opposition parties and civil society existed legally and actually participated in governance. From 1979 to 1984, non-Sandinista parties and actors—evolving into an opposition to the FSLN—took part in the revolutionary junta and the Council of State and held ministerial posts. Opposition parties contested the 1984 election, won 35 of 96 seats in the new National Assembly, and helped write the new 1987 Constitution. The opposition newspaper *La Prensa*, while sometimes censored, published criticism of the revolution, and other non- and anti-Sandinista media developed and grew. Indeed, so much domestic opposition existed that in the 1990 election, Violeta Barrios de Chamorro's National Opposition Union comprised 18 political parties that had been functioning in Nicaragua, including elements of the Liberals, the party once dominated by the Somozas. The Catholic Church provided a major opposition voice almost from the revolution's outset. The economy, although partly nationalized and reformed by the revolution, never attained full socialism, nor did the Sandinistas propose it. The private sector and its organizations, such as the Superior Council of Private Enterprise (COSEP) and the National Union of Farmers and Cattlemen (UNAG), worked assiduously for sectoral interests (Walker 1981; Booth 1985; Spalding 1994; Ryan 1995; Merrill 1994; Kirk 1992; Americas Watch 1986; LASA 1984, 1990).

After the FSLN lost the 1990 election, Nicaraguan politics at the institutional level appeared to revert to certain old patterns, including the return to preeminence of the Liberal movement. Although the Liberals' presence was limited in 1990, they won the 1996 and 2001 national elections led by the Liberal Nationalist faction of Arnoldo Alemán. Both the Liberal Nationalist and Sandinista parties helped revive the tradition of political caudillismo and promoted "hyperexecutivism" (Deonandan 2004). By the late 1990s, as Payne et al. (2002) have shown, the only notable political participation and social capital differences between Nicaragua and its neighbors were Nicaragua's relatively high election turnout and interpersonal trust levels.[1] One could argue that by 2005, 15 years after the end of the Sandinista experiment, at the institutional level and in economic policy, little of the revolution remained except the FSLN itself and the institutions of formal democracy the revolutionary government had designed and adopted (Robinson 2003, 71–86).

Given these persistent opposition and independent elements during the Nicaraguan revolution and the observed tendency of revolutions' effects to fade—especially under the onslaught of determined counter-revolution—this study also proposes a contending hypothesis. It holds that the revolution's residual impact on electoral participation and social capital may have been modest and short-lived, and therefore minimally observable by the time of the survey. Nicaragua might have quickly reverted to common regional political culture patterns and practices, leaving little that would have been distinctive about its electoral participation and social capital. We call this argument our Nicaraguan "similarity hypothesis."

This study investigates the residue of the revolution and the period of Sandinista rule by comparing Nicaraguans' electoral participation, political attitudes, and behavior in the early postrevolutionary period (mid-1991) with those of citizens of five other Central American countries in the same period. Regarding such individual attitudes and behavior, research on stable democracies is extensive (e.g. Inglehart 1997). In contrast, research on behavioral and cultural change after major regime shifts and the passing of revolutionary regimes remains rather scant and shows few clear trends (e.g. Rose et al. 1998; Diamond 1999; Shin 1999; Kim 1997; Gibson 2001). The findings of this study help to fill these lacunae.

The dependent variables are two aspects of electoral participation: voting and campaigning. Also examined are civil society, or organizational involvement, and social capital, or the requisites for effective social action, because some scholars (Inglehart 1997; Gibson 2001) regard them as a valuable mortar for the edifice of democracy. Others counter that civil society may sometimes spawn conflict, incivility, and confrontational or disruptive forms of social capital (Foley and Edwards 1996, 1997, 1998; Edwards and Foley 1997, 1998; Booth and Richard 1998b; Eastis 1998; Stolle and Rochon 1998; Wuthnow 1999; Fiorina 1999; Richard and Booth 2000; Rosenband 2001; Diamond 1999, 226–27). The civil society–social capital arguments are used here to explore Nicaraguans' (and other Central Americans') electoral activism in the years just after Nicaraguans voted the FSLN revolutionary government out of office.

This comparison among Central American countries also allows study of how the political context may affect both social capital and electoral participation. Political context, a complex of historical, economic, and regime factors, varied sharply in Central America during the last third of the twentieth century, despite the region's numerous shared cultural and economic legacies. Previous research has shown that such contextual differences affect citizens, their relationship to the state, and their links to each other. For example, long periods of repression, authoritarian rule, and political violence in a country can lower demo-

cratic norms, impede group participation, and depress or alter other forms of political involvement (Muller and Seligson 1994; Tarrow 1996; Booth and Richard 1996, 1998a, b; Rose et al. 1998; Shin 1999).

In the 1980s, Central America provided an array of contrasting regimes and regime experiences, but by the early 1990s, all six countries had adopted formal electoral democracy. Nicaragua's Sandinista revolution and the protracted Contra war had just ended. El Salvador and Guatemala were still locked in civil wars, but negotiations were under way to end them, and electoral institutions had begun to function. Honduras had emerged from authoritarian rule by gradual military devolution of power to civilians. U.S. military intervention had established a semblance of formal democracy in Panama. Costa Rica stood out in the region for the age and stability of its democracy, but was no longer the Isthmus's only civilian electoral regime, as it had been for most of several previous decades. Such variation in the political context in these six nations during the 1980s should have resulted in differentiated patterns of civil society and social capital. These, in turn, should have had differential effects on citizens' voting and campaign behavior. Nicaragua's patterns of social capital should have sharply diverged from those of its neighbors, given its unique experience with revolution and its record of extensive political mobilization.

In concrete terms, the hypothesis of distinctiveness leads us to expect that the revolution would have elevated Nicaraguans' electoral engagement, because registering to vote, voting, and campaigning became the means of political competition, and because competition over whether to continue or end the revolution was so intense in 1990. We expect that the revolution's efforts to mobilize citizens through particular groups and the extensive countermobilization by opposition forces would have elevated civil society involvement in school- and church-related groups, as well as communal organizations and unions. After 11 years of leftist government, more Nicaraguans than other Central Americans would identify themselves as leftists; and because the revolution's domestic opposition was still savoring the FSLN's historic electoral defeat when the survey was conducted, left-right polarization could be expected to be particularly intense. Finally, because much of the popular mobilization promoted by both regime and opposition during the revolution involved protest and confrontation, Nicaraguans could be expected to be exceptionally tolerant of confrontational political tactics.

The alternative hypothesis of similarity suggests that all six isthmian countries would have common patterns of electoral behavior, and that social capital differences between Nicaragua and its neighbors would be few. This argument is based on the persistence of opposition throughout the Nicaraguan revolution, the quick resurgence of traditional prerevolutionary political practices, post-1990 efforts to roll back revolu-

tionary institutional changes, and the regional convergence on electoral democracy shaped substantially by external pressures.

Data and Variables

Data from comparable surveys, conducted cross-nationally in the early to middle 1990s among the urban citizens of six Central American nations, that explored a broad array of attributes, including electoral participation, social capital attitudes, and civil society activism, were analyzed.[2] Many of these items have been widely validated and field-tested in various cultural settings (Booth and Seligson 1984; Muller et al. 1987; Seligson and Gómez B. 1989; Seligson and Booth 1993).

Social capital is defined as a product of social relations (e.g., reciprocal expectations, authority relations, and social organizations) and individual traits, such as obligations, expectations, information, and norms that help "individuals and collective actors get things done better" (Coleman 1988, S95; see also Foley and Edwards 1996; Newton 1997). Civil society refers to formal social organization outside of government, which here is operationalized as the frequency of respondent involvement in voluntary associations. Civil society and social capital theories, buttressed by prior research, posit that civil society shapes the formation of important social capital. Social capital and civil society, in turn, jointly influence political engagement. For instance, group membership and certain politically relevant attitudes may motivate electoral and other political participation and thus indirectly impinge on the state (Richard and Booth 2000).

The principal hypothesis predicts that Nicaragua's revolution will have left discernible and distinctive imprints on social capital, especially civil society and election-related behavior. Indeed, Sergio Ramírez Mercado's previously cited opinion about the revolution's goal for individual citizens—to establish a "permanent dynamic of the people's participation . . . [to] give their opinions. . . , suggest, construct, and direct, . . . organize themselves"—is a statement about shaping civil society, social capital, and political involvement. Because the Sandinistas mobilized citizens to support the revolution and its policies, and because others countermobilized against the revolution, one would expect Nicaraguans to have relatively high levels of civil society activism compared to other Central Americans, especially in groups related to communities, schools, and unions. The FSLN, for instance, especially mobilized Sandinista Defense Committees (CDS) at the community and neighborhood level, along with labor unions, and parent groups associated with a greatly expanded public school system. The revolutionary government also promoted elections, allowed multiple political parties, and encouraged citizens to vote and campaign. In most of Central Amer-

ica, political parties of the left were routinely discouraged or repressed; in Nicaragua, the FSLN actually governed. Thus in Nicaragua one would anticipate higher levels of electoral participation and identification with the political left.

This study employs both a comparative examination of levels of key civil society and social capital variables and a general model for electoral involvement that has emerged from previous research. The model hypothesizes that electoral participation is partly a function of civil society activism, democratic and antidemocratic norms, diffuse support for the regime, and ideological radicalism. It also hypothesizes that electoral participation is partly a function of the political context and certain demographic traits. The study first compares Nicaraguans' electoral engagement, civil society activism, and social capital with those of other Central Americans. Then it examines how well the general model accounts for the electoral participation of Central Americans overall, and finally it assesses whether and how Nicaragua manifests distinctive patterns and relationships.

The key electoral variables are indexes of voting behavior (having registered to vote and having voted in the last national election) and campaign activism (having attempted to influence someone's vote and working for a political campaign). Table 1 presents the percentages of urban Central Americans reporting these election-related behaviors and country means of the indexes constructed from them.

One key set of independent variables (table 2) includes measures of civil society activism and several attitudes involving citizens' relationship to the state. Civil society activism is captured by citizens' involvement in seven types of organizations: community betterment groups; church-related groups; school-related groups, such as parent organizations; labor unions; cooperative economic enterprises; civic groups (e.g., Rotary); and professional associations (e.g., organizations of lawyers). Because respondents were asked how often they attended meetings of such groups, we can measure the frequency of their activity in each. Also included are five attitudinal variables: diffuse support for the regime (a general feeling of patriotism and pride in national institutions), democratic norms (agreement with generalized political participation rights and participation rights for regime critics), support for confrontation or civil disobedience (respondents' approval of protesting, disrupting public order, and even armed attacks against the government), support for suppressing civil liberties (willingness to accept press censorship and to ban demonstrations and other forms of political expression), and left and right identification (where respondents place themselves along a left-right continuum).

The study incorporates two measures of the political context, both indicative of political violence (see appendix). The state repression

Table 1. Electoral Participation by Urban Dwellers in Central American Countries, early 1990s

Variable (%)	Nicaragua	Costa Rica	El Salvador	Guatemala	Honduras	Panama	Region
Registered to vote	80.2	96.1	80.2	80.4	95.6	96.1	87.3
Voted in last election	80.1	91.1	55.8	70.9	89.0	75.8	76.9
Ever tried to persuade another person how to vote	19.8	34.5	7.9	13.9	45.6	45.9	28.1
Ever worked for a candidate or party	20.7	42.0	7.0	9.4	45.6	29.4	25.8
Indexes (mean scores)							
Voting behavior index	1.62	1.91	1.39	1.51	1.86	1.72	1.67
(Rank within region on voting)	(4)	(1)	(6)	(5)	(2)	(3)	
Campaigning index	.47	.87	.18	.25	1.08	.84	.62
(Rank within region on campaigning)	(4)	(2)	(6)	(5)	(1)	(3)	

See appendix for details of index construction.

Table 2. Social Capital and Civil Society Variables, Urban Dwellers in Central American Countries, early 1990s

	Nicaragua	Costa Rica	El Salvador	Guatemala	Honduras	Panama	Region
Attitudes/Values Indexes							
Diffuse support	4.51 (2)	5.06	3.97	4.14	3.53	3.80	4.16
Democratic norms	7.86 (4)	8.23	6.95	6.16	9.03	9.34	7.97
Support civil disobedience	2.42 (2)	1.93	2.12	2.01	3.41	1.96	2.31
Suppress civil rights	3.55 (4)	2.96	4.75	3.76	4.18	3.22	3.74
Left identification	1.22 (1)	.50	.72	.75	.19	.57	.64
Right identfication	1.34 (3)	1.88	1.01	1.24	1.74	2.41	1.62
Civil Society Activism Indexes							
Church group	.45 (4)	.40	.60	.54	.39	.46	.47
School group	.50 (1)	.38	.39	.47	.42	.32	.41
Communal group	.22 (6)	.23	.24	.30	.23	.25	.25
Professional association	.12 (6)	.24	.15	.20	.42	.23	.23
Union	.12 (2)	.08	.02	.11	.16	.10	.10
Cooperative	.09 (4.5)	.09	.07	.16	.28	.19	.15
Civic group	.09 (4.5)	.05	.09	.18	.19	.31	.15

All differences of means between countries significant at the .05 level or less.

measure treats repression as a systemic constraint on individuals at the polity level and includes two equally weighted components, one measuring repression at the time of the survey, the other the history of repression in the decade before the survey. The average of the two provides a repression score for each country, which is assigned to each respondent by nation of residence. The measure contains a historical component (estimated intensity of regime repression over the decade before each nation's survey) on the assumption that the effect of repression on citizens decays gradually, even after repression has subsided. The immediate repression context also matters, so repression is estimated in each country at the survey date. While repression is a state-based phenomenon, political violence includes harm to citizens and property perpetrated both by regime forces and sympathetic paramilitary elements and by insurgent opponents of the regime. Citizens in countries with state and insurgent terrorism confront a social setting fraught with potential risks. This study employs an item asking citizens how much political violence they perceive, providing an individual-level measure of perceived violence.

Four demographic variables are used; each is known to be related to political participation and social capital: number of years of education, standard of living (a cross-nationally comparable measure of respondent wealth constructed from ownership of certain artifacts, ranging from indoor plumbing to televisions to automobiles), sex, and age.

Analysis

The assessment of the distinctiveness hypothesis, that Nicaraguans in the early 1990s manifested different political traits from other Central Americans, begins by examining the data on electoral participation in table 1. Urban Nicaraguans register to vote less frequently than the regional average. It is interesting that the six countries form two distinct groups with respect to voter registration: Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Guatemala all score around 80 percent, while Costa Rica, Honduras, and Panama score around 96 percent. While El Salvador and Guatemala fall below the other countries on the other three participation measures, Nicaraguans outvote Panamanians and campaign at a rate closer to theirs than those of the two less politically participatory countries. Costa Ricans and Hondurans report the highest levels of electoral participation.

In terms of social capital, table 2 shows that the mean support for the democratic norms index (range = 0–10) varies from 6.16 to 9.34. Nicaragua is near the regional average and again exceeds El Salvador and Guatemala.

Nicaragua's greatest distinctiveness lies in the strength of leftist identification, roughly double the regional average, and in the rough parity

of leftist and rightist identification. Nicaragua's level of identification with the political left, the highest in the region, may be the clearest indication of the revolution's legacy. Likewise, the near-parity of left and right identification indicates ideological polarization, almost certainly an effect of revolution and resistance to it. (The degree of identification with left and right permits a cross-national comparison of ideological polarization in these countries; the uniqueness of each national party system prevents particular parties, and therefore party identification per se, from being meaningfully compared across borders.) Elsewhere in the region, identification with the ideological right predominates. The country with the next-closest ratio of leftist to rightist identification is El Salvador, which also experienced a broad-based, left-driven popular mobilization during the insurgency. In El Salvador at the time of the survey, the insurgent and other leftists were negotiating a settlement of the civil war that would allow them to survive with a strong political party base. Thus in several attitudes and values, Nicaragua reveals patterns consistent with both an imprint of revolution and the distinctiveness hypothesis.

With respect to civil society measures, the data show other indications of the revolution's impact. Nicaragua has the highest level of school group involvement. This probably results from the revolution's massive public education effort and the continuing political conflict over education during the Chamorro administration in the early 1990s. Urban Nicaraguans reported the second-highest level of union activism, behind Hondurans, and roughly the same level as Guatemalans and Panamanians. In the survey year, 1991, Nicaraguans had the lowest mean involvement in professional associations. This was probably due to the emigration of many professionals during the revolution, the Contra war, the country's economic meltdown of the 1980s, and to the intense politicization of professional groups during the revolution. Nicaragua's rank (tied for fourth) on cooperative and civic group membership probably also reflects the flight of small business owners and commercial farmers to escape revolution and economic decline.

Contrary to expectation and despite the levels of community group mobilization during the revolution—especially through the CDSs—Nicaraguans reported a level of communal organization similar to other countries in the region. (The index scores range only from .22 for Nicaragua to .30, with five countries between .22 and .25.) Why might Nicaraguans have reported such unexpectedly meager group involvement in 1991 when so much mobilization had occurred during the revolution? Considerable evidence suggests that the FSLN's links to its mass groups became increasingly authoritarian during the mid-to-late 1980s. The revolution, moreover, ultimately failed to deliver much to neighborhood organizations because of war and economic austerity programs. These policies and behaviors likely led many people to abandon

the CDSs. Several other FSLN-linked interest organizations also declined rapidly in this era (Prevost 1992; LaRamée and Polakoff 1997). Anti-Sandinista groups may also have experienced membership declines once the revolution ended. Thus we may have discovered here likely evidence of postrevolutionary demobilization rather than the residual revolutionary mobilization we expected.

Overall, these civil society patterns lend support to the distinctiveness hypothesis, though somewhat differently than anticipated. Despite the extensive mobilization and countermobilization during the Sandinista period, Nicaraguans were less engaged overall in civil society than citizens in the other Central American countries. Absent the passion and resources mobilized for and against the revolution during the 1980s, revolutionary-era civil society apparently waned rapidly.

The assessment now turns to regression analysis to uncover possible effects of Nicaragua's revolution on voting and campaigning. Our hypothesis of distinctiveness suggests that the unique revolutionary context in Nicaragua should manifest itself in how group involvement and political attitudes affect voting and campaigning. Nicaragua's revolutionary governments from 1979 to 1990 made great efforts to mobilize citizens and exhorted them to adopt new values and become politically engaged. No other country in the region shared this collective experience. Therefore we can test for a unique model for Nicaragua.

In comparing Nicaragua with the rest of the region, we should recall the patterns revealed in tables 1 and 2. These indicated the possibility of two types of countries in Central America: the countries that had experienced high levels of revolutionary and counterrevolutionary violence (Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Guatemala), and the remaining countries, with very moderate or low levels of such violence (Costa Rica, Honduras, and Panama). These higher violence–lower violence classifications are a common-sense assignment based on the political histories of revolutionary insurgency and counterrevolutionary violence of the six nations. Nicaragua, Guatemala, and El Salvador experienced civil wars that took several tens of thousands of lives in each during the dozen years before the survey. Meanwhile, Costa Rica, Panama, and Honduras, although not free of political violence, experienced it at levels virtually negligible when compared to the other three (Booth et al. 2006; Walker and Armony 2000; Robinson 1996; Jonas 1991; Montgomery 1995).

The countries have been grouped accordingly for the regression models presented in tables 3 and 4, following the rationale that if it is intense political violence rather than the residue of revolution alone that shapes social capital and consequent political participation, Nicaragua should resemble the other nations that also experienced high levels of insurgency and state repression but not revolution per se more than it resembles its more peaceful neighbors. If, on the other hand, Nicaragua

Table 3. Civil Society–Social Capital Model of Voting Among Urban Dwellers (by country)

Variables	Nicaragua	Guatemala, El Salvador	Costa Rica, Honduras, Panama	Region Without Nicaragua
Social Capital: Attitudes/Values				
Diffuse support		.038	.014	
Support civil disobedience				
Suppress civil rights			.008	
Left identification	.046			
Right identification				.019
Democratic norms		.022		.017
Civil Society Activism				
Church group				–.044
School group		.143		.065
Communal group				
Professional association			.067	.092
Union	.164			
Cooperative				
Civic group				–.074
Context				
Perceived violence			.015	–.057
Demographic				
Education		.579	.117	.213
Living standard				.140
Sex (M=1, F=2)		.092		–.047
Age	.007	.154	.004	.008
R^2	.058	.131	.036	.118
Standard error of the estimate	.671	.736	.404	.563
Significance	.042	.000	.000	.000
Number of cases	508	988	1,802	2,792

Beta-coefficients presented significant at .10 or less.

Table 4. Civil Society–Social Capital Model of Campaigning Among Urban Dwellers (by country)

Variables	Nicaragua	Guatemala, El Salvador	Costa Rica, Honduras, Panama	Region Without Nicaragua
Social Capital: Attitudes/Values				
Diffuse support		.022		–.031
Support civil disobedience	.057		.045	.046
Suppress civil rights			.017	
Left identification	.098	.077		
Right identification	.045	.060		.063
Democratic norms	.041	.031		.031
Civil Society Activism				
Church group				–.075
School group				
Communal group	.279	.111	.175	.150
Professional association				
Union	.254		.198	.176
Cooperative			–.119	
Civic group		.141	.322	.220
Context				
Perceived violence		–.048	–.064	–.151
Demographic				
Education			.509	.323
Living standard	.504	.214	–.420	
Sex (M=1, F=2)	–.216		–.192	–.146
Age		.004	–.003	
R^2	.197	.097	.086	.151
Standard error of the estimate	.730	.563	1.000	.900
Significance	.000	.000	.000	.000
Number of cases	504	1,035	1,885	2,922

Beta-coefficients presented significant at .10 or less.

diverges from the higher-violence nations, one may reasonably credit its revolutionary experience.

National laws and state support for voting in the 1980s encouraged voting throughout Central America. Facing a major choice over the revolution's survival in the 1990 election, however, Nicaraguans' participation in voting exceeded that of the other higher-violence countries, as well as Panama (see table 1). Campaigning requires more time than voting and, especially in a polarized environment such as Nicaragua and El Salvador, involves displaying one's political affiliation in ways that expose one to controversy and to the possibly intense disapproval of other citizens. This form of political participation tends to be higher in lower-violence countries and lower in higher-violence ones (table 1).

The models of the effects of civil society and social capital on voting in table 3 reveal different patterns of independent variables associated with voting in Nicaragua and in its higher-violence and lower-violence neighbors. The Nicaraguan model of voting is distinctive in that only leftist identification and union activism—two hallmarks of the revolution—contribute significantly to voting. In the other countries that experienced high levels of revolutionary and counterrevolutionary violence, diffuse support, democratic norms, and school group activism elevate voting.

The data in table 3 thus bolster the distinctiveness hypothesis for Nicaraguan voting behavior. The Nicaraguan model differs from those of both the higher- and lower-violence countries to which it is compared. The pattern, moreover, is consistent with a lingering revolutionary effect in that left identification and union membership, two hallmarks of the revolution, contribute to voting.

Turning to campaign activism (table 4), we find that the civil society–social capital model has the greatest explanatory power for Nicaragua. Several attitudes motivate Nicaraguans to campaign: identifying with the left or the right, democratic norms, and supporting civil disobedience and protest. Leftist and rightist identification and democratic norms also influence citizens in the other more politically violent countries, El Salvador and Guatemala. On the other hand, Nicaragua shares almost none of the attitudinal predictors of campaign activism with the lower-violence neighboring countries.

In terms of civil society activism, communal groups mobilize people into campaigns in Nicaragua and in both the lower- and higher-violence countries. The association is strongest for Nicaragua. This finding is not surprising, given the extent of mobilization and countermobilization in both the workplace and the neighborhoods during the revolution. Union involvement contributes notably to campaigning in both Nicaragua and the lower-violence countries. For Nicaragua, perceived violence does not affect campaigning, whereas in the other countries the perception of high levels of violence in the society depresses campaign activism.

CONCLUSIONS

Nicaragua's history of revolution and revolutionary government left certain identifiable imprints on social capital and electoral behavior, as the distinctiveness hypothesis suggests. In the early 1990s, Nicaragua stood out from the rest of the isthmian countries in its degree of leftist identification and the consequent rough balance in leftist and rightist identification. Certain values and behaviors embedded in the revolutionary experience, moreover, led Nicaraguans to take part in campaigning: leftist and rightist identification, support for civil disobedience and confrontational political methods, commitment to democratic norms, and involvement in communal associations and unions.

The findings of this study additionally demonstrate the impact of political context on electoral engagement. The influence of context may be seen in the contribution of leftist and rightist identification to campaign involvement in Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Guatemala, all countries that experienced intense and protracted insurrections and counterinsurgency during the 1970s and 1980s. A history of violence and repression raises the stakes of campaign activism, leading many citizens to cede the terrain to those who have the ideological commitment that helps them assume the risks of participating. Prior research has reported that systemic violence depresses both voting and campaigning in Central America, highlighting how the institutional-historical context of national politics shapes citizen participation (Booth and Richard 1996, 1998b). Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Guatemala, which experienced higher levels of revolutionary and counterrevolutionary violence, reveal lower voting and campaigning levels than the countries that had less such violence and repression.

Did Nicaragua's revolution influence attitudes and behaviors in ways that persist beyond the revolution? In some areas the answer is straightforward. For example, did the revolution lead Nicaraguans toward authoritarianism? No. Instead, Nicaraguans emerged from the revolutionary years as supporters of democracy. Indeed, Nicaragua in 1991 evidenced more support for democratic values than El Salvador and Guatemala, neighboring countries with turbulent and violent politics but without a successful revolution. The Nicaraguan revolution's main institutional legacy is a more democratic electoral system and lessened institutional authoritarianism. Such outcomes have been rare among postrevolutionary regimes.

What traits of Nicaraguan social capital were distinctive in the early 1990s? A greater proportion of Nicaraguans than other Central Americans identified with the political left, producing a unique pattern for the region of relatively balanced levels of leftist and rightist identification. Only in Nicaragua did identification with the political left add to voting

participation. Identification with both left and right, along with support for democratic norms, contributed to campaign involvement in Nicaragua, as they also did in El Salvador and Guatemala. In terms of civil society, Nicaragua was not clearly divergent in factors contributing to campaign involvement, though union participation was associated with higher levels of voting activities in Nicaragua but not elsewhere. Involvement in civic groups led to greater campaign activity in the rest of the region but not in Nicaragua.

International pressures for electoral democracy, and the revolution's own strategy to build its legitimacy by adopting an electoral regime and winning power by electoral rules, led Nicaragua toward the adoption of formal electoral democracy. External and internal pressures on the other turbulent Central American states moved them toward adopting similar electoral institutions. On the other hand, Nicaragua's levels of participation in voting, attempting to persuade others how to vote, and working on a campaign were considerably higher than those in El Salvador and Guatemala. This reveals that the revolution in Nicaragua made democracy-building contributions greater than those stemming mostly from external pressures.

Nicaraguans were less mobilized than expected, especially in communal, church-related, and civic groups. It is possible that, by the time of the six national surveys employed for this analysis, many Nicaraguans once involved in Sandinista mass organizations had demobilized out of frustration with the party and its treatment of their groups. At the same time, many anti-Sandinista group members may also have demobilized with the loss of their *raison d'être* at the revolution's demise in 1990. Groups and their individual members on both sides of the struggle may have also suffered exhaustion from the intensity of the political struggles of the 1980s. Resource flows intended to support mobilization and countermobilization undoubtedly dropped off. In contrast, union and school group engagement probably persisted at higher levels because of their continued importance to their members after the revolution's demise.

The lower-than-expected civil society activism suggests that a first area in which revolution's impact may erode is citizens' voluntary involvement in organizations. Once the struggle over the regime ends, as it did in Nicaragua in 1990, many citizens may disengage from the groups through which they once pressed for their interests. They may do so whether defeated or victorious, disillusioned or validated, and, in any case, probably exhausted from the protracted political conflict and tension of organizational life in a polarized society. Therefore, one conclusion is that the Nicaraguan revolution had mixed residual influence on electoral participation, civil society, and social capital as measured here. A year and a half after the revolution ended, distinctive effects could still be seen in school and union group activism, in leftist identi-

fication levels, in left-right polarization, and in how civil society and social capital affected voting behavior. On the other hand, postrevolutionary Nicaragua fails to stand out from its neighbors in levels of electoral engagement, other civil society activism, or social capital's effect on campaigning.

Taking a long step back from the details of the findings and returning to the original questions about revolution's effects, it appears that the balance of the argument tilts in favor of the similarity hypothesis as it regards electoral participation. The Nicaraguan case supports the argument that revolution's effects are likely to decay rapidly. Even so soon after the revolution ended, Nicaraguans' electoral engagement remarkably resembled that of their nonrevolutionary neighbors. This probably stems from a convergence of forces from within (the revolution) and without (great power foreign policy and other countries' electoral reforms), which pushed Nicaraguans and other Central Americans to adopt similar electoral institutions that constrained their behavior in similar ways. Yet the revolution made a difference in social capital. Nicaragua's distinctiveness in political-ideological alignments and civil society mobilization around schools and unions suggests that in certain areas the revolution mattered a great deal.

It is possible that a broader search for other possible areas of revolution's influence—other behaviors and forms of social capital and their differing rates of change—could tell us more. As comparable data from more recent surveys of the region become available, researchers may be able to answer these questions more conclusively.

APPENDIX: INDEX CONSTRUCTION

The following indexes are presented in the order of their appearance in the tables.

Electoral Involvement Indexes

Voting Behavior combines scores of 1.0 for reporting having voted in the last election (zero if not), and 1.0 for reporting being registered to vote (range 0–2.0).

Campaign Activism combines scores of 1.0 for reporting attempting to persuade others how to vote (zero if not), and 1.0 for reporting campaigning for a candidate for office (zero if not; range 0–2.0).

Social Capital: Attitudes and Values Indexes

Diffuse Support measures mean respondent agreement with several items of general approval or disapproval of national political insti-

tutions (courts, legislature, system as a whole, etc.). Range: low diffuse support = 0, high = 7.

Democratic Norms is an average level of respondent agreement with seven items measuring support for general political participation rights (vote, etc.) and participatory rights for regime critics (tolerance). Range: low democratic norms = 0, high = 10.

Support Civil Disobedience and protest behavior reports respondent's mean level of agreement on an 11-point scale with legally demonstrating, blocking streets, occupying public buildings, attempting to overthrow regime. Range: 0 = low, 10 = high.

Suppress Civil Rights is an index of respondents' mean level of agreement with suppressing civil liberties (i.e., support for censorship, banning legal demonstrations, etc.). Range: 0 = low, 10 = high.

Left Identification measures intensity of self-identification with leftist positions on a left-right continuum: 0 = right to neutral, 1 = slightly left, 5 = farthest left.

Right Identification measures intensity of self-identification with rightist positions on a left-right continuum: 0 = left to neutral, 1 = slightly right, 5 = farthest right.

Civil Society Activism Indexes

Church Group, School Group, Communal Group, Professional Association, Union, Cooperative, and Civic Group each indicate the respondent's reported frequency of attendance at meetings of this type: never = 0, 1 = "from time to time," 2 = "frequently."

Context Measures

Repression at the system level: half of score is based on the level of repression at time of survey, and half is based on repression during decade before survey; the score is the mean of the two. Very low repression = 1, very high repression = 5. All respondents for each country receive the country score.

Perceived Violence is a single item: "How much political violence is in the country?" "None"= 1, "some" = 2, "much" = 3.

Demographic Measures

Education is the number of years of formal schooling attained.

Living Standard is a measure of family wealth based on the respondent's household's possession of items including indoor plumbing, refrigerators, washing machines, telephones, color televisions, and automobiles. Range 0–15.

Sex: Male = 1, female = 2.

Age is the respondent's age in years.

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1. Payne et al. 2002 compare actual voter turnout rates and survey data from the Latinbarometer surveys of the late 1990s on preference for democracy, confidence in institutions, and interpersonal trust in Latin American countries, including all six Central American countries; see tables 2.2 (p. 31), 2.5 (p. 38), 3.3 (p. 59), and figure 2.2 (p. 40).

2. Surveys were conducted in mid-1991 among the urban voting-age populations of El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Panama. In 1992 a similar survey was conducted in Guatemala, followed in 1995 by another in Costa Rica. In each a cluster sample of dwelling units, stratified by socioeconomic level, was drawn from the national capital and other major urban centers. Interviewees were chosen using randomizing procedures and following sex and age quotas. A total of 4,089 face-to-face interviews were collected regionwide, but national sample Ns varied from 500 to 900. To prevent larger country Ns from distorting findings in this analysis, the country samples have here been weighted equally to approximately 700 each (total N = 4,198). These samples reliably reflect the opinions of the urban populations of Central America (capital cities and other major cities and towns). They can be generalized only to citizens of urban areas—roughly half the region's populace.

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